



**State Commission  
for Persons with  
Disabilities**



# SUMMARY REPORT

ON  
**STUDENT COMPETITION  
ON INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES  
FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIA  
2024**



INTERNATIONAL  
**PURPLE FEST**

GOA-2024





## BACKGROUND

Centre For Social Sensitivity and Action (CSSA) at the Goa Institute of Management, in collaboration with the Office of State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities Goa, organized a National level Student Competition to "Identify Innovative Practices Implemented in Indian Workplaces for People with Disabilities." CSSA co-designed this competition to encourage students to identify innovative existing practices that promote inclusivity, accessibility, and equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the workplace.

In light of the global imperative to create inclusive and accessible workplaces, this pioneering student competition to identify and celebrate innovative practices supporting individuals with disabilities in the Indian workplace was launched.

By providing a platform for students to share insights, experiences, and solutions, the competition aimed to discover and promote best practices that can be implemented across different organizations in Goa. The competition ran in two phases. After registering, student teams submitted their entries in the template provided, and then shortlisted teams were asked to present their work to a panel of judges. The overall focus was to instigate a paradigm shift by challenging preconceptions and celebrating the potential of individuals with disabilities.

By identifying and promoting innovative practices, we aspire to create a ripple effect, inspiring organizations in Goa and beyond to adopt inclusive policies and practices. The competition provided a unique opportunity for students to contribute to societal change while gaining valuable insights into the evolving landscape of inclusive workplaces.





## MESSAGE FROM THE HONORABLE MINISTER



Congratulations to the winners of the "Innovative Practices for People with Disabilities in the Workplace" student competition! I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Goa Institute of Management and the Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disability for organizing this insightful initiative. Recognizing and implementing innovative practices is crucial for furthering the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workforce.

The diversity of themes explored in the winning entries - from generating employment to promoting inclusive education and creating accessible infrastructure - is truly inspiring. It showcases the immense potential of young minds to identify and address challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the workplace.

I am particularly impressed by the focus on employment generation, skill gap analysis for different industries in Goa, and the emphasis on sustainable entrepreneurship for self-employed people with disabilities. These projects offer valuable insights that can inform policy decisions and drive meaningful change.

The attention to inclusive education and early childhood intervention is equally commendable, as it lays the foundation for a supportive and accessible learning environment. Moreover, the emphasis on training route-level experts in Goa demonstrates a commitment to building long-term capacity for supporting children with disabilities.

As the Minister for Social Welfare, I am committed to working with various stakeholders to translate these innovative ideas into concrete action. We will strive to create an environment where people with disabilities can find meaningful employment, participate fully in the economy, and lead fulfilling lives.

I once again congratulate the winning students and commend all participants for their dedication and creativity. Your contributions offer a beacon of hope and pave the way for a more inclusive and equitable future for people with disabilities in Goa.

Sincerely,

**Subhash Phal Dessai**

Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare,  
Govt of Goa





## MESSAGE BY STATE COMMISSIONER



As the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, I would like to place on record my sincere appreciation for the insightful and innovative project reports submitted by the talented students who participated in this crucial competition. In collaboration with the Goa Institute of Management, we embarked on a mission to identify cutting-edge practices for the inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities in the Goan workplace. Through the lenses of visual impairment, autism spectrum disorder, and other challenges, your projects delved into diverse domains, offering valuable solutions that transcend mere awareness and pave the way for meaningful action.

I am particularly impressed by the focus on:

*Employment generation:* Identifying roles and skills needed in Goan industries, conducting skill gap analyses, and exploring paths to sustainable entrepreneurship for people with disabilities showcases a true understanding of the economic barriers they face and a proactive approach to creating opportunities.

*Sustainability:* Recognizing the importance of long-term viability, your emphasis on sustainable entrepreneurship and inclusive infrastructure demonstrates a commitment to lasting impact beyond fleeting initiatives. These projects are not mere academic exercises; they are blueprints for change. They embody the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and empathy that is essential for building a truly inclusive Goa.

To the dedicated students who participated, I say: your ideas have the power to shape a future where disability is not a barrier, but a source of strength and diversity. I urge you to continue honing your skills, and turning your vision into reality. To government agencies, private sector entities, and civil society organizations, I offer these reports as a roadmap for action. Let us embrace these solutions, adapt them, and implement them with unwavering commitment. Together, we can create a Goa where every individual, regardless of ability, can thrive and contribute to our shared future.

Let this competition be the catalyst for a transformative journey, not just for today, but for generations to come.

With gratitude and hope,  
**Guruprasad Pawaskar**  
State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities





## MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY



As Secretary, Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities Goa, I am immensely proud to present the findings of our student competition in association with the Goa Institute of Management, focused on innovative practices for disability inclusion in the workplace.

This student initiative aimed to address critical needs within the disability community in Goa. The projects explored diverse themes, encompassing:

*Employment generation:* Identifying practical strategies to create job opportunities for people with disabilities within Goa's industries.

*Skills development:* Assessing the skills and roles required in different industries and conducting skill gap analyses for persons with disabilities.

*Entrepreneurial sustainability:* Designing and exploring models for sustainable self-employment and entrepreneurship among people with disabilities.

The winning entries displayed exceptional creativity, dedication, and a deep understanding of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the workplace. Their innovative proposals have the potential to significantly improve employment opportunities, skills development, and overall inclusion for the disability community in Goa.

We, at the Office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, are committed to implementing these insightful recommendations and working closely with stakeholders to translate them into actionable steps. We believe that through sustained collaboration and innovative thinking, we can create a truly inclusive and empowering environment for persons with disabilities in Goa.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Goa Institute of Management for their valuable partnership and to all the participating students for their inspiring contributions. Your dedication and enthusiasm give us immense hope for a brighter future for persons with disabilities in Goa.

Together, let us build a workplace where disability is not a barrier, but a source of strength and diversity.

Sincerely,  
**Taha Haaziq**





## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Goa Institute of Management (GIM) continues to pursue lifelong learning opportunities and all-round development for our students, faculty members, and community with a mission “to create knowledge and develop responsible and agile leaders at the forefront of cutting-edge business practices”. In this regard, we were happy to have a fruitful partnership with the Office of State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities Goa in co-creating a unique national competition to identify innovative workplace practices for persons with disabilities.

We had teams from various institutions participating in the competition to submit their entries on various themes, such as visual impairment, hearing impairment, autism spectrum disorder and other disabilities. The teams explored technological advancements/other related advancements, diversity and inclusion programs, reasonable accommodations, assistive technologies, and career development opportunities and their impact.

The narratives and insights shared in this document reflect our collective journey towards understanding, appreciating, and harnessing these positive efforts.

As you navigate through these pages, you are not merely reading about practices and policies but engaging with stories of resilience, innovation, and transformative change. Each summary presented is a powerful example of what can be achieved when we dismantle barriers and foster an environment where everyone, irrespective of their abilities, is given the opportunity to thrive.

I thank Shri Guruprasad Pawaskar for this wonderful opportunity to partner and co-create this unique competition.

We will continue this journey with empathy and a shared vision of an inclusive future for all.

Sincerely,

**Ajit Parulekar**  
Director, GIM



## PREFACE



I am honoured to present this report documenting the submissions made by various teams across India, highlighting the innovative workplace practices for Persons with Disabilities by companies in India. The primary objective of this competition was to encourage students to identify innovative existing practices that promote inclusivity, accessibility, and equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the workplace. By providing a platform for students to share, we aimed to discover and promote best practices that can be implemented across different organizations in Goa.

This booklet is not just a collection of summaries of the case studies submitted by students across various institutions in India; it is a narrative of empowerment and a roadmap for inclusivity. We will also compile detailed case studies and make it available online on our website.

I am thankful to Shri Subhash Phal Dessai, Hon'ble Minister for Social Welfare for always encouraging such initiatives. My gratitude to Shri Guruprasad Pawaskar, State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities Goa, Shri Taha Haaziq ji, Secretary, and Ms. Durga Naik, Administrative at the Office of the Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities Goa State for their immense support to the entire initiative. I thank Prof. Ajit Parulekar, Director, Goa Institute of Management, for always encouraging such meaningful initiatives.

I extend my most profound appreciation to all the teams for their participation and our judges. Thank you to Mr. Shriraj Parsekar for his diligent efforts in preparing this summary report and Ms. Durga Naik for making it accessible.

Let this booklet be a starting point for dialogue, a source of inspiration, and a guide for action.

Warm regards,

**Divya Singhal**

Chairperson- Centre For Social Sensitivity and Action  
Goa Institute of Management



## National Institute of Design, Gandhinagar

Members: **Aman Jain, Lakshmi K. Prasad**

Case Company: **Ishaara Restaurant, Ahmedabad**

Ishaara, a unique café located in the Palladium Mall in Ahmedabad, stands out for its innovative approach to inclusivity and social impact. The café's concept revolves around creating a sensory food experience while providing employment opportunities for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.

### **Redefining Inclusivity**

The café's inclusive approach has the potential to significantly improve the work environment for people with disabilities, breaking down communication barriers and fostering interaction between disabled and non-disabled individuals. Ishaara's challenges preconceived notions about disability, potentially leading to broader acceptance and opportunities for people with disabilities in various workplaces across India.

### **Multifaceted Impact**

The initiative's impact is multifaceted. In terms of health, it positively affects the mental and emotional well-being of employees with disabilities, reducing feelings of isolation and boosting self-esteem. Economically, it creates job opportunities contributes to financial independence, and reduces reliance on social welfare systems.

### **Replication in Goa**

The study suggests replicating Ishaara's innovation in Goa through sensitization workshops led by high-ranking Deaf individuals in industries. The National Association of the Deaf (NAD) could serve as the initial funding and connection hub, with workshops evolving into soft skill sessions to foster collaboration between hearing and deaf individuals.

To fund the initiative in Goa, approximately 1.6 crores will be needed for a year, with funding sources including NAD, crowdfunding, and charging organizations for exclusive services to diversify their workforce. Collaboration with stakeholders and strategic partnerships, including NGOs and entities in tourism and hospitality, is crucial for the initiative's comprehensive and sustainable replication, fostering inclusivity on various levels.







## KJ Somaiya Institute of Management, Mumbai

Members: **Rajni Vaishnow, Kaustubh Virkar, Hardik Khajuria**

Case Company: **Wells Fargo & Company**

Wells Fargo & Company, a stalwart in the American financial landscape since 1852, is not only a global financial institution but also a trailblazer in fostering neurodiversity in the workplace. In 2021, Wells Fargo launched the Train, Intern, and Hire program in India in collaboration with EnAble India, specifically designed for neurodivergent individuals.

### **Neurodiversity at Wells Fargo**

The program begins with mapping the market readiness and skills of neurodivergent candidates. A 14-week training program covers employability, life skills, technology, and banking basics. The program's success is evident in its 100% conversion rate from trainees to interns and a 99% retention rate from interns to full-time employees across three phases.

### **Comprehensive Neurodiversity Strategy**

Wells Fargo's commitment extends beyond hiring. The Neurodiversity Strategy in India, initiated in 2021, fosters an inclusive work culture through training, mentorship programs, flexible work arrangements, and a neurodiversity employee resource group (ERG) for support and networking.

### **Success and Expansion**

The Neurodiversity Program has successfully hired over 225 neurodivergent full-time employees globally, focusing on hiring for aptitude rather than deep skills. The program's success has spurred Wells Fargo to expand its initiative, reflecting its commitment to raising awareness of neurodiversity and promoting inclusion in the workplace.

### **Replication in Goa**

In the context of Goa's growing prominence as a MICE destination, there's an opportunity for public-private partnerships to promote neurodiversity inclusion. Collaboration with organizations like EnAble India or The Owl House can provide training, while partnerships with local businesses can create job opportunities. Implementing such innovative programs requires significant financial and human investments, involving resources for training, accommodations, recruitment efforts, and technology investments.

The replication of a neurodiversity program in Goa would necessitate collaboration among various stakeholders, including the government, NGOs, and the private sector, to create a supportive network of employers committed to hiring and retaining neurodiverse employees.





## **Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies, Pune**

Members: **Nisha Mahato, Minu Jyotsna**

Case Company: **'Ishaara' Family Restaurant, Phoenix Mall, Pune**

Ishaara, a family restaurant chain founded by Mr. Prashant Issar, COO of Bellona Hospitality Services Limited, is redefining inclusivity and innovation. Established in 2016, Ishaara challenges stereotypes by employing and training deaf and mute staff. Celebrating over a year of success, Ishaara offers unique dining experiences across its four outlets: Cha Cha Cha, Dobaara, Allora, and Spanish restaurant, bar, and Italian eatery, respectively.

### **A Model for Inclusivity**

This paper explores Ishaara's innovative practices in addressing workplace hearing impairment, showcasing its commitment to an inclusive work environment with a 0% attrition rate. The organization's support system includes hiring from NGOs, dedicated leaders proficient in sign language, and sign language menus for effective communication. Rigorous training programs, employee-centric benefits, and a conducive work environment contribute to the success of this initiative.

### **Leadership Commitment**

Under CEO Prashant's leadership, Ishaara's prioritizes employee well-being, offering medical coverage, housing, education allowances, and more. The organization's environmentally sustainable practices and expansion to multiple outlets have created job opportunities and fostered social inclusivity. The unique concept of employing individuals with hearing disabilities has attracted a diverse customer base, enhancing the dining experience and customer engagement.

### **Replication in Goa**

The paper proposes replicating this initiative in Goa, outlining steps such as NGO partnerships, training centres, community engagement, strategic location selection, marketing, and inclusive messaging. Estimated resources for the first year in Goa include financial, human, partnership, regulatory compliance, and marketing costs.

To ensure successful replication, collaboration with NGOs, local communities, regulatory authorities, business partners, customers, investors, and employees is deemed crucial. The initiative not only creates employment opportunities but also prioritizes well-being, economic empowerment, and social inclusion while promoting environmental sustainability.





## Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Punjab

Members: **Nishit Mittal, Bhavya Gera**

Case Company: **Miracle Couriers, Mumbai, Maharashtra**

Mirakle Couriers, founded in 2009 in Mumbai, pioneered social innovation within the courier industry. The company's focus on providing meaningful employment for individuals with hearing disabilities challenges societal norms, fostering inclusivity with sign language as its primary mode of communication.

### **Comprehensive Skill Development**

Mirakle Couriers goes beyond mere employment, offering skill development and training programs covering logistics, courier operations, and customer service. This empowers individuals with disabilities, enabling them to excel in their roles and promoting professional growth.

### **Transformative Potential and Positive Outcomes**

Mirakle Couriers' innovative approach has transformative potential, improving mental well-being, increasing job satisfaction, and creating career growth opportunities for individuals with hearing disabilities. The project exemplifies how businesses can break down societal barriers, promote social acceptance, and foster diversity. The positive outcomes of Mirakle Couriers' initiative extend across various domains, from improved mental well-being for employees to increased operational efficiency and profitability. The use of technology in optimizing courier routes contributes to environmental sustainability, reducing unnecessary mileage and associated carbon footprints.

### **Business Benefits**

Mirakle Couriers' project not only benefits individuals with disabilities but also contributes to the organization's sustainability and growth. Enhanced operational efficiency, reduced costs, and a positive brand image result in a competitive advantage. The focus on diversity and community engagement attracts loyal customers and investors, strengthening the organization's reputation for corporate social responsibility.

### **Replication in Goa**

A comprehensive needs assessment and market research are essential to replicate Mirakle Couriers' innovative initiative in Goa. Technological prototypes, such as text-to-speech converters and speech-to-text technologies, should undergo rigorous testing with the deaf community. Collaboration with local deaf organizations, addressing legal and ethical considerations, and running pilot programs are crucial steps. Raising awareness, educating the community, and partnering with educational institutions should be part of the strategy.

Public-private partnerships and tailoring the approach to the local context are key components of the replication process. Overall, a multidimensional strategy encompassing financial investment, a skilled workforce, and supportive policies is essential for successful replication and sustained innovation in Goa.





# Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology, Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Members: **Harsh Dev Kangotra, Ankush Koundal**

Case Company: **Wipro Limited**

Wipro Limited, headquartered in Bangalore, India, is a global service provider with a diverse portfolio, including information technology, consumer care, lighting, precision engineering, and healthcare. The company's "Inclusive Hiring Program" is specifically designed to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, focusing on addressing the unique needs of visually impaired employees.

## **Inclusive Hiring for Diverse Talent**

The initiative incorporates accessible technologies and infrastructure modifications, fostering innovation and positively impacting Wipro's reputation. The company promotes a supportive work culture through specialized training sessions and awareness programs, ensuring equal opportunities for professional growth.

## **The Ongoing Commitment**

Wipro's commitment to inclusivity is evident in its ongoing efforts, which include employee training, collaborations with disability organizations, and the integration of inclusive practices into its core values. The leadership actively communicates the importance of the program, reinforcing inclusivity as a foundational aspect of Wipro's corporate identity.

## **Replication in Goa**

Replicating Wipro's initiative in Goa involves engaging with local businesses, government agencies, and community organizations. Partnerships with visually disability-focused NGOs, awareness campaigns, accessible infrastructure, and assistive technologies are crucial. Financial investment, human resources, regulatory adjustments and collaboration with educational institutions are necessary for successful replication tailored to Goa's unique context.

Ultimately, the initiative's success in Goa relies on a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach involving local businesses, government, NGOs, educational institutions, and the community. Through this collaborative effort, Wipro's "Inclusive Hiring Program" can be adapted to foster inclusivity in Goa's workforce, positively impacting individuals with disabilities and contributing to broader societal goals of equality and diversity.





## Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Kozhikode

Members: **Ashi Rebecca Campbell, Abhishek, Walter Paul, Sourav Anand**

Case Company: **Lemon Tree Hotels**

Lemon Tree Hotels, founded in 2002, has emerged as a beacon of inclusive practices within the Indian hospitality industry. The organization's commitment to providing employment opportunities for people with disabilities not only aligns with social responsibility but also contributes to a positive corporate culture and brand image.

### **Inclusive Employment Initiatives**

Lemon Tree's journey towards inclusivity involved collaboration with disability advocacy organizations and vocational training centres. The company overhauled its recruitment processes, embraced technology for accessibility, and implemented robust employee training programs. Key performance indicators were established to measure the impact, focusing on the number of employees with disabilities, retention rates, and guest feedback.

### **Positive Outcomes**

The impact of Lemon Tree's initiatives extends across health, economic, and social dimensions. Employees with disabilities experienced increased financial independence, contributing to their economic empowerment. The initiative, with a remarkable 90% retention rate, highlights a supportive work environment. Employee testimonials underscore improved mental well-being and a strengthened sense of belonging.

### **Business Benefits**

Beyond the social impact, Lemon Tree's inclusive employment practices have tangible benefits for the organization. They enhance creativity, problem-solving, and overall business performance. A positive workplace culture attracts top talent, providing a competitive edge. The initiative also bolsters the brand's reputation, appealing to socially conscious consumers and investors.

### **Replication in Goa**

To replicate Lemon Tree Hotels' success in Goa, collaboration with local disability advocacy groups and vocational training centres is paramount. Partnerships should be forged to identify talent, provide training, and customize recruitment processes. Leveraging technology for accessibility and raising awareness within the local community are essential steps. Alignment with regional policies supporting diversity and inclusivity is crucial.

Financial resources, leadership support, employee engagement, and a cultural shift within organizations are crucial elements for successful replication. Establishing a comprehensive network of stakeholders, including NGOs, government agencies, businesses, and educational institutions, is vital for success in Goa or any other location.





## Kumaraguru College of Arts and Science

Members: **Pragatheeshwari. S, Blessy Josephine .T,  
Sivakeerthana. K. S**

Case Company: **Accenture's Drishti**

In the ever-evolving landscape of technology, Accenture's ground-breaking AI solution, Drishti, meaning "vision" in Sanskrit, stands as a testament to innovation with a purpose. Developed to empower visually impaired individuals, Drishti leverages cutting-edge AI technologies, including image recognition, natural language processing, and natural language generation. This transformative solution provides real-time descriptions of surroundings via smartphones, going beyond conventional aids.

### **Visionary AI for Inclusive Workplaces**

Initially tested with ten blind professionals in collaboration with the National Association for the Blind in India, Drishti has redefined the possibilities for the visually impaired. Its capabilities include narrating the number of people in a room, their ages, genders, and even emotions based on facial expressions. Accenture's Chief Technology and Innovation Officer, Paul Daugherty, praises Drishti as a prime example of AI augmenting human capabilities, and fostering inclusivity and diversity.

### **Beyond Conventional Limits for amplifying Social Impact**

Drishti extends its utility beyond the workplace by aiding in reading text from books, documents, and currency notes. Moreover, the solution prioritizes safety by identifying potential obstacles like glass doors, mitigating risks for the visually impaired. The impact of Drishti is not limited to individual users; it aligns with Accenture's commitment to diversity and inclusion, with achievements like 41% women and 39% men workforce ratio by the end of 2017. Through Global Giving partnerships, Accenture has supported over 160,000 individuals in acquiring employment and entrepreneurship skills, fostering economic empowerment. The commitment to environmental sustainability is evident in the company's 52% reduction in carbon emissions per employee from fiscal 2007 to fiscal 2017. The transformative power of Drishti extends beyond individual users to enhance business processes, decision-making, and societal impact.

### **A Potential Beacon for Goa**

The successful implementation of Drishti by Accenture underscores its potential applicability in diverse regions. Collaboration or developing a similar AI model tailored for the visually impaired in Goa, with the support of Accenture or other strategic partners, could further amplify the benefits of this transformative technology. While financial investments are necessary, the long-term gains in terms of societal betterment far outweigh the costs, making initiatives like Drishti a beacon of progress and inclusion.





# National Academy of Legal Studies and Research (NALSAR) University of Law, Telengana

Members: **Abinaya Kumar, Sumedha Ray**

Case Company: **Lemon Tree Hotels Company**

Shedding light on Lemon Tree Hotels' pioneering initiative in inclusive employment for individuals with visual and auditory impairments. Established in 2002, Lemon Tree Hotels has emerged as a trailblazer in promoting diversity and inclusion within the hospitality industry.

## **The Philosophy: Abilities Over Disabilities**

The study explores the philosophical underpinnings of Lemon Tree Hotels' initiative, emphasizing the belief that disabilities should be seen as untapped abilities rather than burdens. By providing specialized training and support, the hotel chain empowers visually and auditory impaired employees, offering them roles where they can thrive. The inclusive approach not only increases creativity and innovation but also attracts and retains top talent, irrespective of abilities.

## **Commercial Success: Challenging Societal Perceptions**

The narrative highlights the commercial success achieved by Lemon Tree Hotels through its inclusive employment program. The company's commitment to diversity and inclusivity challenges societal perceptions and establishes a progressive business model. By acknowledging the effects of homophily and actively diversifying employee mindsets, behaviours, and professional networks, Lemon Tree Hotels has created a disability-friendly environment contributing to higher financial outcomes.

## **Real-Time Outcomes: Fostering Inclusivity**

The study underscores the real-time outcomes of Lemon Tree's inclusive employment, challenging stereotypes and fostering a more diverse and inclusive workplace. The initiative has positively impacted the quality of life and livelihood of individuals with disabilities, creating a path for them to lead fulfilling lives. The study also analyses the business standpoint, examining factors such as brand value, corporate social responsibility, customer delight, and profit.

## **Comprehensive Implementation: A Secure and Flourishing Work Environment**

The final section delves into the comprehensive approach necessary to implement Lemon Tree Hotels' inclusive employment policies for individuals with sensory impairments. This includes allocating financial resources, investing in adaptive equipment, implementing alternative communication methods, adopting inclusive hiring practices, and fostering community outreach. The narrative concludes by emphasizing the importance of spatial accessibility guidelines, regulations, support policies, and efficient feedback mechanisms to ensure a secure and flourishing work environment for employees with sensory impairments in the hospitality sector in Goa.





## **K. J Symbiosis Centre for Information Technology (SCIT), Pune**

Members: **Aryan Gholap, Hrishikesh Deshmukh, Isha Nikhar**

Case Company: **Lemon Tree Hotels**

In the realm of inclusive employment, Team 04 from Symbiosis Centre for Information Technology (SCIT), Pune, unfolds the narrative of Lemon Tree Hotels – an Indian hotel-chain with 84 hotels and 8,300 rooms across 52 cities. At the heart of their success lies a commitment to inclusive employment, notably for individuals with hearing impairments.

### **Transforming Hospitality: Tailored Communication Solutions**

Lemon Tree Hotels' journey began with a small experiment – a decision to hire two deaf individuals, challenging norms and providing opportunities. This experiment, driven by the human resource department and Chairman and Managing Director, Patu Keswani, led to remarkable outcomes. An emotional invitation to a staff member's wedding highlighted the life-changing impact of the initiative, evolving into a flourishing program showcasing the business merits of employing individuals with disabilities without compromising profitability.

### **Sustainable Inclusion: A Multifaceted Approach**

The study unravels Lemon Tree Hotels' inclusive initiatives, showcasing a multifaceted approach to ensuring sustainability. The hotel chain has fostered an inclusive culture, garnering active support across all levels of the organization. Comprehensive training and sensitization programs have heightened awareness, creating an environment conducive to the long-term adoption of these initiatives. Tangible benefits, such as improved guest experiences and enhanced employee morale, serve as continuous motivators for sustainability.

### **Outcomes Beyond Profit: A Social Impact**

Adherence to disability inclusion laws and regulations, continuous improvement, positive customer feedback, strong leadership support, community engagement, financial viability, and recognition through awards collectively contribute to the long-term success of these initiatives. The outcomes of Lemon Tree Hotels' disability-inclusive initiatives span diverse dimensions, including health, economic, social, and environmental aspects.

### **Replicating Success in Goa: A Commitment to Inclusion**

For hotels in Goa seeking to replicate Lemon Tree Hotels' initiative, the report suggests starting with hiring people with disabilities, providing tailored training, and sensitising the entire workforce. Allocating funds, ensuring legal compliance, and advocating for supportive policies are crucial steps. Success, however, necessitates a commitment to resource allocation and compliance with regulations and policies.

In the symphony of inclusive employment initiatives, these teams from diverse educational institutions have woven narratives of innovation, compassion, and commitment. Their stories echo the resounding truth that inclusivity is not just a choice; it is the key to unlocking a future where everyone has a seat at the table.







# Welingkar Institute of Management Development and Research, Mumbai

Members: **Mrunal Deshpande, Rahul Biradar**

Case Company: **Capgemini**

Capgemini, a global leader in technology-driven business transformation, is setting industry standards for building fully accessible workplaces, with a specific focus on accommodating visually impaired employees.

## **Innovative Accessibility Measures**

Capgemini provides adjustable ergonomic workstations, assistive technologies, and adaptive equipment such as Braille keyboards and mice. Ongoing support includes job coaching, sign language interpreters, accessibility experts, and disability awareness training for all employees.

## **Equitable Recruitment**

Capgemini's innovative approach to recruitment, accommodating visually impaired candidates based on merit, has removed barriers to equal employment opportunities. The company has hired over 100 visually impaired individuals across various roles, with a retention rate exceeding 90%.

## **Positive Outcomes and Expansion**

The initiative has resulted in the creation of over 50 new jobs focused on accessibility, design, and development. Visually impaired employees have demonstrated exceptional performance, enhancing Capgemini's talent competitiveness and reputation as an equal opportunity employer.

## **Learning for Goa**

The Goa government can learn from Capgemini's best practices to integrate visually impaired employees. By providing assistive technologies, identifying suitable job roles, implementing training programs, and fostering an inclusive workplace culture, the government can open more professional opportunities for the disabled.

## **Collaborative Approach**

Collaboration with organizations like Capgemini can provide expertise, financial resources, and manpower support to ensure successful implementation. Engaging NGOs, training institutions, advocacy groups, and assistive technology providers through public-private partnerships will facilitate the creation of an inclusive and accessible environment.

## **Conclusion**

Embracing diversity and promoting inclusion enriches the workforce and contributes to societal progress. The success stories of Wells Fargo and Capgemini serve as inspirations for Goa to create a more inclusive, accessible, and diverse workplace for everyone.





## Goa University

Members: **Ameesha Fernandes, Aydan Peter Rangel, Afiya Beig**  
Case Company: **IBM, India, Lemon Tree Hotels, Vodafone**

This study underscores the critical importance of disability inclusion in the workplace, presenting a thorough evaluation of its impact on organizational performance, diversity, and societal equity. Research-backed insights are provided, offering a nuanced perspective on the multifaceted benefits of embracing disability inclusion.

### **Diverse Workforce, Innovative Solutions**

The first pillar of argumentation revolves around the enhancement of workplace diversity. Drawing on research, it is posited that disability inclusion results in a more diverse and representative workforce, fostering innovation and problem-solving. Scott E. Page's concept of a "diversity bonus" is introduced to support the idea that inclusivity stimulates creativity within organizations.

### **Performance, Ethics, and Legal Imperatives**

The second key point focuses on the positive correlation between disability inclusion and improved organizational performance. Citing studies, the content asserts that companies embracing inclusion witness heightened employee morale, engagement, and productivity, translating into superior financial outcomes. Legal and ethical imperatives associated with disability inclusion are also highlighted.

### **Consumer Impact and Broader Societal Benefits**

Consumer and market impact constitute the next dimension explored. Research findings suggest that businesses demonstrating a commitment to social responsibility, including disability inclusion, gain favour among consumers, potentially leading to market advantages. The broader societal and economic benefits of a more inclusive workplace are highlighted as the fifth key point.

### **Indian Context and Real-World Success Stories**

Transitioning to the Indian context, the content provides statistical insights into the prevalence and types of disabilities, emphasizing the pressing need for inclusive practices. Two case studies, IBM India and Lemon Tree Hotels, showcase innovative practices and initiatives for disability inclusion, offering real-world success stories in fostering inclusivity.

### **A Comprehensive Set of Recommendations**

The study concludes by introducing Project Drishti by Vodafone, an initiative that partners with the National Association of the Blind to hire visually impaired employees. Results and impacts of the project, including increased productivity and higher commitment among visually impaired employees, highlight the success and replicability of such innovative practices.

Finally, a comprehensive set of recommendations is provided for replicating inclusive practices in Goa, encompassing collaboration, awareness, skill development, accessible hiring initiatives, audits, incentives, and community involvement. The legal framework, engagement with educational institutions, and promotion of digital accessibility and regular assessments are also emphasized in creating a holistic and sustainable approach to disability inclusion.





## Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad

Members: **K. Naveen Kumar, Yash Manmode, Mansi Singh**

In the vast tapestry of innovation aimed at societal betterment, unraveling the potential of Sign Language to Natural Language Conversion (ISL to NLC) technology. With a resolute focus on hearing-impaired communities in India, their groundbreaking project seeks to bridge communication gaps by seamlessly translating Indian Sign Language into natural language.

### **Unveiling Sign Lingo: A Technological Marvel**

The project harnesses the power of machine learning algorithms and computer vision to interpret sign language gestures. Crucially, the team ensures cultural sensitivity by accommodating regional variations in sign language and recognizing the linguistic diversity that defines India. At its core, SignLingo aspires not just to empower individuals but to redefine societal understanding and integration.

### **The Spark: Personal Experience and Collaboration**

The genesis of this innovation, epitomized by the SignLingo app, intertwines personal experience, technological prowess, and collaborative spirit. The scarcity of qualified Indian Sign Language trainers, especially in cities like Hyderabad, Gurgaon, and Nagpur fuelled the team's determination to create a solution. This initiative is not merely a technological marvel; it's a testimony to the transformative effects of innovations in assistive and communication technologies, fostering inclusiveness and easy communication in workplaces.

### **Sustainable Implementation: Key Strategies**

The content delves into the strategies adopted by organizations to ensure the sustainability of projects focused on ISL to NLC technology. Community engagement, user-centric design, and collaboration with NGOs, and service providers emerge as pivotal elements for the successful adoption and longevity of such projects.

### **Broad Impacts: Beyond Individual Empowerment**

The narrative paints a holistic picture of the potential outcomes of ISL to NLC technology on health, economic, environmental, and social well-being. The technology is envisioned as a catalyst for improving access to healthcare services, enhancing employment opportunities, promoting sustainability, and fostering social inclusion.

### **Replicating Success: A Roadmap for Goa**

The final section explores the potential replication of the initiative in Goa, emphasizing a thorough needs assessment, local partnerships, customization for Goan Sign Language nuances, community engagement, and awareness campaigns. The importance of financial resources, human resources, collaboration with local authorities, and a strategic approach to navigate regulatory dynamics is highlighted for effective replication. In conclusion, the content provides a comprehensive and inspiring view of the potential of ISL to NLC technology in transforming the lives of the hearing impaired in India. Real-world examples are interwoven with a roadmap for replication in specific regions like Goa, showcasing the team's dedication to inclusivity and societal progress.





## Shivaji College

Members: **Aanmol Prabhakar, Anurag Kumar Nigam**

Case Company: **Wipro Ltd, Barista Coffee, ITC hotels,  
N. Chirag Travels Pvt Ltd**

This comprehensive exploration sheds light on innovative strategies adopted by companies, including Wipro Ltd, Barista Coffee, ITC Hotels, and N. Chirag Travels Pvt Ltd, to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with visual impairments. The study emphasizes the commendable efforts of these companies in providing inclusive environments, challenging stereotypes, and showcasing the exceptional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

### **Rethinking Disability: A Human Rights Perspective**

The study delves into the emergence of disability as a human rights and development issue, signalling a shift in policies toward community and educational inclusion alongside mainstream employment. It emphasizes the need for raising awareness and challenging negative attitudes as pivotal steps in creating accessible environments for people with visual impairments.

### **Breaking Stereotypes: The Power of Inclusive Employment**

The narrative challenges societal equating of disability with incapacity and underscores the importance of promoting equality in the workplace to eradicate discrimination. It highlights the socio-economic vulnerability associated with disability and emphasizes that employment not only provides a means to earn a livelihood but also fosters improved social relations, particularly benefiting women with disabilities who gain economic independence.

### **Beyond Economic Gains: Health, Social, and Environmental Impacts**

The study explores health outcomes, focusing on the role of assistive technologies in reducing physical strain and the potential positive impact of remote work options on the mental health and well-being of individuals with visual impairments. It underscores economic outcomes, emphasizing increased productivity and a diverse talent pool resulting from the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workforce.

### **Toward a More Inclusive Future**

The study concludes by emphasizing the benefits of inclusive innovations, citing increased efficiency, client acceptance, and organizational appreciation. It highlights the potential for individuals with disabilities to contribute significantly to sectors like tourism and proposes government incentives, tax rebates, and the involvement of a commission and college volunteers to drive inclusivity initiatives.

Overall, the content serves as a valuable evaluation of the positive impact of inclusive employment practices, offering a well-rounded perspective on the societal, economic, and individual benefits while providing practical recommendations for broader implementation and support.





## Goa Institute of Management

Members: **Nayan Agrawal, Shashank Jain, Avani Pandey**

Case Company: **NeoMotion**

In the ever-evolving landscape of assistive technology, NeoMotion, an innovative Indian startup, has risen as a trailblazer dedicated to crafting groundbreaking mobility solutions. Central to their transformative initiatives are the NeoFly wheelchair and the NeoBolt motorized attachment, setting unprecedented standards for comfort, independence, and inclusivity.

### **NeoFly: A Marvel of Design Redefining Mobility**

At the core of NeoMotion's innovation is the NeoFly wheelchair, their flagship product. A marvel of design, this wheelchair seamlessly combines lightweight construction, ergonomic comfort, and customizable features. Crafted for manoeuvrability and energy efficiency, the NeoFly goes beyond the conventional wheelchair, serving as a pathway to enhanced mobility, independence, and an improved quality of life.

### **Inclusive Workforce: NeoMotion's Commitment Beyond Products**

NeoMotion's commitment to inclusivity extends beyond product innovation to actively boosting employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Their comprehensive strategy involves recruitment across diverse roles, accompanied by continuous skills development, training programs, and mentorship initiatives. With over 20% of their workforce comprising individuals with disabilities, NeoMotion stands as a commendable model for disability employment in India.

### **Holistic Impact: Positive Outcomes Across Dimensions**

Studies indicate significant improvements in mobility, independence, and overall well-being for NeoFly wheelchair users. The economic benefits manifest in job creation, reduced reliance on subsidies, and increased productivity. Environmentally, NeoFly wheelchairs contribute to sustainability through reduced carbon emissions and the use of eco-friendly materials. Socially, NeoMotion fosters inclusion, diminishes stigma, and contributes to a more equitable society. Environmentally, the organization has reduced its carbon footprint, incorporated recycled materials in manufacturing, and championed eco-friendly practices, ensuring the sustainability of its operations.

### **Blueprint for Inclusivity: Replicating Success in Goa**

To replicate this success in Goa, collaboration with local healthcare providers, partnerships with manufacturing facilities, engagement with governmental bodies, and awareness-building through disability advocacy groups and local distributors are imperative. Aligning with Goa's environmental focus by incorporating eco-friendly materials and customizing the initiative to suit regional needs will ensure successful replication, promoting accessibility and inclusivity for individuals with mobility challenges in the region.

### **Conclusion: NeoMotion's Enduring Legacy of Innovation and Inclusion**

In conclusion, NeoMotion's journey transcends the realm of innovative products; it's about transforming lives, fostering inclusivity, and reshaping societal perceptions. Through their unwavering commitment to innovation and inclusion, NeoMotion stands as an inspiration, showcasing the profound impact that technology can have on enhancing accessibility and empowering individuals with disabilities.





## Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore Team

Members: **Anand Rajagopalan, Ganesh TN Bhushan**

Case Company: **DLearners**

DLearners, incubated by the prestigious Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore (IIM-B), spearheads educational innovation with a focus on Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). Their unique platform, a solution (PaaS), integrates game-based assistive technology and Multi-sensorial VAKT learning techniques for timely screening, early identification, and correct remediation of SLD in children.

### **Empowering Through Innovation**

Online learning platforms often overlook the hidden talents of those with learning disabilities, particularly dyslexia. Research indicates dyslexic individuals may excel in visual-spatial processing, offering strengths in diverse areas. DLearners emphasizes the need to recognize the varied thinking strategies of individuals with dyslexia.

### **Transforming Work Environments for Inclusivity and Universal Design Concept**

DLearners envisions a workplace where inclusivity is paramount, leveraging innovation to enhance the work environment for individuals with learning disabilities by assistive technologies and continuous innovation yields advanced tools, such as screen readers and ergonomic workstations, enabling effective task performance. Principles of universal design foster inherently inclusive workplaces, integrating features without singling out individuals with disabilities.

**Accessibility in Digital Platforms and Flexible Work Arrangements:** Website and software innovations enhance accessibility with features like closed captioning and adjustable interfaces. Innovations introduce flexible options, including remote work, addressing challenges faced by individuals with disabilities.

### **Challenges and Opportunities in India**

In a society valuing academic excellence, individuals with learning disabilities face exclusion. Contrary to myths, learning disabilities don't equate to poor educational backgrounds; many possess valuable technical skills and creativity.

### **Replicating the Initiative in Goa**

**Community Engagement:** Collaborate with advocacy groups, non-profits, and the government to create awareness programs about the capabilities and needs of individuals with disabilities. **Corporate Engagement:** Incentivize local businesses through tax benefits and recognition for adopting inclusive practices. Provide resources for small businesses to implement accommodations.

**Education and Training:** Develop inclusive work environment training for employers and HR personnel. Encourage universities to offer courses focused on disability inclusion.

In conclusion, DLearners showcases the transformative power of innovation and inclusivity. By unlocking the potential of individuals with learning disabilities, DLearners paves the way for a more equitable and progressive future in education and employment.





## Student Competition on Innovative Workplace Practices for People with Disabilities in India Details of Winning Teams

| Sr. No. | Name of the Team   | Name of the Participants  | Company Highlighted            | Prizes             |
|---------|--|---|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1.      | <b>Team No. 205</b><br>(National Institute of Design, Gandhinagar)                               | 1) Mr. Aman Jain<br>2) Ms. Lakshmi M Prasad                               | Ishaara Restaurant, Ahmedabad  | Theme Winner Prize |
| 2.      | <b>Team No. 99</b><br>(K.J. Somaiya Institute of Management, Mumbai)                             | 1) Ms. Rajni Vaishnow<br>2) Mr. Kaustubh Virkar<br>3) Mr. Hardik Khajuria | Wells Fargo Company, Hyderabad | Theme Winner Prize |
| 3.      | <b>Team No. 142</b><br>(Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies, Pune)                         | 1) Ms. Nisha Mahato<br>2) Ms. Minu Jyotsna<br>3) Ms. Pratiksha Kakate     | Ishaara Restaurant, Pune       | Runner-up Prize    |
| 4.      | <b>Team No. 155</b><br>(Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology, Gujarat) | 1) Mr. Ankush Koundal<br>2) Mr. Harsh Dev Kangotra                        | Wipro Limited, Bangalore       | Appreciation Prize |
| 5.      | <b>Team No. 72</b><br>(Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Punjab)                   | 1) Mr. Nishit Mittal<br>2) Ms. Bhavya Gera                                | Mirakle Couriers, Mumbai       | Appreciation Prize |



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Shri Taha Haaziq  
Ms. Durga Naik

### **Goa Institute of Management, Goa**

Dr. Ajit Parulekar

### **Competition Coordinator**

Dr. Divya Singhal

### **Judges (Final Round)**

Dr. Anita Sharma  
Dr. Sreerupa Sengupta  
Shri Taha Haaziq

### **Judges (Prelim Round)**

Mr. Prakash Kamat  
Mr. Avinash Parkhe  
Ms. Durga Naik  
Dr. Divya Singhal

### **Overall Support**

Ms. Durga Naik  
Ms. Kay Karen Gomes  
Ms. Chandrabhaga Patil  
Ms. Roopali Shet  
Ms. Celine Pereira  
Mr. Shirraj Parsekar

### **Creatives**

Team Dranding

### **Report Compilation**

Mr. Shirraj Parsekar

**All our participating teams, their institutions and all the supporters.**