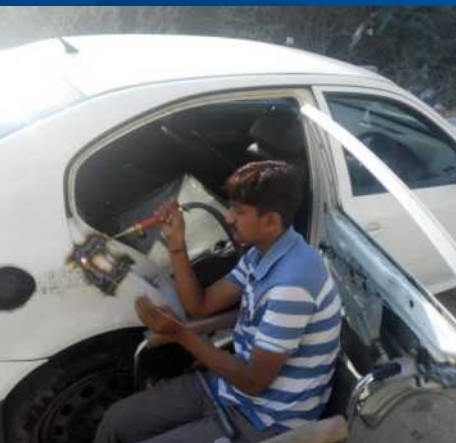


# RISE STARS IN FIRMAMENT



RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND  
MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE  
AHMEDABAD







# **RISEING STARS IN FIRMAMENT**



**RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
AND  
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AHMEDABAD**



## **Rising Stars in Firmament**

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## Preface

It is a great pleasure on my part to have been associated with the most humble and memorable work of honoring and also being instrumental in presentation of awards to Divyangs (Differently Abled Persons) for more than 10 years on behalf of our organization Rural Development and Management Institute.

My experience has been unique and most satisfying to have worked with these Divyangs for more than 50 years. I had the privilege and pleasure of working for Divyangs at Mumbai for more than 40 years alongwith my wife, Smt. Nandini P. Divatia, who devoted her whole life for the welfare of this segment of society. It was she who enthused me to work for these wonderful gifted individuals. After having associated with them, I could see change in my life, in the sense that I have been overwhelmed and highly impressed with these lovable individuals who have changed my inner self.

I have seen the remarkable performance of Divyangs in handling their self affairs, and more so, as in their employment. This booklet presented herewith depicts randomly selected few cases and their triumph with destiny, the kind of progress that they have shown with small encouraging awards provided to them by our organization. All details of their performances are given in this book-let and I see these Divyangs have not only shown a great success in their performance but also shown their capability to make the life full of joy and enthusiasm.

One thing that one could learn from these differently abled persons the sincerity which they exhibit in the vocation that they have undertaken. This has lured us to take up more work for them. It is on account of this that our organization is seriously thinking of starting Entrepreneurship Development Center for these differently abled persons.

**P. J. Divatia**

Hon. Chairman

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018







## Acknowledgement

We are extremely thankful to **Mrs. Nandaja Gautam Divatia** who generously took up the responsibility of bearing all the expenses for this publication. We are indebted to her forever.

Writing the life stories of these *divyangs* (differently abled persons) was hard work. **Mr. Dinyar Dastoor** helped edit the text and give final shape to all the stories presented here. We are thankful to him for his support.

I acknowledge the support of all the **institutions** with whom our awardees are connected and the parents of the awardees for freely sharing their stories with us.

My heartfelt thanks are also due to all the individual and institutional **donors** listed at the end of this book for providing their valuable help and support to this noble cause.

Finally, we take this opportunity to appreciate the work of the survey team of **RUDMI** and all other staff members who contributed in different ways in preparing this small publication.

Ahmedabad

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

**Dr. Manda Parikh**

Director

Rural Development &

Management Institute (RUDMI)

*“However difficult life may seem, there is always  
something you can do and succeed at.”*

~Stephen Hawking

*“Although the world is full of suffering, it is full also  
of the overcoming of it.”*

~Helen Keller







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## Late Smt. Nandini P. Divatia



*“She came as the wind of heaven, bearing  
fragrance of generosity and selflessness”.*

*“She came to seek nothing for herself but only the  
will to give that fragrance to those, whose lives she  
changed for ever”.*





1

## Standing on her own feet

**Name:** Rizwana Ishubkhan Pathan **Age:** 20 years

**Address:** Soni Talawadi, Dhrangadhra, **Dist:** Surendranagar

**Name of Institution:** Inter Rural Development Institute (IRDI), Dhrangadhra

**Year of Award:** 2017

Rizwana Ishubkhan, third daughter of Ishubkhan and Mumtaz, was born with two weak, uneven legs, in Dhrangandhra Hospital on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1998. Her father soon realised the seriousness of the situation and tried every medicine suggested by doctors, but it proved futile.

Eventually, he was asked to consult a “bigger” doctors in cities like Ahmedabad or Mumbai. However, being a rickshaw driver, he did not possess the necessary funds to be able to afford that. As a result, they accepted it as God's wish and tried to teach their daughter to live with the disability. Her mother carried her in her arms till the age of five.

The little girl was admitted to school at the age of six, like other children. As the school was located just half a kilometre away from home, her father used to take her in his rickshaw. The years in the school passed smoothly, without any major problem. She is studying at present for her last year of Commerce at Dhrangandhra and is likely to get her B.Com degree in less than a year. She has desire to study further and work in the field of education, or learn fashion designing and start her own boutique. At the age of 15<sup>th</sup> she learnt using sewing machine and make fancy dresses under the guidance of her neighbour Radhaben but she realised that without learning fashion designing she cannot earn much. But it is difficult to wait. She needs to earn for herself immediately as without which it is difficult for her to realise

her dreams of opening a boutique which can provide her enough money for further studies. The interesting part is that she is now ready and confident of going out and being away from her family and working towards a bright future.

She started stitching fancy dresses under the guidance of her neighbour, Radhaben, She found the work interesting and started using all her spare time for the same. Her grandmother had small grocery shop she helped this small grocery shop in own house. Thus, since the age of 18, she started earning and pursuing her higher studies in college.

She used to have several new ideas for her small shop, but money constraints never allowed her to execute them. The earning from the grocery shop remained limited to Rs.3,000/- to 4,000/- each month. She decided to invest award money in shop. She purchased a refrigerator from the award and started selling milk and other dairy products.

Rizwana is currently selling milk, butter, buttermilk, chocolates etc. besides food packets. Obviously, the number of customers has increased and so has her income. Now her sister also help her in the shop. The income from the shop immediately started increasing.

During these days Rizwana came to know about Inter Rural Development institute (IRDI). Her association with IRDI gave her new contacts and the necessary help to forge ahead. In





2016, IRDI suggested her to apply for the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled.' IRDI sent in her nomination which was accepted for the Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled.

She never expected that she would be given an award in such a large ceremony. She found the workshop and award ceremony both highly motivating. It was a good opportunity for her to

see other awardees and to share her problems with others. She returned home with enthusiasm and strong determination to create a new word for herself. Rizwana has a dream of studying further. Once the shop is set, she will hand over the same to her family and she will go to Surendranagar and learn fashion designing. She also wants to appear in competitive exams for government job.



2

## Woman with a mission

**Name:** Bhavitaben Amrutlal Chawda **Age:** 39 years  
**Address:** Khambara Village, **Taluka:** Anjar, **Dist:** Kutch  
**Name of Institution:** Shree Bidada Sarvoday Trust, Kutch  
**Year of Award:** 2014

Bhavitaben was a victim of the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, when more than 20,000 people died and around 1.25 lakh were injured. Unfortunately, that day, Bhavita was standing on the terrace when their house collapsed in Khambara village, in Anjar Taluka, Kutch district. She fell and her leg was trapped under the debris. When the rubble was removed, she was taken to the hospital and operated upon, but one leg was lost forever. She was shattered and became very negative after this incident. At the tender age of 21, her life became a burden for her.

At the Bidada Trust hospital, where she stayed for four months after this incident, she met Dr. Mukesh Doshi, Virendra Sankalia and Bachubhai. Slowly, she picked up mobility, learnt to be strong and positive, and look ahead. The Trust provided her with an artificial leg and trained her in its use. She also began to see that God was not all that merciless. This was the turning point in her life following which, she

decided to live a strong and happy existence.

After completing her studies in school, she joined Tolani Polytechnic at Adipur and learnt embroidery and screen printing, over the next six months. She also purchased a second-hand sewing machine. Her father, Amrutlal, was a vegetable vendor and her mother, a housewife. She had a brother and sister, of whom the latter was married.

Although in need of a life partner, Bhavita decided to not to marry and began stitching from home. In the beginning, being a small

village, she could not get much work, but she continued her efforts and now, gets more jobs from the village. She then decided to use her spare time to teach sewing and tailoring to other women. Her quest for being independent and her spirit to fight against all odds led her to participate in the Trust's workshops, functions, programmes etc. She won recognition in dance, mehendi,







claywork, among other things, and was even felicitated by the Viklang Adhikar Sangthan in 2009 for her personality. Further, she was the Chief Guest at a flag hoisting ceremony in her village, in the same 2009.

The Polytechnic gave her the opportunity of teaching sewing & stitching and paid her Rs.6000 for a three-month course. Soon she realised that instead of going as far as Adipur, it would be better if she concentrate son local women and began a three-month training programme on her own. By now, having got over of the shock of losing leg, she began to feel quite settled. **She also purchased an Activa scooter that improved her mobility substantially.**

In 2014, there came a new turn in her life. The Bidada Trust sent her nomination for the 'Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled,' which was accepted. Bhavita

had never imagined this and was very happy, as was her family. She was awarded with a cash prize of Rs.15,000, with which she immediately purchased six second-hand machines and decided to move from village to village and conduct off-campus training in stitching and sewing. **Till now, in the last four years, she has covered 17 villages and has trained 1700 women.**

Bhavita has a big dream for the future. **She is now a confident, empowered woman with a mission to help others to come up.** Her training classes are going on. She has plans to purchase a new machine, costing Rs.45,000/- which makes it possible to stitch new things. She said candidly that **"God has given us multiple abilities, so there is no need for despair on losing one type of ability. She said that in this world who so ever fights always wins"**



## Falling and rising again

**Name:** Rakesh Maheshbhai Rathod **Age:** 36 years  
**Address:** Amarbaug, City Bhavnagar **Dist:-** Bhavnagar  
**Name of Institution:** Ankur Special School for Mentally Retarded Children, Bhavnagar  
**Year of Award:** 2015

Rakesh was born in a cobbler's family in Bhavnagar. His father, Maheshbhai, was making shoes and chappals and was selling them in the market, and was earning him around Rs. 9000 per month. The family was quite content and happy. When he was three months old, Rakesh got fever and his brain got affected. Despite having scarce resources, his father ran from pillar to post, taking him to various doctors and hospitals, but all efforts proved futile. He was eventually diagnosed as mentally challenged. It was a big shock for the parents. But Parents decided provide with all possible support that he may require, with increase in age.

Rakesh was admitted in a special school; viz. Ankur School for the Mentally Retarded;

where the Principal, Meghjibhai, took special interest in him. He studied here for seven years and learnt discipline, neat behaviour, mobility and work culture; which changed his life. The school made special attempt to identify subjects of his interest and **he was found to have a deep interest in sports, following which, he was trained in athletics.**

Rakesh showed his special abilities in 100mtr cycling, running and softball throw. He began participating in various district, state and national level competitions and started winning. **This made him so happy that he became habituated to getting appreciation from others.** He is also a regular blood donor. He ended up being awarded at sporting events



at various levels: international (one silver), national (two silver), state (five gold, five silver) and district (four gold, four silver, two bronze).

The person who never ventured out of his city is now going to various places; until the day, he got a unique opportunity to represent India at the Special Olympics. With the help of Ankur School, he went to Australia.

**Looking at his sincerity to the cause, he was also appointed as office assistant at the School.** He was happy at this appointment and at being able to stand on his own feet.

Rakesh's elder brother helps his father in his work as a cobbler, as does Rakesh. However, his dream is to establish a Xerox shop. By God's grace, they have a good house. The family is ready to spare one room for the shop. Ankur School was likely to be his client and Rakesh was likely to earn Rs.7000 - 8000 per month. However he did not have money to buy the machine.



In 2015, when his name was selected for the award, he was asked how he would manage the balance funds; to which he replied that he would get a loan or wait till he collects the balance amount. He has kept the award money in a bank deposit and started saving from his monthly salary of Rs.3500, which has now reached a substantial amount. His parents are attempting to get more funds to bridge the gap. The

a ward ceremony, as well as the feeling of having money in his possession, has made Rakesh more confident, content, positive, hopeful and open to people.

Today, the family is happy that Rakesh has learnt office work, filing, office cleaning and riding a cycle. Rakesh himself is very happy at the recognition received. **His family says that Meghijibhai has changed the course of not only Rakesh's life but that of his entire family. The award has added one more bright spot to his existence.**



**4**

## A will to cope with life

**Name:** Sukhabhai Palabhai Chawda **Age:** 38 years

**Address:** Paliyad Village, **Dist:** Botad

**Name of Institution:** Viklang Kranti Sangthan, Bhavnagar

**Year of Award:** 2014

Sukhabhai is a man of high spirit and courage. He was born in 1980, in a marginal farmer's family, as a first child. Palabhai, his father, had five 'vighas' of land and a house in Paliyaad village of Botad Taluka. As agriculture became less and less productive, Palabhai's economic condition kept getting worse.

Palabhai died at a young age when Sukhabhai was just 10 years old and studying in the V

standard in the village school. The responsibility of maintaining his family with mother and three younger sisters fell on his shoulders. He was too young to understand the calamity. With polio in both the legs, he was unable to do any farming work. He also did not know how to sow or plant. For four five years, the land remained uncultivated and the family without any means of livelihood.





During these five critical years, Sukhabhai learnt several lessons of life. Although his father was a farmer, their community profession was one of cobblers. He began going with one of his relatives and learnt shoe polishing. At the tender age of ten, he left school and started polishing shoes with very limited resources. He started earning but soon could see that it was not possible to survive in this manner for long. Someone advised him to give his land for cultivating to others and charge rent.

Five years after the death of his father, he rented the farm and got Rs. 50,000, which made him happy. He decided to reserve this money for his sisters and mother and use the income from shoe polishing for himself.

When he was 22, his mother too passed away and Sukhabhai took on the responsibility of his three sisters. He got them married off and now at the age of 30, he is alone to manage his vocation and daily routine.

Meanwhile he came to know about Viklang Parivartan Trust of which, he became member and began attending meetings. He also started helping with community work undertaken by



the Trust. This trust told him about the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled' and sent in his nomination.

Sukhabhai came for the first time to Ahmedabad to receive the award. He had never dreamt of going on stage and receiving recognition, in the midst of so many people. Everything was so motivating that **he decided not to throw away his life – it was worth working hard and achieving something.**

He returned to Paliyaad with Rs.15, 000 and purchased different kinds of polish, leather, soles and other shoe accessories. He also bought a wooden cabin. Now he makes new shoes, besides polishing and repairing them. He is happy that his income has doubled and more and more people are coming to him. His next mission is to have shoe shop in the village.

***Through his exemplary courage, Sukhabhai has shown that what one needs is not just the physical body, but also the will and spirit to cope up with life.***



5

## Dreaming big and living big

**Name:** Jatinbhai Jayantilal Makwana **Age:** 38 years

**Address:** Vaniya Sheri, Dhrangadhra, **Dist:** Surendranagar

**Name of Institution:** Inter Rural Development Institute (IRDI),  
Dhrangadhra

**Year of Award:** 2015

Jatinbhai was born in a middle income family in Dhrangandhra, in which both, his father, Jayantilal and mother, Chandrikaben, were working. Jatinbhai's father was a factory worker at DCW, while his mother sold door-to-door saris in their own town. Dhrangandhra is a town with a population of about 75,000

persons. The combined income of both was enough to live a good life.

Jatinbhai was born in 1980 as a first child to the couple. When he was nine months old, his parents realised his legs were not normal and he was unable to stand. They took him to the hospital and got him extensive treatment,



which enabled him to stand on his feet and walk independently without any support. He was admitted to school, but could not take much interest in his studies. With great difficulty, he passed the 10<sup>th</sup> standard.

People advised him to shift over to stenography and computer typing. He took a year's training in a stenocum-computer course of the Gujarat Government and in 2000, obtained a speed of 60 w.p.m. in stenography and 25 w.p.m. in computer typing. He was then 20 years old and was eager to earn, at least for himself. He started looking for employment but could not find any. Meanwhile, his younger brother started a small trading business. Jatin too decided to do something similar, instead of continuing with his search for employment.

While he was hunting job, he had met a man named Vishal Rathod, and soon, both of them became friends. Vishal told him to learn photography and start working as photographer. The idea was good but where was the skill? Again, Vishal said that he would teach him photography. Jatinbhai joined Vishal and worked for ten years in his studio. During this time, he learnt everything, including Photoshop.

Jatinbhai's father expired in 2006 and he had to take on family responsibility. He was earning well working with Vishal. Around 2008, Vishal decided to shift to Surat, so Jatinbhai bought the studio and became the sole owner. The nine years' partnership had helped him run this photography shop independently. **He forgot his inability and difficulties and started doing outside**



**photography on the major social events like marriages.** Soon the camera became his source of life.

Over the years, his camera was getting old. He needed a digital one, which cost around Rs.29,000 and he did not have that kind of money. While looking for a solution, in 2014, he came in contact with Inter Rural Development Institute (IRDI). He was initially approached by IRDI for printing work and photography but then their relationship strengthened. He started giving discounts in prices. IRDI appreciating his commitment and strength

nominated him for the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award for Disabled' and he was selected for the award and cash prize.

This prize and award ceremony became a game changer in his life. He went back with motivation, understanding and positivity. He immediately purchased a digital camera, adding another Rs.14,000/- and decided to save money from his additional income. The digital camera increased his income from merely Rs.3,000/- to Rs.5,000/- to Rs.12,000/- initially Rs.15,000/- per month at present.

Jatinbhai's dream is to earn much more. He wants to make his studio advanced and unique. He needs a UV Printer for this, which costs Rs. 3.5 lakhs, but he is confident of collecting this sum in two to three years. He has not yet married and is searching for a suitable partner. Meanwhile, he is looking after his family and enjoying life.

He believes ***"If you cannot dream big, you cannot live big."***

***"It dose not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop"***

*~Confucius*





6

## A confident mother and woman

*Name:* Subhadra Babubhai Patel *Age:* 44 years

*Address:* Malpur Village, *Dist:* Arvalli

*Name of Institution:* Abhilasha Charitable Trust, Arvalli

*Year of Award:* 2016

Subhadra belongs to an Adivasi Taluka, Meghraj, of Aravalli District. Vav-kampa, where she was born, is a small village of this Taluka. Many Kutchi Patel's have settled in this area. Her father was one of them.

Her story starts from the age of nine, when she got polio. Her family owns 40 'vighas' of land and are involved in agriculture. She is the third girl child in the family. As agriculture was becoming more and more risky and less lucrative, her father took on a labour job in Dubai, in search of more earnings. She was then hardly one year of age. At the age of four, she contracted fever. The people of the village were totally **unaware of polio or its treatment, and could not understand its seriousness. They took it as a curse from God** and no one took her to the hospital for treatment. As a result, she lost the use of both her legs. She always feels that had she gone to the hospital, she would have been better off than what she is today. In the beginning, she found it very difficult to cope, but with time, she has learnt to manage routine mobility. Slowly, she learnt to live with her disability

She was admitted to the local school with her elder sisters and there she completed her study up to the 10<sup>th</sup> standard. She made good friends and enjoyed every moment in school. Unfortunately, she could not study further. Her elder sisters got married and there was only one bus in a day to college from her village. She was not able

to go up to bus stand unless someone supports her. There was no one in the family who could do so, as her brother was also busy with his studies. So she had to leave her studies in 1992. Thereafter, she had nothing much to do at home. Her brother was busy with agriculture. She passed ten years at home without doing anything. These were difficult times for her.

One of her sisters introduced her to Babubhai. This introduction developed into friendship and eventually, marriage. Her parents were not happy with her decision as her fiancé was very poor. They opposed it and tried to prevent her from getting married, but she was determined to do so. Eventually, she left home and married a man who did not have even his own house or a stable source of earnings. Her husband had a small shop of snacks in Malpur which earned him hardly enough for himself. Subhadra moved to Malpur from her small village.

Everything was new around her. The family did not help out, so the young couple began their new life in a rented house near the bus stand. Subhadra had no money to invest for any business. Fortunately, her friends helped out and she started a business of saris. She purchased saris and dress materials from Surat and sold it in Malpur with a reasonable profit margin. Soon she succeeded in building her clientele, but due to lack of capital, she had to forsake her profit margin. She





created her image paid the price of saris immediately after the sale without bothering about her needs. This created a good impression and more and more traders showed readiness to give her the necessary supplies. She now has scooter and moves from door to door without any dependency. This was the biggest achievement for her.

As her trade increased, she came in contact with Abhilasha Trust. The trust sent her nomination to RUDMI and she was selected for the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled.' This was a great moment for her. She had not received any recognition from anywhere before this. She came to Ahmedabad for the award and felt very motivated. She decided to invest the award money in the purchase of saris so that her business may expand.

Subhadra is now earning Rs.80,000/- per annum. She starts her work at 10:00 am in the morning, goes home-to-home to sell saris and comes back at 5:00 pm. She has two daughters. Now, people source their marriage shopping from her as well. She also helps her husband out. Her goal is to provide good education to both their daughters. The younger daughter often says that she wants to be a doctor, so that she can treat her mother's legs. Life is suddenly full of enthusiasm.

Subhadra wants to learn beauty parlour skills and also want to purchase a sewing machine which, in future, would reduce the need for travelling.

Her future appears very bright. **She is no more the silent, dependent daughter, but a confident mother and woman capable of achieving her dreams.**



7

## My skills, my strength

**Name:** Kaushikram Rameshbhai Panchal **Age:** 44 years

**Address:** Nilkant Nagar, Mandvi **Dist:** Kutch

**Name of Institution:** Shree Bidada Sarvodaya Trust, Kutch

**Year of Award:** 2015

Kaushikram was born in 25/09/1978 in the small town of Mandvi in Kutch district, a popular port of ancient times. Panchals are known for their entrepreneurship. His father Rameshbhai started his own welding shop in Bhuj after retirement from Gujarat State Transport Corporation where he was working as a welder.

Kaushikram was the only son. He used to move with his father and started helping him from the tender age of eight. In fact, he used to enjoy welding more than his studies. However, on everyone's insistence, he continued to study up to the 10<sup>th</sup> standard. After failing in the 10<sup>th</sup> board exams, **he joined ITI and took six months' training in "welding".**

**At the age of 16, he started working as a welder** and earning in a small way. He worked hard; those were the days when he dreamed of having a big garage.

Kaushikram got married in 2001. His wife was also enterprising – she used to sell saris, dresses etc. and earn from the commission provided by the supplies. Her business was good. After marriage, both of them decided to continue with their own businesses. Kaushikram got a job in 2007 as an instructor in ITI, which made them financially strong. Life was moving smoothly. Unlike his father, he loves studies and scores high marks.

The year 2013 brought a big jolt in this otherwise smooth life. Kaushikram was





thinking of purchasing a four-wheeler for his family and was on his way to Anjar to see a car. On the way, he met with an accident and lost the use of both his legs at a young age. Life became drudgery. Kaushikram was in despair and lost all interest in living. Hospital bills had put him in debt. One day, he met Dr. Ashok Trivedi of who gave him fresh hope. Through physiotherapy and other physical exercises, he made Kaushikram stand on crutches. More important, he gave him the courage to face his dire situation. Dr. Trivedi taught him everything about being independent; including wearing clothes, changing diapers, moving from one place to another etc.

Kaushikram now learnt to work, sitting on a wheel chair. **He started his favourite welding work again** Matruvandana KVK ITI, Bidada,



again invited him as an instructor and he started teaching welding.

When the Bidada Trust told him about his getting the award, this was the first good news he had received after the accident. He received Rs.15,000/- as a cash prize in 2015, which helped him to upgrade his welding tools by more efficient tools. Though his output is less than earlier, he is working the whole day. He provides practical training to other Divyangs in his

garage. At present, he is earning around Rs.6,000/- to 7,000/- per month from the garage and Rs.13,500/- from ITI.

He has now only one dream – to see that his son enters the Government civil service and make a name for himself. He is confident about continuing his work and move with the time.



## Success through perseverance

**Name:** Baldevsinh Rajendrasinh Parmar **Age:** 34 years

**Address:** Ayodya Township, Tarsali, **Dist:** Vadodara

**Name of Institution:** Society for the Training Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled (Sevatirth), Vadodara

**Year of Award:** 2013

Born in 1984, Baldevsinh is an energetic, computer-savvy youth. He belongs to Kunaba Village of Karjan Taluka. His father Rajendrasinghji worked at the Baroda Milk Dairy; so they left the village and settled in Tarsali. Rajendrasinhji had a regular salary and family life was happy. Baldevsinhji had cerebral palsy from the birth and his speech and left side were affected by it. At present his left side is not working

Baldevsinh did his schooling at Baroda and Alarasa village. He completed his B.A. in 2007 from Gujarat University (college at Vaghodia). When asked about his childhood, he said

there was nothing special about it. Before entering college he came to know about Seva Tirth an NGO working in Baroda for Divyangs. He joined Sevatirth to learn computer. He was then of 18 years. In six months he learnt CCC+ and procured DOEACC certificate.

He started looking for job on completing 18 years. He registered his name at the Employment Exchange, but even that did not help him to get good job and he came to know that the Government has invited applications for licenses for Fair Price Shops, and disabled individuals would get priority in selection. He





applied. His application was accepted and he got a license for Fair Price Shop in 2007. He immediately established a shop in Tarsali and started selling rations. Everything was going on well. In 2013 the Fair

Price Shops were digitalised. He bought a laptop for his shop. He wanted laser printer. But he had not enough money.

In 2013, Seva Tirth sent in his nomination and he was awarded a prize of Rs.10,000/- which made him very happy. He purchased a new printer from the award money. He also decided to take up computer data entry jobs and this added to his income.



Baldevsingh is getting now good amount of work. Life is smooth with income of Rs.8,000/- to 10,000/- a month. He got married and has three children. He is happy. He recently purchased motor cycle,

which increased his mobility. Now with a laptop and printer both, he makes bills on a computer and submits all formats the same way.

He is fully satisfied with his life and does not have any complaints. He believes that the credit of this should go to Seva Tirth. He does not have big dreams for the future. He wants his children to have good life a life of their own dreams.



## Making a difference through teaching

**Name:** Bhavik Bharatbhai Shah **Age:** 33 years

**Address:** Jarod Village, **Ta:** Vaghodia, **Dist:** Vadodara

**Name of Institution:** Spandan School for Mentally Handicapped, Vadodara

**Year of Award:** 2015

Bhavik is 33 years old and hails from Zarod Village, Vaghodia block, Vadodara district. He is mentally challenged from birth. His father has a small business of selling mathia and papad as vendor. It was a shocking moment when the doctor said "child is mentally challenged and no medicine would help him". The parents had never handled any case like this and had no clue about how to raise such a child or train him. They also had three other children and a difficult financial condition.

Bhavik did nothing till the age of 18. except moving in the village, talk with the people and come back home. His IQ being 30 to 35, the village school refused to admit him. Life was passing by, year after year, without any change in his existence.

In 2002-2003, his father came to know about Spandan School of Mentally Retarded. Though it was 22 km away from his village, his father got him admitted there. Bhavik got an opportunity to meet others like him in this school. He was taught everything at 'Spandan' – manners, communication, work etc. He also was involved in file and candle making. Being a slow learner, and having a problem with his hands and speech thanks to the caring behaviour of his teachers, he started liking school.

His father took him to school every day for 15 years. But now Bhavik does not need any support. **He goes back home from the school alone without any escort. Sometimes he gets lost on the road but has learnt to ask people**



**and reach home safe.** He has also learnt to make files and candles. Armed with a smiling face, he makes friends easily. The bus driver, conductor, policeman, postman etc. are his best friends. So now neither his parent nor is he worried about reaching home. He is now also helping his parents in selling mathia-papad etc.

In 2015, Bhavik was awarded by RUDMI and he was very happy when he was invited to the stage for receiving the award. His parents also came for the ceremony and the entire family returned home with fresh hope.

The cash prize of Rs.15,000/- was used for building up stocks of goods in their cart. Bhavik



is being involved more and more in their vendor business. Parents want to hand over their business to Bhavik.

At the moment, the business is not doing well. They have suffered a loss but are not disheartened. Bhavik is the main inspiration for continuing their vending work. They look at it as their future.

The parents are happy that the prize of Rs. 15000/ given to their son has changed his life as well as their life. **Bhavik's teachers say**

**that he has become source of motivation for others.** The income earned has not increased much, but life has changed.



10

## Dancing his way to success

**Name:** Ganpatbhai Gorthanbhai Vankar **Age:** 36 years  
**Address:** Tarunnagar, Society, **City:** Vadodara, **Dist:** Vadodara  
**Name of Institution:** V-one Society, Vadodara  
**Year of Award:** 2014

Ganpatbhai is a big dancer. Many will be surprised, but despite not having two legs and even calipers, Ganpatbhai is being appreciated for his excellence in dance.

He was born in 1982 at Mupur village of Padara Taluka in a weavers' community. He suffered from polio at the age of five and lost both his legs. His parents had no courage to raise and nurture him, so they admitted him in Apang Bal Gruh, Baroda, where he studied up to the 9<sup>th</sup> standard. As per the rules, he had to leave Apang Bal Gruh at the age of 14.

His teachers helped him to get place at the Indulal Smrak Trust, where he came in touch with V-One Society, an institute providing computer training to Divyang in Vadodara. He decided to learn computers and with their help, started living in a shared accommodation

with his friends. However, computers could not interest him. From childhood, he was fond of dancing and seeing others dance. He used to spend most of the time seeing dances and practice them in his own way.

Finally, he decided to be a dancer and entertain people with his unusual ability. He left the computer class and requested his institution to give a chance to perform on stage. His request was accepted and he was given an opportunity to dance in the annual program. He danced and his dance was very much appreciated. But Ganpatbhai understood that dancing is not easy. One needs lots of energy and practice. He decided to work hard to be a dancer and dance became his life.

During this time, he saw Kamlesh Thakkar,



who was also a divyang (disabled) in Indian Dance Competition. This made him more firm in his decision. He decided to learn dancing from Kamlesh Thakkar and joined Jignesh Shah's classes in Baroda. Where he was introduced to many dancing events held by families and institutions. Ganpatbhai took up this as challenge, worked hard to make his performances appealing. His popularity increased with each performance. His grace and energy both appreciated by the audience.



on rent. The award helped him financially and made time more popular. The numbers of invitations have increased since then. He get around Rs.3,000/- per performance and gets at least two such events every month, In the peak season, he get five or more programmes.

Gnpatbhai is aware that he will need to learn new steps constantly, if he desires to be an accomplished big dancer. He remains associated with his dance school for this. He is not worried about the future. He is

Family and close friends started advising him to do something else other than dance, which needs physical energy and which he might lose with advanced age. However, Ganpatbhai is determined and does not think of anything which can stop him from being an accomplished dancer. He was earning Rs.3,000/- to 4,000/- a month, but he was hoping more income in days to come.

In 2014, he was thrilled to receive an award from RUDMI. He immediately went to the market and purchased five different costumes for himself. With good costumes, people appreciated his dance more. He saved money

confident of getting programmes and that is enough for him. **He has a dream – one of becoming celebrity** – and he is doing all he can to make dream come true.

His relationship with his parents is very formal. He rarely visits them. He has chosen his life partner and in September, 2018 they are going to marry in the court. He is a totally self-made man and is proud of the same. He repeatedly says that **“the cash prize helped me in purchasing new dresses and my success story begins from there. Now I have reached a stage where I often have to say that I do not have time.”**



11

## Confident on her own

**Name:** Pushpaben Jayntilal Patel **Age:** 42 years  
**Address:** Dolpur Village, **Ta:** Dhansura, **Dist:** Arvalli  
**Name of Institution:** Sabarkantha Physically Handicapped  
Welfare Mandal, Dhansura  
**Year of Award:** 2015

Pushpaben belongs to a small village, Dolpur, of Dhansura Taluka of Aravalli District. She was born in 1976 and was one of four children – three daughters and a son. Her father had a small grocery shop in the village, which was

the only source of earning. Before completing her first year of life, Pushpaben was infected by polio. In this small village, nobody knew about the disease. Jayantibhai rushed to Balasinor Hospital, 60 km away from





Dhansura, but the doctors said that nothing could be done.

Pushpaben lost her one leg. Her father tried many alternative therapies but nothing helped. She was sent to school in Dhansura and passed with good marks in SSC (69%) and HSC (57%). Though there were problems of mobility and availability of transport, she could manage with support from her father. She also further studied for graduation (1998) and then for L.L.B. (2014). In between, she completed several vocational and skill development courses, such as cutting & tailoring, hair & skin care from Gandhinagar, and garment making from Himmatnagar. In addition, she did four different courses in computers, besides various short-term training modules. All in all, she spent 30 years in her studies.

She lost her father in 2008 and her responsibility towards her mother and other family members increased. With the help of her L.L.B. degree, she started working with a lawyer as his junior, but with her limited ability of walking, she found it difficult to run from one court to another. So she had to forget her dream of being a law professional unfulfilled.

There was a small grocery shop started by her mother in their own house and an old sewing machine which can be used for tailoring. Machine being old was troubling her every now and then and it was difficult to fix the

problem without outside help. She was about to give up on stitching when she came to know about her selection for the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled' in 2015. She also received the award for self employment presented by Governor of Gujarat and was very happy with it. The award also included a cash prize.

Pushpaben had, for the first time in her life, received so much money. She immediately replaced her old sewing machine with a new one costing Rs.11,000/-. She already had the skill so she started with tailoring work immediately. She started taking orders and her timely delivery and neat work helped her in getting clients. Her income increased with this.

She also invested Rs. 4,000/- in her grocery shop and increased income from the shop. Both of these together earn her a good income each month. She is trying to get more work but there is stiff competition. She feels that she needs to go house to house to get more work but she does not have that kind of ability or support.

After losing her father, she is feeling the stress, but is calm and composed. She wants to earn more but needs help to move around. **She is more confident than before but is little depressed with the situation.**



12

## Never Giving Up

**Name:** Geetaben Mukeshbhai Panchal **Age:** 44 years

**Address:** Hariom Apartment, City: Ahmedabad, **Dist:** Ahmedabad

**Name of Institution:** Apang Ekta Samiti, Ahmedabad

**Year of Award:** 2015

As they say: ***“There is nothing more powerful than a woman determined to rise.”*** The proverb perfectly suits Geetaben Panchal. Geetaben was born at Ahmedabad on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1974 as a fourth child after

three elder brothers. Her father was a salesman working for a telephone company. Initially, when she was born with a deformity, everyone in the family was shocked.





Soon, however, they started trying to develop her abilities. She was admitted in a school at the age of six with normal children. Her father used to take her to the school and bring her back home. School passed smoothly; she enjoyed being with friends and teachers and cleared her SSC in the Third Division. Everyone in the family was happy. She was admitted to the 11<sup>th</sup> std. and the next two years of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> were good as well. She also passed the 12<sup>th</sup> std. with good marks.

Geetaben was thinking of studying further in college, but that was not to be. A twist came in her life in 1985 with the sudden death of her father. She lost a good friend and supporter. There was no one in the family who could take her to college every day, as her father used to take and bring her back. She left her studies and she started feeling the stress of her disability. She was at home without any work. There was nothing to engage her mind, it was a total vacuum. Her elder brothers were busy in their own work and had no time for her. The sudden death of father had also resulted in a financial crisis. There was no way that she could think of spending any more money.

In those days of distress, one day, when she was sitting at home, a volunteer told her about 'Apang Ekta Samiti' (AES) a newly opened voluntary organization for 'Divyangs' Bhavinbhai, the founder chairman of Apang Ekta Samiti, also a 'Divyang,' came to meet her. She was astonished to see his spirit and enthusiasm. After many years, Geetaben had something positive to think about. It was a heaven-sent moment for her. At first, she could not believe what Bhavinbhai said to her. He invited her to join the 'Samiti' and assured that all arrangements for her going and coming would be made by Apang Ekta Samiti (AES). Geetaben told her brothers and they agreed to pay her fees.

Apang Ekta Samiti was in its infancy in those days. They had started with programmes of skill training, and celebration of various festivals. It started donation collection and also helped the needy from donations

received. Geetaben became a member and soon she got a bicycle, which solved her transportation problem. Initially, she was quite nervous with the new developments in her life, but now has started going to their office, which is hardly a kilometre away from her residence.

She attended various training programmes; viz. tailoring, purse and bag making beauty parlour techniques etc. Moreover, she also had a lot of fun, which gave her a new ray of hope, a new dream and new friends. She had an opportunity to study courses at the Girls' Polytechnic at AES, where she learnt tailoring and beauty-parlour skills. In five years, she collected many certificates, completing one skill development course after another. But all these times, her inner self was asking: "What will you do with these certificates? What next? What is the future?"

In days of this despair she met Mukeshbhai, at AES whom she later married. He provided all the support she needed for being active. Life again became very colorful.

Soon after marriage in November, 2009, she went to her in-laws. However, their home was on the third floor and she was not able to climb. The houses on the ground floor and first floor were very expensive. Fortunately, they found a basement on rent and she started her life. After some time, with the help from the family, they could find a room on the ground floor at the rent of Rs.3,000/- per month, as compared to Rs.600/- they were paying for basement. However, considering a good house as a necessity, she rented it and decided to work harder.

In the process, she came across a company known as Star Gold, who was looking for persons who could make pencil covers with velvet. The work was easy, but a machine for the same was costing Rs.90,000/-. After a series of negotiations, she decided to buy the machine. She took a loan of Rs.60,000/- from the Kadi Sahkari Bank and managed the rest from her family. The machine was installed and they started making 1000 pencils per day.





She was being paid one rupee per pencil, i.e., Rs.1,000/- a day. Everything was running smoothly, but suddenly after some time, Star Gold started restricting their purchase and gradually it reduced to Rs.200/- per day. This was not at all viable. But what to do with machine? She requested “Gold Star” to take back the machine and pay their money. But Gold Star refused it. After a legal fight with Star Gold for months, they won the case and received back their money.

Geetaben, with a strong zeal to live a good life, purchased an auto rickshaw for her husband from that money. Mukeshbhai now drives the rickshaw daily for two to three hours in the morning and afternoon. They use it for their own requirements and to provide transport services to others. She also started making chania cholis, jute bags and purses, sitting at home. Mukeshbhai helps her in his spare time. They have two sewing machines; one gifted by BPA under Sadhan Sahay Yojna. Both of them are also getting a pension of Rs.600/- per month from the Government.

In 2014, Apang Ekta Samiti sent her nomination for the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled' and she was selected for the award. Though the



money was to be utilised for her business, the pressing need was to meet expenses of her second delivery. She saved Rs.5000/- for her daughter as a fixed deposit. After her delivery, she again started working with double zeal. The memories of award ceremony push her every day to do some economic activity.

She is collecting money to buy an oil machine which will

increase her speed of working and ultimately her earning. At present, they earn Rs.13,000/- to 15,000/- per month, but she has fixed her target at Rs. 25,000/-.

Geetaben says that award brought a new positive twist in her life. **For the first time, she felt that her certificates had value.** Looking at her enthusiasm, RUDMI provided her with a wheel chair through a donor in 2017 - 2018 to assist her further. This has increased her mobility. Going to the market and other places is not a problem now.

Things are now settled for Geetaben. She has two beautiful daughters. The elder one is eight years old and the younger one is about three years. Life is smooth, self dependent, dignified and full of colour. Her strong will power helped Geetaben to overcome all odds and make her dreams come true. **Her motto in life is: “Never give up.”**

***“Disability is not a brave struggle or courage in the face of adversity. Disability is an art. It's an ingenious way to live.”***

*~Neil Marcus*





13

## Carrying her own weight

**Name:** Meenaben Keshavlal Patel    **Age:** 40 years  
**Address:** Ganshyam Nagar Society, Dhansura, **Dist:** Dhansura  
**Name of Institution:** Sabarkantha Physically Handicapped Welfare Mandal, Dhansura  
**Year of Award:** 2015

Meenaben was born as a third girl child in the family. At the age of two, she got fever and a severe attack of polio, which made both her legs paralytic. Her parents, Keshavlal and Manjulaben, tried hard to reduce the impact of polio but they could not change the fate of their beloved daughter. Everyone was in deep shock, but her father decided to use their collective energy to properly train and educate their daughter. They admitted her in school and her elder sisters provided her with support. School was not very far, so the days passed peacefully.

Meenaben passed her Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) exams with more than 50% marks. She wanted to study further and got admission in Talod College, 30 km away from home. Mobility was a problem, but she studied up to her graduation, with Gujarati as her major subject. Her mobility constraints forced her to be absent on almost half the days but she enjoyed studying and she did her M.A. too from the same college. She received many awards and appreciation for her enthusiasm and ability.

Desiring to be a teacher in a government school, she did her B.Ed. in 2005. She also tried for a job in government schools, but soon realised that these jobs were sold at a very high price, which she would never be able to pay. She worked as principal in two primary schools of Dhansura, but the salary was so

ridiculously low and mobility was a problem that she decided to leave the principalship and start some other activity. During her college years, she had done a course in stitching and beauty parlour skills. She also did a course on Hair & Skin Care from I.T.I. and decided to use these skills and earn something.

She participated in sports. The financial condition of the family worsened further. For the sake of earning more, father went to Tanzania for a job but he had to come back in three months. Whatever small savings he had made were lost as a result. One of her younger brothers was running a kirana shop in Dhansura. He was the only earning member, but had his own family with a wife and two children, so Meenaben did not expect anything from him.

As she had no money, so she started doing "eyebrows" for young girls at a nominal rate. This helped her earn a bit. The Sabarkantha Society for Physically Handicapped nominated

her name for the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled.' She was selected and received Rs.15,000/- as a cash prize at a grand function organized by the institute.

With the cash prize, Meenaben purchased some equipment for beauty parlour and started providing more services. Her income and client base both expanded with this. Though she does not have a separate room for beauty parlour, she manages to







get clients. She gets more clients on festivals or social events like marriages and earns at least Rs.1500/- per month on an average.

She has also done a course in tailoring from ITI, Modasa and in her spare time, is doing tailoring work. She has learnt Reiki and practices it for others suffering mentally or physically. She earns Rs.500/- to Rs.1000/- per month from this and is happy with her income. She has good oratory and expression which she uses to help Vatsalya Dham, an old-age home in Dhansura, in conducting various programmes, as a master of ceremony. She is very enthusiastic to move further up the ladder of income. Fortunately, she has now found her life partner who is also a 'divyang.' Her fiancé has promised her a separate room

for her parlour after marriage, which will help her to earn more.

Meenaben is determined to be on her own feet all through the life. The RUDMI award has contributed to this significantly. *She says, whenever I look at the sky I realise that progress has no limit. Though late, my life seems to be settling and opening up new opportunities for me. I am thankful to God and to RUDMI for giving me a good life."*

She is happy with life and feel contented. Recently, she took a loan on her name to help her brother in his kirana shop. No one in the family has felt Meenaben to be a burden. Rather she is the place of solace for everyone in the family.



14

## A business with no horizons

**Name:** Sureshbhai Ranchhodbhai Dhabhi **Age:** 40 years  
**Address:** Shankarpara Village, Botad, **Dist:** Botad  
**Name of Institution:** Viklang Parivartan Trust, Botad  
**Year of Award:** 2015

Sureshbhai Dhabhi of Botad is a successful micro entrepreneur earning more than Rs.7000/- a month from puncture repairs. His life story is quite interesting. He was born with polio in both legs in village Jalila of Dhandhuka Taluka. He was taken to various hospitals, but no treatment could make any difference. The family had to accept that he would have to live with polio.

His father, Ranchhodbhai was a farmer, but they had no land of their own. They used to take the farm on rent and cultivate it. Mother Labhuben was a housewife. Sureshbhai has three more brothers, younger than him. The father expired in 2014 and all responsibility of the family fell on Sureshbhai's shoulders at the age of 36 years.

Sureshbhai was a slow learner, so he had been admitted to school at the age of 10. He

completed his studies up to the 7<sup>th</sup> standard from the local school. There was no secondary school in the village and it was not possible for him to go up to Dhandhuka every day for schooling. So he left his studies and decided to do something which could provide economic support to the family.

The economic conditions of the family was bad after the demise of his father. Sureshbhai was desperate to get work and he found an opportunity to work in diamond polishing in Botad, a nearby city. He worked there for 14 years. His pay was at around Rs.2000/- to Rs.2500/- per month. He was happy with that salary, but the work started affecting his vision adversely. So he decided to leave it and find a better alternative.

He purchased a motorcycle on loan so that he can move independently and search better



job. His younger brothers had started working on the farm. This gave Sureshbhai a little time to breathe. One day, he met Kalubhai, who was doing puncture repairing in his village. Sureshbhai liked this work and he started to work on punctures sitting on the roadside. Local police used to harass him.

He purchased a cabin with money borrowed from friends and, with a few tools and supplies, started puncture repairing. His sincerity and honesty attracted many towards him. In the beginning, he had to face many difficulties. There was a group of people who would use his services and go without paying. They always threatened him that if he asked for money, they would complain against him and throw him out, as his cabin was encroached on public land.

Over time, he came in contact with Viklang



Parivartan Trust, Botad. He joined them and they sent his nomination for the award. He had never expected to get Rs.15,000/- cash prize. For him, this was literally a miracle. With this money, he immediately purchased an air compressor. This increased his speed and volume of work. The award ceremony in his words is lifetime memory. According to him, the day he received the award changed his attitude

towards life. In two years' time, he is earning Rs.7000/- to 8,000/- per month and is hopeful of having greater income.

Sureshbhai tried to find good life partner, but it was not to be. He still has a dream to create good puncture repair facilities for larger tyres with an automatic puncture machine. He says, "My business has no horizon. It will grow till God desires."



15

## Never say die

**Name:** Indravadan Somabhai Tadvi **Age:** 31 years

**Address:** Sankheda Village, **Dist:** Chhotaudaipur

**Name of Institution:** V-one Society, Vadodara

**Year of Award:** 2015

Indravadan, a resident of Sankheda of Chhotaudaipur district, is a man of strong determination and hard work. Life has not been easy for him. Born in a poor family, both his parents were labourers. His father used to work as a construction worker and his mother was a domestic servant. He was born after two daughters and his parents were very happy.

Unfortunately, that happiness lasted only for a short while. It was soon realised that both the legs of the new born were useless. The parents, in their ignorance and poverty, could not take

him to a doctor. Till the age of five, his mother used to carry him on her lap and take him around with her. But as Indravadan grew, it was becoming stressful to continue doing so. He could sense his mother's difficulty at this tender age.

Like other children, he was admitted in the primary school of his village. There, he developed a friendship with a boy facing a similar problem. One day, his friend's father brought the information that Vadodara had a special hostel for such children. He urged





Indra's father to send him there. The family was living in such poverty that the idea of free food, accommodation and education attracted them.

Indravadan's father immediately accepted this proposal and sent his son to H. J. Parikh Model High School in Baroda. Here, he made many friends. He liked the environment and the food. He was happy that he was no longer a burden on the parents.

He studied up to the 10<sup>th</sup> standard in this school, where he learnt lessons on mobility, beside his regular curriculum.

Regular classroom studies could never interest Indravadan. He gave the 10<sup>th</sup> standard exam twice but could not clear it. Soon, he reached the age of 16 and the plight of his family, along with the daily stress of food and other things made him feel serious and accountable for the situation.

Meanwhile, both his sisters got married and left the village. Indravadan started learning cycle repairing from a friend who was in the business since many years in Baroda, and then started his own small shop on the roadside. The Traffic Police threatened him almost every day for illegal occupancy. He was not getting enough work. So tired of this, he decided to leave cycle repair and found out a job with a courier agent where he had a fixed salary of Rs.3500/- per month. He started sending money home to the family.

However, the job required him to climb ten stories with a weight of 5 to 10 kg. For a person who used two hands for support while walking and moved in a wheel chair, this was very difficult. Still, he continued, because he wanted to be on his own.

Within three years, Indravadan realised that it was not possible for him to continue with this job. He developed a problem in his spinal cord at the age of 25 and was advised bed rest for a



year. As a result, he had to leave the job and to remain at home. The period between 2009 and 2015 was a testing one. During this time, he lost his job, his parents and his very energy to work.

Yet, during these extremely trying days, he tried to learn mobile repairing through trial and error. He started by trying out with phones lying around at home. However, due to limited understanding, instead of repairing them, often, he ended up with creating problems and had to

spend more than what he charged. After taking a year's bed rest, Indravadan once again started cycle repairs, but was not able to get enough work. The only silver lining was his marriage with Sumitraben. She provided strong support to him, both economic and personal.

The year 2015 brought a new opportunity to their life. Indravadan came to know about the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the handicapped of Baroda, which was providing a six-month course on mobile servicing. He joined it and got an opportunity to prove himself. He worked hard and they selected him for nomination for the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award for Disabled.' He got the award in 2016.

Immediately, he registered himself with the Global Mobile Institute of Baroda and completed a course of Mobile Hardware and Engineering. He purchased the necessary tools for mobile repairing. With increased understanding and confidence, his work started being appreciated by his clients and his clientele started increasing.

Indravadan now has a daughter, two years old. His dream is to purchase a shop in the market so he can earn well. The award has given him hope, a bright future and ample opportunity. The amount of Rs.15,000/- played a crucial role in his life and at present after many years he is living a happy life.





16

## Rebuilding life after an accident

**Name:** Karunaben Mangilal Sharma **Age:** 38 years  
**Address:** Pethapur Village, **Tal:** Zalod, **Dist:** Dahod  
**Name of Institution:** The Siddhi Mahila Hastkala Audyogik Sahakari Mandli, Sahera  
**Year of Award:** 2016

Karunaben Sharma, resident of Zalod, is a daughter of Mangilal Sharma and Madhuben. Zalod has large population of artisans from the Panchal and Prajapati community, but Mangilal, whose roots are from Madhya Pradesh, is in this town since birth. They are Brahmin by caste and at present, Mangilal is working in the local temple as a pujari. They rent small piece of agricultural land, where 50% of the profit is charged as rent.

Mangilal has six children- four daughters and two sons. Karunaben is the first child. At the age of ten, she met with an accident during the Diwali festival. She had gone to purchase firecrackers. Everyone was in a festive mood. The houses were getting decorated and everyone was busy, when suddenly, the whole shop caught on fire. Before young Karuna could understand anything, she was ablaze. She tried to run but fell. When she got her senses back, she realised that she had lost the right hand. Both the parents were shocked by the calamity. They tried to get her the best treatment, but as they say, "we could not change the destiny."

Three years after she had this accident, Mangilal met with an accident. The accident was serious and he had to undergo multiple operations. There was a possibility of losing his left leg but providence saved him and he was in a position to work. These two events traumatised the family for a long time. They spent almost three lakhs on operation for

the father and more than one lakh for Karunaben. This financial burden was high for them. The family was stressed for their daily requirements as well. Six years passed in this fashion.

As Karuna grew to be around 16 years of age, she understood that she would have to be on her own feet. In the meantime, all her brothers and sisters had got married. She tried to concentrate on her studies, but the trauma was too deep and it was not easy for her. She appeared for the 10<sup>th</sup> standard exams but could not clear. It took her five years to reappear for the exam and this time she cleared it.

She left her studies but soon realised that God has intended for her to study. She appeared for the 12<sup>th</sup> standard exams and passed with a Second Class. She also gave an exam for

English and passed. After passing higher secondary, she opted for a Certificate Course in software programming at ITI, Dahod. Despite completing the course, she could not get a job. While helping out her mother, she was all the time worried about her future. She was thinking of buying a computer, but getting finances was a major problem.

Those days, she came in contact with the Siddhi Mahila Hastkala Audyogik Sahakari Mandli who started supporting her. They sent her nomination for the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award.' She received the award in 2016, which was the first good news in a long time. She was very happy







with getting Rs. 15,000/- and immediately decided of buying a computer. However, her father said that being in a village, she would not get enough job work. So she changed the idea and opened a small shop selling kangan (bangles). She could not earn much from this, again, due to the size of her village.

She is now awaiting to move to Godhra which is bigger place, with a larger population. Her

parents are also planning to settle in Godhra. She hopes to shift soon and open a kangan shop there. She feels that she will succeed once they move.

The tale of Karuna is that of a young girl whose life tragically changed due to a single accident. She is trying to rebuild herself and accept her handicap, but it is still not easy for her. Hopefully, she will have a better life with time.



17

## Overcoming obstacles through music

**Name:** Dhansukhbhai Deshabhai Prajapati **Age:** 37 years

**Address:** Baspa Village, **Tal:** Sami, **Dist:** Patan

**Name of Institution:** National Association for the Blind, Visnagar

**Year of Award:** 2013

Patan is a well-known town located on the banks of the river Saraswati. Dhansukhbhai was born in a small village called Baspa, in this district. The locality has hardly 600 families. Most of them survive on agriculture. There is water scarcity in the area, On an average with 10 'vighas' of land, people doing agriculture are living life of a moderate standards.

Keshabhai, father of Dhansukhbhai, has four children; three sons and a daughter. The eldest son and daughter are married. Dhansukhbhai is the second child. He and his younger brother both are visually impaired. The father and elder brother look after agriculture, so both the younger brothers are free. The family has given them all the freedom to choose their own future. Baspa is fortunately having Uttar Buniyadi Vidyalay where Dhansukhbhai learnt the lessons of life. His brother, unfortunately, could not continue to study, but Dhansukhbhai was determined to complete his schooling.

On completing his primary education, he and his father felt the need for a special school for further studies. Dhansukhbhai was admitted

to the Smt. H. K. Mehta Pragnachakshu Vidyalay at Palanpur. He passed his 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard exams from this school. However, his real passion was music. He decided to study it and graduate in it.

His teacher guided him to join the Visnagar branch of the National Association for the Blind (NAB). Dhansukhbhai learnt vocals and harmonium for five years and passed all the exams. After completing Sangeet Visharad, he returned to Baspa and started teaching music to those interested. He formed a group of singers and started performing on religious festivals.

Soon, people started inviting him to other villages as well, but he did not had a harmonium, without which, one cannot perform. He found someone in a neighbouring village with a harmonium. He made arrangements to borrow it on rent. But there were many occasion when harmonium was not available on rent. According to him, he had to forego almost half the invitations due to this problem.

In 2013, he was selected for the 'Smt. Nandini



P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award' and received a cash prize of Rs. 15000/-. Further, he met and heard several dignitaries, due to which, he was inspired, and his enthusiasm and positive outlook towards the future increased. In time, he got sufficient money to buy a new harmonium, which he had desired for years. He purchased it and in the same year, got an opportunity to serve the mentally challenged by way of teaching them music.

The Uttar Gujarat Viklang Kalyan Sangh of Mehsana District started Sangeet Vidyalay and they wanted a good, qualified music teacher in their school. His friend told him about this, so he went there and got the job. They offered him accommodation and food, free of cost, and a salary of Rs.3300/- per



month. Today, there are 25<sup>th</sup> students who learn music from him and he is happy. He experienced tremendous power of music. He could easily connects with people. Life has changed for him and has become music-centred. His harmonium is the soul of his programmes, as he moves around, singing and entertaining people.

Dhansukhbhai's dream has come true. He is becoming more and more popular in the area. He does not feel anything missing in life. He

is now earning around Rs. 5000/- per month, over and above his salary. He wants to go ahead with music and is confident for his future. He is also looking for a good life partner, who is trained in music.



18

## A light in the darkness

**Name:** Vikaskumar Ramnareshji Agrawal **Age:** 33 years

**Address:** Jivaraj Park, **City:** Ahmedabad, **Dist :** Ahmedabad

**Name of Institution:** Self

**Year of Award:** 2013

This is a story of a blind man who has always seen himself as normal and has tried to live a normal life. Vikas Ramnaresh was born in October 1985 in Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh. He has two brothers and one sister. His parents could not realize his problem immediately and they raised him as normal child till he celebrated his first birthday, Parents having no access to medical services accepted it as fate accompanied.

They admitted Vikas to a regular school at the appropriate age, but there was no facility for Braille, nor of a special teacher in the school. However he studied up to 7<sup>th</sup> standard with the help of elder brother and friends in the school.

Vikas's childhood years, as well as his schooling till the 7<sup>th</sup> standard, passed by without any major event. Sometimes, he felt of his disability, but the other boys and girls were good to him and gave him support. Unfortunately, there was no school for further studies. He was clueless about what to do next. Vikas was 18 years old by then. He had a dream of studying further and being on his own. He was very clear that he did not want to have a life of dependency upon others. One day, a man came to his house and talked about Blind People's Association( BPA) of Ahmedabad. He said that the institute gave very good training and had all the required





facilities. His parents were worried but he said that he would go.

He came to Ahmedabad in 2003 and was admitted to the 8<sup>th</sup> standard. It was for the first time that he was among other blind students of his age. He passed the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> with a First Class from BPA and joined the Diploma Course in Physiotherapy in the same campus. This opened up new horizons for him. He had never thought he would, one day, learn this skill and become a physiotherapist.

Meanwhile in 2008, he got a regular job with the Shri Sewa Trust, Nava Vadaj, at a monthly salary of Rs. 8200/-. His working hours were 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. He was free in afternoons so he decided to go home-to-home and provide physiotherapy services. He looked around for the clients and got them through BPA from the very beginning. The work started and he earned Rs.130/- for providing physiotherapy to one person. Now he is charging much more than this but the moment when he got Rs. 130/- in his hand for the first time is unforgettable. With glory on his face he further said “my leaning at BPA has given self dependent life.”

In two years, he made reasonable progress, and got three to four clients a day. Another miracle happened in his life in 2013, which he had never expected. He came to know about the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled.' Blind People Associated (BPA) sent his nomination and he was selected. He was presented the award and a cash prize of Rs. 15,000/- in the midst of so many people, which was a gratifying moment for him.



As he was in need of a massage machine, costing about Rs.15000/, he immediately purchased it. Since then, his work is increasing and so has his income. Both the confidence and money became a driving force. His clients are happy with his services and his life is flowing smoothly.

As of now, he is married to a Gujarati girl and has a daughter of four months. It was a group wedding arranged by a charitable trust, which provided them with the basic necessities of life. The Samaj Suraksha Department of Government of Gujarat provided another rupees one lakh for setting up the house and he now

has his own house without any complaints about life. His quest for knowledge and becoming something has motivated him to join a graduation course in arts, as an external student. He says that timely guidance and monetary help has made his life smooth and progressive that he never thinks of his disability. **People come to him and he does not need to promote himself.** He easily earns up to Rs. 15,000/- to 20,000/- per month and has everything he needs - a vocation, friends, family and social acceptance.

Vikas is confident about his future. He has decided to not to go for wage employment and wants to remain independent. He is not afraid of any competition in the future. He has a dream of developing a good physiotherapy centre where he can employ others like him. He desires, however, to continue providing home-to-home services even after that and is confident of being able to do it.

***“There is no greater disability in society than the inability to see a person as more.”***

*~Robert M. Hensel*





19

## Striving for success

**Name:** Jaykumar Praffulbhai Barot **Age:** 27 years  
**Address:** Natvar Flat, City: Ahmedabad, **Dist :** Ahmedabad  
**Name of Institution:** Vocational Rehabilitation  
 Centre for Handicapped, Ahmedabad  
**Year of Award:** 2012

Jay is a young man, born in 1991, and is currently 27 years old. His father Prafulbhai, works in a Raymond shop at a salary of Rs. 12,000/- per month. Jay has a younger brother who is working at ICICI Bank, in their marketing department. His family was capable of maintaining him, so he did not have face financial stress or pressure.

However, Jay was, all the time, eager to manage on this own capabilities. His schooling was done at Sharda Vidyalay in the Isanpur area of Ahmedabad city. He found his studies, particularly maths, very difficult. While he passed his SSC, he could not pass the HSC exam. So he left school and joined ITI at Viklang Rehabilitation Centre, Kubernagar, to learn basic electronic repairs and maintenance of PA and audio systems, TV receivers etc. He performed well in this course.

Jay immediately started repairing work at the age of 20 years. He began getting small jobs from the neighbourhood, particularly for mobile phones. However, he had the skills, but not the tools required for the work. He had to go to other mobile repair shops, sit there and repair the phones. This

gave him some income and work experience but not enough.

He received the Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award in 2012. It came as a God-sent blessing, as he could immediately purchased tools and equipment needed for repairing. Having the tools, he started doing work from home, instead of going to the

shops. This reduced his cost. However, his business increased only marginally. On an average, he received work of Rs. 2000/- per month. He realised that this was not enough to sustain himself and his family.

One of his friends advised him to buy computers and start doing simple data entry work. He learnt this from the friend and bought a desktop computer. At present, he is doing both the types of work and earns about Rs. 10,000/- or more, every month. He is now 28 years

old and is looking for a good match.

Jay is confident of doing both types of work which have good business potential. He feels he will get more work soon and wants to get a shop, so that he can give a better professional touch.



***“No disability or dictionary out there is capable  
of clearly defining who we are as a person.”***

~Robert M. Hensel





20

## Down but not out

**Name:** Rekhaben Gordhanbhai Raval **Age:** 22 years  
**Address:** Narsanda Village, **Tal:** Nadiad, **Dist:** Kheda  
**Name of Institution:** Rotary Club Nadiad, Samaj Seva and Sansodhan Trust, Nadiad  
**Year of Award:** 2016

Rekhaben Rawal, daughter of Gordhanbhai, (a small vendor of bracelets) and Sushilaben (domestic worker), was born on 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1996 and was awarded 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards' in 2016 at the age of 20.

Rekhaben lost her father at the age of five. Her mother was afraid of sending her to the special school for the deaf and dumb; viz. S.G.Brahmabhatt Badhir Vidyavihar, Nadiad; but she was sent after persuasion from the teachers, at the age of eight. She soon adjusted in the new environment and enjoyed being in the midst of other girls having same kind of difficulty. She also liked her teachers and got deeply interested in her studies. She was staying in the hostel. Her personality and confidence increased over the years at school.

She passed with 72% in the 8<sup>th</sup> standard 2015. During her stay in the hostel, she got an opportunity to learn beauty parlour skills. She completed the course in year 2015.

After leaving the school, she started plucking eyebrows in neighbouring areas.

There was a lady nearby, who was stitching garments. Rekhaben learnt stitching dresses and blouses from her. She also learnt the technique of interlock for saris. As she did not have a sewing machine, she could not start

stitching herself, but she used to enjoy the work. Looking at her good performance, her school, nominated her for the Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award. Her nomination was accepted, she was awarded cash prize of Rs. 15000/- in 2016.

In her 20 years of age, this was the first such event where she was being appreciated and recognized and she was thrilled. She did not know anything about Rural Development and Management Institute (RUDMI) or the award and believes that it was only by God's grace that she got it.

The course of her life thereafter changed very fast. She bought her own sewing machine, costing Rs. 10,000/- and used the balance Rs. 5000/- for purchasing a beauty parlour kit. Now she is regularly stitching and running a parlour. Her skills are being appreciated by those who use her services. This gives her pleasure and confidence both.

She got married in 2016. Her in-laws want her to go ahead with her activities. Her husband, also a factory worker, has promised her a separate room for the parlour and has permitted her to do the advance course in stitching at Vadtal. She is happy and hopes to get more and more work in years to come. Rekhaben wants to have a reasonably good economic status for bringing her children.







21

## Children of a greater god

**Name:** Bandhu Bhau Jadhav    **Age:** 39 years  
**Address:** Dahisar Village, **Tal:** Palghar, **Dist:** Palghar  
**Name of Institution:** Society for Vocational Rehabilitation of Retarded, (SVRR), Mumbai  
**Year of Award:** 2017

On 3rd December, 2017, the Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award was announced for Mr. Bandhu Jadhav. The moment was indeed special for him. He was happy and had tears in the eyes as he received Rs. 15,000/- cash and a certificate for the first time in his life.

Bandhu Jadhav is a resident of Palghar of Thana district, Maharashtra. He is a brave, honest and dedicated man and stays with his wife and two kids and lives a happy and content life.

Upon his birth on 30th May, 1997, his mother did not realise that the new born was suffering from PPRP in the left lower limb and would not be able to walk properly till he became five years of age. His father was a tailor and the only earning member in the family of seven.

Initially, Bandhu was admitted to the village school at the age of nine with his brothers and sisters. He studied up to the IX standard in the village school, but as his father wanted him and his brother to help in the tailoring work, they had to leave their studies and he started working on sewing machine at the age of 18 years.

During this period, a mobile workshop of the Society for Vocational Rehabilitation of Retarded, (SVRR) Mumbai, came to his village. He took up this opportunity and registered with the institute and remained attached with it for three years. He learned, card board file making, recanting of chairs, weaving and tailoring. These were eventful years for the family, when his brother and both sisters got married. Soon after the marriages his father died suddenly. Following were as the testing

days. His brother moved with his family to another town and the sisters went to their in-laws. The family of seven was reduced to two and all the responsibility of running the house fell upon him.

The course of Bandhu's life changed suddenly and he found these adjustments difficult. However, SVRR helped by providing mental and physical support and he started getting work from the institute.

Bandhu was 21 years old when his mother fixed his marriage with Reema. This helped in recovering from the shock of the sudden demise of his father. He now fully concentrated on his tailoring work. It was not easy to earn a decent sum and he passed through many difficulties during the period 2000 to 2010, but he nevertheless continued to work with patience. In time, he had two children, which increased his responsibilities further.

In 2010, he was selected for the B.C. Shah Memorial Award with a cash prize of Rs. 5,000, the NASEOH award with a cash prize of Rs. 2,000 and the Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award in 2017, with a prize of Rs. 15,000.







He invested all this money into his vocation and gradually purchased a table, a large cupboard, stool, iron and ironing table. He also started providing ironing services along with tailoring. His wife helped him as well. At present, Bandhu is earning around Rs. 7,000 p.m. and lives his life with full joy and

enthusiasm. He has tried to keep pace with modernity, so that his services do not become obsolete. With persistent efforts, patience and support from institutions, his life is steadily progressing. As of now, he has no big dreams or ambitions for his children, but he hopes to continue providing for them and give them a good life.



22

## Art as a source of life

**Name:** Bandenawaz Badshah Nadaf **Age:** 31 years

**Address:** Andheri East, **City:** Mumbai, **Dist:** Mumbai

**Year of Institution:** Indian Mouth and Foot Painting Artists, Mumbai

**Year of Award:** 2015

Bandenawaz is a renowned artist whose painting are displayed and sold at Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai. He was born in a poor family in Mumbai with a little stump in place of his upper right limb and an absent left limb. His parents were horrified at this. His father was serving as a driver and already had two other sons.

When he was of three months old, a circus owner met his father and showed willingness to purchase him for the circus, but his mother refused and decided to make him stand on his own feet.

As expected, this was not easy. She wanted to educate her son, but all the schools they approached approach refused him admission. Ultimately, he was admitted to the school run by the Society for the Education of Challenged (SEC), where he learned swimming, cricket, karate and other sports. His interest in art blossomed during these years, and the school arranged for a teacher for him, which brought a major positive shift in his life. With the

help of a physiotherapist he learned to use his stump for eating and other daily activities. Till then, he used to eat with the help of his foot.

This seemingly small change brought about his acceptance in society. He attended Hindi medium school up to the VII standard and learned to write with his foot. He was a good student and was wished to continue with his studies, but again, was not admitted by any "normal" school. He left formal education and started participating in various competitions and winning awards in swimming, karate and other sports. In the process, he turned out to be both, a good sportsperson and artist. His first painting exhibition at the Jehangir Art Gallery was a great success and all his paintings were sold out. This gave him new

courage and hope in life. He also decided to marry and providence helped him further. The Indian Mouth and Painting Association employed him as a painter to train others like him. Subsequently, he started getting a salary.

Bandenawaz believes that "if one learns to accept everything positively, life





showers him with happiness". It is this positive attitude which made him a confident man with many friends and well wishers.

When he was selected for the Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award, he was very happy. Although this was one more award, he felt it was important as it was given to him and not to his skill.

He says, "The award ceremony is my most happy memory where I received respect and honour from so many people." He further adds, "I am not missing anything in my life, and I do not consider myself as a disabled person".

After receiving the award, he purchased oil paints and canvas from the cash prize and

prepared a portrait of the Maharashtra Chief Minister Shri Devendra Fadnis; as well as paintings for schools, corporates and malls. This gave him a good income and proved a boost to his career. He does not worry about the sale of my paintings. Now he wishes to sell his work and artefacts in the global market, but needs a lot of investment in materials; for which he is seeking assistance.

At the age of 31, he is settled and is looking for a good house for his family. He has one son, a very supportive wife and parents. He knows that the sky is the limit for him. Meanwhile, art continues to be his source of his life, earning and energy.



23

## Struggle makes perfection

**Name:** Sandeep Dattatray Puslekar **Age:** 34 years

**Address:** Shriram Shilpa Apartment, Nashik, **Dist:** Nashik

**Name of Institution:** National Association of Blind (NAB), Mumbai

**Year of Award:** 2012

Sandeep Puslekar was born with visual impairment in Nashik, in a poor family with six members. His father ran a small shop of bangles, clips and cutlery in one corner of their small house.

His childhood was normal. In spite of his problem, his parents, brothers, sisters, friends and everyone loved him. He was admitted to Lokmanya Vidyalyay with normal children at the age of ten years. Though there were no books, no special teaching, and no special aids, he enjoyed his studies. In fact, he wanted to study up to the level where he could have government job. Unfortunately, due to their poor financial condition, his father asked him to help with the shop. It was in 2010 when he was sent to National Association for the Blind (NAB), Mumbai, that he learned braille



mobility and behavioural skills. He picked communication skills which were very useful. He was in NAB for three and a half months. During training, his performance was found to be excellent.

After 2010, he was at home helping his father. He was also fond of listening music, as a hobby, which helped him pass the time.

Young Sandeep was not satisfied with his income. All the time, he was thinking how to expand it further, but he had no money and was unaware of government schemes. Those were years of great frustration, but his contact with NAB remained alive. He was taking their advice and struggling to expand his product range.

During this period, he also got married. His father passed away and the responsibility towards his family





increased. It was in 2012 that his name was nominated by NAB for the Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award. The nomination was accepted and he was given a Rs. 10,000 cash prize. For him, this was a lifetime achievement. He immediately proceeded to increase his product range and expand the stocks. He purchased imitation jewellery and began selling it. To his good fortune, he succeeded in selling it and making a good profit. He also purchased a sewing machine and providing a service of fall bedding for saris.

At present, he has two children. His mother is also staying with him. While his earning from the shop has increased, he is also earning from

his sewing machine. Yet, the financial struggle persists. All the time, he is worried expanding the business and locating sources to get the necessary assistance. He is sure of demand, and is ready to take a loan. Unfortunately, at present his wife is undergoing treatment for kidney failure and he is busy with that,

His training and experience have taught Sandeep to take up life's struggles positively and patiently. Had he not received the award and expanded his business, it would have been difficult for him to provide medical treatment to his wife. Life may have its quirks for him, but is still worth living.



24

## More than just IQ

**Name:** Darpesh Dashrath Shelke **Age:** 23 years

**Address:** Adai Village, **Tal:** Panvel, **Dist:** Raigad

**Name of Institution:** Bhartiya Manav Vikas Trust – New Panvel

**Year of Award:** 2014

Darpesh, resident of a small village Adai, in Raigad district, had a very difficult time in childhood. Born in Dec 1994, he had an IQ of 50-55. His parents did not realise this till he was five years old. He was very slow in learning everything. When they took medical advice, they were shocked to know that their son was mentally challenged. They tried all sorts of therapies but nothing helped him.

Accepting this as fate, he was admitted in 2004, at the age of ten, in a school run by Bhartiya Manav Vikas Trust, in new Panvel. This ended up changing his life.

Darpesh work built up friendships with co-students and life began to get interesting. He was taught agarbatti making at school. He liked the process and for hours, engaged himself in the task. He was also trained in selling agarbattis and at age of 20, he started

producing and selling Agarbatti door-to-door. Soon it became a passion and to date, he enjoys going home to home and talking to people while selling agarbattis.

Darpesh saw him selling grocery right from childhood. As he grew older, he started talking interest in it and sitting in the shop. Soon, he became popular due to his good nature. His association with Bhartiya Manav Vikas Trust helped him to learn dance, rangoli, individual sports and group sports; particularly cricket, drawing etc. He participated in various competitions and won appreciation certificates in several games.

All these added to his personality. He became more open, friendly and confident. When he was awarded the 'Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for Disabled,' it was for the first time in his life that he received such a





large sum. The award ceremony was so enjoyable that he still remembers every moment of it.

As the amount of Rs. 15,000/- was big for him and his family, there were several discussions on the utilisation of the money. Ultimately, they decided to invest it all in the grocery shop to have more products and larger stocks. They also decided to purchase a refrigerator for cold drinks and milk pouches. With this, the whole family started working at the shop, along with him. The turnover started increasing. Darpesh still loves making agarbattis making and selling them door-to-door.



He has many friends today and has a busy life with shop, agarbatti making and many friends. He is also loved and respected by friends and family. His parents are happy and are now assessing whether to find a suitable life partner or wait little more. They

are not worried now about his IQ. They know there are many things which he is capable of. They further say that the award has changed not just life of Darpesh but that of the entire family. It has also opened up opportunity of a bright future for them all.



## An Appeal

If you feel like contributing to the cause of Divyangs, you may assist in one of the following ways.

- i. Sponsor one or more award for divyang of Rs. 15,000/- plus Rs. 3,000/- towards management cost for each award.
- ii. Sponsor required medical aids for divyangs.
- iii. Employ them in your firm/institution.
- iv. Provide general donation for divyangs for their other requirements.
- v. Support their business with technology or purchase of their product.

Your donations are exempted under Section 80G(5) of income Tax Act, 1961



## About Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award for Disabled

The Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Awards for the Disabled, instituted by Rural Development and Management Institute (RUDMI) in 2007, are now known in Gujarat and Maharashtra. It is a novel effort to help divyangs in their struggle to create a space for themselves in this competitive world. It is often observed that by and large, people including their family members fail to recognize their abilities, the energy inherent in them. Bankers and employers have no time to look beyond disabled body. RUDMI established these awards with twin objectives. The first objective is to support institutions which are providing training to rural youth with disabilities while the second is to motivate rural youth to take up vocational training and go for self employment.

The award consists of a cash prize of Rs. 15,000/- and a certificate. Large number of institutions from Gujarat and Maharashtra providing training to adult divyang send their nominations every year. The awards are open to consider all the 21 types of disability as recognized by Government of Gujarat. Awards are selected after detailed scrutiny of their living conditions, their training, their potential to start economic activity and their age. This is the 12<sup>th</sup> year of these awards and more and more institutions are sending nominations for these awards as more and more youth are coming up with project ideas. This is a very satisfying development. In last 11 years, 175 divyangs have been presented the awards. This year, 22 more will receive them for success achieved.

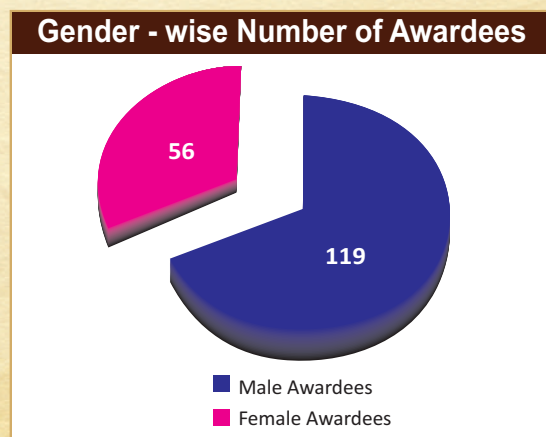
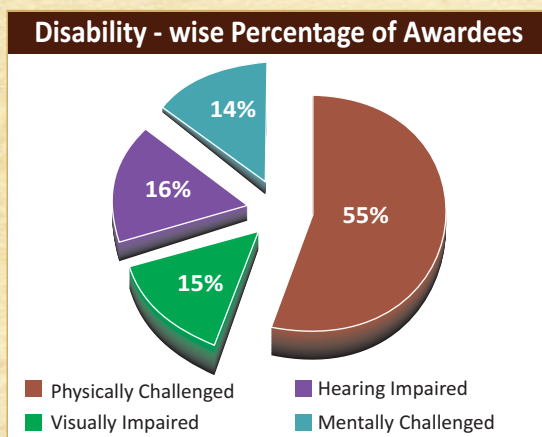
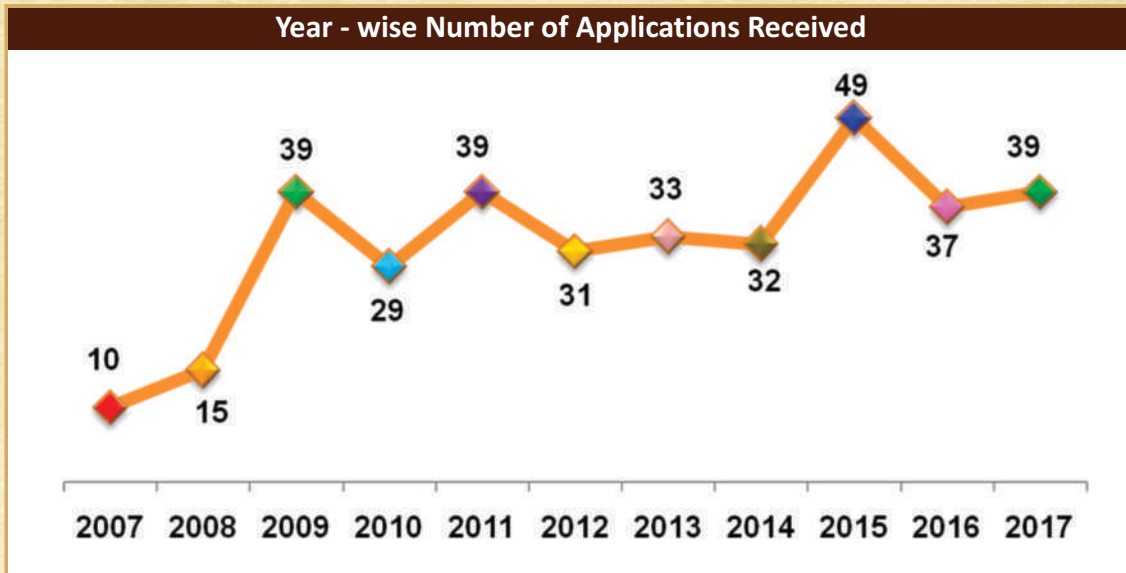
We are proud to say with all the modesty that more than 90% of these awardees have not consumed their award money, but have invested it meaningfully and have generated self employment. Their journey on this road has not been smooth. But they have shown their ability and courage to face challenges, to find solutions to problems and the resilience to face the social dogmas. This small assistance and recognition contribute to their triumph.

*“Once I knew only darkness and stillness... my life was without past or future... but a little word from the fingers of another fell into my hand that clutched at emptiness, and my heart leaped to the rapture of living.”*

*- Hellen Keller*



## Smt. Nandini P. Divatia Rural Rehabilitation Award for Disabled (2007 to 2017)





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