

SENSITISATION WORKSHOP AT RESERVE BANK OF INDIA'S CHANGE IN PARADIGM IN HR MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE ON 15TH JULY, 2018

Centre of Excellence for Persons with Disabilities (CoE), an initiative of SBI Foundation, was invited by Reserve Bank of India to conduct a sensitisation workshop at their ***Change in Paradigm in HR Management Conference*** held at Grand Pinnacle – Radisson Blu, Alibaug on 15th July, 2018.

Before the session commenced, **Mr. A. K. Sarangi (CGM, HRMD at RBI)** reiterated on the need to identify engagements where employees with disabilities can be productive while being sensitive to their needs at the same time.

Mrs. Padmaja Nair (Honorary Advisor, CoE) started the session on Disability Inclusion by objectivising the need to change the way in which people see disability and in-turn ensure that employees with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to progress and develop within the organisation.

The session aimed to:

- distinguish between the medical and social model of disability
- demonstrate appropriate use of language and etiquette while addressing an individual with disability
- learn to empathise and understand the challenges and obstacles faced by persons with disabilities on a daily basis
- identify what equates to reasonable adjustment/accommodation
- explore the barriers faced by persons with disabilities everyday
- create an inclusive work environment

Mr. K. V. Ravichandar (AGM & Training Head, SBI Foundation) also shared his experiences with regards to the right etiquettes to be observed while interacting/helping persons with disabilities.

External speaker for the workshop was **Ms. Tiffany Brar (Founder, Jyothirgamaya Foundation)**, who is the receiver of National Award for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities - Role model category. The award has been instituted by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Given her army background, Tiffany changed many schools in her growing up years and thus, she speaks 5 languages. She recalled being bullied as a child for her disability and described being spoken down to. She spoke about discrimination in mainstream/military schools and lack of inclusion in special schools. However, she refused to settle for anything less than she deserved.

Tiffany spoke about her love and acceptance for her disability and why her disability does not define her. With a view to help others accept their disability, she founded Jyothirgamaya Foundation in 2015 where she helps to create a barrier-free environment for the visually impaired, empowering them to use their potential,

contribute and also at the same time be at the forefront of society. Jyothirgamaya is India's first mobile school for individuals with visual impairment.

Tiffany also took the opportunity to highlight the need for banking services to be accessible, in terms of design and technology. Speaking from personal experience, she said the persons with visual impairment still find it difficult to sign bank documents, and are denied **ATM cards, cheque books and Internet banking**. They are also perceived as dependent on their family members; they are seen as lacking independent agency to make their own decisions. And while RBI has stated that banks have to take necessary steps to provide all existing ATMs/future ATMs with ramps so that wheelchair users/persons with disabilities can easily access them, most ATMs continue to **remain inaccessible**. She also voiced her concern over the new notes introduced post-demonetisation that are proving to be very difficult for persons with visual impairment to recognise due to almost similar sizes. While braille letters have also been printed on the new notes, the impressions of braille get eroded with use.

Tiffany's talk was received with a **standing ovation and one of the participants announced that as a "sighted person"**, he believed that Tiffany had opened his eyes. Tiffany's talk was followed by a short lip-reading activity to help the participants understand that lip-reading is not easy without usage of sign language/gestures.

The session closed with a vote of thanks which was delivered by Mr. Nixon Joseph (President & COO, SBI Foundation).

After the workshop, **Dr. Vijay Singh Shekhawat (General Manager, RBI Academy and Welfare) and other dignitaries committed** to making banking and RBI more inclusive and accessible for its employees and therefore, they look forward to continued dialogue and engagement with SBI Foundation.

Please find the pictures from the event attached below:



Mrs. Padmaja Nair
(Honorary Advisor, CoE,
SBI Foundation)

Mrs. Padmaja Nair sharing her thoughts on 'Disability Inclusion' and 'Equal opportunities' for PwDs employees within the organisation.



Ms. Tiffany Brar
(Founder, Jyothirgamaya Foundation)

Ms. Tiffany Brar (Founder, Jyothirgamaya Foundation) spoke about 'discrimination in mainstream/military schools' and 'lack of inclusion' in special schools.



Mr. A. K. Sarangi (CGM, HRMD at RBI) and other dignitaries from RBI and SBI Foundation committed to make banking and RBI more inclusive and accessible for all its employees.



Submitted by: Team CoE, SBI Foundation