



# National Abilympic Association of India

## **Annual Report**

### **Year 2015 - 2016**

The word Abilympics is a combination of two words abilities and Olympics. These are vocational skill competitions for persons with disability and provide them an opportunity to showcase their professional skills. Abilympics have helped in creating greater public awareness about the skills, potential and abilities of disabled persons and contribution that they can make to the society. It has also resulted in increased opportunities for employment for persons with disabilities.

The contests are organized in two broad categories (i) vocational skills and (ii) leisure and living skills. The vocational skills category has events like mechanical assembly, creating web pages, wood carving, dress making, photography etc. The leisure and living skills category includes hand knitting, embroidery, crochet work etc. The contests are judged based on the quality of the finished product and not on the measure of disability of the contestant.

The National Abilympic Association of India (NAAI) was formed in May 2001 at the behest of Ministries of Human Resource Development and Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India with Amar Jyoti as its nodal agency to inter alia serve as a nodal agency to formulate, initiate and implement policies to propagate Abilympics in the country.

The National Headquarters of NAAI is located at Amar Jyoti Rehabilitation & Research Centre, Delhi. A Governing Body plans and guides its activities and Zonal Vice-Presidents in each of the five zones namely North, South, East, West & Central who are associated with the local NGOs having the required infrastructure in the disability sector help organize state and regional and national with the support from National Headquarters. NAAI organized 6<sup>th</sup> International Abilympics in Delhi during 2003 and has also facilitated participation of Indian Contingents in the subsequent International Abilympics. All this was possible with full support from the Government, NGOs, the private and public sectors as well as individuals.



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**Skill Evaluation:** The skill assessment of all the Gold medal winners of the 4<sup>th</sup> Nationals was carried out and that the main criterion for selection should be the medal winning potential of each member. The Skill evaluation trials were conducted at Blind Peoples' Association, Ahmedabad on May 1-2, 2015. Each event was evaluated by panel of 3 Judges who were professionals in their respective fields and were associated with academics/professionals institutions. The Judges were suggested by heads of prestigious institutes in Ahmedabad like National Institute of Design, Nirma University, LD College of Engineering, Rollwala Computers etc. All the Judges stayed at the contest site all through the contest. The orientation of the Judges was also organized where it was emphasized along with the technical skill, possibility of winnability is also criterion for them to make their recommendation. They were also requested to make suggestions for further improvement and training of the participants to improve their skills.

The funds for holding the skill evaluation were raised by Blind Peoples' Association, Ahmedabad. No grant was sought from the Government. As a result of the skill assessment, the Judges recommended 19 contestants for participation in the 9<sup>th</sup> International Abilympics. A meeting of the Governing Body / Selection committee was held in Delhi on May 29, 2015. The recommendations made by the Judges were perused by the members of the committee. The comments made by Mrs. Rajul Padmanabhan were also placed before the committee. After deliberations the committee accepted the recommendations of the Judges in toto. The region-wise distribution of the contestants was : 5 from North Zone, 1 from South Zone, 8 from West Zone, 3 from East Zone and 2 from Central Zone. It was also decided that the names of Dr. Bhushan Punani and Ms. Minetta Paatil be forwarded to the organizers in France to act as Judges in the International event. It was recommended that all the medal winners be informed of the recommendations of the Judges.

**Media Support:** Local media gave wide coverage to the events.

The names of officials and escorts for participation in the 9<sup>th</sup> International Abilympics were also finalized in the meeting. All the selected persons were informed and requested to continue their training at their respective places. It was also decided that the Zonal Vice Presidents be requested to



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continuously monitor the training of the contestants in their respective zones. It was also decided that a two week training programme be organized in Delhi before departure for France.

### **9<sup>th</sup> International Abilympics**

The 9<sup>th</sup> International Abilympics were organized in Bordeaux, France from March 22-27, 2016. The task assignments received from the organizers in France were circulated to the contestants for their training at their respective places. A two week training programme was organized in Delhi before departure, to hone their skills.

A 30 member Indian contingent from National Abilympic Association of India (NAAI) consisting of 19 contestants, 2 International Judges and 9 officials, escort & a sign language interpreter participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> International Abilympics. The registration was completed online in advance and reservation for accommodation for the contingent in Bordeaux. A kit for the entire contingent was sponsored by the Oriental Insurance Company Limited. Since no grant was received from the Government members of the contingent contributed for the visa. The air tickets for the 19 contestants was sponsored by The Hans Foundation. In addition officials and some members of the Governing Body contributed for meeting the expenses. The contingent travelled from Paris to Bordeaux and back by coach.

The sites for the events were clearly marked and barricaded and all the equipment and raw materials required for the contest were available at the contest site. Prior to holding the contest orientation for the contestants was conducted where detailed information about the contests and general dos and do nots were explained. The sign language interpreter helped in explaining and clarifying the doubts. All the contests were held on March 25-26, 2016. A total of 511 contestants, 215 judges, 194 interpreters, 181 officials and 110 Abilympic partners took part in the Abilympics. Dr Bhushan Punani and Mrs Minetta Paatil from India acted as judges in Desk Top Publishing and Embroidery respectively.

International Abilympics is the world's largest skills competition featuring persons with disabilities. A total of 49 skill events were organized and India participated in 19 events. The events were witnessed by over 60000 visitors.



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The contestants displayed a very high level of professional skills in the events. India won one silver (Creating web pages), one bronze (Embroidery) and a Certificate of Excellence (Photography – Outdoor). This is a significant achievement. Despite making all efforts till the last day the grant from the Government for participation in the international event was not received. The participation in the international event was facilitated by generous support from The hans Foundation, Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd., Blind Peoples' Association, Ahmedabad, The Disable Welfare Trust, Surat, Amar Jyoti Charitable Trust, Delhi and a number of other organisations and individual philanthropists. All the participants were very happy with the arrangements made by NAAI in Delhi and France.





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Dr. Uma Tuli, Secretary General NAAI was elected as a member of the Executive Committee of International Abilympic Federation for the period 2016- till 10<sup>th</sup> IA in a meeting of the IAF EXCO meeting and IAF General Assembly held on March 24, 2016. This is an honour to the country. Abilympics helps to provide an opportunity to the individuals and industries to interact with each other and opens employment including self-employment opportunities to persons with disabilities. Participation in International Abilympics provided an exposure to the participants to the latest technologies and helped to motivate them to work harder to improve their skills

**Budget and Audit:** The Department of Disability Affairs, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has normally been a major source of support for Abilympics since inception by providing 75% of the budget for the Regionals, National and International events. The remaining 25% is raised by the organizers. However, this year despite following up the matter with the Ministry by the Secretary General and President no grant was released. The participation was possible by the vigorous efforts made by the Secretary General and the other members in a short span of time. Most of the individual members of the contingent paid for their visa. Donations were also received from a number of organizations and individuals. Accounts for the 2015-16 have been audited by a firm of Chartered Accountants and found to be satisfactory.

**Membership:** The membership of NAAI is open to all individuals and institutions interested in and working for the disability sector. The total membership of NAAI at present are as under :

Individual Members: 51

Institutional Members: 24

**Conclusion:** The Abilympic movement has spread in different parts of the country and has helped in creating awareness in the society about the productive skills and abilities of persons with disabilities. Abilympics helps to foster friendship amongst the participants from the different parts of the country and acts as a motivating factor for them to improve their skills. It also helps that to inculcate



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confidence, develop skills and facilitate employment / self-employment for persons with disabilities. The movement has become popular and a number of new institutions have shown interest in its activities. All this has been possible because of the sustained efforts of the Regional Vice Presidents and members of the Governing Body.