



ENABLING CHANGE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Hello All – Welcome to this very special webinar on the topic, *Enabling change for persons with disabilities*.

Let me start by stating that this is the decade of delivering on the promise of digital and technology—a time to redefine growth and work in new ways to help address the unprecedented challenges we are all facing. We should, as individuals, companies, governments and communities come together to address important issues, one of them being acceleration of disability inclusion.

Accenture's new global research finds companies that fully include employees with disabilities grow faster than their peers. Yet, employees with disabilities around the world told us that they often feel excluded and unsupported. It's no wonder that 77% of employees and 80% of leaders with disabilities choose not to be transparent about their disability at work.

What can be done? For employees with disabilities to feel their full potential can be reached, the workplace culture must change – but first leaders must see the need. More than 60% of leaders believe their companies are supportive, but only 20% of employees with a disability feel the organization is fully committed to this support.

In this webinar, we'll attempt to cover points that will help in promoting the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities. And, points for us to take action to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society and development.

So, let's hear from the panellist who have joined us today. Before that, a quick introduction of these industry luminaries we have with us today. Today, we have with us

Seema Arora – she's the CII Deputy Director General

Shanti Raghavan – Enable India Founder and Chief Enabler

We have Aradhana Lal – Lemon Tree's Vice President for Brand, Communications & Sustainability Initiatives

We have Pavithra Y.S. – Vindhya Info Founder and Managing Director

We have Aravindan Madhava Murthy – ANZ, COO of the Bangalore Services Center

Now, let us begin with understanding the progress we have made so far in India regarding disability inclusion.

Nizar: Seema, we'll start with you. As a country,



how far have we progressed in including persons with disabilities into the mainstream? From your vantage point, what progress do you see?

Seema: Thank you so much. Good after noon everyone. It's a pleasure to be here with you all, addressing this very important issue. Well, you ask as a country how far we have progressed. I think specially in India, the pivot of change have been through policy and legislation but in the social sphere and specially in the disability movement, the civil society has really played a key role in urging the government to come up with these specific policy and legislative action. The pivot in my mind was two-fold, one in 2004 when India took the step to ratify the UN Convention of Rights of Persons with Disability and the convention required that India implements the rights and guarantees provided in it and also makes new laws or changes in the existing laws in order to bring them in conformity with the convention and this resulted in the big step that was the notification of 2016 of the rights of persons with disability that was you know notified by the govt and really that shifted the narrative. It shifted that from a discriminatory lens that was earlier there to a universal legal capacity and empowerment of PWDs and in my mind that really has been the pivot that made the change for the Indian context. Also, I would like to say that the credit goes to the advocacy of the social sector which really worked hard ... we have representatives here who have enabled the change ... this is in my mind the pivot as I see it.

Nizar: Shanti, you've been in the thick of things, having founded Enable India and armed with grassroot-level experiences. Can we have your views on the progress you have seen?

Shanti: First of all, thank you so much for having me on this and congratulations to Accenture for the report. I really appreciate that. So ya, I see two things, one is institutionalization of things like the RPWD Act that Seema mentioned and the second is change makers. So, institutionalization I have seen in the form of our Skill Council of Disability forming, Seema herself

has been instrumental in the CII India Business Disability Network getting formed being part of the ILO. So, institutionalization means sustainability. We have the Valuable <Finder?> Movement which has been launched at the WEF which says the company and the CEO are going to put disability on the board agenda. So, there are these kind of things which I see which are huge for the sector. Second, I see are the change makers. Now, this is where it gets interesting. I see rural change makers. I will give you a brilliant example. Urban change makers. Rural change maker – a trans man, that means was a woman, now man, married, in a wheelchair. So, a person with disability and is married to a lady and is an NGO leader in their own right. That's the king of landscape I'm seeing. Emerging. There's more to go I'm sure. But such a change maker, every time they go out, they are making a difference in society. I see NGO leaders out there who are now truly understanding the value, you know, that they have put in. Because that's the reason you see so many leaders who are persons with disability. I see so many leaders who have been created, thanks to this partnership we did with Accenture, that's the Enable Vaani. It's a rural social, networking platform. I see people solving their own problems. One, persons with disability crowdsources solutions on how do I get a skill without going out for skilling? How do I do things? And somebody tells get a loan, get your own grocery shop and lo and behold this person has a grocery shop nw. So, persons with disability working as a community solving their issue that's the future I see happening more and more. Other examples are I am seeing that there was a positive movement of persons with disability working in the govt and PSUs but to make them a productive workforce, a lot of NGOs have worked, we have also done work. Today, you go to a small rural Karnataka panchayat and you will see a panchayat development officer who's blind who's working on the computer and doing things there just like everybody else. Just imagine what happens to the farmer there who may have a disabled person and then says wait a minute if this person can be a panchayat development officer, my



child with disability also can. So, that's the future I see.

Nizar: There's absolutely no doubt that persons with disabilities are a large, untapped source of talent. I'm told that persons with disabilities represent about 15% of the world's population – but very few are in employment; for example, just 6.5% in China, 25% in India and 31% in the US.

Let me now come to Aradhana and Aravindan. From a corporate perspective, what is your view on the progress? What's aiding it or what isn't working well? And, what according to you, can be done to accelerate disability inclusion in India?

Aradhana – can you go first?

Aradhana: Ya, sure. Thank you so much Nizar and thank you so much for having me on this panel at Accenture. So, if I think about what works, I want to state that in the last 10 years what we have witnessed in terms of change in the environment. It comes from legislature, it comes from advocacy and it also comes through action. So you are asking us about what we are doing as a corporate and I think that's really where the action will unfold eventually because if the government legislates, if there are laws to help them get education and skilling, if the social sector supports them and gives them that vocational skilling and professional skilling, then it's really up to the corporate sector and the PSUs of course to hire them because if they don't get hired, this entire chain will break down. So, what I'm seeing change in the last 10 years is the open-mindedness and the ability for organizations to see that hiring people with disabilities makes business sense and that's the key reason why Lemon Tree Hotels went for it when we started this work in 2007 --- started as an experiment --- but very soon we saw that there's actually a sense to it, a business sense to go forward and continue. This impacts the employee morale, it impacts the creativity of the team and very beautifully it impacts customers. We will talk more about it later. But it works out

in a way that it's part of your HR strategy, it's not something that you are doing out of any sense of charity at all. It's the way you run your business, it's absolutely central to it. So, I think this has what worked for organizations who explored it so far. If you ask me, what doesn't work, I would say that if you are not open to this idea, then that organization is not going to move forward. Also, sometimes, there are other kinds of hurdles to do with skilling, to do with sourcing, to do with movement. You know, the issue is that public transport sometimes doesn't aid a person with disability in going from his house to his workplace and back. That becomes a bit of a hurdle in this country whereas in other countries public transport is of a very different order. So, there're many reasons why it doesn't work. But I think we should put out focus on what works and take that conversation in that direction. That's what I want to say right now. Thank you.

Nizar: Aravindan – how about you?

Aravindan: Ok Nizar this is the advantage or disadvantage how you at things. When you go last, most of the things are already said. But there are a few things which I wanted to share. But this is an absolute privilege to be among the wonderful people here and thank you for this opportunity. And for Accenture to pull this together and sort of showcase this approach to the larger community. There are 3-4 things which I thought is very key in terms of what progress we have done over the number of years now. I think the canvassing of disability in India has really made a difference and that awareness has made a huge difference right. You take the simple example of this National Education Policy. Now they are asserting that children with have opportunity for participation across the education system. I think from the grassroots level we have to tackle this. The second biggest thing for us especially as an organization has been the experts and the people who have been involved in this. I don't hesitate to call their names at all---Enable India, Vindhya, Vishesh and Samarthan have been huge support in terms of making things happen for us. So that's the second thing. And the large



forums where they have partnerships with CII is a huge big play <not clear/audible> Ambition House and Valuable 500 those institutions have made much more awareness which is created across the group. And finally, the last point what I want like to bring through is this breakthrough in technology. As simple as even if you take this Teams setup here, we can actually have captions in the Team where we actually translate or convert our voice into transcripts. So, we have come a long way. We can't sit down and be happy about it, we have a long way to go. I think fundamentally, I think the things which I think can be done better is the Indian education system. I think we have some way to go there. We can tap into these, penetrate into these areas at a very early stage and not towards degree or undergrad stage that will really help pin down the whole thing. From an infrastructure perspective, when we see some of these developed countries right from the footpath to the pedestrian walkway and what not—all of those things are so friendly for the differently abled. So, that's something that we need to really look at but I think the task is cut out. We have....as corporates, we can come together and make a huge difference to the society. So that's where we are heading towards Nizar.

Nizar: Thank you Arvindan. Pavithra – you managed to integrate business and philanthropy more than a decade ago. What has been the progress in disability inclusion from your views?

Pavithra: Thank you for having me on this panel. And I think ..I see...there's a lot of difference. I see a strong trend toward acceptance and that's the most important thing from the day I started to where I am. I don't see there are very few people. Today there are lots of people joining me on this journey of inclusion and that's a massive difference and which is the strong me. Earlier, if you were talking about accessibility, I mean that was a language, which was never understood. Today, most of them speak the same language which itself says that there is a lot of change, there is a lot of acceptance which is happening but are we there yet? I mean a decade, do we see the change? Yes, we are yet

to see the change I mean there's a lot more to be done ...well, Shanti was mentioning about the rural and the urban difference. I mean even in rural today while we are speaking, while we are doing so many things, there's a whole lot of difference from an urban kind of employment and acceptance to the rural thing. So, from that aspect, I fee there's a lot more to be do. But we're very happy we have arrived here. And I am sure we will see happier days as we go along because as I said there are a lot more people in <inaudible>.

Nizar: Now, before we move into the next section, let me share my observations. There has been a spike in Inclusion & Diversity initiatives across industries in India. Let me give an example – At Accenture, we strive for best-in-class practices—from digital accessibility and flexible work arrangements to workplace accommodations—that empower our people to contribute value in meaningful ways. And, complementing our efforts is our Accessibility Center of Excellence, along with Accessibility Centers in seven different locations around the world, providing spaces to interact with accessible technology and demonstrate accessible design leadership and best practices.

Other companies are invested and committed in their own ways. Having said this, we seem to employ only a fraction of eligible persons with disabilities. Pavithra and Aradhana – there seems to be an unconscious bias around leveraging PWDs in client-facing roles. Research proves otherwise. Would you like to weigh in on this with your experience?

Pavithra – let's begin with you.

Pavithra. For me, unconscious bias is something which is automatic, right. All of us here want to give that opportunity, have that empathy. But, you know, it's just that function in your brain, it automatically comes, oh, maybe they cannot do, I mean this is something. So, there is, I mean, all I am saying is, yes we are all bound by perception because the fact that we have not studied with a child, student or a friend who's a



person with disability or we have grown with somebody. So, there will be these bias. I mean if you ask me, can it go right away by just saying that ok we have had this awareness session and after that we aren't going to be biased? Not at all. Unless you have been a part of their journey. Like at Vindhya what we do, we do not assume and we ask. I think that's where you can come out of your bias and say there's probably a person you know with low vision, not necessarily needs a <not clear/inaudible> or <not clear/inaudible> what they need is a similar system, probably with a magnifier. So, that kind of differentiation or acceptance happens when you are with them. And that's very important. Aradhana, to you.

Aradhana – I agree with you P. It's about how we can see their ability and go beyond their disability. So, at Lemon Tree, we are a hotel company. Today we've got 82 hotels in 50 cities. When we started this initiative, we were hardly even 10 hotels. And the team that was there with us at that time, they had never come across disability before, so naturally they had an unconscious bias because that's how they grew up. They didn't really play with people who had a disability, they hadn't studied side by side with them, when they went to their hotel schools, there was nobody with a disability at the hotel schools. It was something very unusual for them. So initially, we did face resistance. But there was a way to overcome it—through sensitization, through sharing, through storytelling etc. I think the way to move beyond that bias is to build culture. And that's one of the things we have done very well and in a very focused manner in these 13 years at Lemon Tree. And it's something that we share when we come to forums like this or when we talk to companies directly—that you initially mandate it from the very top of the organization but as it becomes a part of thinking a part of culture that all the leaders and the leaders in the making and even the team members they all start understanding, believing and absorbing that culture very well and that culture is simply this: focus on the person's ability and don't just look at the disability. And when you assign a role, give the

role in a manner that the disability will not come in the way of doing his work or her work. So, actually in the end, it's a <not clear/inaudible> working in the team whether in the restaurant, whether in housekeeping, whether in the bell desk, they are delivering and the customer is getting exactly what he or she wants. That's all that matters. We are a hotel company offering services to our customers and a person with disability can add offer as well sometimes even better than a person without disability. So it's just the proof. You can see it.

Nizar: I completely agree, Thanks Aradhana and thank you Pavithra for sharing your thoughts. Now moving onto Shanti now, can you please share how you are bringing about institutional changes in inclusion, let's say leadership, digital etc. And, possibly enabling others to facilitate change?

Shanti: Good question. I'm glad that people talked about unconscious bias and I must tell you when you go to either Vindhya or Lemon Tree you will see people in the frontline. They have not said it, they are being modest but I can tell it you just feel like – oh my God, I belong there and why? Because you see that these companies are seeing value in a person, that's all. Now, we actually have a word for this. We call it "includability." It's a competency, one big "aha" moment we had is that when we have been coaching leaders, almost 20,000 leaders we have coached over the years we realized that it's not...what's been happening and Aradhana and Pavithra we don't realize it's not only sensitization, there's a lot of without realizing skill-building that's happened. There's a competency building that's happened, right. What is that? Actually, you will see the disability, you need to see the disability interestingly. When do see the ability? When do see the disability? Let me give an example, right. When you need to include—oh, does somebody need captions right now? Aravindan you were mentioning. When will we need the captions? Oh, there's somebody hearing impaired...or somebody who has a problem with their system or something. So, you need to see the disability



for inclusion. You need to see the disability to find solutions. Lemon Tree has brilliant examples of how they have done that. you need to see the disability when you want to create a level-playing field. The kind of opportunities given by many companies, including what we have done in Mission 1000 where ANZ is a member of that is giving exposure opportunity, incubation opportunity—car washing, different types of opportunity, which allows the person to grow up the ladder and then come into the company. Some will make it, some won't, you know. So, that's when you need to see the disability interestingly. But when you want to be social, when you want to normalize differences and that time, you want to know more about the person, which makes the person complete. It requires a skill, a discipline—oh my God, I have never met a person who's intellectually disabled, can you find out three more things which make you comfortable about them? That requires a skill, a discipline. Hey, what do you like? You like cricket? I like cricket too. And that's how you get comfortable. So, there's a cognitive dissidence that happens with respect to disability. Do I see the ability? Do I see the inability or disability? The truth is, you need a cognitive resonance on when to, you know, look at what and do you do with it and basically for getting delivery from anybody you need to keep improving the expectation, keep on pushing what the ability and keep on finding a solution and co-creating any solution for the challenge. So, this is part of our includability framework and we do a course at IIM for senior leaders exactly for this and this is the way forward. We feel that companies need to institutionalize leadership which learns to have the competency of having includability. Sorry, I may have gone a little longer but I was a little passionate about that.

Nizar: Thank you. Thank you Shanti. From unconscious bias to institutional changes – we seem to have garnered some very interesting perspectives. But I believe the success of any intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervener. So, let us now understand from Aravindan the source from where he operates. Aravindan - you are an ardent advocate of

inclusion of PwDs. What was your motivation?

Aravindan: Nizar I think, I don't know how people are going to take this but I personally feel every one of us have some disability ok. So, let's start from there. So, my philosophy and as I grew up and my mother taught me one important value system, which is: Treat people with dignity and respect. Because that's sort of the foundation for all of us irrespective of what walk of life we come from. That's the underlying principle in terms of treat people with dignity and respect. Fundamentally, my philosophy has been we have ability in disability. So I think that's the fundamental thing which we all have to go about and that's the way I sort of grew up. But then when you marry the organization's value system and I am talking specifically about ANZ. ANZ has a very strong value system-based and it starts with the purpose. And the purpose says: To shape a world where people and communities thrive. So when your personal value system and the organizational value system sort of come together, that's the best outcome you can look for to actually promote all of these initiatives across and it's sort of even better when you have similar thought process coming from a number of organizations and probably pardon me from repeating it Enable India, Vindhya, CII and a whole lot of ecosystem which is built around us really makes it special to progress that much more faster and rapidly in today's world and what we have also created within ANZ is not just look at hiring within the organization we also went ahead in terms of looking at who are our vendor organizations who can come along this journey. So, <<Haathi Toffee?>> and then you know Mithee Café and Athansee the icecream parlour. So, we actually created that ecosystem, just not restricting within the ANZ network but going beyond that. And that's been a great success story for ANZ to progress this far. The game is not over by any means, we still have a long way to go but I think this sort of quick wins help you to progress really well and showcase what can be done as an organization and in the larger industry setup. So ya.



Nizar: So, Seema, your work involves networking with industry, government and community-based organizations to develop policy instruments and innovative voluntary approaches. What have you been hearing about the progress toward equality of PwDs?

Seema: Actually Nizar, as was mentioned by other fellow panellists, CII has created this network called the India Business Disability Network and Accenture is a founding member of this network that we launched last year. And within a year, we have more than 100 members joining us, which really goes to prove that industry and companies are getting more serious about this issue. Partly, as we all know, is about the policy the government has brought in, which is the IPWD Act which is a strong piece as was mentioned. But also, you know, there are now incentive schemes. The department of Disability Affairs, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has announced a scheme for employers employing PwDs, which is something that we are outreaching. As we speak, not many companies are aware, we need to make them aware. And in fact, even the scheme is not notified in a proper notification. So we are requesting the ministry through our policy advocacy to notify the scheme properly and create awareness. Ofcourse, you know, we work a lot with organizations like Enable—Shanti is here—Sharthak, Vishesh who really work very hard and are committed and bringing about a positive change. So, as was mentioned, you know, CII is a platform and the platform allows all of these organizations to work together, to create that ecosystem that we need to create to bring this positive change whether it's with government, whether it's with community-based organizations or whether it's with industry champions many of which are here and we want to keep on just growing this movement. That is our desire.

Nizar: Over the years, companies have created a conducive environment to work for PwDs. However, we must be mindful about the perception gap between what leaders think is happening and what employees with disabilities

think is the reality—a disconnect that underscores a lack of openness on both sides. That brings us to the significance of fostering a “culture of equality for all.” Let’s hear from all about this key aspect to building such a culture.

Aradhana, one of the key aspects of Lemon Tree is the strong training programs that you have which has enabled you to employ 11-12% of your staff with persons with disabilities. What has been your learning of the impact of training on the workforce to support disability inclusion?

Aradhana: Thank you Nizar. So, training, you know, I would put that into two parts. One part would be the sensitization and briefing of the entire employee base because you know before you can bring in set of people who have different needs and special needs, it's really important for the whole base to understand why is Lemon Tree doing this, why is the organization doing it and also how shall I as a team member, or as a supervisor or as a manager, how shall I contribute to this journey? Because otherwise, they are not trained to work with someone who's deaf or someone who has low vision or take in a member who's autistic or train someone who has Down Syndrome. They don't know how to do it. So, I would put training into two parts. The first part being sensitization and briefing of the entire team, about disability in general as well as specifically when you bring in new disability. So when we brought in autism, we had to teach them what that was all about and what was the best way to train an autistic person. So, we ran a training program. Similarly, Down Syndrome. Similarly, for acid survivors and so on. The second part of the training is ofcourse the training of the people with disability because they may come from a background where their education is not complete. Maybe they have done school partially. Maybe they have not done college or maybe they have. Also, even if they got vocational skilling, they would not have been taught every task the way you need to come and do it inside the hotel. You have to be taught that once you are part of the hotel company naturally because each hotel does it differently. So the idea is that training has



to be done in a manner that does two things. One, it must include each and every disability. I am doing a housekeeping one-on-one training where I am teaching how do you clean room, I cannot just have a trainer who's speaking because if there are deaf room boys who are being taught, I need somebody who's also speaking in the Indian sign language. So, it's for us to equip our training sessions in a manner that a deaf person, a person with low vision, a person with physical handicap, any kind of physical disability can be part of that session. So, we've built that skill and we have built that ability over the years. When it comes to intellectual disability there's a need to separate and run a different kind of traineeship because there there's a lot of role play required. You may need to use more video than normal. You may need to simplify it. You need to repeat. The same thing you may have to say three or four or five times. So, we run a traineeship. In this case, we need the support of a special educator who comes from the NGO. In Delhi, our partners are Muskaan for intellectual disability and Action for Autism for Autism. And they will support us and then teach our managers. So, here's a very wonderful thing that's happening, Nizar. They are teaching our managers how to engage with someone who's autistic or someone who has Down Syndrome or is a slow learner. Now, this person over period of six months or a year suddenly becomes very knowledgeable about that disability. So if a guest comes who's autistic to your restaurant or comes and stays in your hotel, imagine that housekeeping person or that restaurant staff knows exactly how to engage. So, do you know what happens to our customer base? In fact, we often get groups in our hotels. These are special interest groups. So there will be a team of deaf people who come for an Indian cultural ..from outside the country ...who come for an Indian culture exposure. They could be a team of people who are all on wheelchairs looking for rooms. So, there's a wonderful impact even on our customer base. So, this is how we incorporated training in the system.

Nizar: Aravindan, what elements in your organization's culture are helping persons with

disabilities advance in their careers? What's your view specifically about your having clear PwD role models & employee resource groups within companies?

Aravindan: So, Nizar, as I mentioned earlier, the purpose of the organization is absolutely clear and I will just repeat that. It says: To shape a world where people and communities thrive. So that tone has been set up right from the top of the organization. We are talking about the CEO of the organization driving this. And when you take a leaf out of that and then sort of zoom into the Bangalore service center, that message is absolutely crystal clear right from our managing director Venky to actually cascade this and lead that from the front because he's been a phenomenal supporter for PwD things to progress. So, what we did we sort reached it because we want to sort of go into this diversity and inclusion council and we formed 4 specific groups under the D&I umbrella and the managing director is the chair for this entire piece. So the four groups/network are: one was for the disabilities network, one was Pride network, third one was <<COVID?>> this is for promoting women leadership in the organization and finally the <CST?>. If I zoom into the disabilities network, again we reached out to people who are passionate about this, people who volunteered themselves over and above their day job. That has resulted in phenomenal success for us to penetrate into larger forums outside the organization and get this talent into the organization. The other piece is, we got to celebrate success so we have made sure that we have sort formed a network and in fact as simple as a Whatsapp group where we have these people celebrating all of their successes and making sure that they feel respected and treated with dignity. And that goes a long way in terms of ensuring an equal organization across the board. The fourth element is on the piece where we have set up star awards. This is an annual award where we identify people in this category who have gone out of their day job. One of the things which we are very, very conscious about is not differentiate performance and be empathetic with these set of people



because they have a high level of dignity and respect and which we need to acknowledge that. So, we need not differentiate that way but we need to acknowledge the phenomenal contribution they make. So these are the ways we have formulated different groups within the organization and it's reaping really big benefits. And it's a word of mouth and cascading effect. Has a multiplier effect, right. So when people see that people from diverse groups are recognized and rewarded, that goes a long way in terms of putting that extra effort to make things happen. As opposed to sometimes we hide behind the fact that I am part of this community, I need to be shown sympathy. I don't think that's a fair thing to...even they don't like that. So, this is a really hard way we have come through and we are really making good progress for us as an organization to support this whole set of network.

Nizar: Great stuff, Great stuff Aravindan for sure. Other factors that help foster a culture of equality include flexible working options & freedom to innovate. How do you think this will play a role in accelerating disability inclusion? Pavithra if we can have you share some of your views here.

Pavithra: Absolutely. I think the fact that being in the entire ecosystem or rather all the stakeholders that inclusion helps that in itself brings in a lot of change. Yes, flexible working hours and not ...I look at it in two different ways. It's not just the community or the set of people you have been part of but also the people who are supporting them you know it could be the family...the family should feel that they are being respected they are being appreciated and they are leading a life with dignity and respect which I am sure all of us are working towards. I think that's where you know the true change will happen. Our customers whom we are working with also identify and appreciate you know the kind of work we are doing with a set of people. Why? There's no discount on the deliverables, on the expectations, but you know you are very happy about it. So, there's a change there as well. Even not just that, around our office we have never seen people coming forward and accepting you know people the way they are

talking. Today, somebody comes in and says you know I saw this girl at a bus stop and I know she's a person with disability but now I feel there's a place where I can bring them and there's hope. I know she will get some direction to know move ahead. That's the kind of change. Yes, there's innovation, innovation in the mind for people after acceptance which can actually drive a lot of change.

Nizar: Thanks Pavithra. Seema, let's hear from you.

Seema – I think culture is the most essential element according to me. It's really the fabric of the organization and I think it was very well articulated by my earlier panelist but I would say the key to changing the culture and bringing that culture of respecting everybody needs to start from the top and here the Valuable 500 initiative is really I think bang on there when we say that it needs to be discussed at the board level, it needs to start with the board level engagement. Also, there's a need to create more role models. And we heard about that how important it is to create role models. It's also important to also reward people and recognize. I think it's also important to reward the people who are more into including the people with special ability. So not just award the people who have the special ability but normal people who have shown the empathy they need to be awarded too to create that culture of includability as we mentioned. Capacity building is key as mentioned by Aradhana so well. So build the capacity to do that. What's also very important is to start calling out behaviors which are not acceptable. I think a key part of building that culture is listing out the non-negotiables which the organization will not accept. Finally, I think, in terms of the culture change we also need to look at the conversation now changing from maybe inclusion to integration. I say that because when you say that we are being inclusive it's like saying somebody is excluded that's why we are including you and we are doing you a favor. In fact, we should say we want to integrate you because that's something that will help us as an organization. And I think the next part of our journey should be



to say how do we integrate everybody? And it's integrating people with normal abilities as well as people with special abilities. So that's the culture we need to really move on to. Thank you.

Nizar: Thank you Seema. Shanti, over to you

Shanti: It's all the points mentioned you know. Culture, ecosystem and institutionalization. For example, sensitization is being done to everybody. But very often we see that when there's a change management, when a leader changes, that new person who has come may not know what to do. So, when you institutionalize that and just make it a part of change management, this what you do. When manage a company, this is what you do. Some companies do it really well and some are in the path right. I want to tell you something unusual. For example, Aradhana, I want to institutionalize includable leaders. You need to know your assets—that person who went on teaching that autism person is now an asset... Give him a status—of includable fellow. So, it's not only that they will be able to handle customers with autism and their families. They are part of ...this is the includable guru. Anybody who comes in and wants to start becoming inclusive about other people, doesn't know how to do it works, shadows this person. You know, I think it's the institutionalization of leadership and calling includable leaders. We actually want this to be the norm. Maybe Seema, we do this at CII IBDN where there is a list of includable fellows. When you move, you put that up in a resume. So now you tell me Nizar, are we on our way to be in an equitable world? it doesn't come naturally to everybody and we should be mindful that it is the inability of some many people not to be inclusive not because they are bad. Nothing. Inclusion is a process. Inclusion is tough. If you don't include your own inability, when you can't accept yourself, you can't accept others. When you don't find solutions for yourself, you will never expect it in others. So, only when that person works on their self-development, they can be inclusive of others. It takes time. Let's allow the others to get that journey. So, hence institutionalize these whole set of assets ...these

includable leaders... and we are good to go.

Nizar: It's very clear - If people feel a sense of belonging and are valued by their employers for their unique contributions, perspectives and circumstances, they are more likely to advance and feel empowered to innovate.

It's also evident that the community of persons with disabilities is full of career aspirations and talents. They are creative, thoughtful, sensitive and determined. It's up to employers to provide strong leadership, flexible policies and inclusive environments so that persons with disabilities can develop confidence, fully belong and truly soar.

In closing, let me reiterate – this is the decade of shared success with people, companies, governments, organizations and communities coming together to address important issues: equality, human rights, climate change and future of work, to name a few. Thanks to all our wonderful panellists. Truly hope, the perspectives shared here will enable viewers to take individual and collective action.

Thank you. Great. This was so inspiring and I could resonate with everything that was said. Thank you so much.

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