



Organises

## 2nd National Convention of **SELF ADVOCATES FORUM OF INDIA (SAFI)**

November 26 - 27, 2015, Udaipur

Supported by :

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, MSJE, Government of India.



Hosted by :

**Prachya Shodh Peeth – Prayass Sansthan**

### **REPORT ON THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF SELF ADVOCATES FORUM OF INDIA (SAFI) HELD ON NOVEMBER 27-28, 2015 AT RAJASTHAN COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, UDAIPUR, RAJASTHAN**

#### **PARTICIPANTS:**

The second National Convention was a very big success with the participation of One hundred and twelve self advocates and 75 mentors, parents, officials from 17 states of India. The States represented were: Andhra Pradesh (including Telengana), Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal. There were nearly 20 volunteers from RMTT College to assist the National Convention. (*See Annexure for list of Participants*)

The entire Program was coordinated and conducted by the National Executive Council Headed by:

1. Ms. B C Mahalakshmi, President SAFI
2. Mr. G. Parthiban, Secretary, SAFI
3. Mr. Mahesh Chandrasekhar, Jt. Secretary,
4. Mr. Kumar Guru, Treasurer, SAFI
5. Mr. Shantidev Bera, Invitee, SAFI, West Bengal
6. Mr. Rohit Toshar, EC Member, SAFI from Bhilai

and assisted by Mentors from various States and officials from Parivaar and ably supported by the Host Organization Prayass Sansthan, Udaipur.

#### **Opening Ceremony:**

An important feature of the National Convention was the musical composition of SAFI Theme song by Ms. Prem – a self advocate from Coimbatore. He sang the theme song with his keyboard. *See Annexure for the Song.*

The event started with a colourful Opening Ceremony with Lightning Lamp by all the guests and SAFI leaders. There was an invocation song performed by Dr Dipti Pandya, Dr Anupama Sharma, Dr. Charu Sanadhya from RMTT College, Udaipur. Ms. Rashmi

**Rekha Sahu then performed an Odishi dance invoking God's blessings. All the guests were presented with a traditional Rajasthani Turban as a token of appreciation for their presence. Special Children from Paryas Sansthan gave a very colourful Rajasthani Dance performance.**

**SAFI President Ms. Mahalakshmi welcomed all the participants to the National Convention. Mr. Parthiban National Secretary gave an overview of Self Advocates Forum of India (SAFI). The invites guests made brief remarks and offered their felicitations. They gave their best wishes and ideas to how to make SAFI a strong and powerful organization in the future. The chief guest offered his support for SAFI in Udaipur. Prayas Sansthan children with Special Needs gave an awesome cultural performance. Mr. Mahesh Chandrasekhar, Jt. Secretary SAFI gave a vote of Thanks. He Thanked Mrs. & Mr. Raja Bhandari the local Host for the excellent arrangements for conducting the SAFI Convention. He thanked CBM and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, MSJE, Government of India for their support to SAFI and the delegates from various states for their enthusiastic participation making the 11th National Convention a grand Success.**

**The Chief Guest was Mr. O.P. Bunker IAS - -A.D.M (Additional Deputy Magistrate, Udaipur City and Other Guests were :**

- 1.Mr. Shiva Mohan Rao, Program Officer -CBM, SARO, Bangalore**
- 2. MR. Jay Kumar, Program Officer CBM, SARO, Bangalore**
- 3. Lt. Col Gautam-President Parivaar, Ahmedabad**
- 4. Mr. J.P Gadkari- Director, Projects and Development-Parivaar, Bangalore**
- 5. Mr. Soundara Rajan, Treasurer, Parivaar, Bangalore**
- 6. Mr. M G Prakash, Core Committee Member, Parivaar, Bangalore**
- 7. Smt. Bhandary & Secretary, Prayas Sansthan, Udaipur**
- 8. Mr. Raja Bhandari, Prays Sansthan, Udaipur**
- 9 Mr. Sudeep Goel, Director, Asha-Ka-jharna, Nawalgarh, Rajasthan**
- 10. Mr. Vijay Kant-Chief Operations Manager-Parivaar,**

### **Public Rally:**

**As part of the SAFI Convention, a Public Rally was organized. Self advocates and other delegates travelled in a procession on Camel carts carrying slogans on disability to create awareness among general public on Disability and SAFI. It was a 1.5 km walk on the main roads of Udaipur city flagged off by the City Police Commissioner.**

### **Business Meeting:**

**After lunch Safi Secretary Mr. Parthiban presented Annual report and gave presentation on the successful journey of SAFI. Then State leaders were invited to present their report with the support of Mentors. SAFI representatives from states gave their report without the assistance of Mentors. Only one or two states used the service of a mentor. Delegates spoke in their own regional languages and it was translated in to English by the translators. The reports reflected on the positive growth of SAFI in major states.**

### **GROUP DISCUSSION:**

**At the end of first day, participants were grouped by language for group discussion on the topics gave topics of**

- Taking decisions**
- Political participation**
- Setting up safi groups**

- **Legal Capacity and Decision Making**

Self advocates and Mentors then moved to various designated places for discussion assisted by the mentors. The discussion was for nearly one hour. One group leader was chosen from each group to make the summary presentation on the next day. The day ended after the group discussion.

The local organizers arranged for a local sightseeing and a visit to Narayan Seva Sansthan Hospital and Rehabilitation Center and a dinner at this place.

The day two started with rendition of SAFI Theme Song and recitation. Mr. Pranay Burde and Ms. Devanshi Joshi shared their experiences of participating at the 11th World Down Syndrome Conference (WDSC) held at Chennai earlier this year. The WDSC had a major theme on self advocacy by persons with Down Syndrome.

Group leaders from 12 groups made their presentations on the group discussion along with mentors. Mr. Parthiban, Secretary, SAFI made summary chart of the salient points as detailed below and presented it to the delegates. These were adopted as resolutions of the Second national Convention and approved by the general council of SAFI.

## **UDAIPUR DECLARATION OF SECOND SAFI NATIONAL CONVENTION 2015**

We, the Self advocates gathered at Udaipur, Rajasthan, after careful deliberations and discussions issue the following statement that we wish to pursue categorized in broad areas as indicated below:

### **DECISION MAKING AND LEGAL CAPACITY:**

We are aware of the consequences of the recommendations that we have made. This can be achieved only when we have the support of the family, community, government and other stakeholders.

- **Right to marriage:** This is a subject that our families have a lot of ifs and buts. We want our families to think about this issue with all seriousness and openness. We need legal protection and adequate safety measures by the government. We should have the right to select our partner when proposal for marriage.
- **Extensive use of internet for communication:** People with Intellectual and developmental disabilities have different levels of communication. They must be provided with various options for communication.
- **Opportunity purchase of essential needs:** Seldom families trust us when it come to making choices for buying essential needs – not only for self but also for families.
- **Opportunity to travel independently:** Many of us can travel independently or with our friends. Families should provide maximum support for us to travel. Government should also provide concessional travel facilities.
- **To be consulted when decisions are made for me:** There is very little communication between the family and the individual with disability. All decisions are made without even the cursory consideration that I may have an opinion.
- **Education is my right:** Most of us especially in rural and semi-urban areas have very little opportunity for appropriate education. We want to go to schools that my

brother or sister go to. Special education in segregated setting should be the last choice.

- **Job according to my interest & ability:** 99.9 % of us do not have any access to meaningful employment. Those that of us who are employed are not even paid minimum wages which makes us very dependent on our families or other service providers.
- **Right to have an account, operate and spend my money:** We do not have the right to hold bank account or bank card. We demand that we hold our own bank account and spend our money without undue interference.
- **Right to chose my friends and community:** We are friendless and our only association has been with our family members and siblings. Families should let us to develop social network that will be more supportive of us in the future.
- **I have right to spend my time alone and whatever I want.** Ex-playing listening music, watching TV etc. Privacy is taken for granted when it concerns us. We need our own space in the family, to privacy and freedom to enjoy what we like.
- **I have right to choose my dress, food and everything should be my choice:** My capacity to make choices begins with small things in life when i can make simple choices which leads to developing greater ability to make difficult decisions.
- **I want to do business independently:** Open employment in government is absent in government or in Industry. Majority of us will remain outside the labor market. Therefore self employment in agro-based vocations, SHGs will benefit many of us. Skill building programs should include such activities.
- **Lead independent life:** It does not mean that we want to be left alone. Community based living options.
- **Law enforcement agencies should take the complaints of PwDs seriously and act upon it on priority.**
- **Treat our parents/ organizations respectful manner- representation on all policy making bodies as our spokespersons/ allies.**
- **We can fight against violations against us when we are united in group and result will come. Support promotion of SAFI at all levels.**
- **We should have right to property and to buy or sell it.**
- **Sexual harassment of PwDs should be treated as grave offence attracting maximum punishment under law.**
- **We wish to be representative in legal matters that affect us.**
- **Insurance policy as available to all.**
- **Helpline should be established at the state level .**
- **Free hospitalization in private & public Hospitals through appropriate Health policy.**
- **Access to holy places and easy access.**
- **Enforce 1 %reservation for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities as proposed in the new RPD Bill.**
- **Reservation of housing in all housing schemes of the state & central government.**
- **To access inclusive education , appoint more special educators in schools.**

## **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:**

- **Demand for National ID Card:** This could be one window service.
- **There should be uniform pension across the country without income limit. We should be treated as individuals not taking family income into account.**

- **Accessibility: Universal accessible design in all public places, clean toilets etc. Enforce building laws both private and public utilities that conforms to standards.**
- **Right for equal wages**
- **To be job holder: Equal right to employment**
- **All PwIDDs should have a voter ID, voting right and choose my leader**
- **Be our own spoke person: We should be consulted on issues that affect us at all levels.**
- **Of course we want and we have right to be in politics for good things that we can do for our community. (if we come in politics)**
  - **we can do our best to fulfill the aspirations of Pwds**
  - **We will work towards employment of PwDs**
  - **Ensure equal opportunities to all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.**
  - **We will ensure opportunities to study in inclusive education system/ or special education as may be needed.**
  - **Appoint a self advocates as a member/representative in all consultative bodies of the government.**
- **Recognition of SAFI as a legal representative of PwIDDs by governments at State and Centre.**

### **PROMOTION OF SAFI:**

- **Expand SAFI in all states supported by government**
- **Create awareness about capabilities of PwIDDs**
- **Not to be neglected or over protected**
- **Opportunity to train ourselves to be our own advocate/ spokesperson**
- **Organize capacity building training program for PwIDDs**
- **Leader should be us: We want to be our own leaders**
- **skill training program and small workshops for self advocates**
- **Publish SAFI directory all India level**
- **use of twitter for group sharing**
- **Gender specific events for male and female SAFI members.**

### **Open Session:**

**Self advocates and Mentors were given opportunities to air their views in the open session. Parents also joined in expressing their views.**

**Delegates from new states were very impressed with the capacity of self advocates to speak about their issues. They assured that they will go back and promote self advocacy groups. They wanted support for organizing training programs.**

**There should be state level conventions every year.**

**The two day session came to an end with an open cultural program by participating delegations.**

## **Video Documentary:**

**The two day event was videographed and documentary is being produced and will be shared with all stakeholders.**

**SAFI and Parivaar wished to thank CBM SARO, Bangalore and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, MSJE, Government of India and all other supporters for making the National Convention a grand success and memorable for the delegates from all over India.**

### **Report compiled by:**

**G. Parthiban,  
National Secretary SAFI**

**Vijay Kant  
Chief Mentor & COM, Parivaar**

**ANNEXURE**

**SAFI SONG**

<p><b>Manzil Ab Toh Door Nahin Hein</b>  <b>Kadam Hamare Ruke Nahi Hai</b>  <b>Rukna Hamko Abhi Nahi Hai</b>  <b>Thakna Hamko Kabhi Nahi Hai</b>  <b>Manzil Ab Toh Door Nahin Hein.. (bis)</b></p>	<p><b>The destination is now not far off</b>  <b>Do not stop.. move forward now</b>  <b>We just do not stop</b>  <b>We never tire</b>  <b>The destination is now not far off</b>  <b>The destination is now not far off</b></p>
<p><b>Ummide Bhi Bani Rahi Hai</b>  <b>Koshish Mein Koi Kami Nahin Hai</b>  <b>Aage Hamko Aana Hai</b>  <b>Karke Kuch Alag Dikhana Hai</b>  <b>Himmat Me Kuch Kami Nahi Hai</b>  <b>Manzil Ab Toh Door Nahi Hai... (Bis)</b></p>	<p><b>Hopes have remained</b>  <b>There is no shortage in trying</b>  <b>If we come forward</b>  <b>By doing something different to show</b>  <b>Do not fall into Haushlon (willful)</b>  <b>The destination is now not far off</b>  <b>The destination is now not far off</b></p>
<p><b>Prerna Hame Tum Dete Jao</b>  <b>Sahyog, Hamara Karte Jao</b>  <b>Ham Bhi Kuch Karke Dikha Denge</b>  <b>Ek Nayee Surat Bana Denge</b>  <b>Tarkibon Ki Kami Nahi Hai</b>  <b>Manzil Ab Toh Door Nahi Hai...(Bis)</b></p>	<p><b>Do you get inspiration</b>  <b>Get Our cooperation</b>  <b>We also show by</b>  <b>Will create a new face</b>  <b>There is no shortage of tips</b>  <b>The destination is now not far off</b>  <b>The destination is now not far off</b></p>
<p><b>Yē rāha bhī āsāna banī hai</b>  <b>Samāj mēm cētanā jagī hai</b>  <b>Chēharōm pē muskāna khilī hai</b>  <b>Hamkō bhī paichāna milī hai</b>  <b>Avasarōm kī kamī nahī hai</b>  <b>Mañzila aba tō ḍōor nahī hai</b>  <b>Mañzila aba tō ḍōor nahī hai</b></p>	<p><b>The path is made even easier</b>  <b>Social consciousness is roused</b>  <b>Smiles on faces has blossomed</b>  <b>We have also gained recognition</b>  <b>There is no lack of opportunities</b>  <b>The destination is now not far off</b>  <b>The destination is now not far off</b></p>