

# SAAJHI SAMAJH 6.0

Including Disability at the Workplace: From Aspiration to Action



## EVENT REPORT

December 6, 2021

## About Tech Mahindra Foundation

Tech Mahindra Foundation (TMF) is the corporate social responsibility arm of Tech Mahindra Limited, a Mahindra Group Company. The Foundation set up in 2007, as a Section 25 Company (referred to as a Section 8 Company in the Companies Act, 2013), has been working tirelessly in the areas of education, employability, and disability, with a keen focus on corporate volunteering.

The Foundation works with the mandate that 50% of its beneficiaries are women and 10% are Persons with Disabilities. Over the year, it has impacted 290,425 direct beneficiaries across all programs. Additionally, the Foundation continues to serve the nation through the 572 COVID Relief Projects\* across 17 states in India.

## Our Focus Areas

### EMPLOYABILITY

SMART (Skills-for-Market Training) is the Foundation's flagship employability program to empower youth from economically backward urban communities. It provides them with the requisite employability skills through structured training programs, ensuring that they are placed in suitable dignified jobs. The Foundation has been implementing the SMART program by establishing a network of SMART Academies and Centres - run both directly and through other partner implementing agencies.

### EDUCATION

The Foundation works in Government schools through its ARISE (All Round Improvement in School Education) program with the objective of holistic development of children in these schools. Moreover, Shikshaantar is the Foundation's training program focusing on teacher empowerment and capacity enhancement through modern-day subject matter and pedagogical practices. The Foundation has also launched Mobile Science Lab, where a bus equipped with hands-on activities of EVS (Science) visits the Government schools to facilitate the learning of students from Classes 3 to 5.

### DISABILITY

The Foundation believes that there is Ability in Disability. With the focus on creating an inclusive world and providing a life of dignity and confidence, we are working in the area of education and skill development for children and youth with disabilities, respectively. This is done through ARISE+ (All Round Improvement in School Education for Children with Disabilities) and SMART+ (Skills-for-Market Training for Persons with Disabilities). ARISE+ is a program that encourages children with disabilities to become a part of mainstream education. The SMART+ program focuses on providing employable market-related entrepreneurial skills and opportunities to youth with disabilities.

### VOLUNTEERING

Corporate Volunteering lies at the heart of Tech Mahindra Foundation's ethos. Employees volunteer and contribute to driving positive social change while simultaneously enhancing their own capacities for empathy and compassion. This is how we *#RiseforGood!*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tech Mahindra Foundation expresses its sincere gratitude to all the leading industry experts including corporate veterans and professionals from the government, social sector, and civil society who are working towards making workplaces inclusive for persons with disabilities (PwDs). The profiles of all the speakers and panelists are given towards the end as annexures. We are thankful to all of them for agreeing to be a part of this discussion platform and sharing their valuable inputs. It will surely help us to shape the advocacy towards understanding the significance of creating a conducive work environment for PwDs.

A special thanks to Gaurav from Noida Deaf Society (Delhi), Satyabrata from Youth for Jobs (Kolkata), and Sunder Raju from Deaf Enabled Foundation (Hyderabad) for their support in sign language interpretation during the discussion.

We are also grateful to our parent company, Tech Mahindra Limited, for extending its support towards the cause and the event. Last but not the least, we acknowledge the Saajhi Samajh core team for making this event a success.

**Concept Lead:** Chetan Kapoor

**Event Coordination:** MSB Sudheer Babu & Chhavi Bhardwaj

**Core Contributors:** Sajid Ali, Shormi Roy Choudhury, Tanish Maheshwari, Nidhi Gupta, Supriya Das, Praveen Kumar, Bitupan Boruah, Naima Urooj, Aishwariya Durgia, Neha Soneji, Mrinal Roka, Sudip Chakraborty, Anjan Lohani, Archana Sharma, and Kunal Ghosh

©2021 Tech Mahindra Foundation

*Material from this publication can only be used with acknowledgment.*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1. INCLUDING DISABILITY AT WORKPLACE: FROM ASPIRATION TO ACTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. ABOUT THE EVENT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. DISCUSSIONS: SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1 SEGMENT 1: EXPERIENCE SHARING - EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE	4
3.2 SEGMENT 2: EXPERT AND INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE	7
<b>4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>5. CLOSING REMARKS</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>6. ANNEXURE</b>	<b>15</b>

# INCLUDING DISABILITY AT THE WORKPLACE: FROM ASPIRATION TO ACTION

## *A Call to Action for Employers in Corporate India*

On 6 December 2021, Tech Mahindra Foundation hosted an expert-led virtual panel discussion as a part of the seminar series titled 'Saajhi Samajh (or Shared Understanding)'. The sixth edition of Saajhi Samajh with the theme - '*Including Disability at the Workplace: From Aspiration to Action*', was organized on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disability. The discussion was aimed at bringing out affirmative action steps from employers and experts on how we can promote the idea of an inclusive workplace for PwDs.

While policy directs every employer not to discriminate on the basis of disabilities, PwDs still do not experience equal access to mainstream education or find suitable/desired job roles in the workplaces. The population of PwDs represents an untapped pool of skills that can only help the business grow, but due to the existing misconceptions, prejudices, physical and information barriers, their connection with the outside world is deeply affected.

Tech Mahindra Foundation, the CSR arm of Tech Mahindra Limited, has been working for Youth with Disabilities for over 10 years now. Its employability program, SMART+ prepares young men and women with a diverse range of disabilities (like visual impairment, hearing/speech impairment, and locomotive disability) for workplaces. The program provides hands-on training and exposure to the rich curriculum and learning resources that help them develop life skills and support them with jobs to become financially independent.

The Foundation decided to collectively brainstorm on how workplaces can realize the benefits of employing PwDs from structural to tactical perspectives. Interesting conversations, dialogues among stakeholders, and some unique insights were shared by our stakeholders and experts.

### The key questions addressed during the discussion were:

1. How can disability be looked upon as an opportunity?
2. Why and how should recruitment of PwDs become more central to the recruitment strategy of all companies?
3. What are some of the best practices an organization can follow to create a conducive environment for the personal and professional growth of PwDs.
4. What more can be done on the part of the industry and the government to improve the skills of PwDs so as to ensure better integration for them in the workplace?

## ABOUT THE EVENT

This event was a gathering of eminent personalities and professionals from the industry, corporate, government, and non-profit organisations. Our audience included our stakeholders and partners working towards promoting employability for PwDs. All the experts gathered together on an online platform (Zoom) on the morning of 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 to discuss the idea of building an inclusive work environment altogether. This discussion was divided into two segments followed by a keynote address by our leader. Throughout the event, our sign language translators - Gaurav, Satyabrata and Sunder Raju supported us with interpretation.

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS

In this segment, we heard views of the corporate veteran on the importance of inclusion and the steps taken by TechM and the Foundation towards the disability sector.

Keynote address by CP Gurnani, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD), Tech Mahindra Limited (TechM).

### SEGMENT 1 - EXPERIENCE SHARING - EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

In this segment, we heard voices from the ground where the SMART+ Alumni students and their immediate employers were gathered to share their experiences of working together.

**Moderator:** Chhavi Bhardwaj

**Participants:** Rahul Das - Location HR and Mohua Parihari - Picker from Mahindra Logistics (Kolkata); Mohammed Jeelan - Head of Operations and D. Rama Lakshmi - Sales Associate from Essencea Infoserv Pvt. Ltd. (Hyderabad); and Pradeep Kumar Katta - Test Analyst and R. Asha - Accessibility tester from Tecfinics Technology Pvt. Ltd. (Hyderabad).

### SEGMENT 2 - EXPERT AND INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

In this segment, the panelists came together to discuss the theme - *Including Disability at Workplaces: From Aspiration to Action*.

**Moderator:** MSB Sudheer Babu

**Panelists:** Ravindra Singh, CEO - Skill Council for Persons with Disability (SCPwD); Aradhana Lal, Vice President, Brand, Communications & Sustainability Initiatives - Lemon Tree Hotels; Shivani Dimri, Manager HR, D&I Lead - BigBasket; Prateek Madhav, Co-Founder & CEO - AssisTech Foundation (ATF); Ravi Gopal, Program Head, BPS, Tech Mahindra Limited.

## DISCUSSIONS: SUMMARY HIGHLIGHTS

### KEYNOTE ADDRESS



#### CP GURNANI

Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director  
Tech Mahindra Limited

“ Today, the idea of an inclusive workplace goes beyond an HR policy, or a Diversity & Inclusion department, or a headcount. An inclusive workplace needs to be the natural order of things for any workplace, and a necessity in today’s times when the need for breaking silos and creating level playing fields is more than ever before. Hence, Tech Mahindra Foundation has taken the initiative to talk about this critical and sensitive issue through this forum.

The pandemic has brought home the reality of disparities in our society. As a corporation that has always taken its social responsibility earnestly, Tech Mahindra has taken several steps to embrace this reality and address it with vigour and passion. At Tech Mahindra, we are intentionally diverse and globally inclusive. We believe that diversity is the missing block of the puzzle that will unlock future growth opportunities for enterprises across the world. It is more important now than ever for businesses to embrace workforce diversity and reap its complimentary benefits in terms of increased creativity and profitability. Persons with Disabilities represent an untapped pool of skills that can enable businesses and industries with unique opportunities.

Even as we are affirming our commitment to inclusivity at Tech Mahindra, it is a matter of pride for me that our Foundation has been working on the theme of improving the lives of PwDs since its inception in 2007. We at Tech Mahindra have enshrined in our CSR policy that at least 10% of all the beneficiaries of TMF will be PwDs. In FY 20-21, we supported over 4,400 persons with disabilities, which is 14% of our overall beneficiaries. We are doing this through our ARISE+ and SMART+ programs, wherein we are providing special education to children and employability training to youth with disabilities. We are committed to reaching out to a larger number of PwDs through these programs in the future.

”





## SEGMENT 1: EXPERIENCE SHARING - EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

Discussion on inclusivity is incomplete without hearing the voices from the ground. Hence, we assembled a few of our SMART+ alumni and their immediate employers to share their experience of working together. In this segment, we heard their journeys and experiences at the workplace.

### EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE

The selected alumni shared their individual experiences and insights into how they feel empowered at their workplaces irrespective of the challenges they have faced in their lives. The courage and confidence with which these students shared their personal experiences were extremely heartening and had drawn a lot of attention and appreciation.

#### Journey of our SMART+ Alumni



**Mohua** is a 22-year hearing Impaired student from Kolkata. She is an alumna of Tech Mahindra Foundation's SMART+ Centre - Youth for Jobs. Mohua shared her experience of facing difficulty to get a job and how after getting trained in the SMART+ Centre led her to get employed in Mahindra logistics with a decent salary. Due to COVID, her father lost his job and she took up the responsibility of supporting her family with daily needs. She also financially supported her brother for his admission. Her parents are always concerned as she can't hear, but today Mohua is confident that she can take care of herself and support the family with her job.

**Rama Lakshmi** is a visually impaired student from Hyderabad. Her father passed away at an early age and she has been raised by her mother. Since her childhood, she is getting free treatment from LV Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad for her eyes. She is the only earning member of her family and unfortunately lost her job during COVID. LVPEI institute supported her during the COVID crisis by getting her trained in their SMART+ Centre. Now, she is working as a Sales Associate at Essencea Infoserv Pvt. Ltd. She has been awarded with top sales performer and got appraisal with salary raise within just 3 months. Today, Rama Lakshmi is very happy to work in her organization as her management and team are very supportive, where they take good care of the special needs of PwDs.



**Asha** is a visually impaired student from Hyderabad. She was associated with LV Prasad Eye Institute and underwent IT training from SMART+ Centre. Presently, Asha is working as an Accessibility tester in Tecfinics Technology Solutions Pvt Ltd. where she is responsible for testing Google products. She talked about the friendly and warm environment at her workplace and how she feels confident and resilient after joining the organization. Today, she has developed a sense of financial stability and independence with her job.

## EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

The employers shared some significant takeaways from the industry and corporate sector. The discussion highlighted the benefits of hiring PwDs, their work-related capabilities, and measures that organizations are taking to create inclusive workspaces.

### Work-related Capabilities of PwDs



**Rahul Das** from Mahindra Logistics, Kolkata shared that Mohua is a dedicated, responsible and a humble employee. Just after a few months of working as a picker, she was promoted to the senior picker, and was awarded the star performer for the year, twice.

Mohammed Jeelan who is the Head of Operation at Essencea Infoserv in Hyderabad shared that Rama Lakshmi is performing better than the normal employees and has topped the sales for many months.

Pradeep from Tecfinics Technology Pvt. Ltd. shared that during various situations at work where a normally sighted person would miss out on detail or take it for granted but they were timely pointed out and corrected by the PwD team members. These experiences clearly talk about the commitment and focus shown at work by the PwD candidates.



## Specific Profiles for PwDs



**Pradeep** from Tecfinics Technology shared that they hired Asha and other PwD candidates as their client requested their perspectives on the accessibility of their products. He further shared that their team was amazed to see the results produced by PwD employees and emphasised that including PwD candidates at workplaces will make the digital space more accessible.

“

*I have encountered situations at work where a normally sighted person would miss out on a detail or take it for granted but they were pointed out and corrected by the PwD team members.*

- Pradeep

”

-As quoted during the event

## Creating an Inclusive Workplace Environment



**Mohammad Jeelan** from Essencea Infoserv Pvt. Ltd. talked about how his organization is taking the utmost care of PwD employees by creating a conducive environment for them. Before the PwD candidate joins the organization, the HR team implements various strategies to sensitize the employees on interacting with PwDs. The HR team cascades the message at every level to establish inclusive workplace. He further shared that at the organisation, every team has a PwD employee and they have rolled out certain guidelines for each team leader and manager for taking utmost care of individuals with disabilities.

These interesting experiences shared by the employers tell us how there are some specific need-based roles that are the right fit for the PwD candidate.

“

*Individuals with disability have a different zeal in them and they want to do their best at work.*

- Mohammed Jeelan

”

-As quoted during the event

## SEGMENT 2: EXPERT AND INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE



### RAVINDRA SINGH

Chief Executive Officer

Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPwD)

### Mapping Disabilities to the Appropriate Job Roles

SCPwD is trying to understand and identify various job roles where the PwDs can find gainful employment. They adapt these job roles to specific disabilities in terms of learning methodologies, learning outcomes, monitoring, and assessment. In the past 6 years, 250 courses have been adopted for differently abled people. Organizations are willing to hire locomotor, SHI, and VI disability but for Persons with Intellectual Disability is still a challenge. There are organizations that have hired people from the Autism spectrum and given the best innovation award to a person who is autistic. It is important to understand that these people are not in any way disabled but differently abled and they are brilliant in what they are doing. We just need to identify their brilliance of application. It's the joint responsibility of the industry and government to identify the true potential and right area of expertise for the PwDs. To make change happen, skilled manpower from the industry and training sponsor approvals from the government needs to go together.

“Skill development is the joint responsibility of the government and industry. It is important to understand that these people are not in any way disabled but differently abled and they are brilliant in what they are doing. We just need to identify their brilliance of application, where we can apply it.”

- Ravindra Singh

-As quoted during the event

### Aligning Job Roles to Government Schemes

A lot of courses have been brought up by the SCPwD as a part of a structured apprenticeship program under the government scheme. This will allow the industries to hire people from the program and get benefitted by the scheme. Industries need to identify the areas and trades that can be put forward to the government for its apprenticeship program scheme.

### Integration - A Key to A Sustainable Culture

A culture of integration plays a key role in sustaining PwDs at workplaces. Integration is a continuous journey that requires a specialized role to do that. SCPwD has developed a specific job role called the *job coaches for inclusivity*. It helps the industry to integrate PwDs' abilities and overcome the challenges of attrition.



## ARADHANA LAL

Vice President

Brand, Communications & Sustainability Initiatives

Lemon Tree Hotels

### Benefits of Including PwDs

Lemon Tree Hotels started working with PwDs 14 years ago as an experiment. After practicing for years, it was identified that the work done by PwDs is much more efficient. From the productivity point of view, they are 15% more efficient. As an organization, the organisation's goal is to increase the hiring of employees with disability from 16% - 30%. The attrition rate has also been reduced leading to an improvement in the engagement level of the organization. Like other employees, PwDs work six days a week with nine hours a day shift and together they make an integrated team.

“ Our Housekeeping Room Boys (hearing) clean about 19-20 rooms a day, while our Speech & Hearing Impaired Room Boys clean about 22-23 rooms a day. So, if you look at it from a productivity point of view, they are about 15% more efficient.

- Aradhana Lal ”

-As quoted during the event

### Disability as an Integral Part of the Organization

Considering inclusivity as a business model and HR strategy, appropriate training in Indian sign language (ISL) is given to the colleagues and team members of PwDs. Once trained, they were able to understand their jobs and tasks well that led to higher engagement levels and integration in the team. Understanding the customer and employees' perspectives through surveys, the Lemon Tree Hotels identified that the employees are satisfied and proud to be associated with an inclusive organisation. This becomes another powerful reason to support PwDs at workplaces.

### Career Growth and Trajectory for PwDs

Individuals with disability contribute in many ways to an organization. It is important that we support their career trajectory. The idea of early hiring of PwDs and grooming them internally through capacity building and leadership training should be considered as this will strengthen an organisation's vision of inclusivity and diversity.



## PRATEEK MADHAV

Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer  
AssisTech Foundation (ATF)

### The Role of Technology

Employers need to understand that hiring PwDs is beyond their good productivity rate at work. As a matter of fact, they bring a different perspective to increase the innovation quotient of an organization. Assistive technology can help in increasing the innovation quotient. India won 19 medals at the Paralympics; it can go tenfold with assistive technology. If it can happen in sports, it can happen in corporates as well. There are brilliant technologies developed in India and outside, which can help speech and hearing-impaired employees communicate effectively. Also, using it, a visually impaired person can go to the washroom or the respective office spaces on their own.

“Employers need to hire people with disabilities for not only their skills and productivity but also for the value they add beyond. As a matter of fact, employees with disabilities bring different perspectives and can increase the innovation quotient of the organization.”

- Prateek Madhav

-As quoted during the event

### Five Principles of Inclusivity

To include disability at workplaces, organizations and industries need to work on five principles including 1. workplace preparedness, 2. sensitization at all levels, 3. structural readiness - policy and procedures within the company, 4. talent and recruitment strategy, and 5. enabling integration in the organisation. Aspiring for change will not just happen by hiring PwDs but by changing the framework and including assistive technology. There are reports where within three to six months of joining PwDs left the job, so joining is not an issue but integration at workplaces is. However, one also needs to focus on governance and impact as well. Organisation should not only focus on the number of PwDs hired, but they should also talk about the happiness quotient of these employees.

### Technology as the Gamechanger

While the focus on job mapping and internal training will support workplace integration, creating a *playbook of all the assistive technologies* can certainly go well while hiring PwDs. As technology is changing the way we do our day-to-day activities like shopping or banking, having a playbook along with all the artifacts and collaterals will enable the organizations to understand the possibilities of the PwDs after their recruitment. If we equip PwDs with enough tools and technology, it will not only be productive but also bring in the perspectives for growing the business.



## SHIVANI DIMRI

Manager HR, D&I Lead  
Big Basket

### Job Mapping to Integrate PwDs

The first step towards diversifying the workplace is job mapping. This is done to identify the set of jobs within the organization where PwDs can be the best fit. People with speech and hearing disabilities fit very well in the retail and e-commerce setup. They are offered with packing profiles wherein products like cereals, fruits, etc. are packed.

### An Inclusive Ecosystem

Another significant HR perspective is building an ecosystem that accommodates respect and equality, altogether. The organization's culture needs to reflect that there is no charity work and including disabilities is only on the basis of capability. Every leader and team member should be sensitized to work with PwDs and trained in ISL. To ensure PwDs are as efficient as others, they go through rigorous training. They are trained based on their needs so that they are confident enough to deliver in the same way as other employees.

### Providing PwDs with the Right Opportunities

Some roles in the retail sector like the picker and packer profiles have worked well with the PwDs. These profiles require a focussed and committed approach that inherently is a part of PwDs. They have shown high productivity not only at work but also in terms of attrition, and absenteeism. In fact in some of the areas they are even more productive than other associates. So, it clearly builds a case for the entire retail industry to hire PwDs and equip them with the right ecosystem.

The retail sector has also hired PwDs for their delivery roles, operations, data-entry, MIS executive, and customer support executive. The HR vertical has taken care that there is no demarcation between PwDs and normal employees, the person who is performing better is moved to the next level, keeping the career path same for all employees.

Employers should focus not just on including them but providing them with correct opportunities and career path, so that they feel empowered and included. It is not just about including them but enabling them.

“*In terms of attrition, absenteeism and productivity, people with disabilities are scoring much better numbers. This clearly builds an excellent case to hire them, equip and train them and provide them with the right ecosystem where they will deliver fabulous results.*”

*Inclusive workplaces should not just be about including them but also about enabling them so that they feel empowered.*

**- Shivani Dimri** ”

*-As quoted during the event*



## **RAVI GOPAL**

Program Head, BPO  
Tech Mahindra Limited

### **Envisioning a Conducive Environment for PwDs**

Corporates like Tech Mahindra Limited supports inclusive workplaces. Organizations need to work on integrating PwDs with other team members so that PwDs feel happy and comfortable at work. Managers and leaders need to do a lot of sensitizations for creating a safe environment for PwDs, spaces where they can make mistakes and learn from them. The impact sourcing incubation team at Tech Mahindra is sensitizing employees by doing webinars and training programs at every level to make sure that they build a conducive environment with equal opportunities.

“Organizations need to be flexible and adaptive. They should be ready to review and realign PwDs to the best-suited profiles.”

- Ravi Gopal

-As quoted during the event

### **Organizations Need to be Flexible and Adaptive**

It is important to review the profiles PwDs are working for. If the candidate is unsuitable for any particular profile, organizations should analyse it and realign accordingly through job mapping or providing need-based training.

### **Changing Mindsets**

The inclusion process takes time. The corporates have not hired PwDs earlier, so there is already an assumption that including disability is time-consuming and may affect the quality and organisational processes. Organisations need to believe in the capabilities of PwDs. It is important to include the world around us - the clients, vendors, and stakeholders. The journey of inclusivity needs to be celebrated and shared with the people around. When it is not a topic of discussion but part and parcel of the work, only then it will be known that the objective of changed mindsets is achieved.



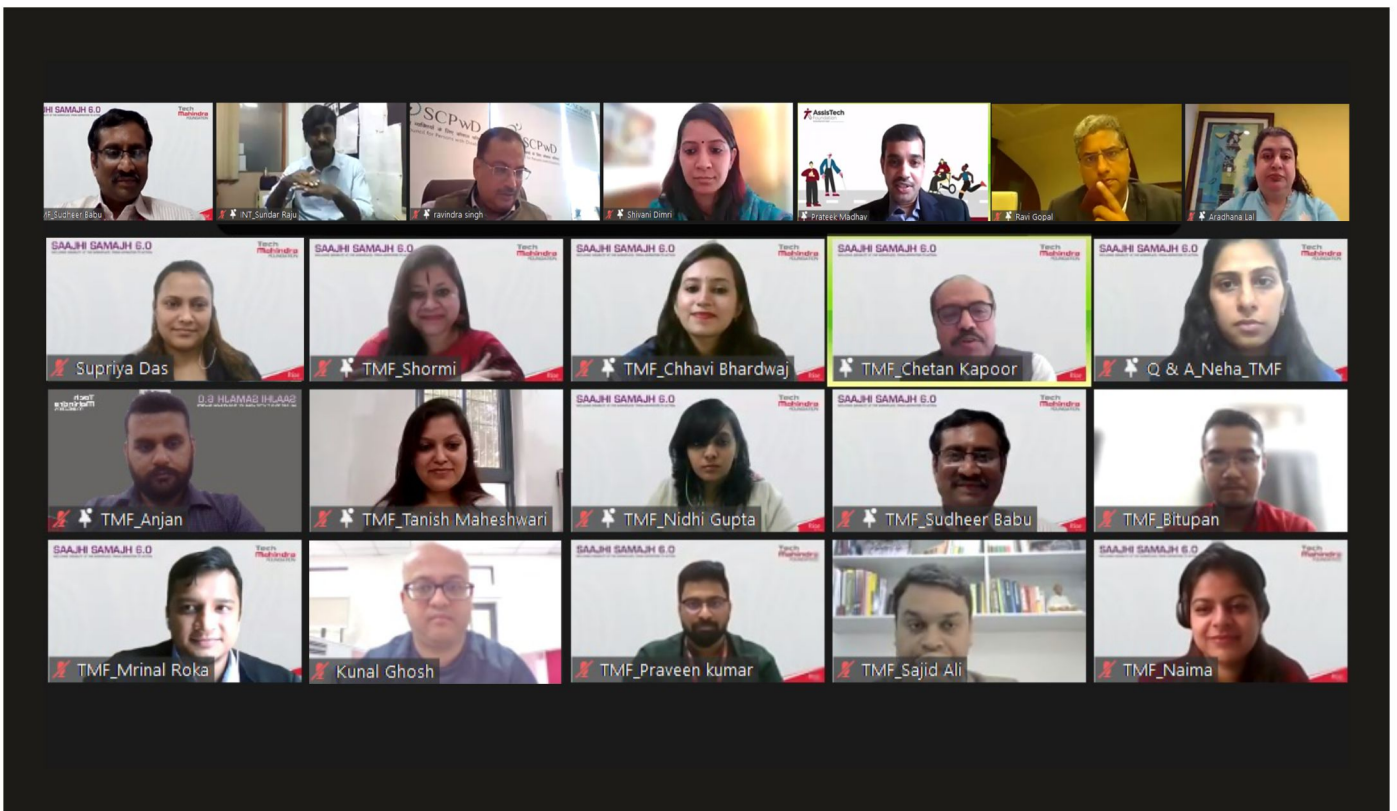
## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

### How can we ensure that individuals with disabilities get equal opportunities at the workplace?

Based on the insightful discussions and valuable suggestions from the employers and panel of experts, some specific recommendations are proposed to create equal opportunities for PwDs at workplaces:

1. **Identifying Right Opportunities to Integrate PwDs** - The first step towards diversifying the workplace is job mapping. It is done to identify the set of jobs within the organization where PwDs can best fit into. Organizations need to be flexible and adaptive. They can review the profiles of PwDs and if the candidate is unsuitable for any particular profile, they can review and realign it accordingly by incorporating it in the job mapping process.
2. **Creating an Inclusive Ecosystem** - A significant step for inclusive workplaces is building an ecosystem that accommodates respect and equality. The organization's culture needs to reflect that there is no charity work and including disabilities is only done on the basis of capability. Every leader and team member should be sensitized to work with PwDs and must be trained on ISL.
3. **Internal Capacity Building and Leadership Training of PwDs** - Organizations need to ensure that PwDs must be as efficient as others. They should be trained based on their needs so that they are confident enough to deliver in the same way as other employees do. It is important to support their career trajectory and growth. The idea of early hiring of PwDs and grooming them internally through capacity building and leadership training can play an important role in reducing the attrition rate.
4. **Awareness About Government Schemes and Policies** - Organizations need to be aware of the schemes and policies formed by the government for PwDs. This will help them in building HR strategy around recruiting and sustaining PwDs in the organisation.
5. **Promoting Inclusive Workplace, everywhere** - It is important to include the world around us – the clients, vendors, and stakeholders. The journey of inclusivity needs to be celebrated and shared with the people around.
6. **Building a Sustainable Culture** - To bridge the gap of integration between PwDs and other employees, some new job profiles can be defined. For example - Job coaches for inclusivity. The responsibility of the job coach can be to identify challenges of integration and recommend strategies to create an inclusive culture for PwDs. This can also support organizations to overcome the challenges of attrition.
7. **Exploring Technology and Innovation** - Assistive technology can help in increasing the innovation quotient. Equipping PwDs with right tools and technology will enhance not just productivity but support the business growth as well. Organizations must actively explore new innovations and technology.

## GLIMPSES FROM THE EVENT





## ANNEXURE SPEAKERS' PROFILES

### **Ravindra Singh, Chief Executive Officer at Skill Council for Persons with Disability (SCPwD)**

Mr. Ravindra has vast experience with Quality Assurance and CSR Implementation. Before he took charge of SCPwD, he has a demonstrated history of working in the mining & metals industry. He is a skilled professional in Talent Management, Business Development, Organizational Development, Employee Engagement, and Business Strategy. The Skill Council for Persons with Disability (SCPwD), since its inception in October 2015, has been working on mobilizing training partners towards fulfilling the skilling initiative of PwD under the PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna meaning Prime Minister's Skill Development Plan).

### **Aradhana Lal, Vice President, Brand, Communications & Sustainability Initiatives at Lemon Tree Hotels**

Aradhana is a TedX Speaker and leads brand/Communications/Sustainability Initiatives at Lemon Tree Hotels. The company's strategy is to build an inclusive employee base and has been hiring Employees with Disabilities (EWD) for 14 years. The goal is to take this to from the current 16% to ~30% in FY 2025-2026. Aradhana is an MBA from IIM Ahmedabad and has 28 years of experience in Sales, Marketing, Corporate Communications, and Sustainability. She was earlier Vice President - Sales & Marketing at Lemon Tree Hotels. Aradhana was previously Sales & Operations Manager at Hindustan Lever Network. (formerly known as Aviance), the multi-level marketing business of Hindustan Unilever. Prior to that Aradhana was with the Taj Group of Hotels.

### **Prateek Madhav, Co-Founder & CEO at AssisTech Foundation (ATF)**

Prateek is a Jaipur-born, NIT & IIM Calcutta-educated, corporate-digital-technology-leader turned happy-social-entrepreneur. His belief in technology making a significant impact in the lives of people with disabilities encouraged him to give up an 18-year-old career in the IT industry to focus on promoting disability/ assistive technology start-ups through his venture AssisTech Foundation (ATF). ATF has impacted the lives of 4.22 Lakh (422,000) people with disabilities through its portfolio of 21 assistive technology startups with 50+ assistive technology products.

### **Shivani Dimri, Manager HR | D&I Lead at BigBasket**

Shivani is an MBA graduate from IIT Kharagpur with close to 8 years of work experience in Corporate. In her present profile as D&I lead at BigBasket, Shivani works in close collaboration with the Corporate and Regional Leadership team for designing and formulating practices - to create a workplace that is truly diverse, inclusive, equitable with a culture of belonging.

**Ravi Gopal, Program Head, BPS, Tech Mahindra Ltd.**

Ravi is a Sales & operations-focused professional with over 25 years of experience across diverse industries, geographies & business functions. Ravi holds an MBA degree from Oxford with close to 15 years of multifaceted BPO industry exposure in Operations, Vendor Management & Sales. In his current role in Tech Mahindra, with the vision of inclusivity and diversity, Ravi and his team have designed an incubation Program to help the Impact Sourced candidates succeed in life. In the last 1.5 years of his journey with Tech Mahindra, around 185 candidates have been recruited from various sources under the Impact Sourcing category.

**Moderator:**

**MSB Sudheer Babu**

Program Director, Employability, Tech Mahindra Foundation

## OUR **SMART+** PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



**Empower Youth**  
Learn. Earn. Grow.



## TECH MAHINDRA FOUNDATION

📍 C/O Harijan Sevak Sangh, Gandhi Ashram, Kingsway Camp,  
New Delhi – 110009

Registered Office: Oberoi Gardens Estate, Chandivali, Off Saki Vihar Road,  
Andheri (East), Mumbai - 400072

✉ [info@techmahindrafoundation.org](mailto:info@techmahindrafoundation.org)

🌐 [www.techmahindrafoundation.org](http://www.techmahindrafoundation.org), [www.smart-academy.in](http://www.smart-academy.in)

