

The Indian Stammering Association Newsletter



Samvad संवाद

*A digest of blogs
from the ocean of
contributions from
TISA Bloggers*

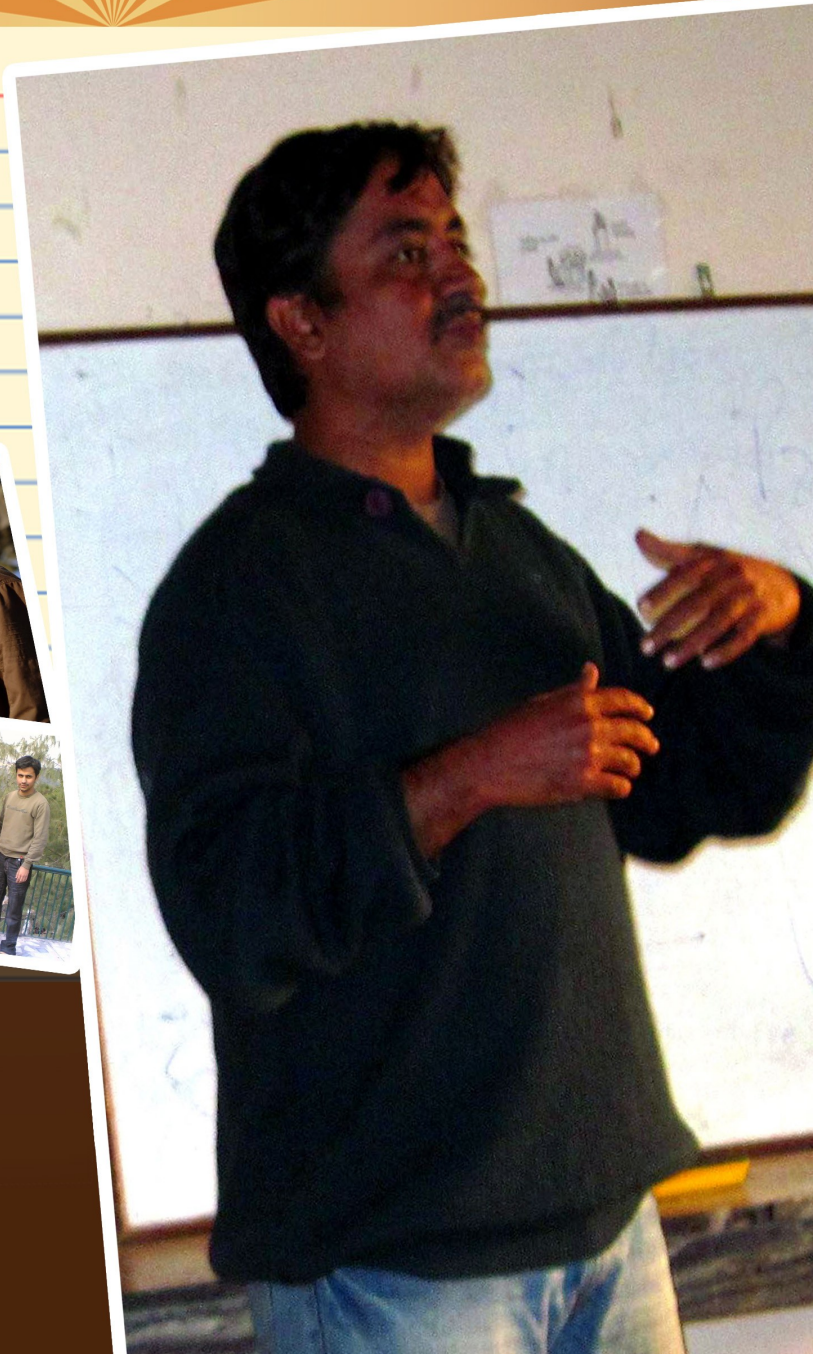


**First National Conference on
Stammering and Self-help**

Institute of Health Sciences (IHS)

Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India

28 Dec 2011 - 1 Jan 2012



THE JOY OF SELF-HELP

DR. SATYENDRA (SACHIN) SRIVASTAVA
DEHRADUN, INDIA



Dr. Satyedra (Sachin) Srivastava
TISA Founding Trustee and Co-ordinator

Upanishads say: Atmanomoksharth, Jagadhitaya cha. For the liberation of self and the good of the world (we must work). Bible says- Cast your bread upon the water and it will return to you after many days. Both sayings have the same essence: serving others selflessly benefits you in a way better and deeper than competing with others and serving your own self exclusively. If we dive deeper, we discover that concept of “self” versus “other” is at the root of the problematic ego, which sets us against everyone else and creates a deeply divided society of unhappy people and miserable circumstances.

This thought led a group of stammerers to start self-help groups across India. Stammering is a problem of social presentation of ourselves. We don't stammer, when we are alone. We stammer only when talking to 'others'. Therefore, solutions also had to be found in social settings. So social interaction, in some form or the other, is the basis of self help for stammering. This is how TISA began in 2008. Its informal inception of course had already taken place in Chennai through good efforts of Manimaran since 2001.

After many Communication workshops, much interactions over TISA blog and IPWS Yahoo group and ding-dong battles to initiate and sustain SHGs over the country, we thought that now the time was ripe to meet “nationally”. This national conference at Bhubaneshwar, as 2011 rolls out, ushering in 2012, is a significant step: many of us will be meeting physically for the first time; again, for the first time, self-helpers will be interacting with professionals and clinicians. And yes, families too are invited. IHS campus, a voluntary sector teaching institution working in disability sector, is obviously the best choice for the venue. If therapist and stammerers can communicate better, everyone stands to gain.

On this rare occasion, we are putting a digest of our best expressions in to your hands, which has been selected from our blog and elsewhere. As you go through it, you will discover that shortages of verbal fluency has been over-compensated for, by nature, in the form of exquisite sensitivity, interesting manners of expression and diverse perspectives. TISA wishes you a very fulfilling time at the conference, carried over into the new year.

GO FOR IT

SHORN JACOB
KERALA, INDIA



I don't know about my future. I have a huge bank debt to pay back. My first girlfriend dumped me. I am 25 and still haven't got any major professional Experience. Still when I sit down, bow my heads down and talk to myself - I say I have seen and felt many beautiful things and I want to continue to experience what life has in store for me - better or worse.

I stuttered through my IELTS exam, stuttered to find my way from Cochin to Kuala Lumpur and from Kuala Lumpur to Christchurch, got lost in the airport and stuttered on the service counters. All the way I was alone, as this was not a friendship blasting exercise for me but a quest to find a worth for my life riddled

with stuttering. I again stuttered my way here to get a casual part time job.

From one Gods own country to another Gods own Country. The only thing I clutched in my hands was my faith and I still hold it dear to my heart. And I say it here because a lamp hidden under a bed does no good. Life goes by, seasons come and go.

Back home, it was my mom who always cooked and washed for me and if I get my visa extended, I won't see my loved ones anytime near.

I continue to struggle with my stammer and loneliness. But I hope to gain a different view of life. A long journey is always good. It soothes ones quest. I am presently in a country on the tip of the world, one of the last to be settled by humans, in one of the realms ruled by King George's Daughter.

A journey is good, as Santiago in "The Alchemist" takes it.

To end with, as someone said, it's not the destination, but the journey that matters more.

My blog: <http://isstutter.blogspot.com/>



CHERISHED MEMORIES



Nine IPWS met in Mumbai for the first time on 13th April 2008- after considerable planning and preparation, to deliberate about formation of TISA. In this face to face meeting, they discovered that their unique speech issue offered not just a common basis of empathy and understanding (in spite of many differences) but also a strong imperative to act together.

THE MONSTER IN MY MIND

RAJESH BHANDARI
DEHRADUN, INDIA



My name is Rajesh Bhandari. I am 20 years old and was born in Dehradun, India. My stuttering began when I was ten years old. As far as I remember, my speech was fluent until I came in the fifth grade. I didn't receive early therapy as a child. I cannot re-call any major difficulties because of my speech until I entered the 10th grade when I was 15. I had a lot of friends and enjoyed thoroughly in my school life. But still, as I retrospect on my early years, I do have a lot of regrets.

One is that there was not a single person who could help me out of this terrible situation. I do remember everyone laughing at me on some occasions and all I wanted to do at that time was hide or run away. I was extremely embarrassed at times. Some-times during the classes, the new Teacher would ask us all to introduce our self and I remember the fear I had whilst waiting for my turn. The other students would say their name without thinking twice while I used to become more and more nervous as my turn came closer. When finally my turn came, I couldn't get the words out.

As a typical 10th grader, I really cared

about what my peers thought of me which further aggravated my stutter, especially on the telephone. I do, however, wished that someone should have recognized my fear and helped me overcome it at that time and by doing so, maybe my problem would have been much lesser than it is today. This was the beginning of my real problem. I started avoiding every speaking situation. You can imagine how this felt. I hadn't received any kind of therapy at that time. The type of stuttering I had at that time is called stoppage. But still, I never let my stuttering keep me from having fun in school.

My ambitions were high. As I progressed through school, the situation worsened and I came to accept that I could never speak in front of a group. I felt that I would always have difficulty expressing myself to strangers. After school, I decided to pursue career in Engineering. I have vivid memories of struggling to give my name and address at the initial registration or when answering roll call and in the presence of teachers and pupils that I had not previously encountered. I developed strategies to protect myself from shame and embarrassment.

Fear assumed the role of guardian, shielding me from experiencing the negative emotions that I felt when I stuttered. At that time, I hadn't met any other stutterer. So naturally, at times a feeling of loneliness engulfed me. At the end of 2nd year of graduation, I decided to take speech therapy. I learned some techniques

to become more fluent, but at times I still stuttered. It wasn't as bad as when I was in high school. But still, I was not totally satisfied as avoidance and substitutions were very high. Within a month, relapse was visible. I had a good friend circle in university and I confined myself to my circle not caring about others.

I locked myself into my comfort zone. I never talked about my stammering with anyone. It was like a forbidden topic, kind of like an unspoken truth in my friend circle. I attended my first SHG meeting at the end of 2nd year organized by Sachin Sir. It was a wonderful experience for me. For the 1st time in my life, I met other people having the same problem as mine. After that, I started browsing the TISA blog and other stammering sites but the world outside was still the same- avoidance, hiding, shame, guilt, etc.

Another significant step was disclosing my stammer through social networking websites (a thing I would be scared to even think about earlier). I have almost 200+ wonderful friends who stammer from across the globe on my Facebook page. I feel really lucky to be surrounded by such friends who genuinely like me and would go well beyond their capabilities to help me. I interact with them regularly. That's clearly the positive side of my stammering. Slowly and slowly it is helping me to be

more open about my stuttering. I get emails from various PWS which encourages me further. Hence, slowly and slowly I'm coming out.

I'm getting actively involved in SHG activities and in the online world. All my life, I have been fighting —My stuttering – a thing that burdened me from the childhood. It was one of my characteristics, a part of my self-image, my scary monster. The most important thing is that I have stopped getting frustrated over my failures. I have stopped being afraid. In fact, I have become so fascinated with my monster that I have decided to befriend it.

I have some good days and some bad ones too. I'm learning to live with it, it will always be there. If it wasn't for my stuttering I would still be that person today. I wouldn't have even bothered to improve myself and become a better person... and this is true not only for stuttering but for any emotional pain and challenge you experience in life. For us (PWS), Everyday is like a big Challenge.

We should accept our stammer from heart. It needs a great deal of concentration, hard work and commitment. I know it's easier said than done. I would like to end with one of my favourite quotes- —Anything in life which gives you pain is a source of happiness and strength. You just need to learn how to use it for your advantage.



A JOB IS A JOB

SHORN JACOB
KERALA, INDIA

I was looking for a part time job in New Zealand to earn some extra finances as a university student. I had no idea what will be the reaction of the Kiwis to my speech impediment.

I had filled an application form in a retail chain and I was called for an interview. Till now, it is my first and only interview in NZ. I told in the beginning that I am a student and that "I had a bloody stammer" and stuttered my way through the interview for their general questions. They told me they had a night fill vacancy and will refer me to the concerned manager.

A few days later I got a missed call from a unknown number. I gave it a call back and I got a reply- "This is the warehouse, happy to help you?" - a fluent eager to help voice came from the other side. I again stuttered

my way through -
"I ..received.....a ..call ..from..this...number..
". After I conveyed the information, I got the night fill manager on line and he asked me to come and meet him.

I was told I will be employed in the beginning on a casual basis for training. I again told him about my "stammer". He said he is aware of it. He also conveyed a general apology if any of the team members tried to "finish my words for me" during my duration of the job.

I just got a part time job which no way interferes with my university timings and will let me earn some "kiwi dollars".

Getting a job - always has a very emotional impact on me. I had tears in my eyes. But life has taught me not to show it outside.



CHERISHED MEMORIES



TISA was registered as a Public Charitable Trust in Vikasnagar (Dehradun)
on 13th November 2009

THE SCIENCE OF HELPING WORDS

ASHISH AGARWAL
BHIWANI, HARYANA, INDIA



The below written lines are solely on the basis of my experiences and beliefs. Everyone is absolutely free to disagree / agree upon them.

I had used and am still using helping words on the basis of feedback given by my mind to lessen the force / pressure to be exerted on difficult words or simply to avoid stammering during difficult situations. Frankly speaking, using helping words is basically quite an effort towards the tendency of hiding stammering.

With course of time, I have developed a healthy treasure of helping words which I use at various occasions as per the suitability. These helping words had proved to be my best buddies during feared situations until yesterday.

Yesterday, a very strange thing happened. I was returning from my office. On the way to

my room, I just tried bouncing with a stranger as directed by Dr. Sachin to understand the basics of bouncing technique. I was practicing it since last few days with the same question to each and every stranger-D-D-D-Dost time kya hua hai..? (Friend, what time is it?).

But yesterday while asking the same question to a stranger, I observed that I was asking – D-D-D-D-D-D-Dost abhi exact time kya hua hai..? (Friend, what is the exact time now?)

After the question answer session with that person, I realized that I used the helping word "EXACT" sub-consciously. I just used it as I was afraid that I would face a long forceful block at T-T-T-T-T-T-T-TIME.

So my mind just pushed me into using this helping word even without me consciously getting noticed about it. It was amazing as well as strange! I just noticed this very nature of my speaking habit only yesterday after so many years, thanks to my quest for conscious living these days.

Now onwards, I wish to use all those helping words consciously to check whether the situation is really so feared or it is just a mind game.



VIPASSANA - RIGHT HERE RIGHT NOW

ASHISH AGARWAL
BHIWANI, HARYANA, INDIA



Vipassana meditation is a familiar name for all of us. We have heard about it a lot of times from all the core team members of TISA including Dr. Sachin himself. I have been lucky to attend a 10 day Vipassana meditation course more than a couple of years ago. Vipassana was re-discovered in India by beloved Gautam Buddha. It means to see the things as they are.

I hope all the TISA members would try at least once a Vipassana meditation camp in their life time.

In the meanwhile, I would like to give a brief description about this wonderful technique. We can practice Vipassana throughout the day, while sitting, while sleeping, while standing & while talking too. It is best to practice 2 hours a day, 1 hour in the morning & another before sleeping in night. However, we can practice whenever we can spare some time and can relax.

All we would need is to start observing the in-out process of our breathing. Closing our eyes will make it much easier to

concentrate on breathing. During the course, various past experiences & future anticipations will keep on wandering in our mind and try to distract our focus on breathing.

Initially, very few and minute moments of breathing observation would be possible; most of the time, our mind would be filled with either past good/bad experiences or future good/bad anticipations. But with course of time, significant longer focus on breathing would be possible for us. If we keep on practicing... we will experience a whole lot of lovely and lively experiences.

Doing Vipassana, I have observed very clearly that all the thoughts striking my mind used to be very fragile. One moment I was 5 years back some where and at another moment, I was roaming some where few years ahead, figuring my future. This experience is applicable fully to our fear of stammering too. Just like all other thoughts, fear of stammering is also a very much a temporary thought. But to realize it, daily practice of Vipassana is necessary.

So happy meditating all..!

Important note: - This brief is not at all intended to explain all the aspects of technique of Vipassana. Vipassana is science of mind. I Request the readers to attend at least one 10 days residential course for better understanding. Refer to - www.dhamma.org for further information.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

DHRUVA KATHURIA
CHANDIGARH, INDIA



Humour is something that no one can have enough of. And if you are anything like me, a person with a good sense of humour would also attract you a lot. No one likes to

talk to a person who gets upset at the slightest thing. I personally can't be good friends with a person who is serious all the time and can't take a joke the healthy way. This is evident from the fact that all my friends just wait for an opportunity to make fun of each other. (Though they have never made fun of my stutter probably due to my discomfort on this topic.)

Most of you would be thinking that I have gone crazy as I am supporting the idea of making fun of my stammering where on one hand we have filed a case on Golmaal 3 for the same reason. Well I strictly oppose humour which is derogatory to anyone. What Golmaal 3 did was derogatory for the stuttering community.

The saying humour is the best medicine applies to stuttering as well. Think about it. How relaxed you would feel while giving a speech if you started with an opener like "I know I am supposed to give a 4 minute speech but I only prepared a 2 minute one as I expect my stutter to fill in the rest." This one-liner solves 3 purposes- "You break the tension within. You innocently acknowledge that you stutter. You put the audience in a relaxed state of mind.

Also there are various funny situations in

your everyday life arising because of your stutter. The following link gives tons of such real life incidents. I had a good time reading all of them last night and I promise you will enjoy them too: <http://www.mnsu.edu/comdis/kuster/humor.html>

I also want to share 2 such incidents of mine-

1) A night before the exam, I went to the college market to buy something. When I started to say the name, I blocked very very severely and started jerking my head and shaking my whole body in an effort to get the word out. After giving me the item the shopkeeper said "I can't believe you are drunk even during exams. Try not to drink alcohol at least during examinations." I smiled and said- "I will keep that in mind."

2) Once I and my friend were going somewhere in his car and I was giving directions. Now at a junction I thought I had to turn left so I started stammering L-L-L but then I realized we actually had to go right. So what came out was L-L-L- Right. My friend replied "Dude!!!! At least stammer grammatically" It was the first time I just couldn't control my laughter and seeing me laugh my friend also started laughing uncontrollably. He had to stop the car as we just couldn't control ourselves."

What I believe is that humour is acceptance in action and that too an advanced stage of acceptance. Laughing at your own stammer takes guts but once you do sit, you experience a feeling like never before.

DON'T BACK OUT

DHRUVA KATHURIA
CHANDIGARH, INDIA

The one thing that I have observed about myself as a person who stammers is that whenever I have tried to make changes in my life and my attitude towards stammering, my stammer has always increased manifold. It increases to such an altitude that I start to block even in comfortable situations and with relatively easy words.

And needless to say, it shatters my optimism and I again go back to square one in my comfort zone. The end result is that ultimately all the efforts I put in go in vain and my progress comes to a standstill. But now I realize that this is a basic nature of our body. Our body doesn't like change. For it, change means danger and our body never wants to be in danger as this would threaten its existence. So whenever we try to take steps for improving our stutter, our body goes to its maximum capacity to prevent that change so that we don't venture out into the danger zone and be confined to the comfort zone that our body loves. To do this it increases our stammer

manifold to make our rational mind believe that whatever we are doing is only making the situation worse and sooner or later we return to our original ways. In my view, this is one of the reasons why a person's stutter increases after he/she attends a stammering workshop. Those 3 days of change is too much for the body to take and it goes to its full length to resist that change and the only way it knows to do that is to make the person's stutter worse. So what exactly should you do when this happens to you? NEVER LOSE HOPE! Don't give in to your stammering and continue your fight without thinking about the results. Do what needs to be done. Don't be afraid of the beast after you have cornered it. Another question you might ask is that "Exactly for how much time will this cornered beast continue to fight with me?" I don't know the answer for sure, but if you don't give in to your fear and keep on fighting persistently, then that day is much near than you think.



CHERISHED MEMORIES



TISA facilitated and hosted the visit of Mr. Keith Boss, Trustee BSA and Chairman of Outreach, ISA in February 2010. Keith interacted with some of the SHGs, schools and the media.

SPEAKING ABOUT STAMMERING

**SUDHEENDRAN
BANGALURU, INDIA**

Naveen is one of the members of the Bangalore SHG from the very first meeting itself. I still remember the first meeting and was really surprised to see a person like him in the meeting as he was speaking fluently. He told he acquired this habit when he was in seventh standard and that he was a good speaker and an actor before that. He 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 told us none in his company knew he was a stammerer.

Recently he sent a mail to the group telling he faced some personal tragedies and was living in his native place which was around 100 KMs from Bangalore and was travelling daily to Bangalore and back. His stammering had also aggravated due to this. In addition to that he was denied a promotion to the managerial post in his company. His CEO felt he had some attitudinal issues as he always used to reply in monologues to him and always avoided talking to him over the phone. He did this as he didn't want them to know about his stammering. He asked for suggestions to come out of this situation.

Most of us including Dr. Sachin suggested him to speak to the CEO about his problem and to avoid hiding his problem. Though he

was a bit apprehensive, in the end he decided to speak to him about this. After a few days he sent a mail telling he had a discussion with his CEO about stammering. His CEO told him that he knew about his stammering and that he was waiting for him to talk to him about this! He promised all his help to him and asked him to work on his presentation skills and prove to that he was a good presenter.

After a few days, he sent one more mail telling 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 mail because of that. He always used to speak in monologues and she thought it was the best way to talk to him! She advised him to practice yoga and meditation and offered all the help.

These incidents show the advantages of not hiding the stammering. We undergo a great amount of tension hiding our stammering and most of the time stammering comes out on its own without our knowledge. Most of the time, the listeners are not concerned about the stammering but about our habit of running away from the situations and going into a shell. Sometimes they might even offer help! So, let us not hide the stammering. Let us eliminate some tension by openly speaking about it.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

MUGDHA BENJAMIN
MUMBAI, INDIA

I would like to share an experience with you. For the past one month we have been going to various schools to teach. This is an incident that happened with my friend Erica.

Erica was teaching dialog writing to seventh standard boys. She asked them to write a dialog between 'A Woodcutter and a Tree'. Later she asked them to read what they had written. There was a boy sitting in one corner of the classroom, Erica asked him to read his piece. When he began reading, his classmates started making fun of his speech. The boy suffered from a severe lisp. She encouraged him to read further. The more he read, my friend realized that his piece was the best written piece in class. And what she did next was really nice and different. She called that boy in the front of the class and asked his classmates to clap for 20 seconds for him as his was the best dialog writing. Erica told the class that he was the 'Dialog King' of the day.

Though lisping is not related to stammering, I wanted to share this incident with you because it was very special. Erica not only encouraged the child with the lisp but also sensitized his classmates about the boy. I believe that boy will always treasure this experience and it will also boost his confidence. In a span of 30 minutes a teacher can make a sea of difference in the lives of 60 plus students. We can and should adopt more creative ways like this to help our children.

All PWS have some or the other dark memories of school, college days. You too can come up with some creative ways as to how a PWS child can benefit if the teacher or parent adopts constructive methods. Suggestions are welcome.

Last but not the least I would like to thank my friend Erica for sharing this experience and allowing me to share it with others. Erica you will be a great teacher. All the best!



CHERISHED MEMORIES



TISA felicitated the self less service of Mr Manimaran who has been facilitating Chennai SHG meetings regularly for over a decade now- by presenting a plaque and a shawl to him. The felicitations took place on the eve of the third anniversary celebrations of Chennai SHG on 23rd January 2011.

THE THREE MUSKETEERS

B A B A J I R E D K A R
G O A , I N D I A



Left to Right : Harish, Babaji and Rahul

Harish, Rahul and I met at Nehru Park in Margao for the weekly SHG meet which was my first. It was a pleasant evening and sitting under the tree really refreshed us. Harish had prepared an agenda for the meet which included introduction and speaking rounds with bouncing, giving testimony of the Goa workshop by using any of one technique, catalogue our stutter and discussion on how to deal with our stammering by making commitments.

We started with our introduction round using bouncing technique. Thereafter in speaking round each of us had to ask question to one another. Harish started first by asking if we were made the coach of Indian cricket team then what will be our strategy and each of us had our own plans. After all, everyone likes to be associated with a winning side. Initially we used bouncing technique and later on used pausing in between our speech. Apart from what we say, observations and introspections were done on how we say and mistakes were brought to the notice. I asked them what they will do if they win 5 crore rupees in KBC and I could see big smiles on both the faces. Imagining of winning such a big amount really takes us to a

dream world. We all shared our dreams to one another in bouncing style and had a hearty laugh. On Rahul's question, I jumped to answer first since it was on favourite topic - tourist spots. I briefed them about my favourite tourist spot - Hampi. Harish told us about a place Yana in Karnataka while Rahul said he loves Ganapatipule and Marleshwar. Apart from our speech analysis we also gained a lot of information about these places and desired to visit those in the near future.

Next for giving testimony on Goa workshop, Harish went with voluntary stuttering technique and he briefed us about his experience while I and Rahul chose to bounce.

To assess our stammering secondary behaviours we used mirror to look onto ourselves while answering questions and noted down our secondary symptoms. I found my lips muscles being stiffened to be taken care of while Harish wanted his twitching of nose and clenching of jaws to be worked on. Rahul's secondary symptoms were hardly visible.

A general discussion was then done on PRE Block, IN Block and POST Block technique usage to overcome our speech blocking moments. Before leaving we planned about conducting an SHG meet in Panaji so that our north Goan friends may also participate and benefit. We concluded our SHG meet and the three musketeers left with happy and relaxed minds, looking forward to share our moments again.

POWER OF 1+1+1

MANIMARAN
CHENNAI, INDIA



Manimaran Velan, Chennai SHG Co-ordinator

The Chennai chapter meeting held on 7/8/2011 at YWCA were attended by 15 PWS including 3 new ones. I conducted this meeting differently from the previous ones as every one needed some change in the agenda. I conducted this meeting based on the one day training program I attended in my organization. I will write down in sequence of order so that other SHGs may also follow suit.

1. First we told our names loudly with hands hitting the air with pride in the heart. We told our name with vibrantly. Yes! We have to be proud of our names.

2. Then we practiced power meditation for 5 min. The power meditation is- every one has to close their eyes (except the coordinator) for 5 min. The coordinator has to tell slowly count backwards... 25...24...23...22.....1...0...with 10 sec gap between each count. After the meditation, everybody felt very much refreshing.

3. Then, I prepared 7 pair of slips marked 1,1...2,2...7,7 and asked everyone to take one slip. Those pair who got the same number had to discuss between themselves for 10 min and then talk about their partners. This is to avoid always talking about ourselves only. To every one's surprise, lot of new information came to the light.

4. In tea break, we had Gulab Jamun, Samosa, Khichadi and Tea.

5. After tea break, we discussed about NC to be held at Bhubaneswar. So far, about 5 PWS confirmed their willingness to attend NC along with their wives. Since it is too early, the final confirmation will be known only in the month of Oct.

6. Then, about 4 PWS told stories.

7. After that, I explained about the acceptance of stammering to the new PWS and the first step is as soon as they returned back home, they have to explain about Chennai chapter meeting.

8. At last, we shouted one by one by saying "I will overcome stammering".

After attending the above meeting, one PWS who had intended to resign his job and had also booked tickets to go back to his home, informed that he changed his mind and that he will cancel the tickets, stay with the job and will fight against stammering. That is the power of SHG!



JAMMU SHG MEETS...

MANPREET SINGH
JAMMU, INDIA



Left to Right : Rajesh, Manpreet and Aditya

On 15th Nov 2009, we had our 6th meeting of Jammu SHG. This meeting was attended by three members. The meeting started at 11 am and went on till 1:30 pm. According to the Photograph, starting from the left, it was Rajesh, I (Manpreet Singh) and Aditya.

We started this meeting with a little bit of Bouncing and Voluntary stammering. On our way to our meeting place, we saw a guy sitting on a bench at a distance. Aditya went to him and asked him to take our photograph using some bouncing and voluntary stammering. This time Aditya was quick and confident.

Then we sat at our usual meeting place and discussed about stammering in our life. Rajesh said that today he has achieved so much in his life just because of his stammering. He said that instead of being here, he would've been somewhere else doing wrong things like most of the young people are doing for example taking drugs or wasting time and money by going after girls etc. And I totally agreed with him. Because I think that stammering makes us much more hardworking, determined and above all kind hearted people who

understand the pain of someone else.

Then we discussed about a movie called "Front of the Class". In this movie I learned loads of things that were even missing in "The Unspeakable". This movie is based upon a true story of a Guy named Brad who is having Tourette's syndrome.

Tourette's is also a sort of speech impediment in which the person keeps on making funny sounds even when he is sitting quietly. They have shown a lot of emotions and struggle that Brad goes through. He wants to be a Teacher but gets rejected every time he goes for an interview. But he keeps on his fighting spirit and never lets Tourette's to win. After appearing for more than 25 interviews, he gets a job as a teacher in a school. And in the end, he gets an Award of "The best gifted teacher of the year". In his last speech he says that "I got support from my family, my school family, friends and my students. But my best teacher and constant companion was my Tourette's who taught me lots of things. I wouldn't have been here without my Tourette's". That was very encouraging.

Oh my God! Brad and Rajesh are having similar kinda thinking!

Then we called Sachin Sir on his phone and talked to him for about half an hour. Sachin Sir motivated all of us and also cleared many of our doubts. We also talked to JP and Romi. Romi is from Mumbai and he came to Samagra to work on his speech. He is at the right place. Nothing can be better than Samagra ashram.

After that, on our way back, we once again asked a guy to take our photograph using bouncing technique. Then we started asking him few questions about stammering. But he was a bit confused and said that he had no clue why people stammer. He was feeling a little bit

uncomfortable. So instead of explaining him why it happens, we thought to leave him alone. It really looked a bit strange to him. Three stammering guys standing around him and firing questions! It was a little funny.



DELHI SHG HAS FUN

UMESH RAWAT
NEW DELHI, INDIA



The enthusiastic members of Delhi SHG in one of their meetings

Delhi SHG meeting was held at Central Park in New Delhi on 25 September as usual. This time we were all young PWS and no seniors present. But it was quite a successful meeting as we managed to practice all the techniques. This time Lalit, Umesh Rawat, Parmendra Bundela, Abhishek, Pinakin, (yet another) Abhishek and a new member Sourav Aggrawal attended the meeting. Lalit shared his experiences with Vipassana meditation course which he attended last week. All of us were not aware of such a course. He told us very sincerely and answered all queries we asked. Parmendra explained

how to do bouncing in a good manner and what its benefits are to a PWS. Umesh told his experiences of "Acceptance" and its benefits. And what we will lose if we don't work on acceptance. Abhishek introduced us to various activities one by one and cautioned us in case we left out an activity or went wrong. Abhishek has great courage and never seems to be defeated. Pinakin told us about his life journey as a stammerer and how stammering affects our surroundings.

After practicing all the techniques including voluntary stuttering, we discussed on organizing workshop in Delhi and many other aspects (like venue, fees etc) & activities in it. It was quite a pleasant meeting. We were happy that we successfully arranged and completed it in absence of our senior coordinators. We learned how to manage and handle a group. Thanks to all other members for becoming a part of the big TISA family. We support and learn from each other. We missed Sikander, Gaurav, Arun and Nitin Tomer.

AND I CRIED...

JAI PRAKASH SUNDA
CHANDIGARH, INDIA

Today I pinged one of my school time friend on a social networking chat window, which generally I don't do. We were asking each other about our present jobs, girlfriends (which both of us have none), families etc. Then suddenly he gave me his phone number and asked me to call him, or give my phone number to him so that he can call (A lot of people have tried this to me, but generally I never used to respond). To my surprise, I called him and during our conversation I found out that he was in touch with a lot of people from school. I casually told him that I think only I am the person who was not in touch with anybody from school (And not even from college. By the way I never attended college regularly. But that's for some other time). He asked me why I never tried calling anybody from school. I didn't reply.

After the call I started thinking about this and to my amazement I found that I was so concerned with my speech that I forgot everything and to me life's only purpose was just to have a perfect speech, that's it!, nothing else. I had zoomed in, so much on my stammer, that I couldn't see anything else.

And I started crying, thinking what I had done to myself. I don't blame my stammer but my attitude towards my stammer. I used to think, I will call all my friends once I have that perfect fluency. But today I stammered a lot with my friend, I told him that I stammer myself and work for people who stammer and we shared some good laugh too while we recollected some of the old school memories. I used to think I shouldn't talk to any of my past friends because if I go back in past, I will also have to go to some of the embarrassing moments as well and it will undo whatever amount I have changed. But I was wrong. Talking to my friend helped me bring out my suppressed emotions.

If any person who stammers, is reading this, please don't focus all your attention to your stammering, there are many other things in life and don't think I will go for an MBA or call my old friends or get married when I will have total fluency, because believe me that is not required. I am not asking you to stop working on your fluency but that can go side by side while you enjoy your life. Everything shouldn't not stop to gain fluency.



PWS WITH FACE

JAI PRAKASH SUNDA



Jai Prakash Sunda, an enthusiastic young man from Chandigarh. An IT professional who has worked in the leading IT organization of India, JP as he is fondly called, has spent a 6-months sabbatical with TISA to serve people who stammer. JP has also co-facilitated a number of workshops across the country, initiated SHGs in Pune and is also taking care of the IT needs of TISA.

HARISH USGAONKER



Harish Usgaonker, an IT professional co-ordinates a SHG in Goa. Harish also organized a 3-day TISA communication workshop with the help of TISA for the first time in Goa. He is also the editor of the TISA quarterly newsletter 'Samvad'.

AMIT SINGH KUSHWAH



Amit Singh Kushwah is a special educator from Madhya Pradesh (MP), working towards the noble cause of education and rehabilitation of the disabled. Besides co-ordinating two SHGs in MP, one in Indore and other in Satna, Amit is also the editor of the Hindi section of the TISA quarterly newsletter 'Samvad'.

VIVEK SINGH



Vivek Singh is yet another IT professional in TISA family, working in a leading IT organization in Pune. Vivek has participated in TISA workshops and has played a pivotal role in initiating and co-ordinating a first-of-its-kind corporate SHG in his organization.