

TITLE : A Different Way Of Life

INTRODUCTION

This session attempts to sensitize students and make them aware of the difficulties and challenges faced by differently abled persons in day to day life. The session utilizes Self Awareness, Empathy and other Life Skills to orient and encourage students to adopt a positive outlook to life and to be proactive in preventing the occurrence of disabilities.

- 1. Objectives** :
- By the end of the session, students will be able to:
 - Understand and become aware of difficulties faced by Children with Special Needs (CWSN).
 - Be sensitized to the needs of such students in their class and school.



- 2. Time** : 35 Minutes

- 3. Life Skills Being Used** : Self-Awareness, Empathy, Critical Thinking to help develop a positive attitude.

- 4. Advance Preparations** : 1. 4 clean cloths (dupattas), preferably cotton

- 5. Linkages** : Please see Contents

- 6. Methodology** : Role Play, Brainstorming, Discussion.

- 7. Process** :



Step 1:

Please read the Fact Sheet carefully and go through this session well in advance before you carry it out with the students

Step 2:

Greet the students and tell them that today they are going to do a role play in the class.



Step 3:

Ask for 3 Volunteers from the class to be blindfolded. Blindfold each of them and ask one of them to go to the Principal's room. Ask another one to go back to the desk and start writing; ask the third one to go out to the playground. Send other students to accompany these three so that there are no accidents.

Note for Teachers:

While the students negotiate their way and bump into things, they can be given verbal instructions or can be involved in some kind of conversation by the second student.

Step 4:

Simultaneously ask for one more volunteer. Fold this student's right leg and tie it with the cloth piece and ask him to go up to the Principal's room. Again ask a second student to accompany him. (Ensure that he is not in pain!)

Step 5:

Remind the students that today is a day for role-playing and ask for one more volunteer. Make him stand in-front of the class and ask him to move his lips to say something without producing any sound. Ask the other students to lip-read and guess what he is saying.

Step 6:

When the students have returned from the Principal's office and playground, ask them to sit in their usual place.

Note for Teachers:

There will be some noise in the class as students try to read his lips. Let them be involved in the whole process. But do keep an eye on the student who has his leg tied and is trying to move out of the class! And also the students who are blindfolded.

Step 7:

After few minutes send 3 students to call the volunteers back to class, untie the leg of the volunteer, untie the blindfolds, and ask them to go back to their seats.

Step 8:

After the students have completed the tasks allotted to them and have returned to their seats ask the students **who were blindfolded the following:**

- Could you see any light?
- How did you find the experience of not being able to see?

Expected Responses:

- We could not see light
- It was difficult to move but was easier to go in the directions from where the sound was coming.

Step 9:

Ask the student whose leg was tied, his experience of walking around with one leg. Similarly, ask the students who were trying to lip read: “was it ea sy to understand what he was saying?”.

Expected Responses:

- It was difficult to balance.
- Support was needed.
- Not easy to make sense of the lip reading.
- Had to concentrate really hard to understand what was being said.

Step 10:

Brainstorm on the following:

- How would you feel if you are not able to see?
- What would it be like to have only one or no legs to walk?
- How would it feel if you could not speak, or hear?

Expected Responses:

- We will feel terrible if we can't see our face, or see our mother.
- It would be difficult to walk without support.
- It will be hard to study and take down notes of what the teacher is teaching if we can't hear properly.
- We just cannot imagine how we would manage without all of these.
- Reading and writing are essential for progress in life.

Note for Teachers:

Utilize the following for discussion: We all take our senses including the sense of vision for granted but all of us are not so fortunate. Generate a discussion about the kind of difficulties a person with ‘seeing problems’ may encounter. Introduce the term ‘**visually challenged**’ instead of blind. Similarly, use ‘**physically challenged**’ for a person with limb loss, and ‘**hearing challenged**’ for the person who has hearing problems. Explain that in the role plays, students were challenged in some way or the other. To overcome their difficulties they needed a few special means/aids which are called SPECIAL NEEDS. Elaborate on the meaning of Special Needs emphasizing the fact that we all have needs. Give the example of a student who wants to be an engineer, but is weak in Biology. Its special need will be extra teaching in Biology.

Similarly, suppose another child has one leg and uses crutches or a wheel chair. To attend his class, his special need could be a ramp, lift or a classroom at the ground level where he can reach on his own. Thus all of us have needs, but for challenged persons some needs contribute very significantly in their day to day life. These may include **special education** needs like learning through a different script - say **Braille** or using abacus to do mathematics instead of using common ways of learning at school.

Explain to the students that they must understand the needs of specially abled children and help them, in the classroom in the school and wherever else they may meet them.

Step 11:

Ask the class:

- Is there any particular category of people who become disabled?
- Can anything ever happen to us?
- Can disability occur only at young age?

Expected Responses:

- Mostly poor people become disabled, uneducated persons can become disabled, if we take care, we can avoid this, and anybody can become disabled.

Note for Teachers:

Generate a discussion about the fact that anyone of us can have disabilities. No particular strata, caste, age, race is barred from disabilities. Give examples of famous people like Stephen Hawking, F.D. Roosevelt, (ex President of USA), Major Ahluwalia, who have had such disabilities. Tell them that Einstein, Leonardo da Vinci, Rockefeller (the American business tycoon) and Tom Cruise have had dyslexia, the learning disability! So disabilities can strike anyone. Brainstorm about the possible causes of disabilities. After taking inputs from the students divide these in 3 stages (1) causes of disabilities before birth (2) during birth and (3) after birth. These causes would include health of the mother, RH factor, nutrition, radiations, virus, infections, accidents, trauma etc. Vaccinations at scheduled time can be a life saver.



**Do Boond Jeevan Ki –
Polio Drops.**

Ask the students to imagine themselves in place of any of the volunteers who had role played at the beginning of the session and try to experience/ feel the difficulties and challenges faced by differently abled people. With numerous factors at play to cause disabilities let them become aware that a normal healthy body is a miracle and we usually take this for granted which is not so. Share with them that based on 2001 census data we can estimate 4 to 5 % of Indian population has some disability (Source –RCI Publication).

Prevention of disabilities can help to improve the situation. Point out that many of us keep complaining about our complexion, features, lack of resources etc. Let us learn to look at the positive instead. Share the story of a boy who complained about not having enough money to buy a branded pair of shoes. He was very angry, had arguments with his parents and was feeling very miserable about himself. In a huff he left the house to go out for a walk. Suddenly he saw another boy crossing the road. The boy didn't have any legs. This jolted the first boy and self realization dawned on him that at least he had legs and feet to walk on. So becoming aware of the difficulties faced by others, and many factors responsible for causing disabilities helps us become more self aware and develop a more positive outlook towards life. More importantly it sensitizes us to the needs to others and helps us become more caring human beings.

Step 12:

Explain to the students that the differently abled are as talented and brilliant as anyone else. Share the amazing stories in the clippings in the Fact Sheet with them. Have a quick discussion on how the students will help any person they meet.



Major H.P.S. Ahluwalia



Helen Keller



Satish Gujral



Franklin D. Roosevelt

Key Messages:

Highlight and repeat the following to the class:

- Children with challenges, or differently abled students, have to face various challenges on a day-to-day basis. Differently abled students have some special needs.
- Everyone can become disabled at sometime.
- We should appreciate others' abilities and not criticize or mock their disabilities.
- We need to spread awareness about various factors responsible for causing disabilities so that they can be prevented.

Ideas for Learning More:

FACT SHEET

A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIFE

The term 'Differently abled' is used as a substitute for disabled or handicapped. This places emphasis on the fact that many people with disabilities **are quite capable of accomplishing** a particular task or performing a particular function, only in a different manner or taking more time or effort than people without the disability in question.

According to estimates more than 90% of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school. Disability is both the cause and consequences of poverty. **It is also a major cause of social exclusion.** (Source UNESCO)

Concept of disability

WHO defines impairment as a normal process of change with physical, anatomical and cognitive structure coming with age or other factors but does not interfere with the performance of activities expected from an individual. If impairment interferes with the process of education or work, it becomes a disability. A handicap is a disadvantage for a given individual resulting from impairment or a disability that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal for that individual.



Definitions of some disabilities

Mental Retardation:- This refers to significantly sub average intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with related limitations in two or more of applicable adaptive skills areas of communication, selfcare, social skills etc. Mental retardation manifests itself before the age 18.

Many mentally retarded people are able to participate in activities with non-disabled people given an appropriate adaptation and support. Others may require a long term structured programme. With adequate training and education such persons can be more self-reliant citizens.

Autism:- Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life. It is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain. It is a developmental disability typically affecting the processing, integrating and organizing of information that significantly impacts communication, social interaction, functional skills and educational performance.

Cerebral palsy (CP):- Cerebral palsy is caused by damage to the brain. It is non-progressive. This is a condition characterized by paralysis, weakness in coordination and other motor dysfunction due to brain injuries occurring in the pre-natal, peri-natal or the infant period of development.

Learning Disability

It is a disorder, which affects the basic psychological processes of understanding or using written or spoken language which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, read or write, to do mathematical calculations. The term **does not** include children who have learning problems which are primarily the results of visual, hearing or motor handicaps of mental retardation or emotional disturbances, or of environment, cultural or economic disadvantage. This term also includes brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction and dyslexia.

Hearing Impairment

This includes deaf and hard of hearing. Deaf persons have a situation where the sense of hearing is non-functional for ordinary purpose, they do not hear/understand sound at all, even with amplified speech.

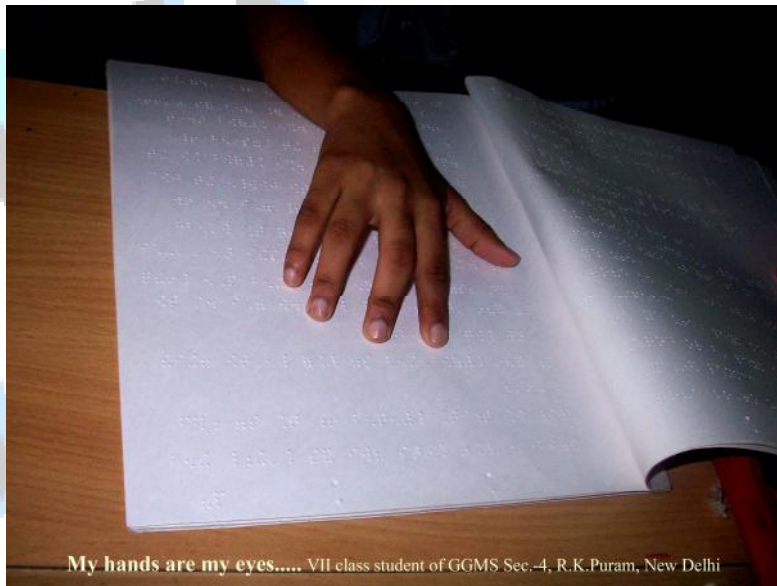
A hard of hearing person is one who, generally with the use of hearing aid, has residual hearing sufficient to enable successful processing of linguistic information through audition.

Visual Impairment

Blindness is a condition where a person may have any of the following conditions, namely

- Total absence of sight
- Visual acuity not exceeding 6/60 or 20/200 or
- Limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of 20 degrees or worse.

A person with low vision (Partially sighted) is a person with impairment of visual functioning even after treatment or standard refractive corrections but who uses or is potentially capable of using vision for planning or execution of task with appropriate assistive device.



Locomotor impairment

It is a disability of the bone, joints or muscles leading to substantial restrictions of the movement of the limbs or a usual form of cerebral palsy and autism.

Orthopedics disability is a locomotor disability. It is a person's inability to execute distinctive activities associated with moving both himself and objects, from place to place.

Causes and prevention of disabilities

Causes of disabilities include chromosomal abnormalities and other non genetic factors. Broadly they can be divided in three stages, namely prenatal (Before birth), peri natal (during the process of birth), post natal (after the birth).

Prenatal factors may include infection – rubella, syphilis, mother-fetal blood incompatibilities, RH factors, drugs and alcohol, material-fetal irradiation, chronic maternal health problems: Diabetes, hypertension. Perinatal factors include birth injury, asphyxia (hypoxemia), head trauma, hemorrhage, and infection. Some **postnatal causes** of disabilities include infection: Encephalitis, meningitis, accidents, poisons and environmental toxins: lead, mercury, anoxia-cardiac arrest, hormonal deficiencies, brain tumors, epilepsy, poor nutrition. Some of the common causes for blindness in India are cataract, glaucoma, albinism, and conjunctivitis.

Prevention of Disabilities emphasizes 3 main components namely (a) Immunization (b) Genetic counseling (c) Nutrition and diet

Protection against disease by inoculation leads to the bacteria, viruses or the poisons being rendered harmless thus saving a person from various infections and diseases which lead to disabilities. These include immunization of persons against diphtheria, tetanus, polio, whooping, cough, measles and tuberculosis.

Genetic counseling may be sought for many reasons but generally because a suspected genetic disorder has occurred or may occur. There may be concern about more general risk factors such as the age of the mother, marriage between cousins. Genetic screening programmes to identify individuals with treatable genetic diseases and parents at risk of having children with severe genetic diseases are an important element of genetic counseling programmes.

Malnutrition caused by a low intake of vitamins may lead to vitamin deficiencies. Various diseases result from deficiencies of different vitamins and minerals, and of proteins

Proper diet and nutrition can play an important role as a preventive measure in dealing with causes of disabilities

List of National Institutes working in different domains of disabilities is given below for easy reference:-

NATIONAL INSTITUTES

- **ALI YAVAR JUNG NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE HEARING HANDICAPPED**
K. C. MARG, BANDRA (WEST),
MUMBAI - 400 050.
MAHARASHTRA. **Branch office – Lajpat Nagar, New Delhi**
- **NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE MENTALLY HANDICAPPED**
MANOVIKAS NAGAR,
SECUNDERABAD - 500 009.
ANDHRA PRADESH.
- **NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED**
116, RAJPUR ROAD,
DEHRADUN - 248 001.
UTTAR PRADESH.
- **NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE ORTHOPAEDICALLY HANDICAPPED**
B.T. ROAD, BON HOOGHLY,
KOLKATA - 700 090.
WEST BENGAL.
- **NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF REHABILITATION TRAINING AND RESEARCH**
OLATPUR, P.O. - BAIROI,
CUTTACK - 754 010.
ORISSA .
- **INSTITUTE FOR PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED**
4, VISHNU DIGAMBER MARG,
NEW DELHI - 110 002.

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI
MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2007

This special diva is a dance champ

TCM



DANCING TO LIFE'S TUNE: Nikita, who suffers from a spinal cord disorder that has rendered her 50% disabled, will be honoured by President Pratibha Patil today

Deeksha Chopra | TNN

New Delhi: Eleven-year-old Nikita Madan is the dancing sensation of her school. Suffering from spina bifida (a spinal cord ailment), Nikita hardly has any sensation in her right leg, as a result of which she walks with a limp. But she has never allowed the physical challenges from realising her dreams.

Soon she will be adding another feather to her cap, winning as she has the national award for empowerment of persons with disabilities, 2007. She will be honoured as the "outstanding creative girl" by President Pratibha Patil on behalf of the ministry of social justice and empowerment on the occasion of World Disability Day in Vigyan Bhawan on Monday.

"Her handicap does not stop her from doing any activity including dance. One has to see her dance to believe that a child with 50% disability can dance so well. She is so creative in her dance steps as well as in her emotions and expressions that she has won all the four times she participated in dance competitions, competing with normal children without any handicap," said Dr S Bhanumathy, her mother:

'More than anything else, I work towards making my parents proud. Their excitement seems to be more than mine,' says Nikita

A student of Class VI at DPS Rohini, Nikita has been an all rounder all through. From her parents to her principal, everyone is extremely proud of her: "She is an outstanding girl and her disability has never come in the way of anything she does. That is why we made her head girl of junior school which demands a lot of responsibility and leadership skills. I am confident she will go places.

We all are very proud of her," said Rita Sen, principal of DPS Rohini.

Nikita's creativity has brought her many laurels in several fields like poetry writing, art & craft, dance, oration and academics. Nikita has composed more than 25 poems on various topics. Her poems have been published in national newspapers and children's magazines.

Nikita believes nothing is impossible if you set your mind to it. "More than anything else, I work towards making my parents proud. Their excitement seems to be more than mine. Like them I wish to become a doctor one day. Nothing can stop an achiever," she said, adding, "No one has ever made me feel I was different and I thank my peers for that."

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A BPO enabled by the differently enabled

The Times of India, New Delhi, Dec. 02, 2007

It's a company with a difference – the difference being its 81 employees who are people with different kinds of disabilities including physically challenged, hearing impaired and visually challenged persons. The company, Vindhya E- Info-media in Bangalore, has grown from a small data entry firm launched in June 2006 to a full fledged non-voice BPO with profits touching a crore. Its profit in the initial months was just Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 50,000.

Pavithra Y S, who started the company, attributes its success entirely to the “dedication, focus and hard work” of her employees who, she says, are not just as good as any employee but “better in every way”. “I am very proud of the sense of belonging that each employee has in this company of 96 people. This company is not owned by Pavithra but by every employee of Vindhya who made it what it is today,” she says. She found most of her employees through the Karnataka Government’s department for the disabled and the NGO Enable India.

Pavithra did have to invest money and effort in the initial training of her employees, which included brushing up their computer skills, increasing their typing speed and putting them through English classes as most were from a rural background. She has even learnt sign language from her hearing impaired employees.



“Earlier, I used to write down what I had to say to them. Now I can speak to them in sign language. This is important to me because no employee ought to feel alienated in the company,” says Pavithra.

Her efforts have paid off. Vindhya has almost zero attrition. After the company started providing accommodation close to the office, even a couple of people who left the company have come back. They are now moving into a 400 seater office space, adding more to their staff, who they say, will definitely be from the disability sector.

- RN

Total employees	96
Disabled employees	81
Orthopedically disabled	40
Hearing impaired	37
Visually impaired	04

On World Disability Day, HT looks at the problems faced by the differently abled and profiles those who scaled the odds

Wanted jobs

World bank report shows dip in employment rate for disabled from 43 to 38 per cent



WORLD DISABILITY DAY

Jaya Shroff
New Delhi, December 2

THE WORLD Bank has found that the employment rate among the physically challenged in India has dipped from 43 to 38 per cent in a decade.

The report, coming just two weeks before the International Day of Disabled Persons on December 3, points to the greatest stumbling block for the physically challenged in India — suitable job opportunities.

While enough sympathy is spared for the disabled or differently able, there is little on paper to help them.

While the government has quotas for the disabled but reserves 3 per cent, the private sector is yet to make a visible contribution.

Among multinational companies, there is only 0.06 per cent presence of people with disability.

In the late 1990s, employment of people with disability among large private firms was only 0.3 per cent.

Among the states, only two — Chhattisgarh and Karnataka — have drafted disability policies. This despite an approval of a national policy in 2006.

World Bank country director Isabel Guerrero said: "India has an impressive set of policy commitments to its citizens with disabilities. The challenge facing Indian society now is to translate those commitments into better lives for disabled people."

The Indian economy boom has done nothing to the employment

graph for the disabled which keeps going southwards.

"Part of the blame for this rests with employers and some with the disabled population," said wheelchair-bound Sminu Jindal, the managing director of Jindal Saw. "It is we who want to be treated differently and taken special care of. If we want jobs, we should be willing to work like normal individuals, we are not special, we are simply differently able," she said.

Sanjiv Sachdeva from the NGO Samarthyam has little complaints from the private or public sector. He said on most occasions, the candidate refuses a job because of accessibility issues. "If the environment was disabled-friendly, automatically we would be happier accepting jobs though a good chunk of our salary gets spent on transport."

He also commended the efforts of the BPOs which have cab services and also good salaries.

Recently, the National Trust and Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment organised an interaction between physically challenged job seekers and the business community in the Delhi.

Leading multinational and Indian companies — IBM, Pepsi, HCL and Honeywell International, Jindals and ITC — interviewed disabled candidates for jobs.

"The problem really is that most people eye our handicap with suspicion. I see it as a good opportunity for us to interact with the companies in a friendly environment. The employers also come mentally prepared to hire a disabled candidate. This removes the mental fear of being rejected on grounds of physical disability," said Pinku Kumar, a polio-affected job-seeker.

letters@hindustantimes.com

'Impossible' means nothing

Aiitiya Khan
Mumbai, December 2

For Sharmila Divatia, "impossible" means nothing. A cushy IT job wasn't enough for the Mathematics post-graduate from Baroda University.

So the 43-year-old, who was detected with cerebral palsy when she was six, enrolled for an MBA course with the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

"I was six years old when I had come from school and gone to sleep. The next thing I knew I had convulsions and went into coma. I suffered from encephalitis. My life was saved but it changed forever," she said.

Sharmila recalled the harrowing experience of job hunting. "I got selected but during the personal interviews, they rejected me. I think people believe a physical disability ensured a mental one too," she said.

Her dream is to run a dairy farm some day. "I want to retire soon and run a dairy farm, milk cows and keep animals. I love open spaces... so I would take up a farmhouse and raise cows," she giggled.

Battle against polio won

G.C. Shekhar
Chennai, December 2

Polio disabled her left leg when Jansi Rani was two and since then the calipers have been her constant companion.

But the 27-year-old could not stop grinning while narrating the strange co-incidence when she got a job in a BPO called Caliber Point. "The similarity of the two words was so striking that I asked the co-ordinator at my placement agency if they meant the same (as the Tamil alphabet is the same for b and p). He explained caliber stood for ability and that I was chosen because of that and not because of my callipers, which symbolised disability," Rani said.

A graduate in public administration, Rani was recommended to Caliber Point by Anbhuti, a placement agency for disabled candidates. "Her confidence and self belief were top-notch, so when Caliber Point wanted more disabled candidates, Jansi Rani came first to our

mind," said R. Kannan at Anubhuti. Jansi Rani was chosen as service executive. "My job involves entering data into health forms from the UK and my superior tells me that I have picked up fast in my two months here," she said. Rani got the BPO job after she and 12 other physically-challenged girls were short-listed by the Tamil Nadu government which had promised jobs in the state press. "The officials at the employment exchange told us to take ITI training in book binding after which we were assured of jobs in the press. But when we went back with our ITI certificate we were told that our turn would come later even though we headed the list of prospective candidates," Rani said. During childhood, all her weight had been borne by her right leg — before the calipers were fixed — so this limb failed to grow to its normal length. Her only hassle is commuting as she has to change two buses to reach office.



SHARMILA DIVATIA



JANSI RANI

Transport crusader

Jaya Shroff
New Delhi, December 2



DINESH GUPTA

Delhi's physically-challenged have Dinesh Gupta to thank for making low-floor buses available.

The 33-year-old who suffers from cerebral palsy with spastic quadriplegia or paralysis is shy of tooting his achievements.

A couple of years ago, Dinesh filed a case against the Delhi Transport Corporation and the Delhi Government in the Chief Commissioner of Disabilities' office for the inconvenience caused to the physically challenged because of buses that were not convenient for them. Soon, a disabled-friendly bus (Route 620) was introduced between IIT and Shivaji Stadium as an experiment.

This year, 200 low-floored buses hit the roads. The Delhi Government has promised to have all present buses replaced with disabled-friendly ones by 2010.

I think people believe a physical disability ensured a mental one too.

SHARMILA DIVATIA

Graphic dreams

Jaya Shroff
New Delhi, December 2

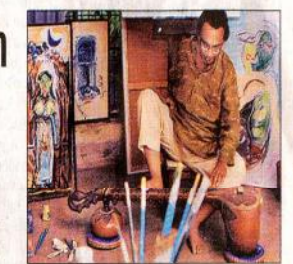
With dreams to become a graphic designer, Satyajit Singh came to Delhi two and half years ago from a village in Nalanda, Bihar.

Both his legs are polio affected, so moves using his hands with the support of his left leg. "We are special children of God. I realise that there is added struggle for people with disabilities but then I don't see why we should not follow our dreams," Satyajit said.

The final year B.Sc student, who likes to listen to Jagjit Singh and Sonu Nigam in his free time, has been working with the National Association for the Blind as a computer faculty for the last one year.

Does he like his job? "Absolutely, it not only gives me a sense of independence but I also feel complete," Satyajit said.

"I think one has to have a patience and determination to reach where you want. The going is difficult but not impossible," Satyajit said.



SANJAY GHOSH

In tune with the sitar, with a gifted foot

Mohana Dan
Kolkata, December 2

Sanjay Ghosh can play the sitar — with his right leg. Misdiagnosed with diphtheria when he was just five, Sanjay lost the ability to move his limbs.

At 49, he has no regrets. "I knew I was different from other kids but I used to take offence every time somebody said I could not do something because of my physical drawbacks," he said.

"I could never believe that I was handicapped and I used to feel humiliated when people used to call me one."

Two years on, after treatment and exercise, life returned to his legs and left hand but the right hand remained dead.

But Sanjay still managed to learn swimming and cycling.

"I was always looked upon as a helpless human being who could not do the things that he wanted to. It was this pity that made me strong and I developed a stubbornness to achieve things," Ghosh said.

"When I started playing the sitar, at the back of my mind I knew I had to do it and it did not matter whether I used my leg or my hand," he said.

As a painter, Sanjay's works have been put up by V.S. Arts in Washington DC.

"When I was 16, in one of my exhibitions, somebody had called me disabled... I felt so hurt that I refused to recognise him the next day. That reaction is something I still regret," he said.