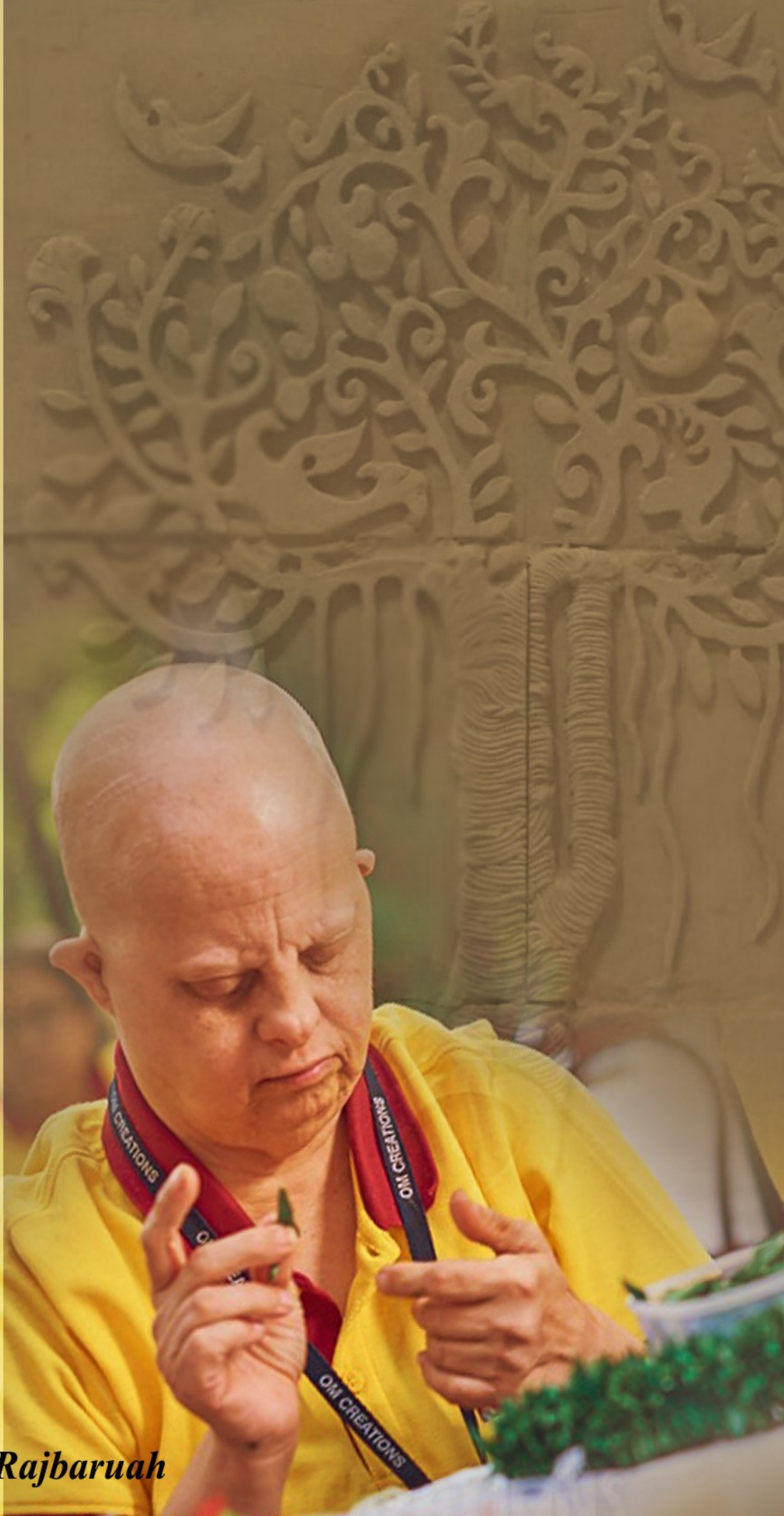


# **IMPACT ASSESSMENT of OM CREATIONS TRUST**

*Elizabeth Dalton*

*Mayuri Rajbonshi Rajbaruah*



# IMPACT ASSESSMENT of OM CREATIONS TRUST

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTs

*With immense pleasure, the authors take the privilege to express their deepest sense of gratitude, indebtedness, cordial thanks and profound appreciation to the founders of OM Creations Trust Mrs. Durga Jain and Dr. Radhike Khanna and other trustees Mrs. Ranjana Mahedevia, Mrs. Arundhati Bhattacharya, Mr. Pranav Shah for their valuable inputs, sharing their experiences helping to grow the organization and the young adults and for contributing immensely with their views for the manuscript of the research study.*

*The authors sincerely acknowledge their indebtedness towards all the staff who worked untiringly with young adults and who has helped in manifold ways right from ice-breaking with the young adults to providing the right information about each of them individually.*

*The authors will remain grateful to all the parents of the Young adults, especially the interviewed parents of the young adults who took out time from their busy schedules, who were so cooperative & open about their challenges and experiences of parenting their special children without any hesitation.*

*\* A deep sense of heartfelt reverence goes to all the young adults who patiently and honestly responded to the questions asked and taught us about unconditional love and perseverance.*

*\* We would like to express our special gratitude to all the funders/ contributors and sponsors who believed in the young adults and in the aim of Om Creations Trust in providing them with a livelihood.*

*\* We would be pleased to extend our gratitude to the neighboring organizations like AURED, Vatsalaya and Cancer Institute who have provided with their valuable feedback and opinions about Om Creations Trust.*

*Last but not least, the authors would like to thank Priti Patel for compiling the book and all the volunteers/ benefactors who unconditionally contributed their time and skills to the organization and shared their experiences and enormously helpful insights for the research study.*





## Foreword

OM Creations has the last thirty years been forerunners in developing methods to support specially abled young adults in India. This report assesses the impact of their work and shows the potential.

On a trip from Sweden to India some years ago I had the pleasure to visit OM Creations. I met with their staff in a workshop where we talked about their work and how to choose what to do from joy. We had a wonderful time, but I do not think I needed to “teach” them about joy as the whole place was filled with beautiful products where you immediately could sense that they have been produced with great joy and pride. I am always deeply touched when I connect to things that have been created with great care and love as it gives them a certain “air”. Even if you cannot see it you will most certainly feel the result of work that has been done by people that are joyous and thriving. If only more of our production facilities around the world could have this view of quality, a joyous work environment and camaraderie, then we would live in a quite different world.

The number of specially abled children in Sweden diagnosed with for example ADHD, Autism and Asperger, according to a study done in 2018, have doubled between the years 2011 and 2016. As the spectrum conditions are increasingly accepted in society it is likely that more people seek help, but that cannot explain the doubling of the numbers. Another reason mentioned in the study is that today’s society is quite stressful leading to that many cannot live and develop their innate capacity under such stress. In addition, we also see a significant increase in mental health challenges in Sweden such as anxiety, stress and depression, much of what can be referred to our chosen lifestyle. The solution is often medication rather than change of lifestyle and societal conditions.

My belief has always been that the specially abled young adults can teach us things that we have forgotten and as such show us a way forward to a more sustainable way of living. I see a great opportunity with the methods described in this assessment report and hope that the number of specially abled young adult to receive such support will increase significantly. I also see a great opportunity to expand the scope of the concept further, reaching many children. Every young adult need support to develop their innate qualities and abilities so that they can flourish. Today’s educational system is to a large extent still concentrated on factual knowledge is not sufficient. It should be complemented with tools that help children develop their unique gifts and stimulate them to follow their individual path. I see an opportunity for this report to be spread and shared with everyone who is curious about how to develop abilities and capacities in young adults.

My wish for OM Creations for the coming thirty years is that you will be as successful as the first thirty years when you now set out on your endeavour to develop a home for your young adults to bridge the gap of inability to capability.

With love and gratefulness,

Marie Örnsvärd, Publisher Fabric of Life



# Table of Contents

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>FOREWORD .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PREFACE .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SHORT PROFILE OF THE AUTHORS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Intellectual Disability and Om Creations Trust</i>	
<b>CHAPTER 2 .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<i>The Story of Need, and the Establishment of OM Creations Trust: A social enterprise for intellectually challenged young adult women</i>	
<b>CHAPTER 3 .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<i>Results and findings of the study</i>	
<b>CHAPTER 4 .....</b>	<b>93</b>
<i>Extended impact</i>	
<b>CHAPTER 5 .....</b>	<b>99</b>
<i>The vision for the future</i>	
<b>REFERENCES AND APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>102</b>



## PREFACE

*OM Creations is a unique social enterprise, whose purpose is to provide skills training, job preparation experiences, and real, financially productive employment opportunities for young adult women with intellectual or various developmental disabilities, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This program began in the early 1990's and has been growing and building ever since – in physical size, scope of programs, and capacity to support the diverse needs of its participants.*

*This comprehensive study will explore the actual impact of the programs, philosophy, and work of OM Creations on its young adults, staff, administration, community, and benefactors. It begins with a look at the broader scope of historical and present disability rights and services, situating the study in the context of the world, the country, and the city of Mumbai. Since 1991, OM Creations' work on the behalf of young women with intellectual disabilities has helped them not only to learn job skills and also how to communicate and interact with each other in ways that are both positive and respectful, and reflect each student's independent thoughts. Since the very early days of OM Creations, the programs have grown from basic food production, to integration of the arts and students' creative capabilities, expanding into its current social enterprise which offers high quality products and comprehensive services for its students, benefitting the community-at-large. Much of the success foundation of OM Creations' programs has been shaped though the boundless energy and expertise of Dr. Radhike Khanna, who leads the organization as its CEO. This report offers a careful look at the organization, from both broad and more focused perspectives, exploring the contexts of social, educational and job services in India and beyond. The Impact Study, with data collected between October 2018 and April 2019, provides the assessment results of carefully measured outcomes, both quantitative and qualitative, providing documented evidence of the numerous areas of impact that have been made by OM Creations – its programs, staff, and students. The goal of this study is to provide a clear and thoughtfully presented picture of OM Creations as a whole, and the difference it has made for its students, their families, and their communities. We thank you for your interest in OM Creations and we do hope that you will enjoy learning more about OM Creations through this work. We invite you to become connected with this innovative program, as it continues to break barriers for those with intellectual disabilities.*

Elizabeth M. Dalton, Ph.D.

Supervising Researcher

Dalton Education Services International

Rhode Island, U.S.A.

Co-Designer of the OM Creations Impact Study

Mayuri Rajbonshi Rajbaruah, Msc.

Research Consultant

Mumbai, India

Co-designer/Researcher of the OM Creations

Impact Study

## SHORT PROFILE OF THE AUTHORS

### *Elizabeth M. Dalton, PhD*

Principal Consultant, Dalton Education Services International (DESI)  
Steering Group and Website Team, INCLUDE International  
Collaboratory for Leadership in Universally Designed  
Education <https://include.wp.worc.ac.uk/>  
Adjunct Professor, University of Rhode Island  
Co-Chair, Universal Design for Learning SIG, Society for Information  
Technology and Teacher Education (SITE)  
Chair, Communications Committee, Unitarian Universalist  
Congregation of South County (UUCSC)  
[elizabethmdalton@gmail.com](mailto:elizabethmdalton@gmail.com)  
@ElizabethDalt19 (Twitter)  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/elizabethmdalton>  
<http://www.scoop.it/t/udl-mobile-learning-and-assistive-technology>  
<https://bit.ly/DaltonCV2020>



### *Mayuri Rajbonshi Rajbaruah*

M. Sc. in Human Development And Family Relations From  
College Of Home Science, Assam Agricultural University, Assam, 2005,  
India

Currently: Working as a freelance Research Consultant in Mumbai, India  
on- planning, designing, executing, and doing statistical analysis of  
research projects, related to improving the lives of various marginalized  
groups of our society such as intellectually challenged young adults, street/slum children, residential  
children, economically disadvantaged groups since 2014.



Prior experience:

- 6 years as Project/ Centre Coordinator in the Don Bosco NGO network.
- 17 years of experience in the field of social research in various local, national, and international projects.

Rewards and Achievements

- Represented India presenting the research paper based on her research on “Alcohol Prevention within a Rural context” in International Congress on Addiction 2009, Mexico City as per the invitation by Centros De Integracion Juvenil A.C. Mexico.
- Presented paper on “Role of youth in shaping democracy” in "International Conference on Youth & Democracy in South Asia", Pune.
- Attended “International conference on good street boys”, Mumbai
- Coordinated a National Career Fair for street children/slum children with 5000 participation.
- A national awardee in Vocal music from CCRT(Centre for Cultural Resources and Training) New Delhi, India.



## CHAPTER 1

### INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND OM CREATIONS TRUST

#### INTRODUCTION

This book is based upon a study that was carried out between the periods of September 2018 and April 2019 to understand and document the impact that the programs of OM Creations Trust (OMCT) has had over its 28 years of operation – growing from a very kernel of an idea to the full scope of educational and vocational programs that now exist. These programs serve to educate young adults with intellectual disabilities in the skills and understandings necessary to actively participate and build personally and economically productive livelihoods. Throughout this book, we use the term “young adults” to refer to the wide range of individuals who participate in the workshop programs of OMCT, regardless of their age – since, in the words of a staff member of OMCT, “the young adults may differ in their actual ages, but truly they are all young at heart”. In this study, we have experienced this to be true, and feel that use of the term young adults (YA) is most appropriate. One common thread that links all YA is the fact that they each experience some significant degree of intellectual disability – and currently OMCT program participants are primarily female.



## What is intellectual disability (ID)

According to American Psychiatric Association, intellectual disability involves problems with general mental abilities that affect functioning in two key areas:

- \* intellectual functioning (such as learning, problem solving, judgment)
- \* adaptive functioning (activities of daily life such as communication and independent living)

(Ranna Parekh, 2017)



This condition appears in about two out of every hundred persons (2/100). In many parts of the world, this condition is referred to as *mental retardation* also, and is part of the larger area of disability known as *developmental disabilities*. Children with intellectual disability can be born in any family - rich or poor, living in urban or rural areas, irrespective of gender, caste, creed, race, religion or nation ((WHO), 2007).





## **The importance of livelihood to all youth**

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (SDA) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 asserts that the world shall leave no one behind in the global push for social and economic development (Islay Mactaggart, 2018 Apr 9) (1). As part of the agenda for ending poverty and inequality, “decent work for all” has been promoted in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number eight as a key tool for inclusive economic development. This statement rhetoric is of crucial importance in relation to the estimated one billion people living with disabilities globally, 80% of who live in low and middle-income countries (LMICs). To achieve decent work for all persons, education, skills training, and good jobs cannot be separated. Livelihood is an essential precondition for generating resources for survival. Studies demonstrate far reaching negative economic consequences of loss of earning arising out of non-participation in livelihood. Existing studies also show the symbolic significance of work as a marker of identity and acceptance. Thus work, as in engagement in livelihood, has manifold significance for people, touching upon not just economic but also social and cultural dimensions of



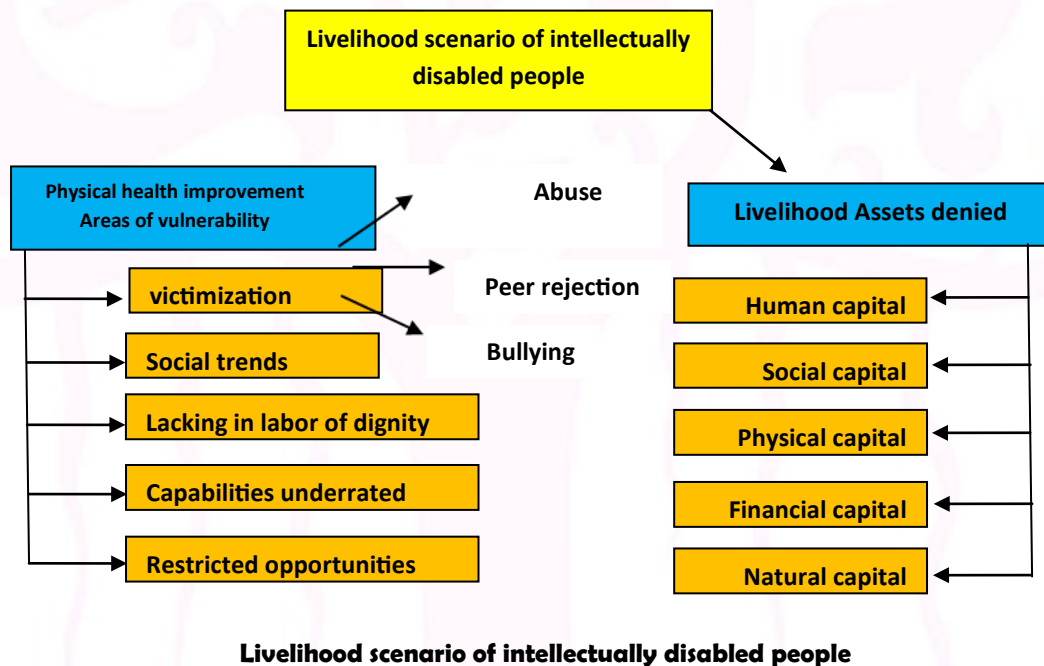
life. Every individual has the right to secure a productive livelihood, through which the individuals or households is/are able to meet their basic needs. It encompasses not only remunerated labour, but also an individual's capabilities (e.g. level of education, skills), assets and participation in other productive activities. The Sustainable Livelihood Approach has been a fundamental cornerstone of

international development and poverty reduction, as it emphasizes a shift beyond the subsistence level, toward long-term poverty alleviation. A key component for sustainable livelihoods is engagement in decent work: with the expectation that work that is stable, respects an individual's dignity, provides safe conditions and has fair remuneration.

## **Reasons of Unemployment for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities**

“Human rights are universal” (O'Manique, 1990)) and every citizen has the right to enjoy life with all that comes with existence on this earth and in this world, including the right to work. Historically, persons with intellectual disabilities have been treated with disdain in different countries based on different beliefs and cultures (Munyi, 2012). People's attitudes and the societal perceptions towards individuals with disabilities along with the treatment of persons with disabilities have been the bane of persons with Intellectual Disabilities (ID). This discriminatory

treatment meted out to persons with intellectual disabilities in the area of failure to create conditions that will facilitate the inclusion of this population into mainstream employment and accessing public facilities. False notions and fears that have existed within these societies for a long period of time have been largely due to lack of knowledge and awareness of what persons with intellectual disabilities can do, and a disregard for their basic rights and dignity. Young Persons with Disabilities (YPD) comprise an important section of the youth population. But Persons with disabilities face widespread exclusion from livelihood opportunities in many settings. Throughout the world they have made significant contributions as artists, chefs, sportspersons, musicians, etc. Other than such extraordinary achievements, many YPDs have successfully negotiated challenges of everyday lives to lead a meaningful life as contributing members of their families and of society. However, despite this, YPDs continue to be an excluded minority. As development literature proclaims the power of youth to transform countries like India (World Bank, 2006) (Men and Women (with disabilities) at Work), YPDs remain at the periphery- their contributions unrecognized and their potential unexplored (Sapra, 2014) (6). Intellectually challenged youth become vulnerable in many areas (Figure 1) and so been deprived of many livelihood assets.



“Disability-based discrimination in the employment context constitutes one of the most pervasive and insidious forms of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities in many societies”, World bank (2011) .



**Social victimization:** youth with intellectual disability are at greater risk of being victimized at work places and social places as they rarely can identify potential dangers and risky situations, or due to absence of a capable guardian, and a motivated offender. Rejection from their workmates, physical & sexual abuse at work, and bullying by people around them can make their jobs a horrifying experience at times that pushes them away from working and being independent in life.

**Social trends:** Even though there are many exceptionally successful stories of achievements by youth with intellectual disability, existing society's trend of discriminating against people with ID with views that they are not good enough for any work makes the person with ID prefer finding no job.

**Lacking in labor of dignity:** Persons with intellectual disabilities are often considered useless and objects of pity at their work places, with lesser chance of dignity for the job they are employed for.

**Capabilities Underrated:** Most of the youth with intellectual disability are very dedicative workers and are often experts in what they do. But due to pre-assumed mindset of employers, their skills and abilities are not considered 'good enough' for the jobs they are actually capable of.

**Restricted Opportunities:** At times there are many opportunities available for various employments, but the youth with intellectual disability, unlike their counter parts, are restricted from applying even though they have the requisite skills. This is due to various reasons, including societal attitudes and perception, employment facilities and opportunities designed more in favour of the able-bodied. Transportation accessibility challenges for persons with disabilities also exist, causing restricted employment prospects for persons with intellectual disabilities.

**Human Capital:** Human capital includes personal health, education, capacity to work, skills and knowledge that enable people make a living.

**Social capital:** Family, friends, networks and social relationships, formal and informal groups are the social resources people rely upon to make a living.

**Physical Capital:** Physical capital consists of basic infrastructure, technology, tools and equipment people use for their livelihood activities.

**Financial Capital:** Financial Capital includes savings, credit, remittances, salary/wages and any form of liquid asset that people use for economic activities.

**Natural Capital:** use for economic activities. This consists of natural resources such as land, water, forest, wildlife, and minerals that support people in deriving livelihoods.

## **B. World View of Intellectual Disability and Their Livelihood**

Of particular concern is the meaningful inclusion of persons with developmental disabilities in the planning for global development. While recognition and services have existed more readily for those with visible physical or sensory disabilities (i.e. wheelchair users, or persons who are blind or deaf, etc.), the challenges faced by those with developmental disabilities (i.e. autism, mental, and intellectual disabilities) are multifaceted and complex –which has led to the recent development of the descriptive term, “complex support needs”, which better explains what is actually necessary for each person’s functional success in life. Persons who are intellectually challenged (whose mental development is assessed to be significantly below expectations for her/his chronological age) or persons whose patterns of interaction with the world fall far outside of standard expectations (such as many of those on the autism spectrum), face great challenges in meeting world expectations for academic and work performance – they have complex support needs.

While there is clear evidence from high-income countries of a gap in the employment rate between persons with and without disabilities (averaging 40%), existing evidence points to substantial inequalities. For example, in the 2002–2003 World Health Surveys significant employment gaps between persons with and without disabilities were found across nine of 15 low and middle-income countries (LMICs), with persons with multiple impairments experiencing the highest gaps (1). Lower rates of employment among persons with disabilities have been found consistently in other studies. Exploration of predictors of access to livelihoods amongst persons with disabilities reveals certain trends, as well as the heterogeneity of the lived experience of disability. In India, key findings indicate that women with disabilities were twice as likely not to be working as men with disabilities, supporting the theorized ‘double discrimination’ experienced by women with disabilities (Groce N).

Labour market analyses in high-income countries highlight numerous realities which underpin the employment gap between persons with and without disabilities. These include employer misconceptions about the productive capacity of persons with disabilities, insufficient environmental or physical accommodations to meet individual needs, and policies that may

reduce, remove, or eliminate incentives for persons with disabilities to join or remain in the labour market. These dimensions are less explored or understood in LMICs and their complex livelihood mechanisms. One qualitative study by (Palmer M, 2015) in Vietnam cited low educational attainment and discrimination as the greatest barriers to formal and informal work for persons with disabilities. (PLoS One, 2018). Considering the over-representation of persons with disabilities amongst the poor, the UN's Sustainable Development Agenda's focus on decent work for all as a tool for inclusive economic development, and LMIC's suspected context of discrimination against the employment of those with disabilities, particularly women, there is an urgent need for data to assess current access to livelihood opportunities amongst persons with disabilities. Understanding this relationship is key if the world focus on inclusive development and elimination of poverty within the SDGs is to be achieved.

### **C. The Indian Context**

Employment is often seen as an important step towards the rehabilitation and empowerment of a person with disability, because it provides a sense of belonging, importance and independence (Department for International Development, 2000). However, persons with disabilities often face many barriers when seeking employment. This is particularly true in India, as well as in other developing countries, despite the current laws and services in place. According to the initiatives of the Ministry of Labour, Government of India, there are 47 Special Employment Exchanges and 914 regular employment exchanges that cater to the employment needs of job-seekers with disabilities. Disabled persons can get seventy five percent concessions in the basic train fare, preferential allotment of telephone booths, and preferential (Ritu Kalgotra, 2017) allotment of plots and housing sites by housing boards and urban development authorities. In the case of cerebral palsy and intellectual disability, parents have similar posting choices for government service and 100% assistance for voluntary organizations for developing organizational infrastructure and training professionals. However, it was revealed that there is no unemployment allowance/social security or any other security benefits available to persons with disabilities. As per the PWD Act (Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995), intellectual disabilities were never a category that is included in the 3% quota reserved for employment for disable people. However, recently, Lok Sabha has passed a new bill where new categories including intellectual disability, people with Down syndrome and autism are included in the employment quota (India Today, 2018).



## D. International Initiatives and Perspectives on Intellectual Disability

Perspectives on the rights of person with disabilities, including those with intellectual disabilities and what is possible for these individuals to achieve exists in a wide range around the world.

### United States of America



In the United States, the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1991 served as landmark legislation to ensure that all persons would have equity of access to buildings, transport, programs and services as a civil right. The ADA has continued to be reinforced and expanded over time, including clear national standards for the accessible design of all new government-funded buildings, as well as expanding rights to include access through auxiliary aids (such as assistive listening devices and closed captioning) in public areas such as theatres, movie houses, educational institutions, etc. Through the Olmstead decision (1999), unjustified segregation of persons with disabilities was found to be discriminatory and in violation of the ADA.

Development of programs for those with developmental/intellectual disabilities in the US is led by the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, whose vision is “a future in which all people, including those living with developmental and other disabilities are fully included, participating members of their communities” AUCD, (2019). The Centers value participation of people with developmental disabilities and their families, broad cultural and linguistic diversity, Self-determination of people with disabilities, individual and family-centered care, and a view of disability as a natural part of the human experience. Each Center frames its own programs and services to meet these stated values.

Self-advocacy efforts in the US are strong, as exemplified through ADAPT: Self advocacy and action for those with disabilities. The organization regularly works across the country; individuals with disabilities standing up for the rights of those with disabilities. They share their view of equality in this quote: “In ADAPT, we strive to advance beyond “mere tolerance”, where tolerance might be defined as a mere acknowledgement of someone’s right to exist but may not require more effort than that. Indeed, we dismiss tolerance – it is lacking, it is empty, it is not enough. Instead we argue for embrace. We advocate for embracing disability, demonstrating a willingness to open up, literally and figuratively” (ADAPt-Free our people, 2019)

## Europe

**Down Syndrome International (DSI)** is based in the United Kingdom, but has chapters reaching around the world. This organization is committed to improving quality of life for people with Down syndrome, promoting their right to be included on a full and equal basis with others. Individuals with Down Syndrome and their families around the world gather together regularly to meet and share their cultures and ideas. DSI involves every member country in a wide range of sport, art, and dance programs that include all interested persons – fully inclusive.

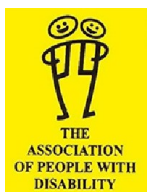


**Autism-Europe (AE)**, another international association to advance personal rights, helps persons autism to improve their quality of life. AE advocates for better policies to meet the needs of autistic people, and strives for more awareness and understanding of autism in society. In addition to policy work, AE promotes appropriate care, education, training and employment, living support, adapted medical and social services, professional diagnosis, early intervention, protection from discrimination and better social inclusion to foster the well-being of people on the autism spectrum (Autism Europe, 2019)



## India

In a recent study of the issues and challenges of disability and rehabilitation services in India (S. Ganesh Kumar, 2012). Disability was identified as an important public health problem, especially attributed to issues faced as a developing country. These problems are expected to increase, due to many changes that lead to an increase in life expectancy. As the issues differ in developed and developing countries, services should be targeted according the needs of the disabled, with local community participation. Specific recommendations include advocacy for mainstreaming of systems and services, investment in specific programs and services for people with disabilities, capacity building of health care and human resource providers, educating disabled children as close to the mainstream as possible, and increased public awareness and understanding of disability.



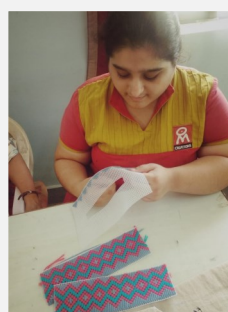
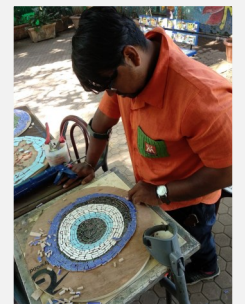
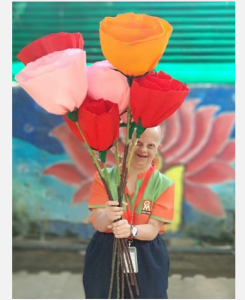
**The Association of People with Disability (APD)**, India is an NGO focused on transforming the lives of underprivileged people with disability since 1959. Based in Bengaluru, Karnataka, their programs in rural and urban Karnataka enable, equip and em-



power children and adults with a range of disabilities including locomotor, spinal cord injury, speech and hearing, cerebral palsy, and to some extent, mental issues. Working in the areas of early intervention, inclusive education, and livelihood programs, APD offers job training courses and job placement assistance for marginalized youth with disability, as well as employer sensitization towards the needs of persons with disabilities.

## Summary

Around the world, and in India, there is recognition that persons with disabilities do have the civil right to be full participants in society as a whole, however recognizing this reality and actually taking the actions needed to bring about positive change in the lives of those with developmental and/or intellectual disabilities is another thing altogether. Many great laws can be put into government books and publications, however unless a vision emerges as to how these human rights can be nurtured and supported, and unless capable and dedicated individuals exist to implement such a vision, change certainly will not come. From this reality grows the power, the vision, the creativity, and the purpose of OM Creations – to achieve the vision of living satisfying, independent, creative, productive, and beautiful lives for young adult women and men with intellectual disabilities.





## CHAPTER 2

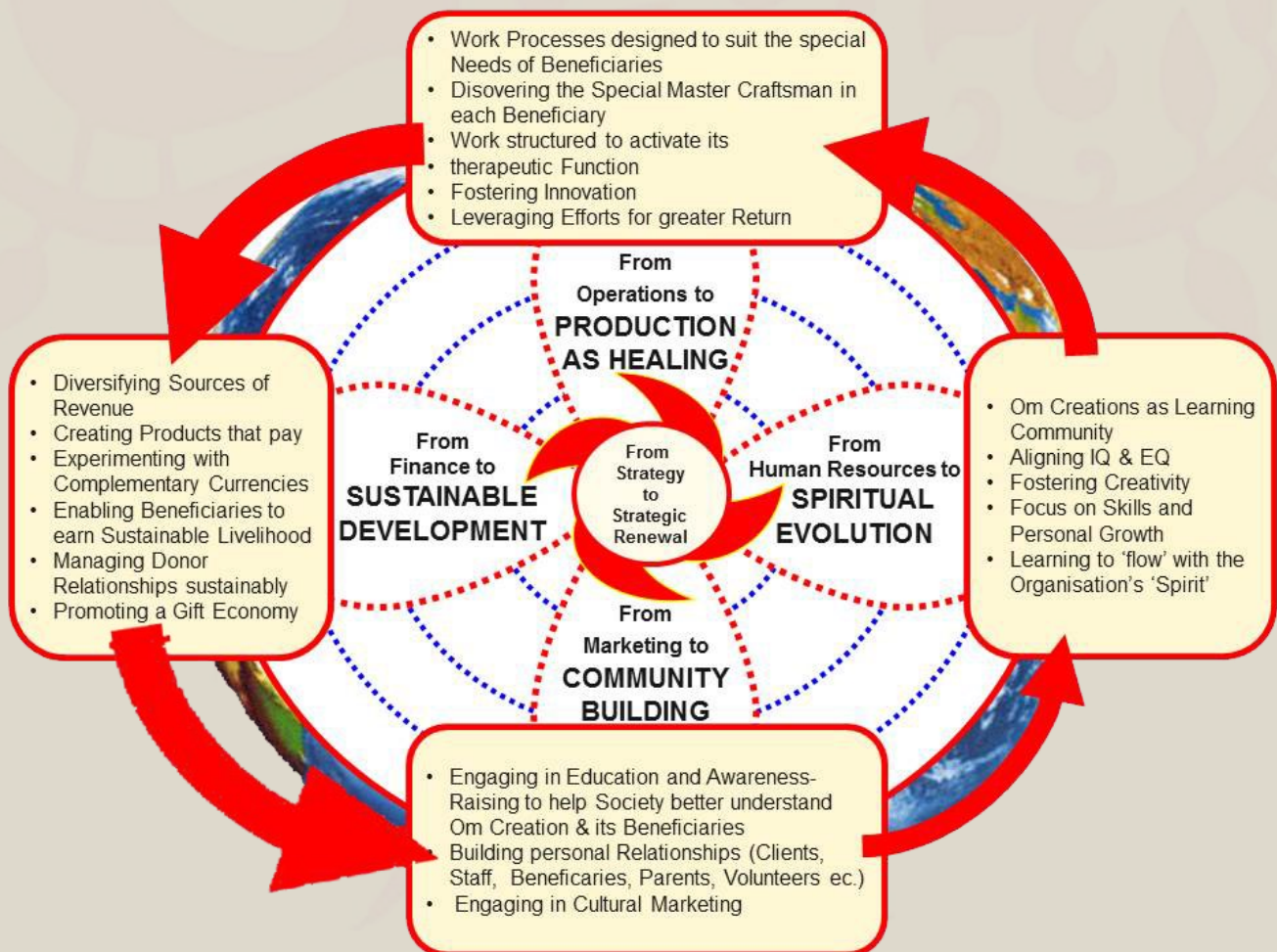
### **The Story of Need, and the Establishment of OM Creations Trust: A social enterprise for intellectually challenged young adult women**

#### **2.1. Introduction**

*Editors' note: To truly understand why OM Creations Trust came to be, it is important to understand the full scope and nature of needs for those with intellectual disabilities living in India, generally, and in Mumbai, specifically. These needs are described in the section to follow:*

#### **Status and Needs of Persons with Intellectual and Other Disabilities**

Historically, over various periods of time up until the advent of the colonial rule in India, rulers were exemplified as protectors, establishing charity homes to feed, clothe and care for the destitute persons with disabilities in India. Local communities, under the Panchayati system of those times, took care of physically and mentally challenged people outside their homes as a means of charity. the Indian classrooms. Later, the need for education of those who were



intellectually challenged people began to develop during the pre-independence period, and special schools were started for those who could not meet the demands of the mainstream schools. The first residential home for persons with mental retardation was established in Mumbai, then Bombay, in 1944, and was followed by the establishment of a special school there as well (Rehab Council). Slowly the number of special schools providing special education began to grow, but the question remained - was this all that could have been done to empower these students to flourish in their lives?

Research reveals that young adults with intellectual disabilities, who are typically born with widely varied developmental challenges, face many disadvantages in society and are often subjected to stigma and discrimination even after they grow to adulthood (Munyi, 2012). While programs and support services do exist, it has been questionable whether these individuals can become economically independent, or, just as importantly, if they will be able to, and have the opportunities to develop pride in their own identity and feelings of self-worth. Was society and were families adequately aware of these needs? Was society adequately equipped to bring out the best in these individuals? Were families knowledgeable of the potential of their special needs child and the pathways that are possible for them to grow and learn? The answer to this question was a resounding NO, evidenced by the many problems encountered in complying with the set values and expectations of Indian society regarding intellectual and social behavior. Intellectually challenged persons have been traditionally rejected, isolated, stigmatized, and deprived of society's resources as they were unable to meet the society's set standards. To address these issues, India did move forward with some specific legislation to improve the situation of persons with disabilities .

The Persons with Disabilities Act in India, eg. Children with disabilities were often kept at home and not sent to schools with other children, as the communities and schools could not see how they would be able to participate or to learn in slating the right to equal opportunities and full participation for persons with disabilities, was established by the National Government of India in 1995. The Act listed seven conditions of disabilities, which were blindness, low vision, leprosy cured, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation, and mental illness. In the RPWD Act, 2016, the list has been expanded from 7 to 21 conditions that also include cerebral palsy, dwarfism, specific learning disabilities, autism





spectrum disorders. The nomenclature mental retardation is replaced by intellectual disability which is defined as “a condition characterized by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem-solving) and in adaptive behavior which covers a range of every day social and practical skills including specific learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorders(John,2017).”

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 along with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017 has been enacted by the Indian government. The new Disability Law gives effect to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Disability Law inter alia seeks to protect disabled persons from various forms of discrimination, increases measures for effective participation and inclusion in the society, and ensures equality of opportunity and adequate accessibility (India's New Law on Disability Extends to Private Employers, 2017).

Regardless of this act, ineffective programmes, insufficient funding and complexities in resource mobilization continue to pose barriers to the realization of these rights. The Government of India has introduced legislation and policies for the welfare of persons with disabilities due to mental illnesses, but there is no much data available about successful implementation of these policies.

India did ratify the United Nations Convention Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on the 1st of October, 2007, and was the 7th country in the world and the first significant country to do so. The ratification of UNCRPD was a direct result of the advocacy by National Centre for promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) and Disabled Rights Group (DRG). UNCRPD is stated that persons with disabilities must have the same human rights that everyone else enjoys. It marks a radical shift in defining and understanding disability, moving from a medical/social welfare perspective to a human-right based approach. The Preamble to the UNCRPD states that “Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. While the Government of India has enacted laws and provisions for disabled people, due to a general lack of awareness or understanding of the true issues regarding disability, existing laws are not being effectively implemented to support the disabled individuals’ personal growth and self-development. As per Delhi Psychiatry Journal, 2014 (Ravichandra S. Karkal, 2014), there is an increasing recognition and emphasis on the needs and rights of people with disabilities. The constitution of India ensures equality, freedom,

justice and dignity of all individuals and explicitly mandates an inclusive society for everyone, including persons with disabilities. Unfortunately, these rights have been slow to take hold, and there is a dearth of specific research looking carefully into the impediments to societal access and human rights implementation for persons with disabilities in India.

### **The negative attitudes of stakeholders / employers at job places in India**

As per the Indian National Census of 2011, out of the 121 crore (cr) population, about 2.68 Cr persons are identified as disabled, which is 2.21% of the total population. This figure appears to be significantly below expected percentages. As per the World health Organization, about 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability, with 2-4% experience significant or complex difficulties in functioning. The global disability prevalence is higher than previous WHO estimates from the 1970s that suggested a figure of around 10%. The global estimate for disability is on the rise due to population ageing, rapid spread of chronic diseases, and improvements in the methodologies used to measure disability (World Health Organization, 2019). While the exact reasons are not known for this discrepancy between world figures and Indian figures, it is very possible that due to lingering societal beliefs or fears regarding disability, the full sum of persons with disabilities in India has not been identified. However, out of 2.68 cr persons, 6% of them are identified to have mental retardation and 3% have mental illnesses. In an era where inclusive development is being emphasized as the right path towards sustainable development, focused initiatives for the benefit and advancement of disabled persons are essential. Despite the existence of the many policies that focus on inclusive growth, including education and livelihood, research reveals that there are still very limited opportunities available for young adult women or men with intellectual disabilities to become that empowered economically and to build their own identity. While many educational needs of the mentally challenged have been addressed by the government to some extent, livelihood needs are still restricted to a great extent. Lang (2001) finds that disabled people in India are subject to exploitation by Government staff. Despite approaching officials several times, and even after bribing, disabled people have not received services and therefore, they often loose hope of receiving help from government facilities. Additionally, prevailing negative attitudes of officials and employers prevented disabled people from availing loans. When interviewed, 18% of the parents in the Lang study stated that they were unable to get funds for young adults after their graduation, even after several attempts. Often, the banks were apprehensive of timely repayment due to their uninformed perceptions regarding the capacity of disabled people. Lang also



discovered that 82% of the parents or guardians of the young adults were not aware of any services besides railway or bus concessions. The young adults with disabilities also had little access to other employment, self-employment, social security services or treatment facilities. When interviewed, 81% of young adults with intellectual disabilities stated that due to a lack of specific plans or closed mindedness of employers in cities like Mumbai, opportunities available for them to get employed were very limited. Their capabilities were always questioned or their applications were denied without any justified reasons. In addition, lack of accessible transportation options, negative attitudes of stake-holders, and administrative complications have deprived these individuals from procuring the benefits of available entitlements.

### **The identified need to create job opportunities for young intellectually challenged adults**

‘Livelihoods’ not only refers to the ability to earn but also the opportunity to develop one’s full potential with control over factors that shape his/her life and contribute to society’s development (Coleridge and Venkatesh, 2010) (Coleridge, 2010). It is widely recognized that employment and income generation are key factors for empowering and promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities into society (DFID 2000). Some studies (for example DFID 2000, WHO 2011) have indicated that many people with disabilities have proven their capability in various sectors. Across the world, people with disabilities are entrepreneurs and self-employed workers, farmers and factory workers, doctors and teachers, shop assistants and bus drivers, artists, and computer technicians (Domzal et al 2008, cited in WHO 2011). Thus, if effective support and protection in employment and income generation are achieved for disabled people, many intellectually challenged young adults will be able to not only live healthier and happier lives, but will also make a significant contribution to economic and social progress across society.



Clearly, the results of Lang's study, as well as others, point to the need for other options and models of support to effectively meet the stated challenges. **The model offered through OMCT** has instilled both **hope** and **satisfaction** in the lives of young adults with disabilities through the creative and personalized programs available at the skills center, where each person is accepted and celebrated for their individual talents, and together they build a successful social and business community. When asked, 80 %of individuals said their job at OMCT is the first job where they were welcomed whole heartedly, despite their limitations.

## **2.2 A Snapshot of OM Creations, through the eyes of Archana Mehta, Coordinator of OM Creations Visual Arts programs**

*Editor's Note: Archana Mehta has worked at OM Creations for the longest time amongst all staff, starting at the very beginning of the program and now serving as leader for OMCT employment programs. The Editors interviewed Archana in June of 2019. Her experiences, perspective, and understanding of OM Creations are shared below.*



"OM Creations has advanced much over the years. The products are focused on being high quality, and services are customized and very responsive.

Some examples of this are -

\*The Reliance family requested customized services to make decorative garlands. OM Creations developed 10 samples, from which one was selected. Multiple garlands were produced, of several different sizes, with customized designs, and completed within the required 2-day window. The family was very appreciative, and loved the work.

\*Printed gift bags for Bharad Serun were produced as a regular order - 3 orders every 3 months. Due to problems with floods, many products are destroyed, however the damaged product was kept and when seen by another customer, they 'loved' the water effect and purchased these materials, creatively eliminating any material waste.

\*The Indian Express family wanted special door decorations for gifts (N=185). OM Creations designed for a month before achieving the ultimate design, but was very successful in meeting all expectations and a tight timeframe. The staff worked together to analyze and problem solve, and develop a process that was a good match between the job, the skills of the students, and

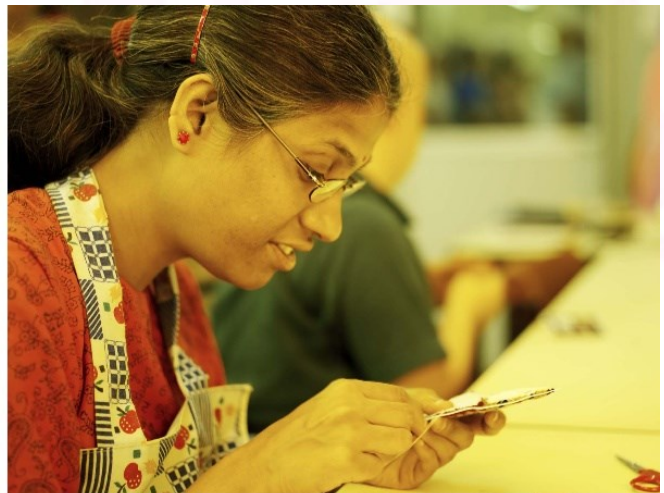


planning for any unexpected challenges, to achieve the task to the highest standards. Much good will was established and the relationship continues and has grown to include other friends and clients.

Much of the success of OM Creations is directly connected to the unique, caring, and capable guidance of founder trustee, Dr. Radhike Khanna. With many years of experience in special education, has changed the way that the teachers work with the individual students to help make each person's life at OM Creations very meaningful. The partnership of Mrs. Durga Jain (trustee and founder of OMCT) and Dr. Khanna wisely developed the many learning and job training programs, and the skills and understandings of the staff.



The young adults (YA) range much in age, but are all 'young at heart'. Dr. Khanna has brought new strategies, which are shared with the staff, to develop clear steps for all YA to be able to work independently on tasks, and to be a full member of the social community of OMCT.



**Young adults at work**



Dr. Khanna has brought in many new skills for the program, expanding the workshop to produce ceramics, embroidery, batik, hand painting, food preparation, office skills training, and even more. She has done so through a careful analysis of the steps for each task, developing clear steps to follow, which helps all staff and YA to maintain high quality of production throughout all enterprises. A different thing, Dr. Khanna brought yoga and meditation, to help students to be calm and balanced, and also Brain Gym, which helps to balance both sides of the brain, leading each YA to better understand the work and how to accomplish it. Parents identify important progress for each student in their life and home behaviors, and in making the YA a positive contributor at home. The YA are proud of themselves and of their jobs, because of the real accomplishments they experience every day. Some YA have become very independent, traveling now on their own – some for up to 1 and a half hours. The YA learn to be accountable for their time and can make independent judgments. This has been life changing for both YA and the families. Parents are so happy that the YA work from 9-5, allowing the family also to work without worry for their child, and parents have confidence that OM Creations is a very good place and that it will guide their child to be independent and to be happy in life.

### 2.3 The Unique Nature of OM Creations

In India, intellectually challenged individuals currently depend primarily upon family members' compassion and charity to sustain their livelihoods. Due to lack of knowledge, various family interests, and family members' negative attitudes, disabled people are often prevented from being independent in their livelihoods, which causes them to be virtually powerless. The lack of physical, financial and political power further reduces the disabled person's self-esteem and confidence. Possible mechanisms for promoting greater participation of persons with disabilities in livelihoods include improved access to social protection systems, healthcare, rehabilitation and assistive devices, education and vocational training, as discussed in many of the earlier referenced materials. This very concept of full participation in one's own livelihood was realized and heartfelt by the founder trustee of OM Creations Trust,

**Dr. Radhike Khanna**, visionary special educator, and also by patron and founder trustee, **Mrs. Durga Jain**, who believed in the abilities of special children. The question of "what's next after



**Mrs Durga Jain & Dr. Radhike Khanna**

their education?” was always there. How will young adults be employed after they graduate? Will they be skillful enough to earn and be a contributive citizen? Are there employers who could see beyond their disabilities and bring out their best abilities/talents? Dr. Khanna and Mrs. Durga Jain understood that if these children did not develop with job skills on par the market need, they would likely be dependent and a liability to their families, leading to crisis. Further, they may remain largely excluded from political and civil processes and voiceless on crucial issues that affect them and their society. Realizing this fact for the young mentally challenged girls from Sadhana school, Dr. Khanna conceptualized ***a dream that would bring revolution*** for the benefit of many mentally challenged young adults - **the OM Creations Trust**, a social enterprise where the young adults can dream the undreamed, explore their capabilities and lead a dignified life.



### **The vision of Dr. Radhike Khanna for the social enterprise of OM Creations Trust**

The birth of a mentally challenged child also gives birth to feelings of denial, shock, anger, grief, guilt, embarrassment, depression, withdrawal, ambivalence and fears of stigma within the family. The enthusiasm and the aspirations associated with the expected child after 9 months of waiting may become shattered for many of the families. Families are not ready to welcome a special child, hence, after detection that the child is born special, many families may deny or refuse to accept the fact. Family members are reluctant to discuss problems of their child with others, due to fear of social stigma. The result of stigma is that family becomes more and more isolated and withdrawn (Sharpe, 1977). Lack of understanding of the causes of retardation has further contributed to social ostracism and to a general tendency to deal with mental retardation through denial. The possibility of having a retarded child is so traumatic and the causes are still so poorly understood that most people typically exclude the possibility from awareness. Often the family members become worn out and discouraged as they work to cope and deal with the needs of their mentally challenged child. Presence of a mentally handicapped child can shake the foundation of the whole family. Therefore, the greatest challenge for Dr Khanna was to first help families to build confidence in parenting their special children. Focusing upon this issue at the organizational level, it was found that parents who came for rehabilitation did not see the

potential that the child was born with – they only were seeing the difficulties and barriers - since they had a vision of conformity, as per societal acceptance. The blueprint the child was born with was getting submerged in attempting to keep up with societal expectations. With over 33 years as a special educator, Dr. Khanna envisioned and promised herself to bring change in their mindsets and bring the best out in these children, breaking all societal norms and customs. Her major focus was on reshaping the mindset of the parents, to empower them with feelings of contentment towards their children.

**“I have observed in many parents, how having an intellectually challenged child in a family was considered a serious stress factor for the parents. They were or are still always at a dilemma of reorienting and reevaluating their family goals, responsibilities and relationships. Hence, I felt the need, as a special educator, to equip the parents with advocacy skills alongside equipping their intellectually challenged children with livelihood skills to bring out the best in them towards a successful and satisfactory life for themselves and for their family as well.” – Dr. Radhike Khanna.**



These revolutionary ideas help to form the core of Dr. Khanna's approach to teaching and learning, known as the **REALM Model**.

#### **2.4. The REALM Model**

Ravichandra et al (2014), states “the policy makers have to adopt a social model for the mentally challenged that is still yet to exist, which can be of great need for the betterment of them.” The unique pedagogy developed by Dr.

Radhike Khanna, the REALM Model(which stands for “*Radhike Enabling Actualization through Learning Methodology*”)proved to be a “game changer” in developing the minds, hands, hearts, and spirits of young intellectually challenged adults.



# The REALM MODEL

*The Inclusive Empowerment model for  
Intellectually challenged young adults*

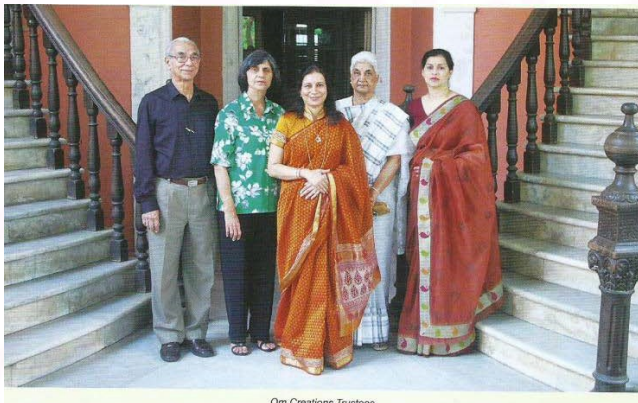


**Realm Assessment: A Unique Way to Plot Vocational Training**

## 2.5 The Role of Creativity and Universal Design for Learning at OMCT: A Holistic Model for Education and Job Skill Development

### OM Creations Trust

OM Creations Trust began as a pioneering non-profit project by educators and parents seeking to create positive and productive life options for young mentally challenged girls in Mumbai. The OM Creations mission statement is:



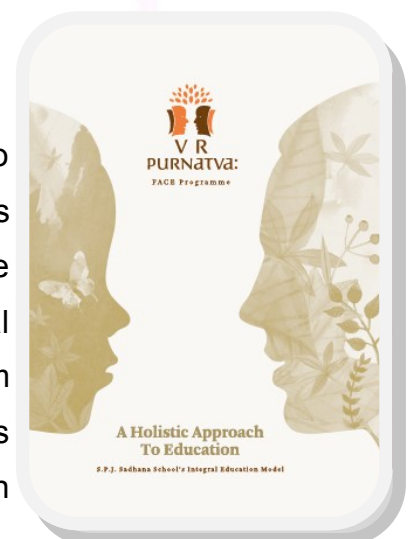
**The Founders – Special educators & parents**

Based in belief in the positive impact of professional training and relevant and appropriate client supports, Om Creations has operated for more than 28 years, working with the SPJ Sadhana School, and has become “a social enterprise rooted in the Indian ethos with a culture and value system that has the potential to transform individuals.” (Om Creations Trust, 2018).

**“Creating an organization where the differently abled can realize their creative selves and harness their potential, thus allowing them to stand on their own feet by being productive and earning members of the society, and supporting them to have a life of dignity till the end.” (Om Creations, 2018)**

### Integral Research Design: V.R. Purnatva

An Integral Research design (Esbjörn-Hargens 2006) was applied to merge the Sadhana School’s core methodology with Trans4m’s Integral Worlds Theory (TRANS4M, 2018). The product became the Integral Education Model, **V.R. Purnatva**, a holistic educational approach which has come to be known as the FACE Program (Facing Autism through Communication with the Environment). This model represents the relationship between student and teacher, both



being whole human beings and together building an inseparable whole. Developed through co-operative inquiry, a participatory form of action research methodology, the FACE model is based on the interconnection between the four world dimensions of the South (*Healing Relationships*), East (*Creative Consciousness*), North (*Applicable Knowledge*) and West (*Sustainable Livelihood*), leading to a holistic approach on the educational (student, teacher, parents) and organizational (school) level (Khanna & Bucher, 2015).

### FACE Program

As a pioneering example of holistic education in India, the FACE program “leads to the transformation of many specially-abled students, allowing them to develop their full potential and become valuable and earning members of the society” (Khanna & Buchler, 2015). This successful educational approach brings about a change in the lives of many special students and has become a catalyst for societal co –evolution. in India. “The four dimensions of the FACE program are profoundly connected to the respective societal dimensions, mirroring the need for more holistic perspectives” (p. 11). The four world dimensions are implemented in four phases.

The FACE program is based on the belief that science and art must be equally used to nurture and develop skills in specially-abled students. This approach uses multiple means/ways to both engage students and encourage them to express themselves and what they have gained through their understandings and skills. This diversity of teaching and learning follows in the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) (CAST, 2019), which include multiple means of representation of content and instruction, multiple means of action and expression of what has been learned, and multiple means of engagement in all of activities and tasks.

**Phase 1-** Facing AUTISM through Communication with the Environment

**Phase 2-** KEY OM: Kriya, Empowerment, Yoga and OM meditation

**Phase 3-** LINC'S: Linking Initiating a Network of Communication through Synergy

**Phase 4-** SANTOOLAN: Sensitizing Attitudes for Normalizing Tendencies and Offsetting Latent Adult Non-acceptance of Autism.





## Details of the FACE Program's VR Purnatva Model

### *Phase 1- Healing Relationships.*

Facing AUTISM through COMMUNICATION with the ENVIRONMENT (FACE). The first phase of this program was aimed at creating thinking individuals with the capacity to extend their thinking to everyday situations. By establishing relationships, the educator is accepting students as a whole with challenging behaviors and helping students to communicate with the environment. Behaviors are changed by physical modification of the site and class to make the learning scenario conducive. This helps to create thinking

**Communication established with students**



individuals.

### *Phase 2- Creative Consciousness.*

Kriya, Empowerment, Yoga and OM meditation (KEY OM) Over the years, the FACE program has repeatedly surmounted barriers and evolved through dynamic progression to create a therapeutic environment enabling each participant to attain their full potential. Development of the right brain (which controls creativity) to facilitate whole brain activity is emphasized by use of alternate therapies such as visual arts, yoga, and meditation, creating better balance between right-brain the and left-brain areas. This strengthens the moral and mental fibers of the person.

**Alternate therapy practiced by young adults**



### *Phase 3-Applicable Knowledge.*

Linking & Initiating a Network of Communication through Synergy (LINCS). Association between mentor and student is built on the understanding that if the student is treated as a respected member of society, he/she has the potential to rise to the required expectation. Synchronization of the work of



**Association of students with her teacher / mentor**

the staff mentor and trainee creates a systematic flow of synergy between mentors and trainees and is extended to the students. The student gradually builds up a primary LINC with his/her mentor that forges connections with other teachers, peers and society.

#### **Phase 4- Sustainable Livelihood.**

Sensitizing Attitudes for Normalizing Tendencies and Offsetting Latent Adult Non-acceptance of Autism (SANTOOLAN). The final stage of FACE is SANTOOLAN, where the student is placed in an environment of normalcy and integrated at the work place. The imbalance, created due to psychological blocks of parents who may not have completely accepted the child as a whole being, undergoes a focus shift, from the child to parental, societal influences, moving toward a shared holistic view of the normalcy of the student.

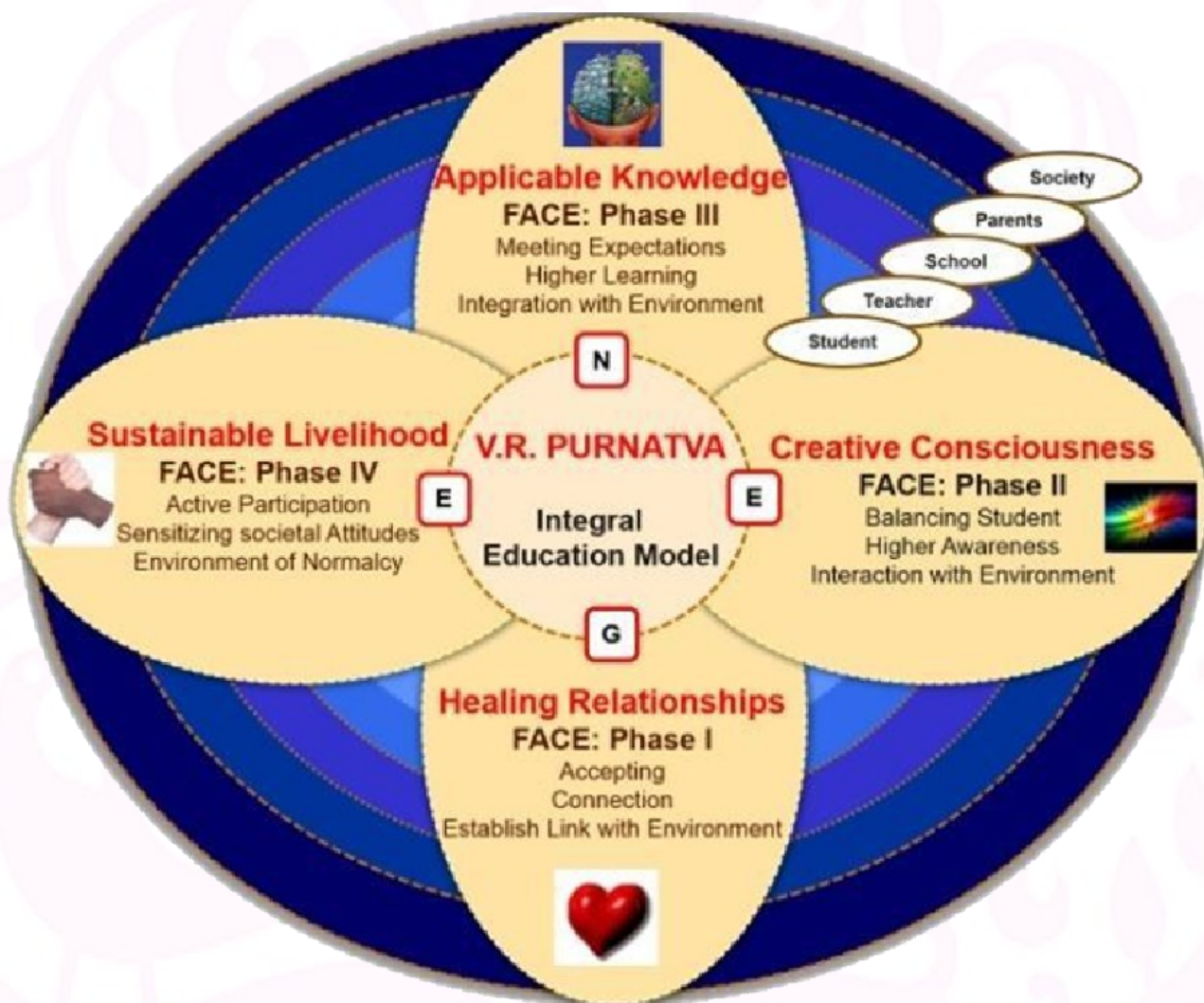
By following this diverse transformational model, both the student and the teacher change. The key component for success in model implementation is the teacher student relationship. When the teacher student relationship is established, there is an understanding of difficulties and challenges, which creates a balance leading to the evolution of the teacher.



**Young adults at work**







Evaluating a student's ability, prior to initiating training in vocational skill development, is key to each student's education plan. The Realm Assessment tool was developed in-house, based upon many years of researching, living with, and learning to understand the challenges of the special needs students and finding workable solutions for teachers, parents, and students through a sustainable approach. The Realm assessment evaluates functional academics, basic motor skills, communication skills, cognition, and perception and most importantly the personal aspects of each learner, revealing who the student really is individually. This is key for the educator to devise a vocational training plan that fits each individual student. The tool allows educators to measure current levels, and the same tool can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the education/vocational plan, after it is implemented. The assessment subject area is carefully selected to match the in-house training curriculum used by the organization. The results give a direction to the educators about the student readiness, flexibility and mode of training that is a directed match with the student needs, connecting Realm with Universal Design for Learning principles through its various implemented components in education.



## Teacher Training: Capacity Building Workshops (CBW)

In connection with Mumbai University and other local universities, administrators and educators of OM Creations empower teachers to overcome the issues that are typically faced during the education and training of OM program participants, who have varied developmental and behavioral needs. The workshops are designed to help teachers and teacher educators to develop their willingness to recognize and adjust to new perspectives through experiential teaching methods where teachers are put into shoes of students to make learning empathetic and accessible to them. CBW enables the participants to transform themselves and their students according to the following organizing principles:

- \* Understand and increase teachers' capacity to learn about students' abilities through Perception, Movement and Balance modules
- \* Apply a dynamic approach that differs significantly from what is typically taught in the official training colleges.
- \* Enable teachers to address the challenging issues that they face in classroom.
- \* Enable teachers to let go of their fears and apprehensions; to accept disability and build learning experiences that empower students' abilities from inadequacy to normalcy.
- \* Enable teachers to grow into "radiant people" who are focused in their work.
- \* Apply the model of VR Purnatva practiced by administrators, educators, and trainers of the OM Creations Trust team.



**Capacity Building Workshops for staff**





Negative cultural attitudes and ideas about persons with disabilities can keep these individuals from fully participating in and enjoying full membership in society. OM Creations Trust and its related programs has made significant strides in Mumbai to use

innovative techniques and training methods to help educators to evolve in their attitudes about persons with developmental disabilities, and to help program participants to develop the skills and personal confidence to live productive and joyous lives. Science, art, and spirituality come together equally to develop skills and confidence in specially-abled students, expanding options for engagement and expression, thereby connecting strongly with UDL (CAST, 2019).

The components of OM Creations programs are applicable far beyond India, and can be replicated in order to share the holistic Integral Education model of *V.R. Purnatva* worldwide. The creative departments of OM Creations Trust are always growing. Departments include food preparation, catering, ceramics, fabric design, and hand-work arts, each focused on developing beautiful minds, beautiful souls, and beautiful, high quality products. Production of such products provides individual and collective satisfaction and pride in work, a feeling of self-worth for each of the young adults, and a regular paycheck that brings pride to all of the family. The holistic circle of need, learning, skill development, and beauty found through art and spirituality, community belonging, family pride and financial independence is complete.

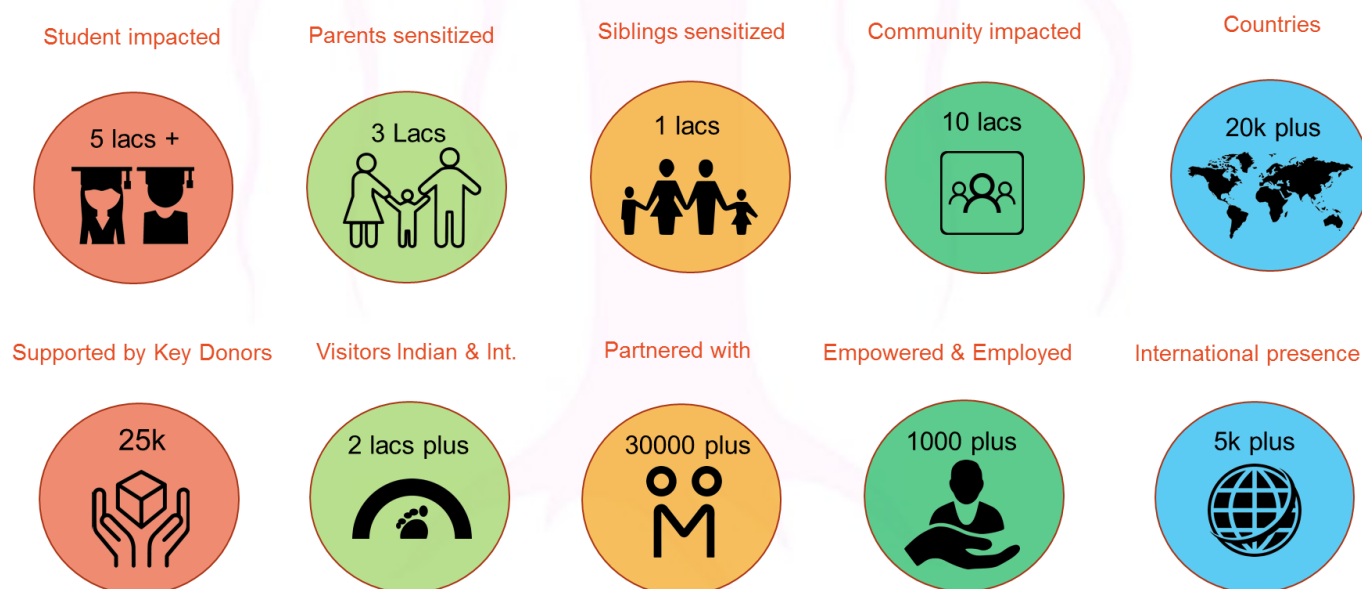
## 2.6. The “Interwoven Cloth” of relationships between skills, creativity, self worth and mental health of the young adults of OMC.



**Different Skills, creativity, self worth and mental health of the young adults**

As social beings, the capacity to form and maintain relationships is essential to us and how we function within society. Building this special bond between the young adults and young adults is a key component of OM Creations Trust to make them mentally healthy, and acquiring a positive sense of wellbeing. Teachers and staff will have a relationship with young adults, but it is the quality of the relationship that Om Creation Trust gives importance about. A consistent and sensitive relationship with the staff has been helping young adults to secure attachment or bond with their peers, family and immediate people in their contacts. Young adults at Om creation Trust is securely attached to the staff, their peers and the environment that provide them comfort when in distress, and they always develop a sense that they are worthy of being consoled and loved. This is essential for healthy development in young adults, and has been helping to set them up for a good start in life. Young adults who are securely attached here at OMCT are able to manage their own feelings and behaviors and able to relate to others. This gets them off to a good start in terms of their social development as well.

As children spend more years at Om Creation Trust, their ability to form and sustain relationships – be that with peers, parents, teachers etc. enhances noticeably. Most young adults naturally acquire these skill through the time spent at the centre. However, there are some young adults who, for various reasons need some help with this. The various skill and creativity development programs intrigued with social and emotional learning programmes of Om Creations Trust have been helpful both in terms of social and emotional learning.





## 2.7 Focus for the OM Creations Impact Assessment

To document the effect that the unique qualities of OMCT's model for individualized personal growth, skill development, livelihood training and independence has had for the young adults with intellectual challenges and developmental disabilities, their families, the OMCT staff, and the program stakeholders, the implementation of an Impact Study to assessment these factors was determined to be needed.

### The Aim of the Study

To articulate the visionary measures taken for the growth of OMCT, to determine the effectiveness of livelihood programmes rendered at the trust to uplift the lives of intellectually challenged people, and to share results of the study to expand community understanding and support of the program.

### Study Objectives

To create awareness and understanding of the **philosophical pedagogy of Dr. Khanna** in developing OM Creations as an integral enterprise in transforming lives and redefines the capabilities of intellectually disabled people. To explore the effectiveness of the **organizational model of OMCT (REALM)** as an innovative livelihood solution to uplift the lives of intellectually disabled people.

To identify the many **areas and extent of impact of OMCT** on the lives of intellectually challenged people, from the inception time to date.



## CHAPTER 3

### Documenting the Impact of 28 years of OM Creations Trust as Social Enterprise in Transforming Inabilities to Abilities

#### 3.0 Methodology

##### Research Questions

To begin this assessment of the impact of OMCT over its 28 years of operation, specific research questions were identified to frame the study. The research questions developed to assess OMCT impact are as follows:

**How effective is the philosophical pedagogy of Dr Khanna in developing best practice in the support of intellectually disabled young adults?**

**How effective is the current organizational model of OMCT in the operation of a successful and thriving NGO?**

**How effective is OMCT as a social enterprise in contributing as an innovative livelihood solution for young adults with intellectual disabilities?**

##### Research Process

The study on impact assessment of OMCT was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods to achieve research objectives and address the research questions. A combined approach of survey data collection, as well as personal interviews was determined to be the best way to identify the full impact of the program on all constituents. Due to the unique nature of the program and the research, a survey instrument was developed by the researchers, with some minor variations of formats to suit each target group from whom data was sought. Survey questions and interviews would yield both discrete and qualitative data responses.

**Note: Survey forms and original data are available upon request from OM Creations.**

## **Key Stakeholders**

For the purposes of this study, the key stakeholders from whom primary or secondary data would be collected include the following:

- \* 26 Young adults with disabilities at OMCT (using cluster sampling technique\*)
- \* Families of the young adults•Educators for the program
- \* Volunteers and benefactors
- \* The OMCT management team
- \* Professional education community, including researchers

## **Primary Data**

Primary data was collected from 25 selected young adults who are working at OMCT and who are verbal and therefore able to respond verbally to survey questions (written responses would not be possible with this target group). The 25 selected young adults were interviewed individually with the help of their respective teachers from their specific departments. Also, the parents of the selected young adults, the educators of OMCT, and other stakeholders were interviewed separately using the survey instrument to gather data on their views and opinions about OMCT. The pre-tested interview schedule was used for gathering the required quantitative information. Qualitative information was obtained through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Guidelines were prepared for the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to commencement of the study, from parents or elders or other responsible stakeholders. A sample of the survey instrument used in data collection is included in the Appendix.

## **Secondary Data**

Some secondary data was obtained from a review of research papers, projects documents/ records and evaluation reports. Data collected throughout the study was reassured through the incorporation of spot checking, scrutiny of field notes, and an editing process for the relevant information gathered. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS. Thematic analysis of qualitative data was applied and undertaken.



### 3.1 Results

According to the design of this study, qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed using a thematic analysis process (qualitative) and descriptive statistical analyses (quantitative). Since the qualitative methods and analyses offer a more in-depth picture of OMCT and its impact, these results are presented first. Following this, representative case studies are included, and finally the quantitative analyses are shared through specific tables and figures that represent the scope of the study and quantitative findings.

#### OPERATIONAL PROCESSES OBSERVATION:

Evaluation of the administrative & operational processes of OMCT

##### 3.1.1 Internal Operation

OMCT has been instrumental in mobilizing resources, in the form of financial donations, materials, and volunteer labor, to help build and sustain their projects and programs. The organization follows a well-conceived, well designed, and well executed plan for each of the many programmes offered to benefit their young and maturing adults. The management has given special attention to the internal workings of the Trust by setting criteria for proper functioning of the operation, as well as appointing review panels and various support and guidance groups. They have successfully established a framework over the last 28 years for a careful ongoing monitoring process of the operation, and for periodic independent evaluations of performance. Additionally, financial accountability is carefully tracked for all of the activities supported by the many stakeholders involved.

*“To create an organization one needs courage as it is an unknown path, at Om creations we wanted to give a platform to their talents and livelihood through their potentials and talents, not what the society wanted. For example, the students did mundane things like sticking envelopes, making candles or rolling paper around the crayons. These are rote activities which doesn't have any expression of the talents. It was a fire work as you face many arduous situations as people could not understand how a special woman can contribute to the society and was a realistic approach. Most important thing is that you have to revisiting your goal and re-inventing your strategies to be successful in the mission. Foundation of an organization with a cause is tough, but tougher it is to take it forward to flourish for the betterment of the maximum”- Dr. Khanna*

Having positive-thinking and effective people on board who are likeminded in their understanding and determination toward social benefit for the program participants is basic for the successful management of an organization. A well-run administration must carefully familiarize all target constituents with the activities of the NGO, help to better the understanding of the organizational structure of the NGO, and assist in distributing responsibilities among the team members within the NGO organization. OMCT successfully does exactly this. Despite the many hurdles associated with the program's physical challenges, Dr. Khanna always believed in integrity, and shares, "There is



power in unity". To achieve such integrity of purpose for OMCT, she has created a '**human resource pool**' comprised trustees, parents, well-wishers, volunteers and several handpicked staff within the system, all of whom are devoted to the belief that these young adults ARE capable, and have unique skills and abilities that can be maximized in order to become independent in their lives. To recognize and bring out these abilities, the special talents and skills of every staff member, volunteer and all of the people associated with OMCT are utilized for the best interests of the special adults. This was revealed in the many interviews taken with the staff where 95% of them did express upon how their expertise and experiences in the field of art and catering are best utilized at the organization. 100% of the staff expressed that they were in appreciation of the management for being encouraging and accepting of their new ideas and creativity within their departments. Many stated that this appreciation was unlike the environment of their previous jobs. The staff also expressed that they felt blessed to find their true happiness in making the young adults happy and independent in their lives, something that these young adults could not find elsewhere.

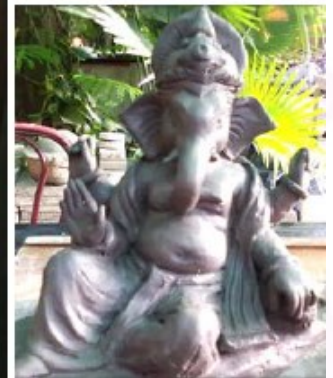
Acquiring sufficient funds for the operation of various activities and programs for any NGO is crucial. Dr Khanna, the founder trustee, leaves no stone unturned in this pursuit for OMCT, deriving sufficient funds for smooth functioning and on-time operation of the many OMCT programs. The OMCT finances are obtained from different grants, contracts, foundations, companies, and from the sales of the wide range of OMCT products. These finances are fully utilized for the benefit of OMCT, and carefully managed by the trustees and the management, who spend significant time on planning, preparing applications, budgeting, accounting and reporting. The operation of the organization is designed in such a way that there is a constant



cyclical flow of revenue in and earnings paid out to beneficiaries. As quoted by Rishabh Khanna in his book on Om Creations Trust, in the long term “Within the food and art department, constant innovation takes place, so that the organization moves along with the demand of the customers. There has also been a strategic move towards spreading the revenue throughout the year, thus creating a better cash flow for the organization. Earlier the organization was extremely dependent on the sales during Diwali (Indian Festival of Lights)”.



Products ready for DIWALI



Successful operation of an organization depends on the common organizational values, purposes and dedication by each person involved with the organization and its aim. Archana Mehta, the head of the Visual Art department, mentions in her interview how closely she checks each and every order placed for the clients and does a thorough check on each of the customers' minute needs, on product quality, and on timeliness of deliveries. The staff of the two full-fledged departments, **Visual Art** and **Food & Catering**, brings out the best creativity in the special employees, who therefore grow in their own belief that they can create something so beautiful. In the study, 72% of the young and maturing adults expressed that they never knew that they had such a capability to create something so beautiful. This they each attributed to what they have learned through working at OMCT.



Jewellery & Paper bags / pouches



### 3.1.2 The admission policy and the criteria of the intellectually disabled students

60 % of the young adults have joined OMCT after they have completed their education and skill training from Sadhana- A special school for special children. But OMCT welcomes one and all categories of special adults, regardless of their severity of the intellectual disability. Factors such as level of Intelligence Quotient (IQ), socio economic strata of the applicant's family, efficiency of their work skills or the 'difficult ones to handle', has never been set as a criterion to accept or reject any application for getting admission here at the Trust.

### **“The door of OMCT is open for each and every adult with intellectual disability” – Dr. Radhike Khanna**

For majority of the young adults, OMCT is the first place of work that has taken them 'under its wings', believing in their abilities and helping each YA to discover a livelihood even after being rejected by others. This study reveals such findings, verifying that for 80% of the young adults, this has been their first paid job in life. Interviews reveal that 87.5% of staff members never checked the young adults' past records to decide whether they are capable enough to fit into the system. Instead, OMCT staff works with their observed strengths, helping each YA to become stronger in belief in themselves, in order to fit to the society, despite of the many hurdles they face.

### 3.1.3 Bridging the gap between vocational training and being able to work and earn



**SKILL TRAINING**

Young adults who join OMCT are primarily those who have already had some skill training during their years in their special school. Of those who have graduated from school, 95% received some skill training in their schools, most often in one particular skill or two. However, what was missing for them was to become independent and to be able to work in a professional

work setting. Typical employment expectations, such as working with a timeframe to meet the customers' requirement on time, carrying out the fine details of work for products, quality checking Before delivery, and quality packaging are some of the areas that OMCT has been training young adults to perfect. In doing so, OMCT has carefully taken into account consideration of the young adults' understanding levels, vocational skills and, of course, their personal interests & preferences before assigning any job to them. There are two additional and very important areas that OMCT has taken utmost care to address:

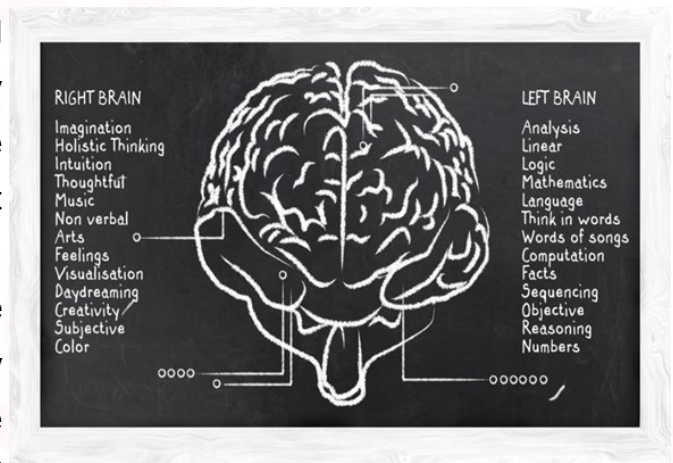
**Safety measures:** Focus group discussions and interviews with the staff reveal that safety of the young adults is the most important area of focus that OMCT has prioritized. Once a young adult joins OMCT, they first are familiarized with the rules and precautions to be taken to ensure safety and avoid any hazards at work. Surprisingly, 90% of the parents express this as the primary reason for getting their wards admitted at OMCT as they find this is the only place that they feel safe and secure for their children.

**Health and Hygiene:** As a social commercial enterprise, OMCT has built up the image of success as a commercial place over many years. They had to change the negative preconceived mindset existing in the society to a more positive one, that people with ID do pay attention to cleanliness and hygiene. It was not easy to transform this mindset, and there was always in a tough competition with many other organizations with employees from the mainstream society. The organization had been looked down upon by many of the leading companies when approached to market the food products. The reason for this was that they were doubtful about the hygienic side of the food products that would be prepared by employees who had intellectual disabilities. Upon request from OMCT, companies were asked to come and visit the food and catering department, to verify the food safety procedures. To their surprise, the way each and every food product was being super hygienically handled by these special adults literally “blew their mind”. From that point forward, companies began to rely only on the OMCT's products for good quality and hygiene for their future purchases.



**MIND TRAINING**

Besides being skillful to carry out any assigned job, a young adult with intellectual disability requires a large amount of mind training to be able to focus on their work and to settle down at the workplace. “The concept of **Brain Gym**”, created by Dr. Khanna, “has been molding the minds to become amore productive and happy person”. As understood from Dr Khanna, the Brain Gym exercise practiced at the vocational workshop of OMCT is an advanced and highly effective movement-based programme that has been improving neural communication throughout the mind and body for all participants, helping the young adults to access and achieve their highest potential in learning and to improve their life skills.



## 2. a. THE BRAIN GYM

The brain gym has of two main parts. In **Part 1**, young adults are taught how to **anchor**, **set goals** and how to do **balance actions** for positive attitudes, seeing, listening, and writing, and for whole-body movement. The emphasis here is laid on crossing the midline that connects the left and right sides of the brain and the body. Learning to cross this midline is fundamental to skills of vision, hearing with both binocular ears and whole-body movement. Each of these skills has helped the young adults to work toward excellence in their creative fields and to provide a stress-free learning base for all other life activities.

In Brain Gym **Part 2**, the understanding of the brain and body is expanded to include all three of the dimensions of brain functioning. In this part, the results come from the three dimensions; reviewing and refining the understanding of **laterality** (the left/right dimensions of the cerebral hemispheres), **centering** (the top/ bottom dimensions involving the midbrain), and **focus** (the back/ front dimensions involving the brainstem). Each dimension is separately explored in action balances and then combined in the X-SPAN Balance. When the three dimensions are working together, the whole system is balanced to communicate, organize and comprehend. When one or more of these dimensions are in conflict with the other, the learning process is impaired or interrupted. Brain Gym Part 2 allows acknowledgement and education at developmental levels often previously ignored, overlooked, or misunderstood.



**“This learning is believed to be challenging, safe and fun, and a natural process which will continue throughout life.”- Dr Khanna.**

## **2.b. Auditory training:**

“Everything happens as if human behaviors were largely conditioned by the manner in which one hears” – Dr Guy Berard (<https://berardaitwebsite.com/>). **Auditory retraining** has been very effectively practiced by Dr. Khanna at OMCT and was adapted from the **Berard method of auditory integration training**. This auditory training for the special children (who can hear) stimulates the auditory system with some unique sounds produced by the Berard AIT device. These unique sounds stimulate the auditory system to reduce or eliminate the problems within the system. This is a method of retraining the way that sounds are processed and heard by the person with autism or any other intellectual disability. It was observed that when a special adult could process sounds properly, they could maintain a state of alertness, readiness, concentration, and effective comprehension in everything that they do. The main idea behind adaptation of this method as a part of the training process at OMCT recognizes that a weakness in any part of the system’s functioning can have a ripple effect throughout, and interfere with the overall process, leading to a breakdown in efficiency.

The person may exhibit irritability, hyperactivity, fatigue, distractibility, pain, discomfort, anxiety and confusion.

There may also be problems in other areas of sensory processing, including vision, touch, smell, taste, etc. Auditory training addressed these problems. Hearing controls many areas of function, such as balance, motor planning and coordination, assists in the control of eye movements, and controls all other sensory processing like reading, writing etc. By introducing this audio retraining through Dr. Khanna (one of the 16 certified trainers worldwide), it has been helping the young adults tremendously in balancing, motor coordination skills, speech and language development, reading skills, concentrating on their works, fine motor skills, vision skills and sensory processing.



### 3.1.4 The bonds between young adults and trainers

The interpersonal relationships between staff and young adults are crucial predictors of the wellbeing of people with ID (Schalock, 2004). The young adults spend the major part of their daily lives at the workshop and with the staff on a regular basis. Active association with the people they are in contact with in their day-to-day lives is one of the effective evidence-based approaches that OMCT has been practicing to enable a happy and healthy relationship with staff. The trainers have been very supportive and understanding about the young adults' every expression whether it is verbal or actions. The young adults are constantly encouraged to bring out their best thorough creativity and self-expressions, which is then evidenced in their art and their work. The trainers are very much well versed on each and every adult's abilities and limitations. Interestingly, even though the staffs working at OMCT are from different educational backgrounds, with only 25% of them having done some courses in special education, 80% of them reveal that the quality of trainings provided to them at OMCT helped them to deal with every individual adult at OMCT very easily. They are able to understand clearly the adults' moods, certain behaviors and their various ways of expressing their inner feelings. The young adults and staff share this special bond, which is more than a teacher-student one. Young adults are comfortable enough to share all their professional and personal woes with their trainers.

**Bond shared between young adults and trainers**





## **Om Creations Trust - a place to transform to a happy human being**

OM Creations Trust always believed in providing a joyful working environment filled with laughter and music in the background. The young adults are so happy to work here, despite any discomfort to commute (100%), they don't want to miss a single day to spend at OMCT. 100% of them express that they feel very happy to be at the Centre because of reasons such as their friends are here (77%), they like the staff here a lot (88%), and they love to work at OMCT (93%), and most importantly, the feeling of belongingness (96%). One very interesting observation made in their work environment is that in all programs or tasks at OMCT, the young adults are given the prime importance. Their opinions, interests, and ideas are always taken into consideration while working on any small or large order of any customer. Jobs are distributed among them keeping in mind their best of abilities, which lets them each work with ease and always strive for perfection. This involvement not only makes them happy and satisfied, but also provides them the sense of belongingness to the Centre. Belongingness apparently is expressed as the most positive factor about OMCT by the young adults (95%). They feel they are just like a family member of this big family at OMCT. It always gives them the joy of working towards a common goal and remaining positive in their mind and energy. This positivity also contributes to create the happy environment that helps in the growth of each young adult at OMCT.



**JOY of being One Family**



### **3.1.5 The adequacy and the utilization of available resources and space (best usage/ recycling and waste management):**

OM Creations Trust always believed in **Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce** from the time of its inception. OMCT has practiced how to make the best out of what they have, right from the very first day of its inception. Despite the hardships of not sometimes having enough funds to run the programs or not having sufficient manpower, Mrs. Durga Jain recollects in her interview how they started the workshop in a small room with just a handful young adults and staff. OMCT has made the best use of its available resources both human and material ones. In human resources the skills and capabilities of each YA, staff, volunteers, well-wisher, parents and their social network with likeminded people has been established over the years to bring the very best to the organization.

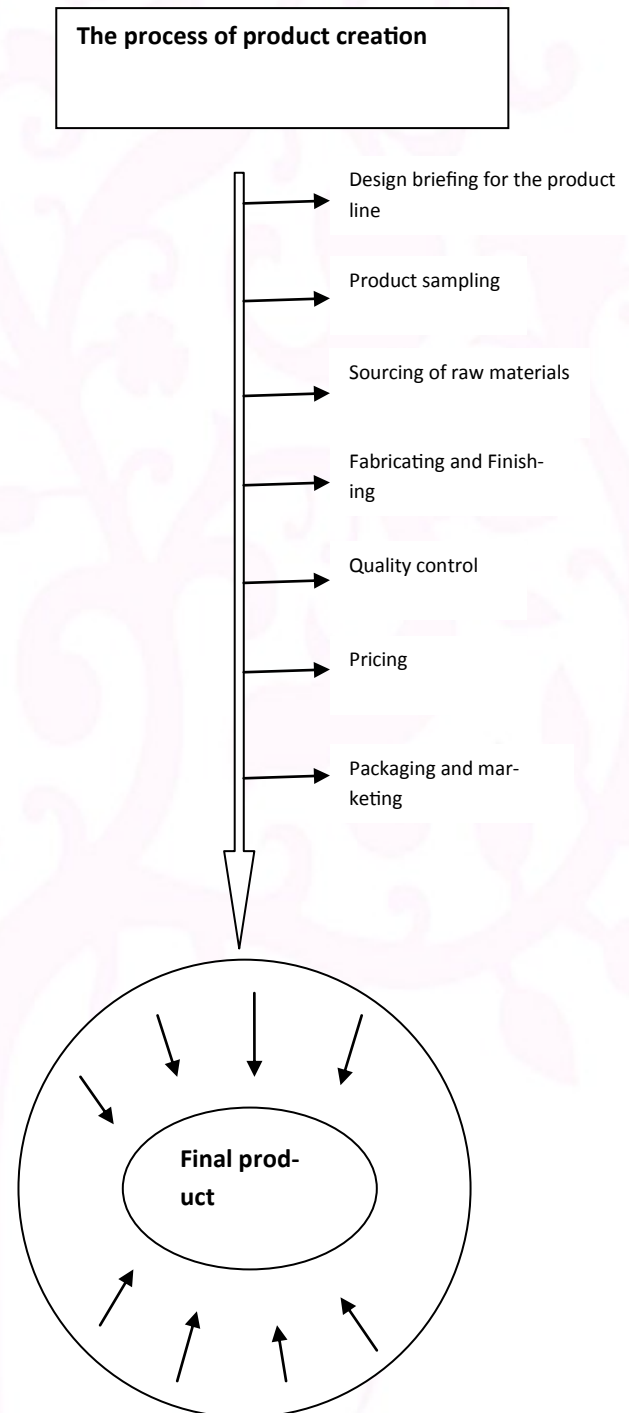
OMCT is extremely aware of potential wastage regarding 'cost materials' or 'cost of labor' and most importantly the wastage of dignity of its special workers. The philosophy of Dr Khanna has always inculcated this value in the mindset of the young adults - that wasting is not good; there is always room for re-creation, recycle and reuse. The YA at OM Creations are trained to be so creative that they don't even waste a single paper or a bottle, but will recreate something beautiful out of it that wins hearts of the customers. Provided with any materials (raw or waste) they have the ability to come up with some ideas for how it may be best used for. For example, old glass bottles are melted and carved to make beautiful platters for serving food or keeping ornaments. The production team is constantly thinking of unique ways of adding utility to any of the materials that come as a donation or are leftovers from the previous production. For instance, old fabrics are utilized to make attractive bags, napkins, table mats and coasters. This extraordinary skill within the organization for creating 'best out of waste' has been helping them to reduce their costs, as well as their impact on the environment and manages their waste in a beautiful way. During this study, it was revealed that there was only 5-15% wastage of products or raw materials which occurred due to monsoon dampening or mishandling during transport. The staff of OMCT also admits that 95% of the young adults are careful about handling their finished products and doing their work perfectly to avoid wastage.

OMCT has been providing a very organized and safe working space to carry out the many activities at the workshop. A very systemic work flow has been followed at the Centre to avoid any

interruption of work due to their co-workers who work and share the same area. For example, in the case of traditional floral door decoration (Toran), a team of young adults is chosen only to fold the papers, while another team ties the petals to the strings and another team unites it all together to create the requisite product. Together, these team members carry out all of the steps to complete the project and feel great satisfaction upon finishing

### 3.1.6 Production/ creation:

In the course of its journey of 28 years, OMCT has molded the unique skills of each young adult to create beautiful products that no one would have believed before are made by people with intellectual challenges, if they had not witnessed this personally. The YA are fully engaged in making products that are of superior quality, have a market value and provide therapeutic impact to the beneficiaries. The **Art section** at OMCT has evolved to create diverse lifestyle products with intricate designs that are handcrafted with utmost love and care by the young adults. High product quality, close attention to each customers' needs, and attention to the details of each product (made using different media like paper, fabric, canvas, clay, ceramic and wood) has led to a great rise in popularity among various buyers for their uniqueness. There are stages (Diagram 3) rigorously followed to ensure that the final product surpasses the expectations of buyers each and every time.



To give the best aesthetic appeal to the products, key elements like market surveys, current trends and customers' feedback are given the prime importance. Responding to the question posed to *Dr Khanna, the founder trustee* "How are the products always of super quality?" she expressed that

**"OMCT never compromised on design, raw materials and finishing. We at times let go of any order if quality or expected delivery can't be promised due to overload of orders. We also ensure that our special employees are comfortable and at ease, which allows them to bring out their best creativity to the products".**

### **3.1.7 Quality control/ standardization/ packaging/ labeling:**

Despite the challenges or limitations of its special employees, OM Creations Trust has been delivering the best quality to its products to the consumers. OMCT believes that quality is an important factor when it comes to any product or service. With the high market competition, the quality of the products created by the young adults has become the market differentiator. The regular customers easily recognize and adhere to buying only OMCT products due to their best quality. The management of OMCT believes that 'Quality control' is essential to building a successful business that delivers products that meet or exceed customers' expectations. Hence, OMCT follows strict testing of every unit produced and determines if they are within the specifications for the final product. Maintaining this level of quality has played a key role for the success and survival of OMCT as a social enterprise.

*Ranju Mahadevia, the trustee mentions,*

**"Quality control helped OMCT to establish its brand image, facilitation of standardization, and cutting down costs by avoiding defective production. It also led us to increase in sales and made the organization competitive by helping in accurate prediction of costs involved."**



Once a product goes through each stages of the production process, the final product with the necessary design and color is standardized for the future reference, as confirmed by 100% staff of OMCT. In case of food products, the right amount of ingredients, color and texture are made consistent to produce the same result. Ceramic items like plates, tea bags holder or similar decorative items, pattern molds are created to keep producing the same product over and over again. Packaging has been the crucial marketing and communication tool for the products of OMCT. It's the face of the beautiful products wrapped in some lovely papers and boxes that gives its customers the joy of unwrapping something magical. After packaging of each product is completed, they are tagged with the Om Creations Trust label and finally its ready for the sale.

### 3.1.8 Fund raising/Sales/marketing/ product promotion strategy:

With its vast range of creation of products, the organization has always been in constant need of raw materials and manpower. OMCT and the trustees, to reach out to maximum young adults in providing livelihood, practice different strategies to gain attention of the society and well-wishers to raise enough funds to fulfill this requirement. Previous perceptions about the young adults by the society have changed by showcasing the talents of the young adults at various platforms such as art fair, art galleries and through the high-quality products displayed at the OMCT sales



outlet. To find new sources of funds to cover the difference and to reach out to new donors, OMCT is working hard to fulfill the demand for products on par the commercial market. OMCT has already faced enormous challenges to raise funds and fulfill the program demands. With the recent marketing team volunteers helping to spread the awareness through social media 24/7, OMCT is able to fulfill many of such demands. Social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram are constantly updated about OM Creations Trust, young adults with intellectual disability, their abilities, and the beautiful creations create news and help greatly to change the mindset of the society towards them.

### **3.2. The Core Element of OM Creations Trust - Implementation of the REALM MODEL, and how it has helped to improve the mental health of young adults:**

REALM MODEL developed by Dr Radhike Khanna is a comprehensive approach to the development and empowerment of intellectually disabled young adults through her years of work in special education and arts. She basically has infused the ideas of creativity into the model that leads them towards self realization and confidence of individuals with intellectual disability. The REALM Model through its many components guides the work of the staff and the young adults at OMCT towards meaningful inclusion within the OMCT community, their home community and the society at large. The students are exposed to various realm components within their programmes and daily work at OMCT. Each of these areas are developed and worked together to lead towards a balanced personal and work life. Each person is unique and comes with individual strengths and weaker areas that needs additional guidance and care in order to grow. Through the guidance of OMCT and the Face programme, the young adults at OMCT each can grow and become confident in themselves and in their works. On a schedule that is relevant to their needs. For example: one young adult may have greater communication need than another and needs more time to develop communication skill. Because the staff are aware of these needs and understand the idea of diversifying their methods to address them. This individual will progress and eventually become competent communicating with others. The REALM model is the overview of the full scope of skills/ programs at OMC. And in order to achieve this various skills/ the approaches of the face programme are the instructional and creative approaches are used to accomplish each of them.





## TABLE OF STATISTICS

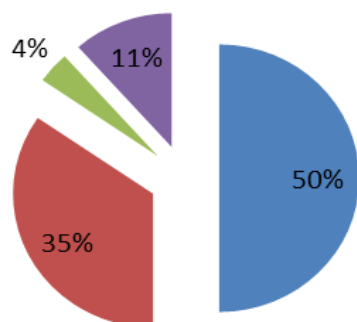
### YOUNG ADULTS (Total interviewed young adults=26)

Age	Education	Skill training	Ability to communicate orally	Type of disability
<b>23- 35 years= 50%</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> Standard pass= <b>12%</b>	Skill Training from Sadhana school= <b>60%</b>	Fluent= <b>88.5%</b>	Autistic= <b>11.5%</b>
<b>36- 45 years= 34.6%</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> Pass= <b>8%</b>	No skill training done before= <b>3.8%</b>	Moderately= <b>7.7%</b>	Down Syndrome= <b>30.8%</b>
<b>46- 55 years= 3.8%</b>	Graduation from Sadhana school= <b>60.0%</b>	skill training at Om creations Trust= <b>36.2%</b>	Need assistance= <b>3.8%</b>	severe Mental retardation= <b>7.7%</b>
<b>56- 65 years= 11.6%</b>	Graduation from other special school = <b>20%</b>			Mild Mental Retardation= <b>46.15%</b>
				= cerebral palsy <b>3.8%</b>



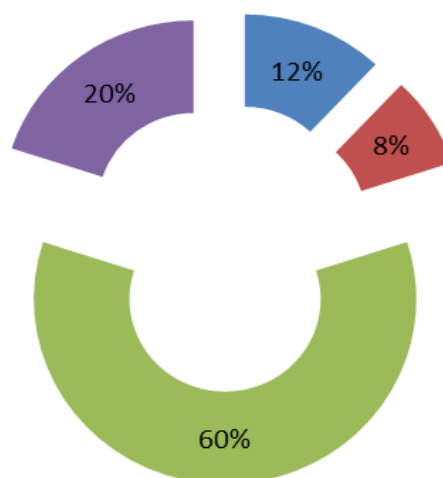
## Age of the young Adults

■ 23- 35 years ■ 36- 45 years ■ 46- 55 years ■ 56- 65 years



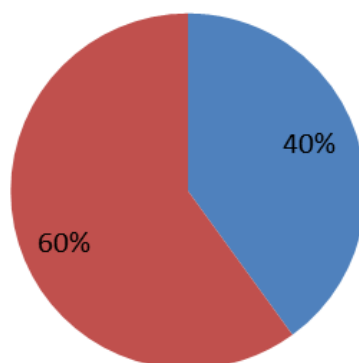
## Education of the young adults

■ 6th- 8th Standard pass  
■ 10th Pass  
■ Graduation from Sadhana school  
■ Graduation from other special school



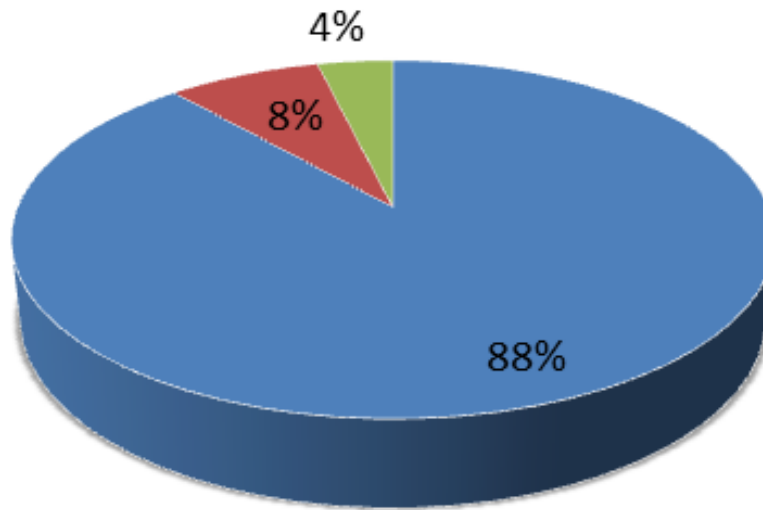
## Skill training done

■ Skill training done at OMC ■ Skill Training from Sadhana school

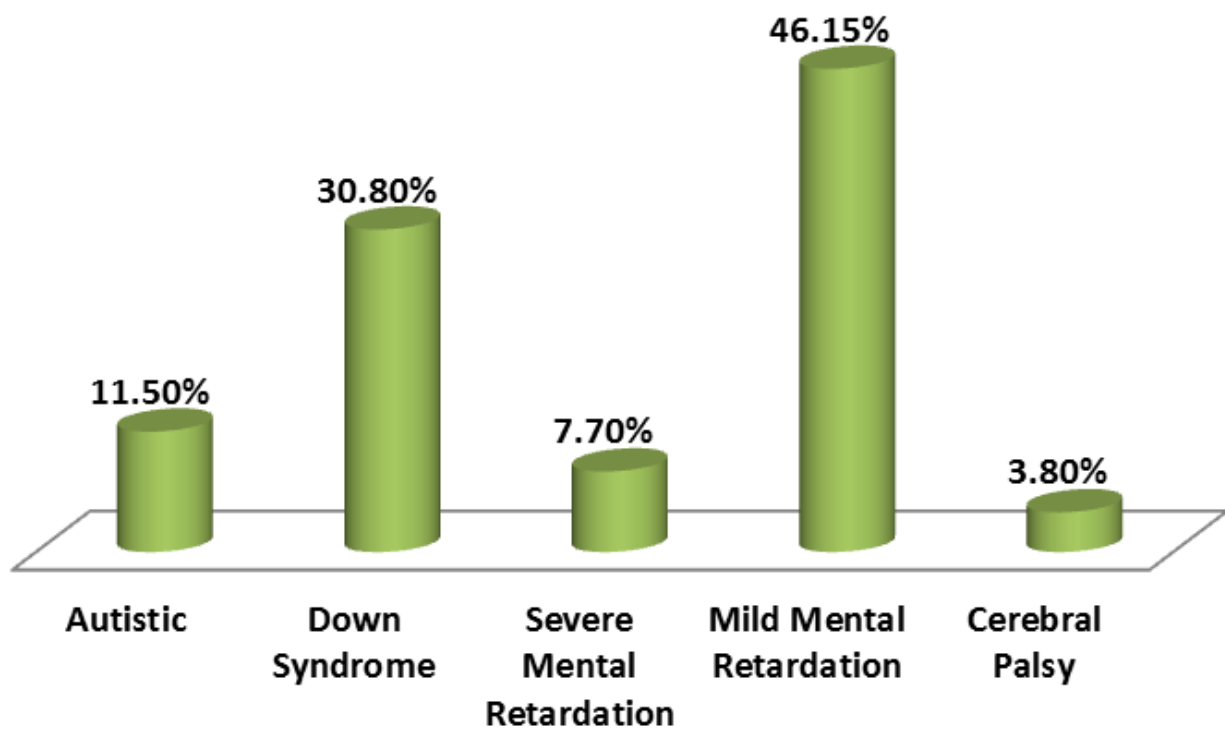


## Ability to Communicate Orally

■ Fluent ■ Moderately ■ Need assistance



## Type of Disability

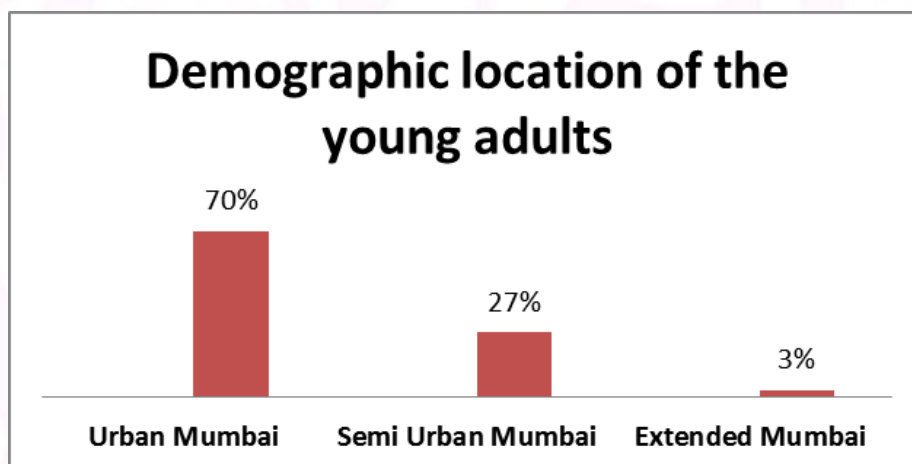


**What are the skills you knew before joining OMC (N= 26)**

<b>Skills known before coming to OMCT</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
nothing much	2	7.7%
cooking	8	30.7%
office work	1	3.8%
painting	26	100%
embroidery	10	38.4%
crochet	5	19.2%
vegetable chopping	1	3.8%
cleaning	1	3.8%
chocolate making	8	30.7%
housework	1	3.8%
tailoring	1	3.8%
packing	7	27%
bead work	5	19.2%
paper flower making	9	34.6%
ceramic	6	23%
art and craft work	7	27%
bottle carving	2	7.7%
baking	4	15.3%
Kitchen works	2	7.7%
Screen printing	1	3.8%
Washing utensils	4	15.3%

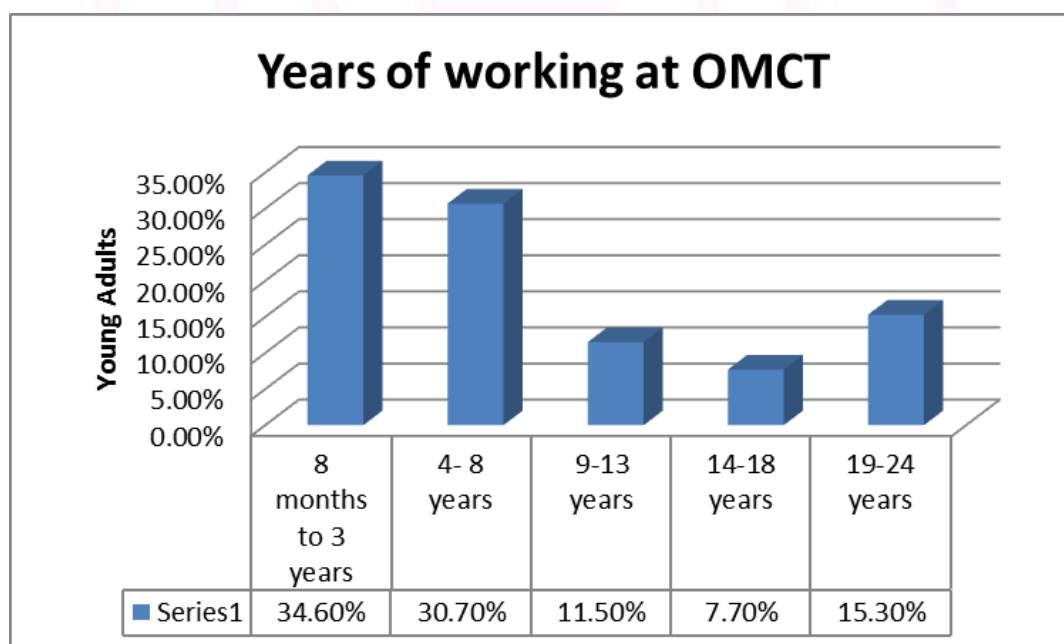


## Demographic location where the young adults come from



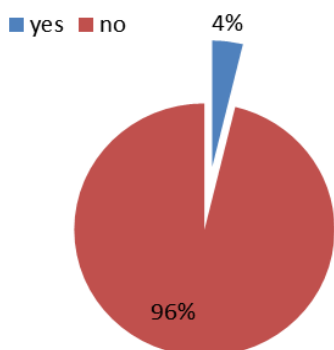
## How long you have been working at OMCT?

Years	Frequency	Percent
8 months to 3 years	9	34.6%
4- 8 years	8	30.7%
9-13 years	3	11.5%
14-18 years	2	7.7%
19-24 years	4	15.3%

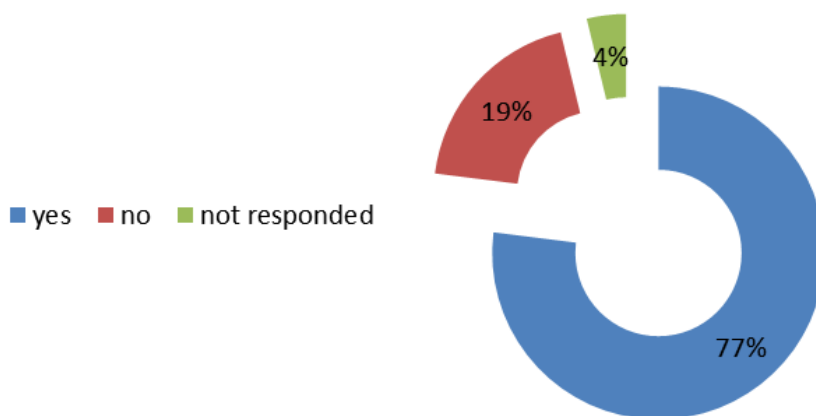


## Demographic location where the young adults come from

**Does travelling keep you away from coming to OMCT**



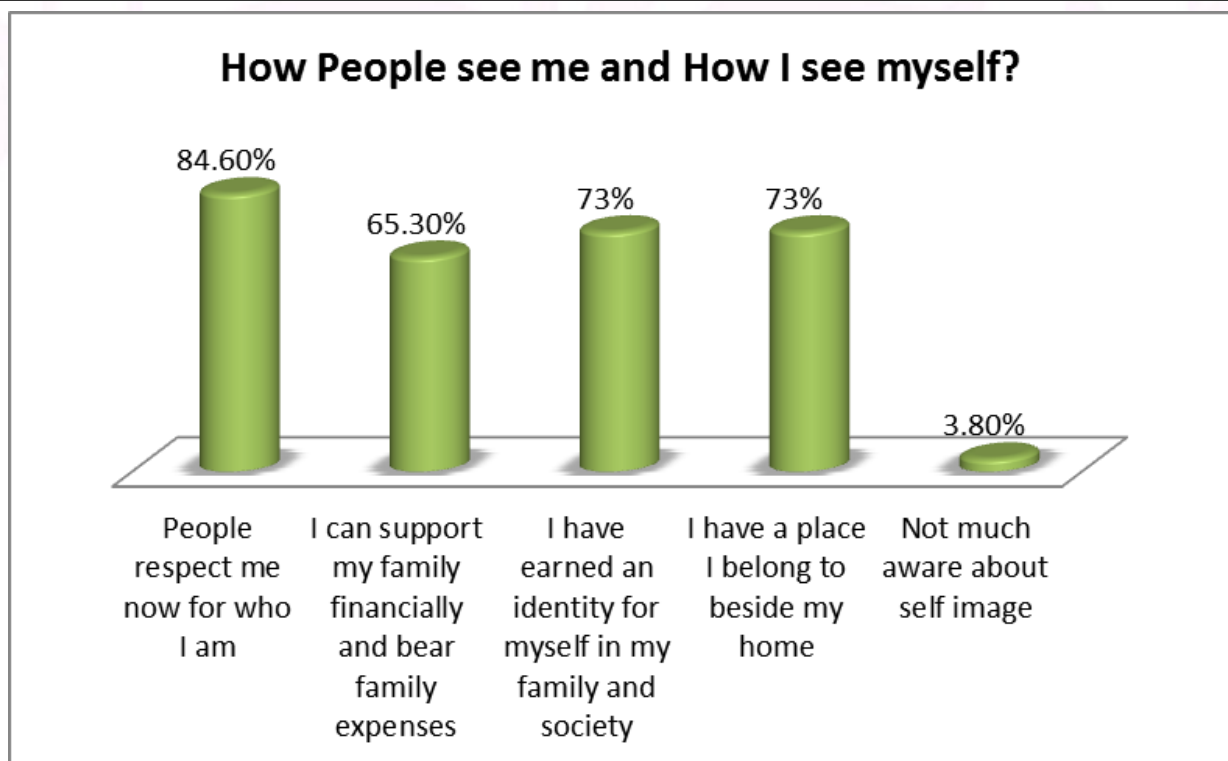
**Is this your first job at OMCT?**



Before joining OMCT did you find it difficult to get a job?			Responses did you get when applied for a job somewhere else before joining OMCT		
yes	no	Did not try anywhere else as I knew I ll be going to OMCT	Rejection without any reason	Employer doubted my abilities	No response
23.1%	11.5%	65.3%	11.5%	19.2%	69.2%

### How people see me and how I see myself?

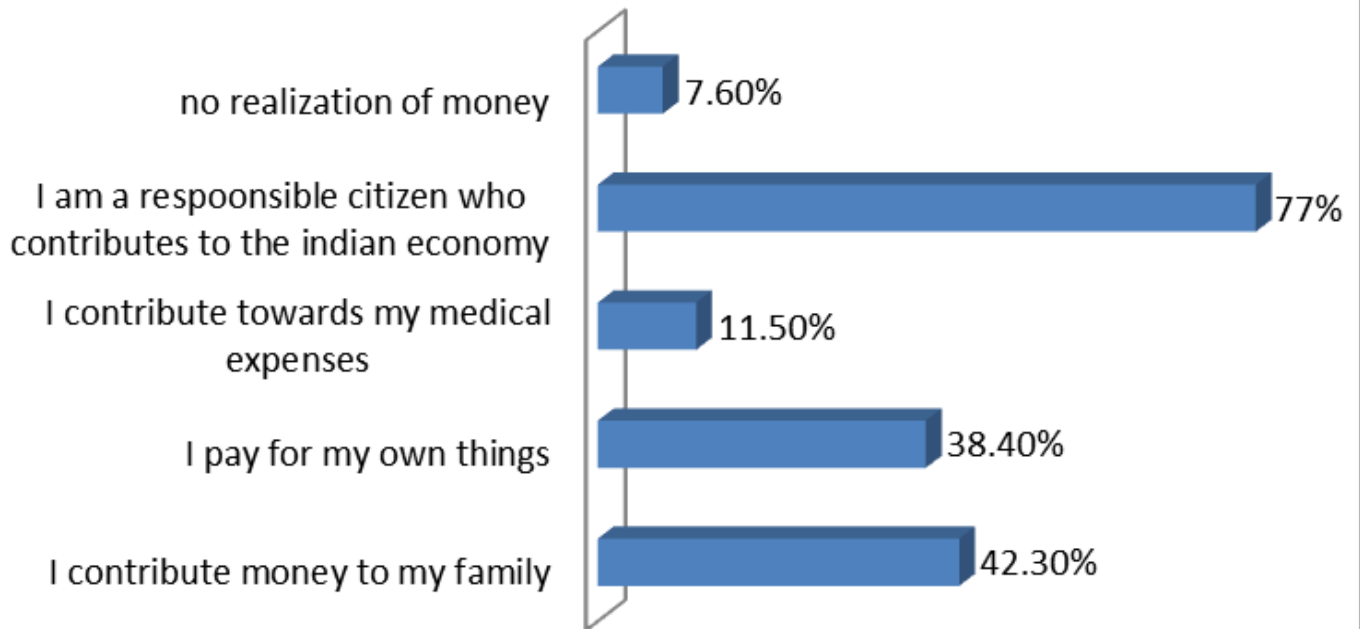
	Frequency	Percent
People respect me now for who I am	20	84.6%
I can support my family financially and bear family expenses	17	65.3%
I have earned an identity for myself in my family and society	19	73%
I have a place I belong to beside my home	19	73%
Not much aware about self image	1	3.8%
Total	26	100.0





## How I help my family and myself financially?

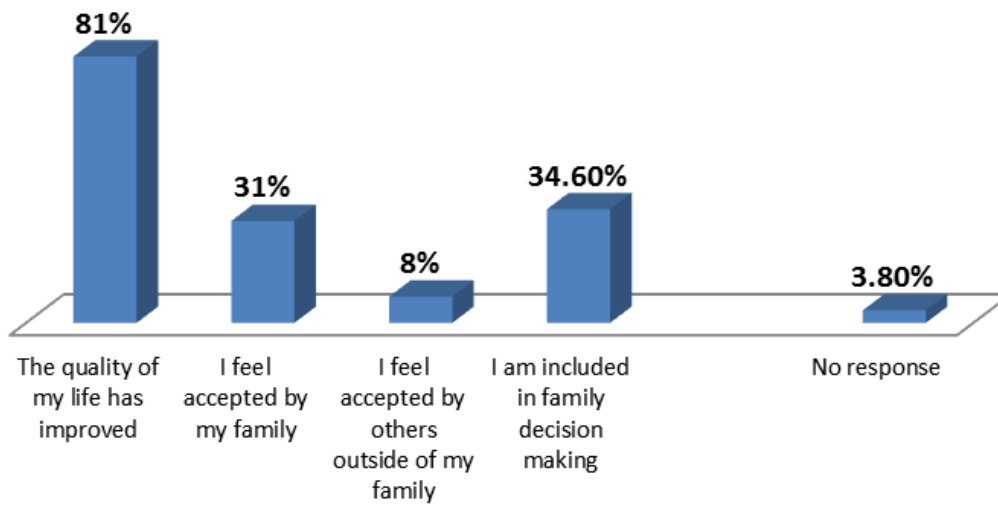
### How I help my family and myself?



## How my feelings have changed (Psychological) after joining OMCT?

	Percent
The quality of my life has improved	81%
I feel accepted by my family	31%
I feel accepted by others outside of my family	8%
I am included in family decision making	34.6%
No response	3.8%

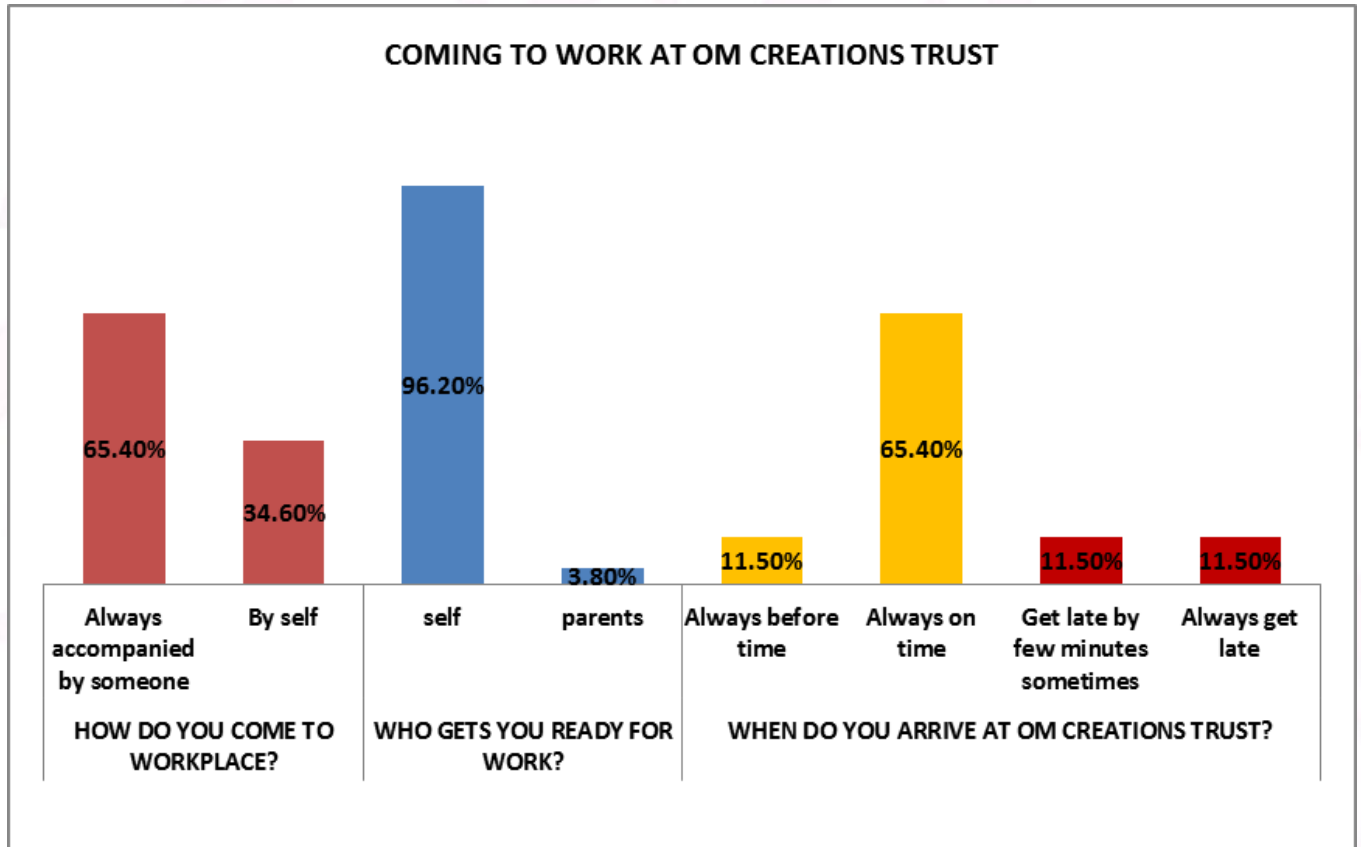
## How my life has gotten better?



## How my life has gotten better?

	Frequency	Percent
I am not fearful anymore about what to do in my life	5	19.2%
I feel better about myself	25	96%
I can do more things by myself without help	10	38%
I don't worry being different from others	3	11.5%
I have become a better artist	1	3.8%
No response	1	3.8%

## COMING TO WORK AT OM CREATIONS TRUST



HOW DO YOU COME TO WORKPLACE?		WHO GETS YOU READY FOR WORK?		WHEN DO YOU ARRIVE AT OM CREATIONS?			
Always accompanied by someone	By self	self	parents	Always before time	Always on time	Get late by few minutes sometimes	Always get late
65.4%	34.6%	96.2%	3.8%	11.5%	65.4%	11.5%	11.5%



# Do you like coming here?

■ yes ■ No



## What do you like most about OMCT?

This place feels like home to me	58%
My friends are here	88%
I love working here	100%
I feel so happy coming here	100%
I love the teachers here	65%
This centre helps me feel like I belong	96%

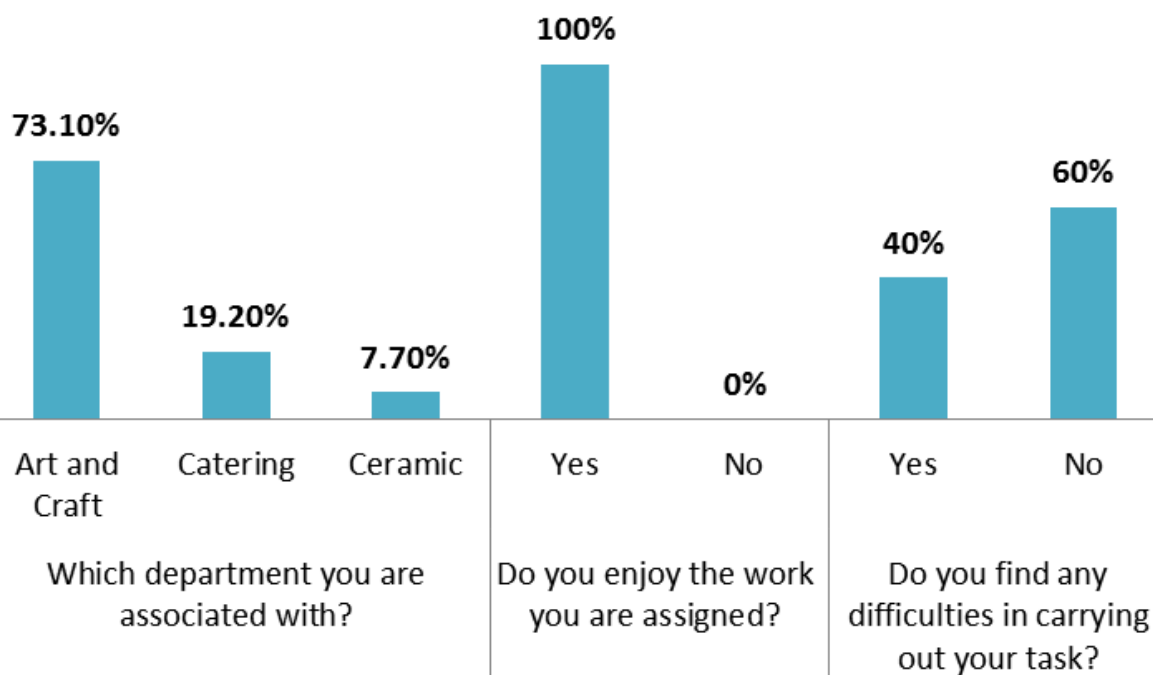
## What do you like most about Om Creation trust?



## What do you like most about OMCT?

Which department you are associated with?			Do you enjoy the work you are assigned?		Do you find any difficulties in carrying out your task?	
Art and Craft	Catering	Ceramic	Yes	No	Yes	No
73.1	19.2	7.7	100%	0%	40%	60%

## About Job at Om creations Trust



### What do you do when you have difficulty in doing anything?

	Percent
Ask teacher to teach you again/help you	58%
No difficulties	42%

### Did you know that you were capable of creating such beautiful things before?

	Percent
yes	37.0
no	59.3



### Is your family happy that you are working and earning here at OMCT?

	Percent
yes	100%
No	0%

### Is your family happy that you are working and earning here at OMCT?

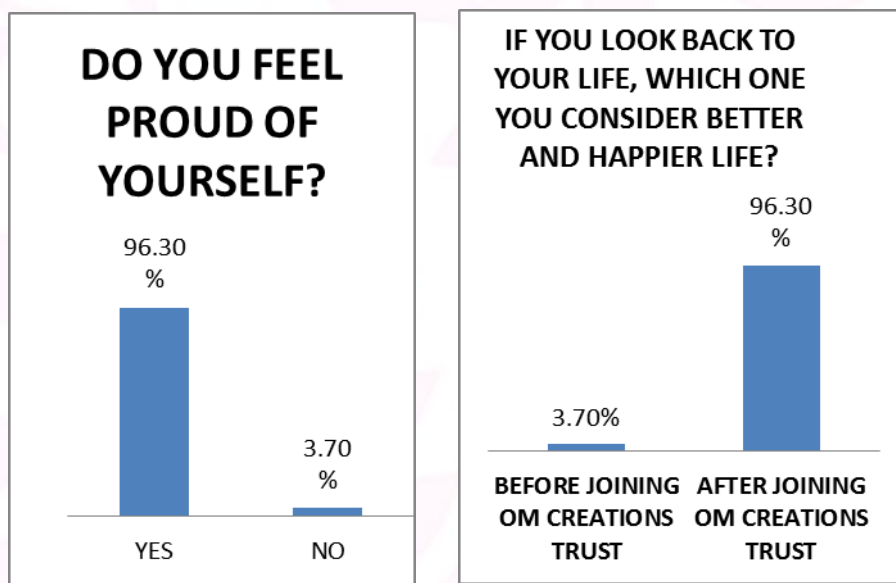
■ yes ■ No



### What do you do with the money you earn?

The young adults (96%) prefer to keep their money in bank. They don't spend it much: primarily the entire amount received is saved for their future. They prefer to spend their money only when they have to gift to their dear ones. At many occasions, they amazed their families gifting luxurious things like Television, scooter, fridge, watch or mobile phones with their hard-earned money.

DO YOU FEEL PROUD OF YOURSELF?		IF YOU LOOK BACK TO YOUR LIFE, WHICH DO YOU CONSIDER BETTER AND HAPPIER	
Yes	No	Before joining Om Creations Trust	After Joining Om Creations Trust
96.3%	3.7%	3.7%	96.3%



### Do you feel grateful to OMCT for giving you an opportunity to earn?

100% of all the young adults are very grateful for getting an opportunity to be explored and get explore new way of life.

	Frequency	Percent
yes	25	92.6
No response	1	3.7

### Future Goal:

60% of the young adults have realistic and positive goals in their respective work fields, whereas 40% of them found to be having non-realistic goals like being an engineer/ doctor/ pilot in life.

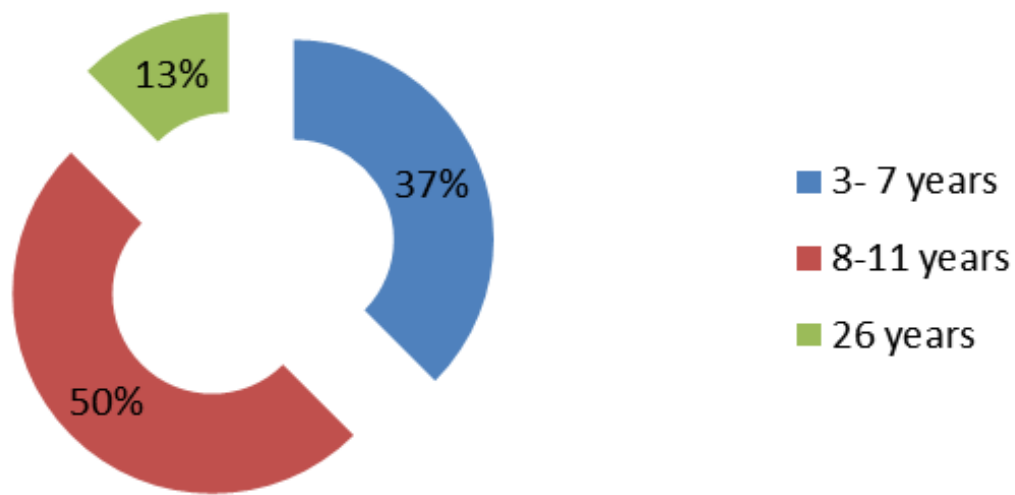
### STAFF

Total 8 staffs (1 Centre Coordinator and 7 teachers) were interviewed individually with the help of an interview schedule to understand operation of OM Creations Trust and their intellectually challenged employees (The young adults). Each interview took 30- 45 minutes to complete.

#### Years of working at OMCT

	Frequency	Percent
3- 7 years	3	37.5
8-11 years	4	50
26 years	1	12.5

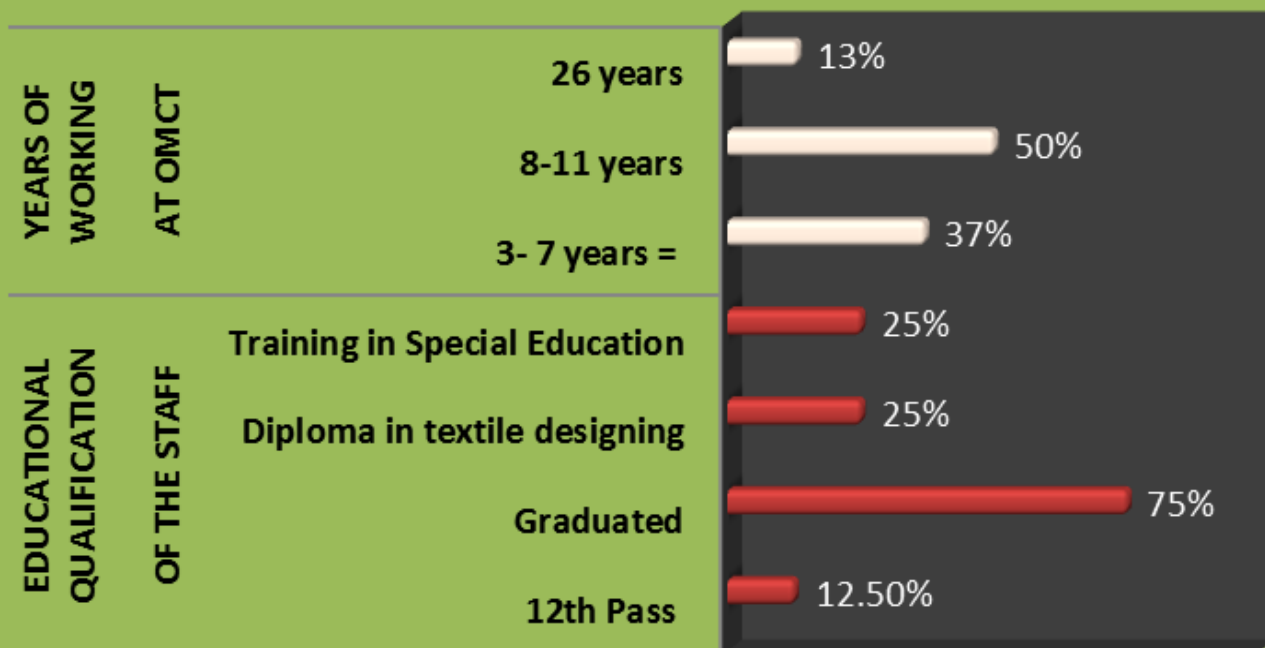
#### Years of working by current staff at OMCT





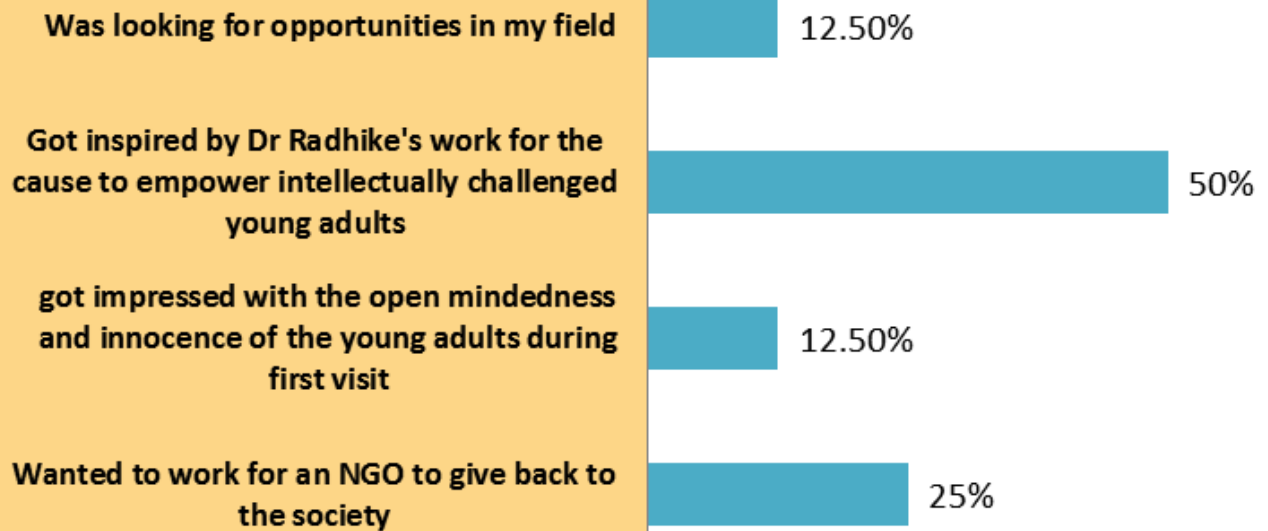
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE STAFF				YEARS OF WORKING AT OMCT		
12 <sup>th</sup> Pass	Graduated	Diploma in textile de- signing	Training in Special Education	3- 7 years =	8-11 years	26 years
12.5%	75%	25%	25%	37%	50%	13%

## Profile of the staff



Why did you decide to work for his organization?

## Reasons for joining Om Creations Trust



## PREVIOUS IMPRESSION ABOUT OMCT AND PRESENT STATUS

What was your first perception about your job at the organization?

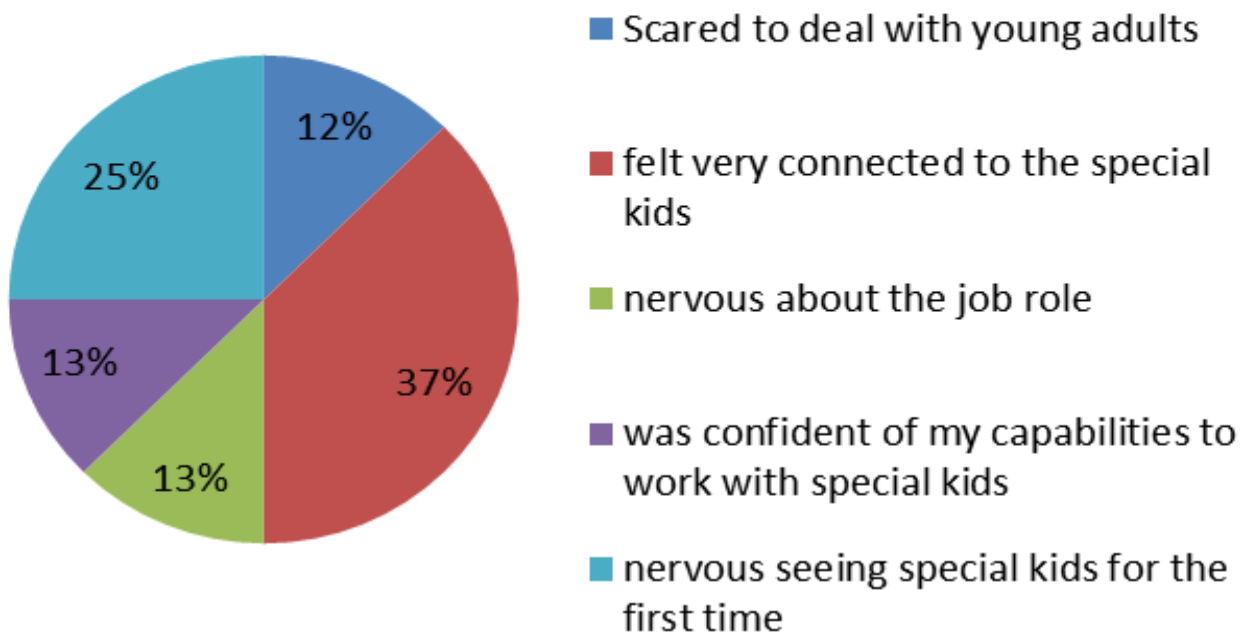
	Frequency	Percent
Scared to deal with young adults	1	12.5
felt very connected to the special kids	3	37.5
nervous about the job role	1	12.5
was confident of my capabilities to work with special kids	1	12.5
nervous seeing special kids for the first time	2	25.0

Has the perception changed over the years?

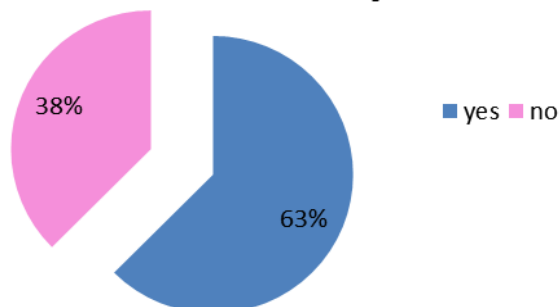
	Frequency	Percent
yes	5	62.5
no	3	37.5
Total	8	100.0



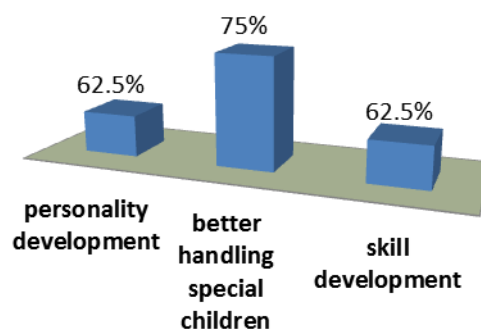
## What was your first perception about your job at the organization?



## Has the perception changed over the years?



## AREAS WHERE 100% of STAFF BELIEVED THEY HAVE IMPROVED WORKING AT OMCT



### How does a student become prepared to work and earn at OMCT?

The young adults are prepared through some steps to settle down at OMC once they join.

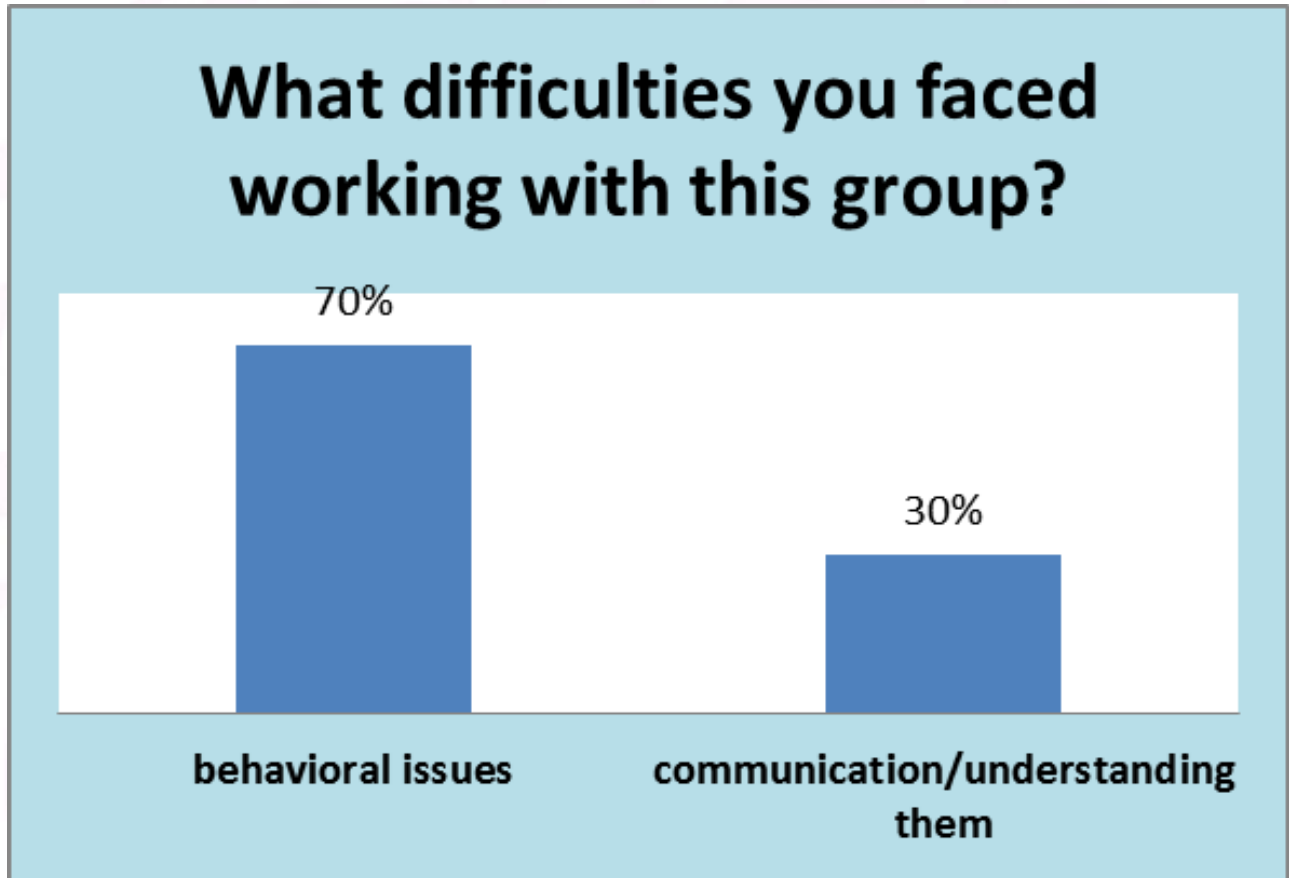
These are -

	Frequency	Percent
by giving simple tasks/ artworks	8	100%
By making them feel comfortable through happy talks and fun moments in the initial days of work	8	100%
By identifying their interests/talents before assigning any task	8	100%
By orientation to safety measures	8	100%

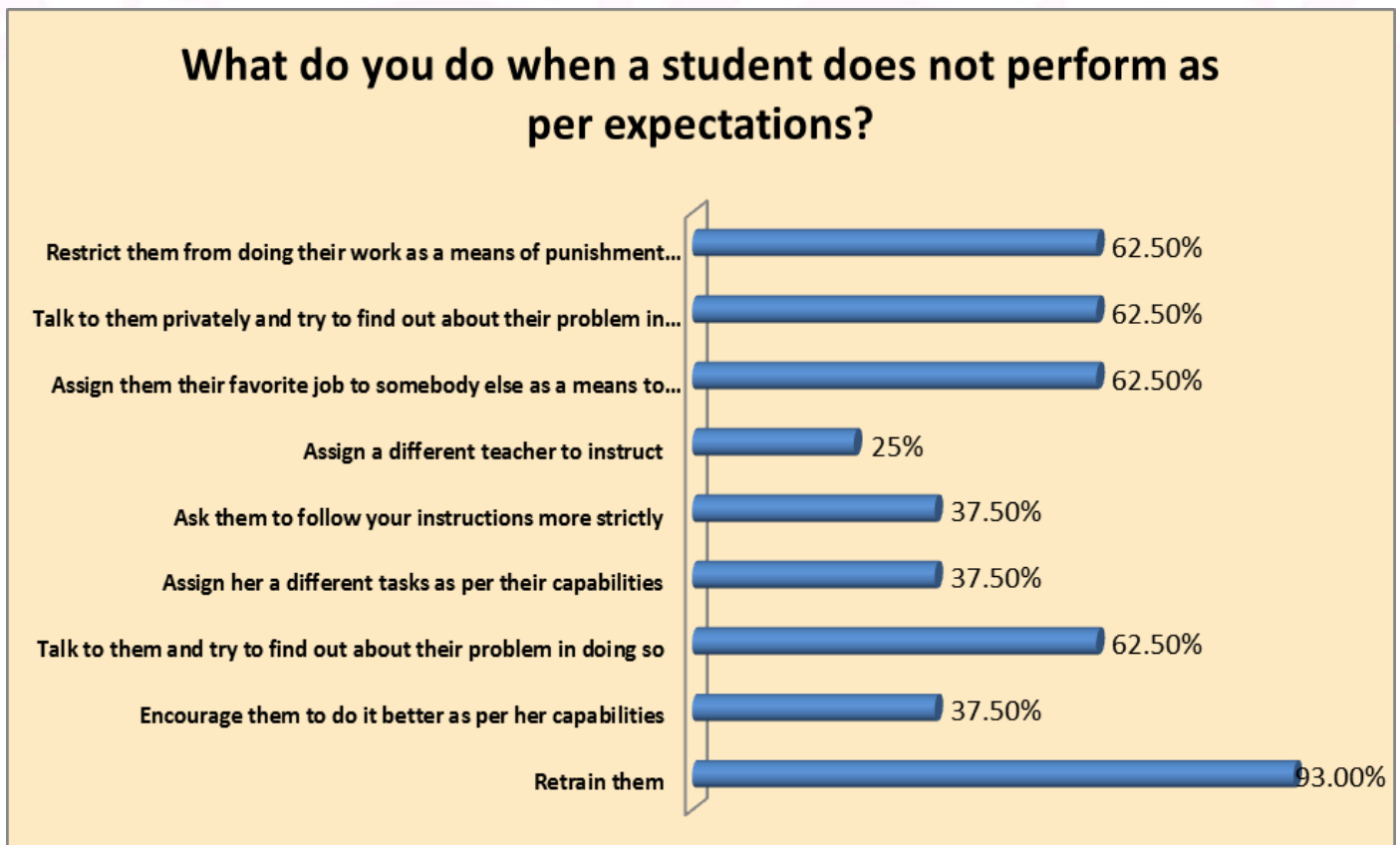
**Do you feel students learn faster and efficiently by the training method followed at the centre?**

	Frequency	Percent
yes	8	100.0

What difficulties you faced working with this group?



What do you do when a student does not perform as per expectations?





### **What do you do when students show behavioral issues while training/performing job?**

Many a times young adults show a lot of behavioral issues while at work place such as getting aggressive, non attentiveness, hyperactive and injuring self. In these situations the teachers and staff tackle them with lot of perseverance, love and care. When the students show any such issues during their training and performing job, teachers usually follow the following things

- \* make her/him calm
- \* counsel them why that behavior is not good
- \* refer to senior
- \* give something to eat, if the students sugar level goes down
- \* withdraw them from problem environment
- \* show her/him the right behavior at the very moment
- \* restrict from doing something as a means of punishment
- \* counsel them why that behavior is not good
- \* Attend for any medical concerns

### **Do the young adults express their feelings and needs efficiently at Om creations Trust?**

	Frequency	Percent
yes	7	87.5
no	1	12.5
Total	8	100.0

**Have you attended any training program recently that is helping you professionally?**

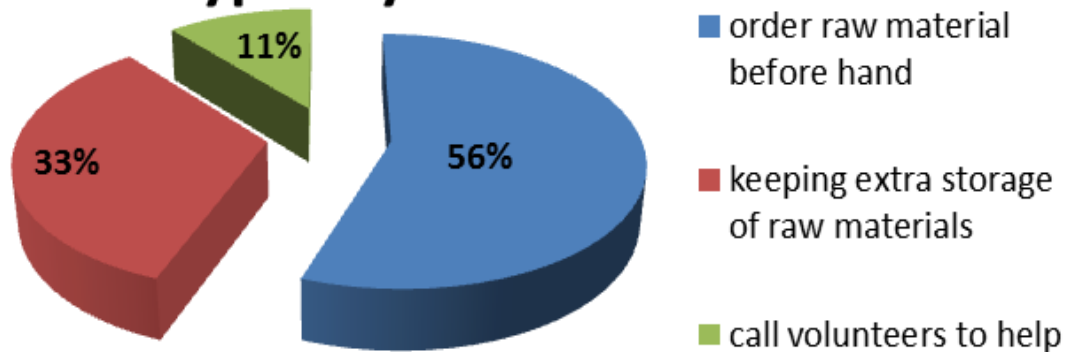


OMCT is such an organization who believes in brushing up skills and work efficiency of the staff by exposing them to various skill trainings and exposure visits. The in-house trainings mostly personally designed by Dr Khanna, the founder trustee; teachers has been helping the teachers to teach and handle the young adults learn in the most creative and efficient way.

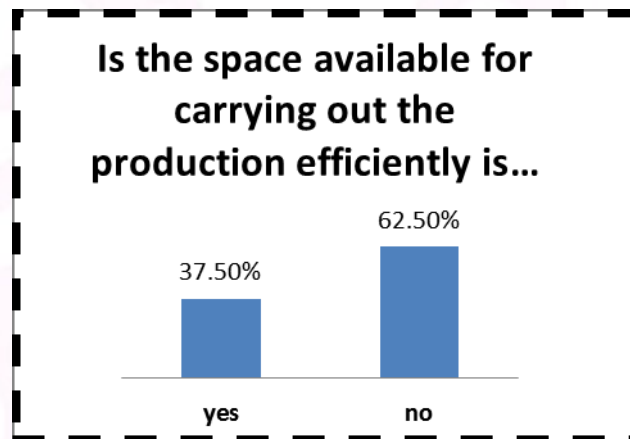
**How shortage of any resources typically handled?**

	Frequency	Percent
order raw material before hand	5	62.5
keeping extra storage of raw materials	2	37.5
call volunteers to help	1	12.5

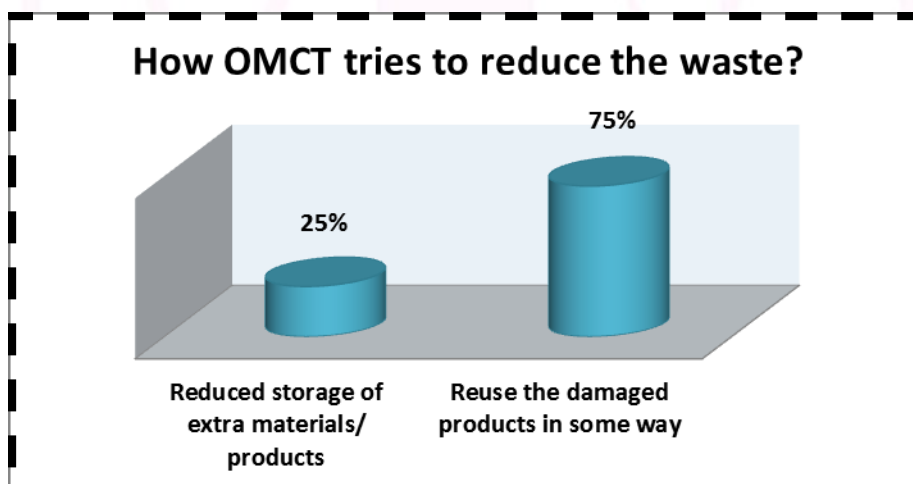
## How shortage of any resources typically handled?



Is the space available for carrying out the production efficiently is sufficient enough?



How OMCT tries to reduce the waste?



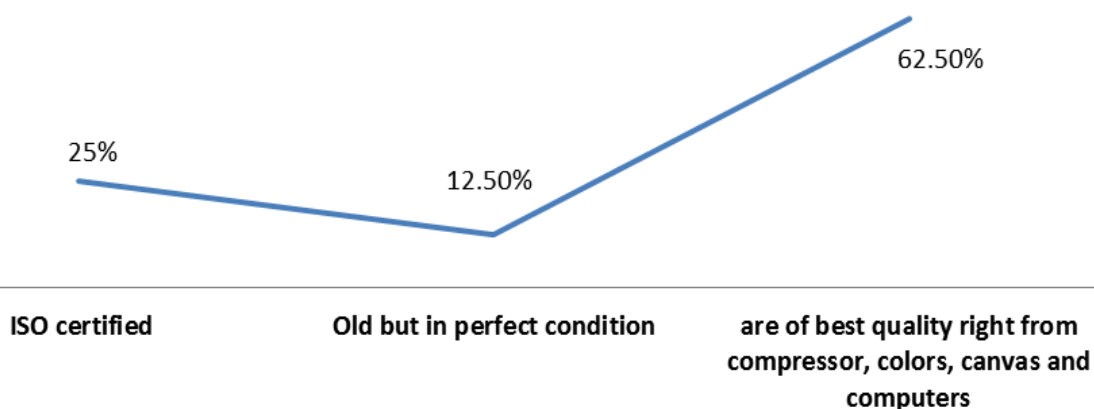


### Are the equipments and machines used for production are of high quality?

As per the teachers and staff the equipments and machines used for various activities at OMCT are

	Percent
ISO certified	25.0
Old but in perfect condition	12.5
are of best quality right from compressor, colors, canvas and computers	62.5

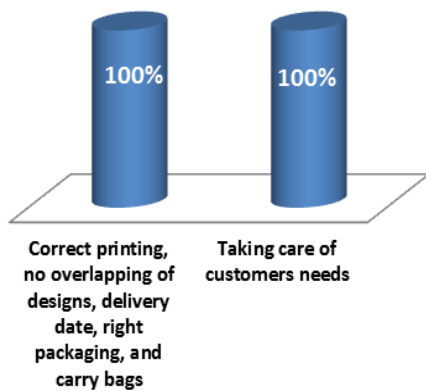
### Are the materials/equipments and machines used for production are of high quality?



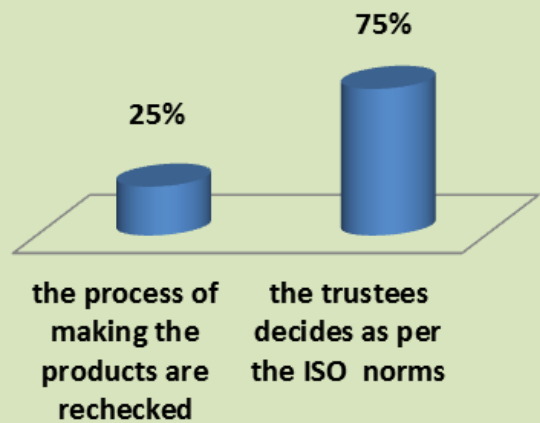
### How are product standards set?

How are product standards set?	Frequency	Percent
the process of making the products are rechecked	2	25.0
the trustees decides as per the ISO norms	6	75.0

### Criteria followed for controlling the quality of the products/product packaging/ labeling



### How product's standard is set?

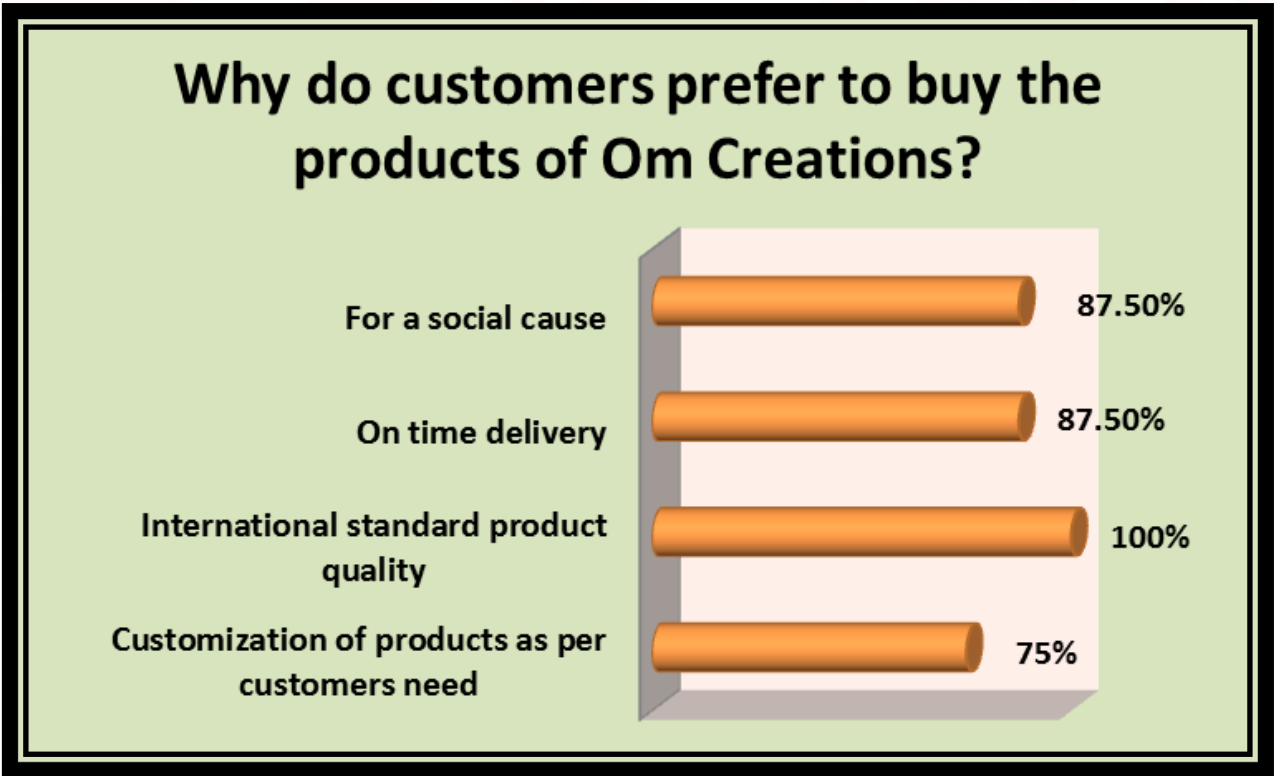
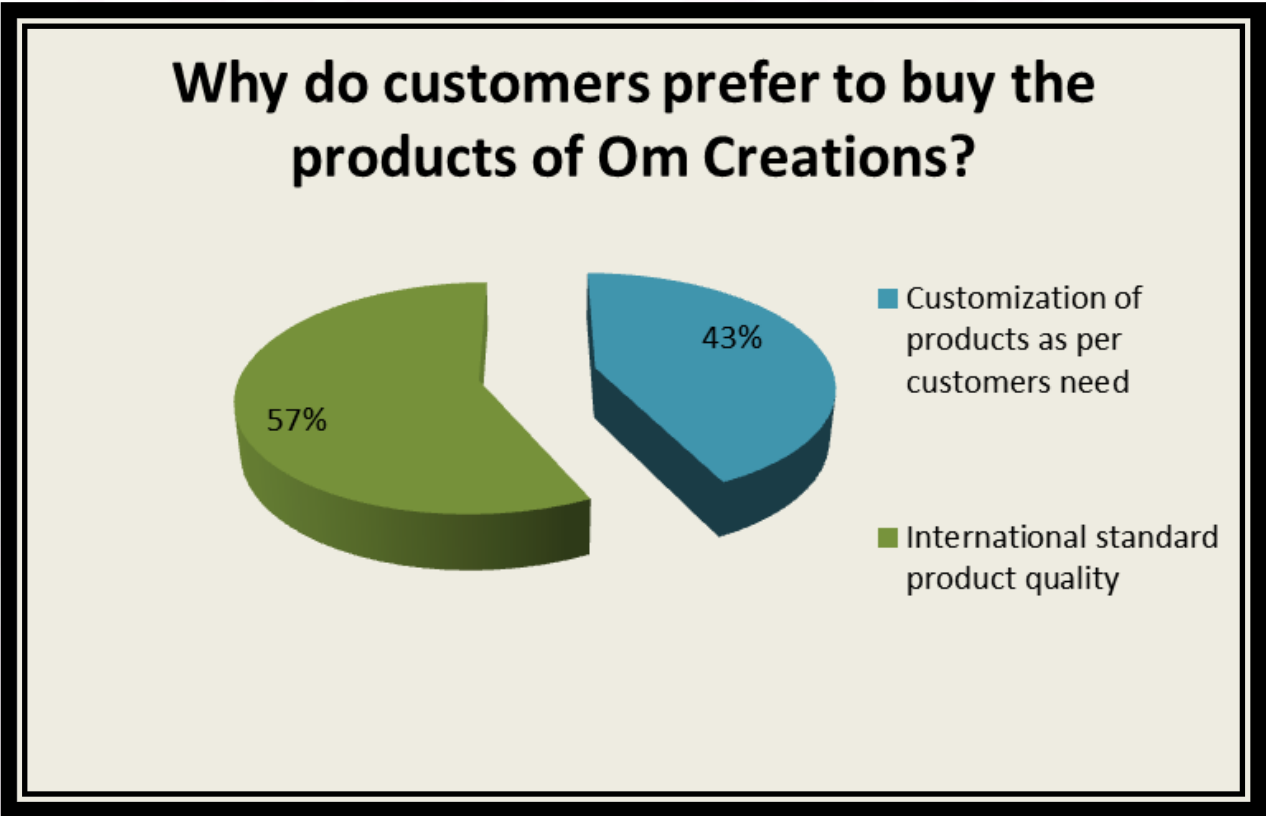


### How marketing and sales of products are done by Om Creations Trust?

- \* Om creation's outlet shop
- \* Exhibitions at different art fairs
- \* Social media advertisement, word of mouth advertisement, CSR approach, print media advertisements



From your perspective (staff) why do customers prefer to buy the products of Om Creations?

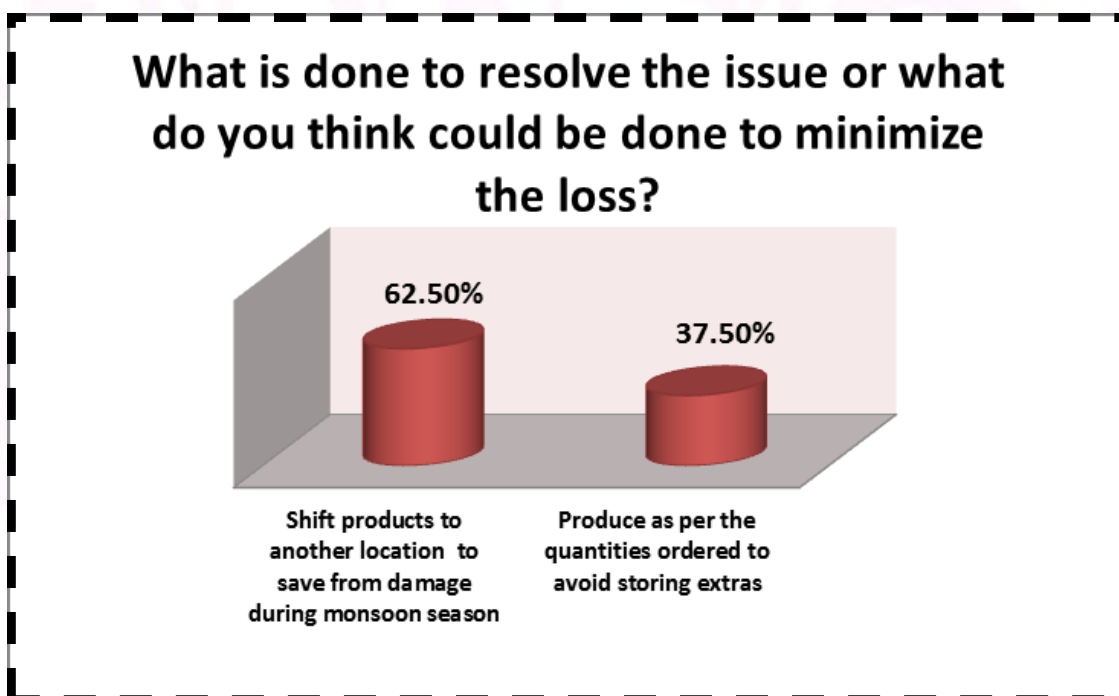




**Does your department face any waste of effort or revenues due to damage of products due to lack of proper storage facility?**

	Frequency	Percent
NO	6	75%
YES	2	25%

**What is done to resolve the issue or what do you think could be done to minimize the loss?**



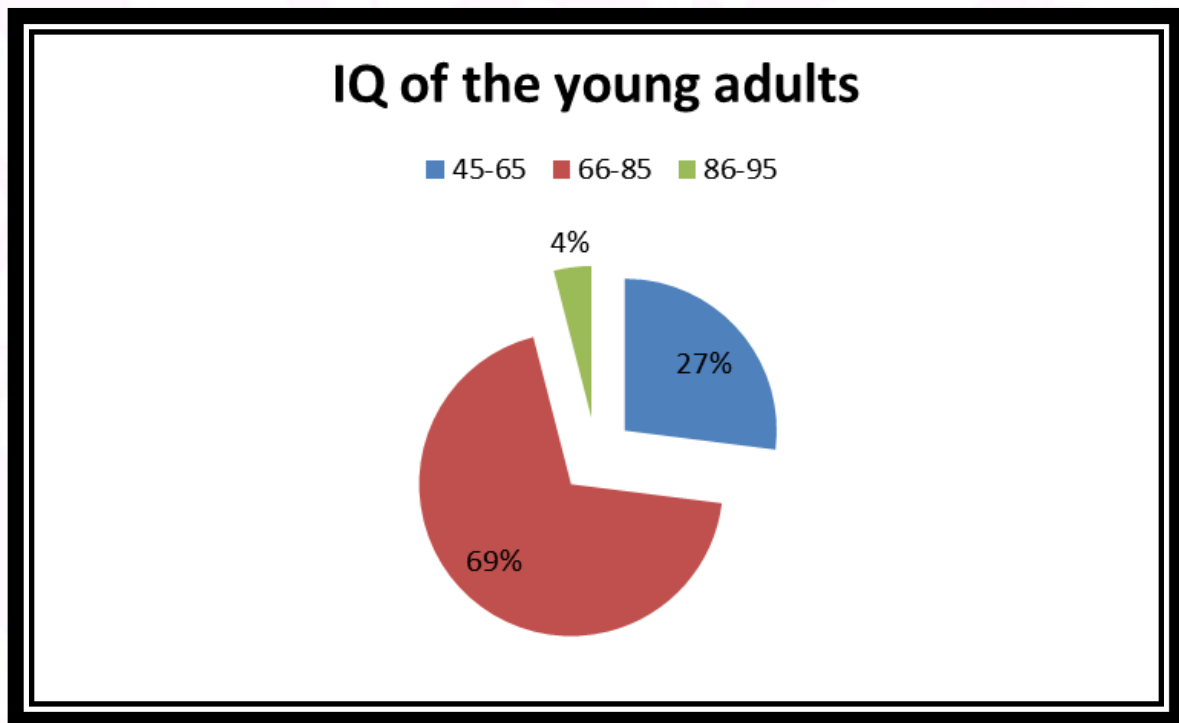
**Are you satisfied with the work that you do at Om creations trust?**

	Frequency	Percent
very satisfied	7	87.5%
Satisfied	1	12.5%

### Analysis of the parents/guardians interview schedule

Total number of parents and guardians interviewed for the study was 26. Individual interview of the parents and guardians were taken by the researcher to collect relevant information about their young adults working at Om creations Trust.

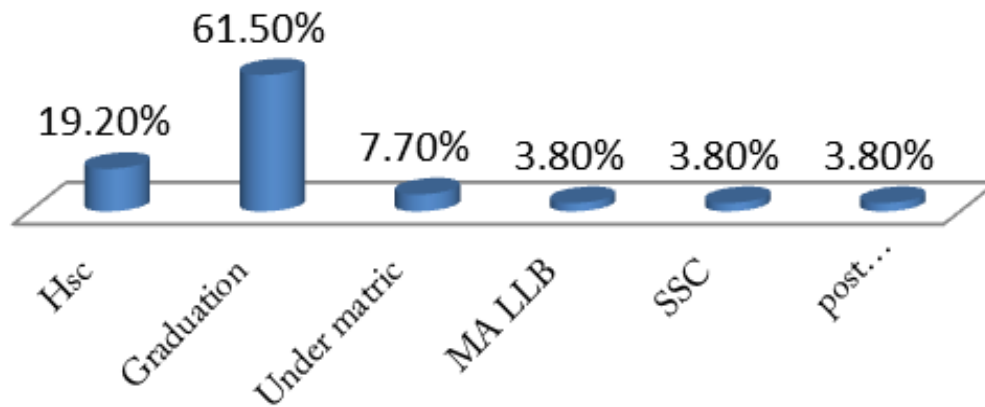
#### 1. IQ of the young adults



#### 2. What is the education qualification of the parents?

	Frequency	Percent
Higher Secondary	5	19.2
Graduation	16	61.5
Under Matriculation	2	7.7
MA LLB	1	3.8
10 <sup>th</sup> Standard	1	3.8
post graduation diploma	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

## Eductional qualification of parents/ guardians



### 3. When did you come to know about your child's intellectual challenge?

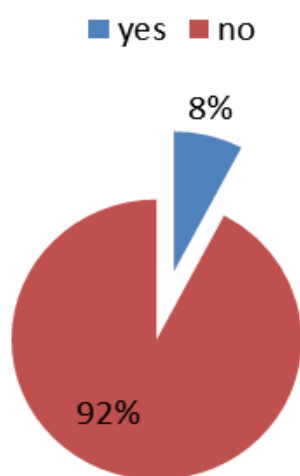
	Frequency	Percent
right after birth	4	15.3%
few months after birth	6	23.1%
during preschool time	14	53.8%
during primary school time	3	11.5%



#### 4. Were you aware about intellectual disability before having your child?

	Frequency	Percent
yes	2	7.7
no	24	92.3
Total	26	100.0

### Were you aware about intellectual disability before having your child

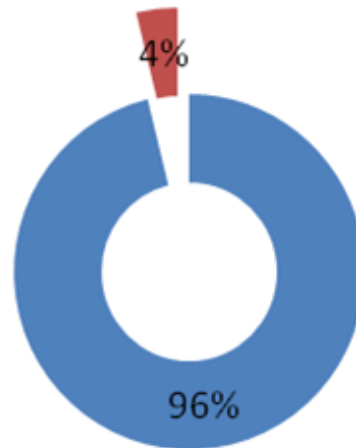


#### 5. How were you made aware about intellectual disability?

	Frequency	Percent
doctors	25	96.2
from internet	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

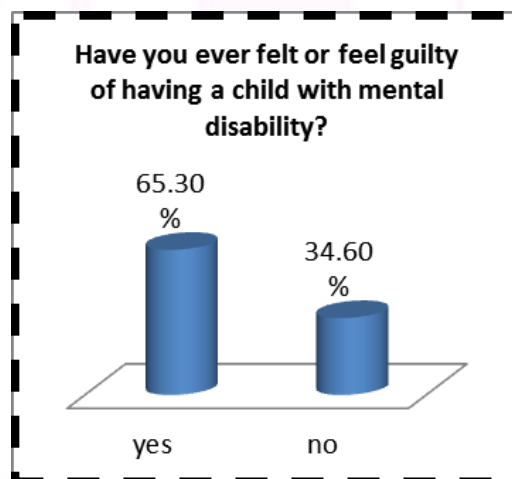
## How were you made yourself aware about intellectual disability?

■ doctors ■ from internet



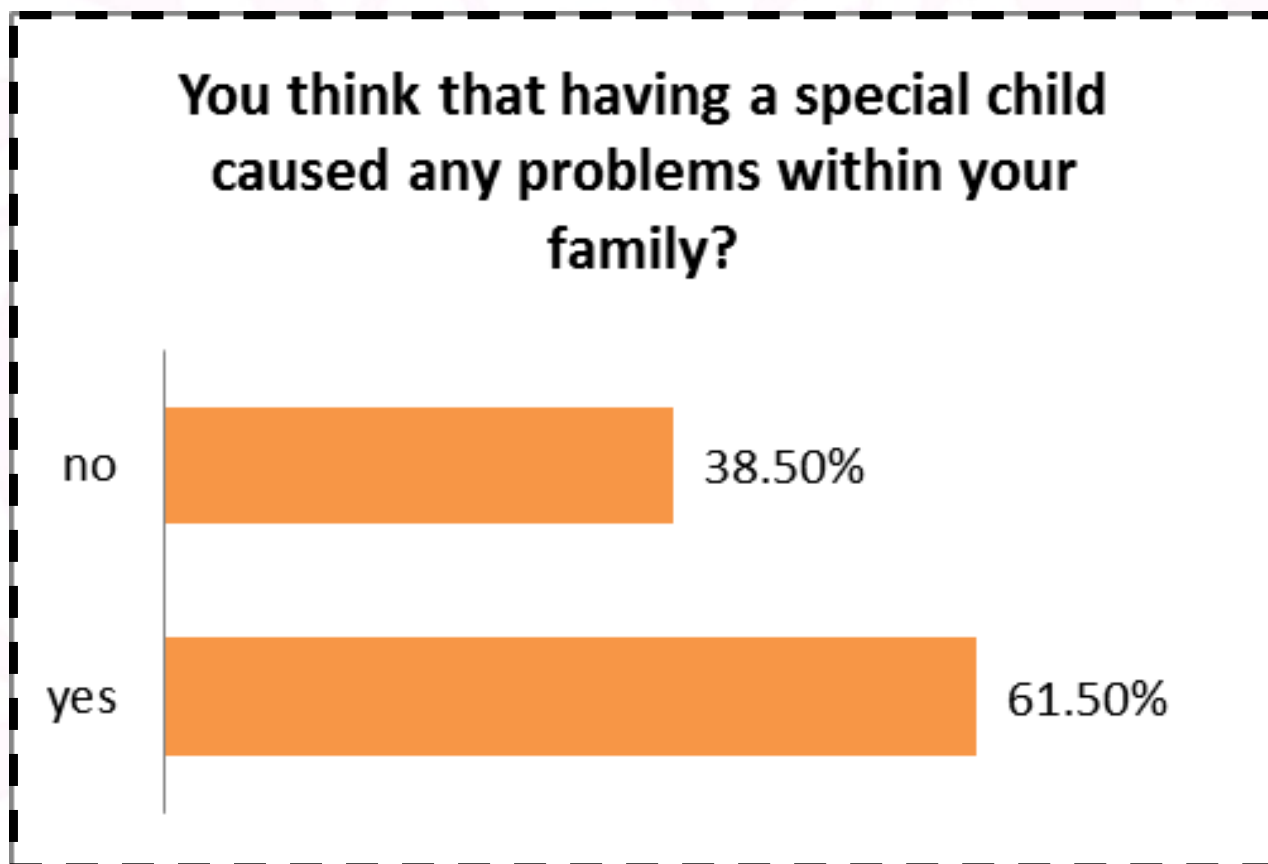
## 6. Have you ever felt or feel guilty of having a child with mental disability?

	Frequency	Percent
yes	17	65.3%
no	9	34.6%
Total	25	96.2



7. Do you think that having a special child caused any problems within your family?

	Frequency	Percent
yes	16	61.5%
no	10	38.5%
Total	25	96.2

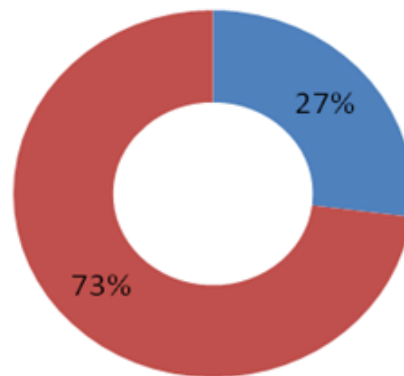


8. Have you felt burdened to raise special child?

	Frequency	Percent
yes	6	26.9
no	19	73.1

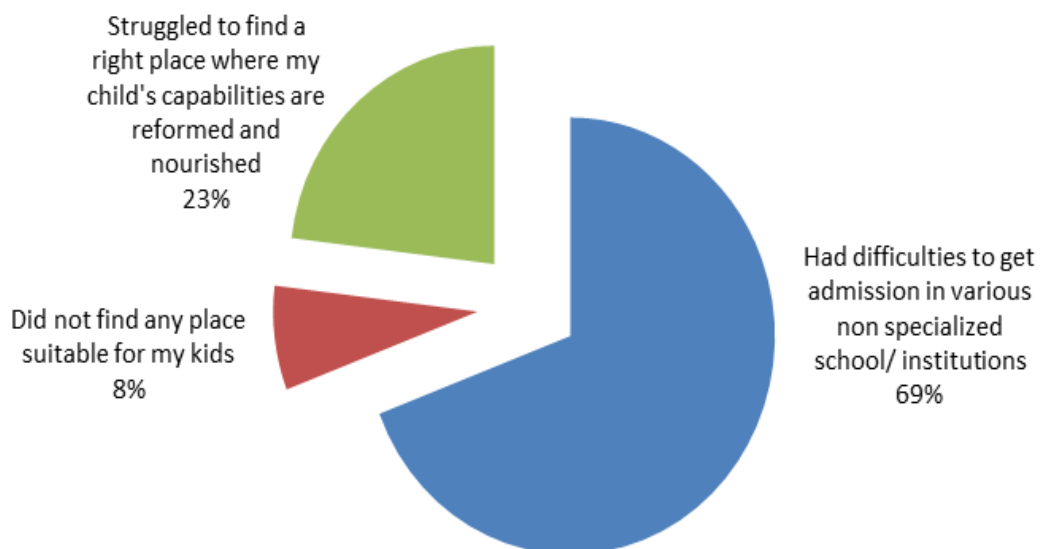
**Have you felt burdened to raise special child?**

■ yes ■ no



**What challenges did you face to provide education and livelihood for your child before coming to OMC?**

**Challenged faced to provide education and livelihood to your young adult before coming to OMC**





**Have you used any services/ schemes/ concession/support by government or any other institutions for your child besides OMC?**

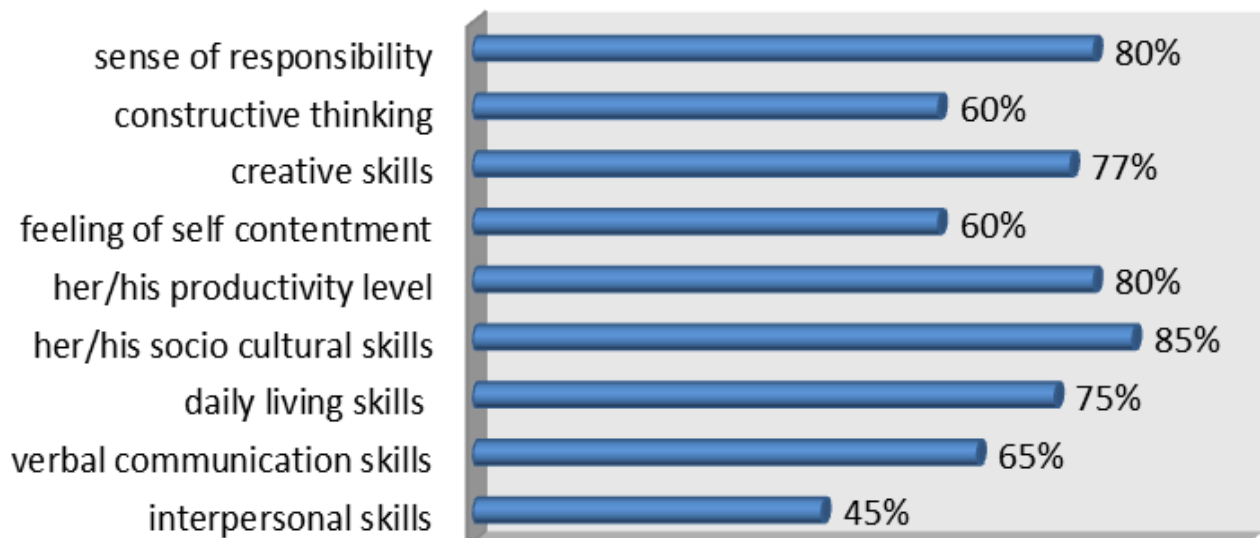
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	yes	11	42%
	no	15	58%

**Have you used any services/ schemes/ concession/support by government or any other institutions for your child besides OMC?**

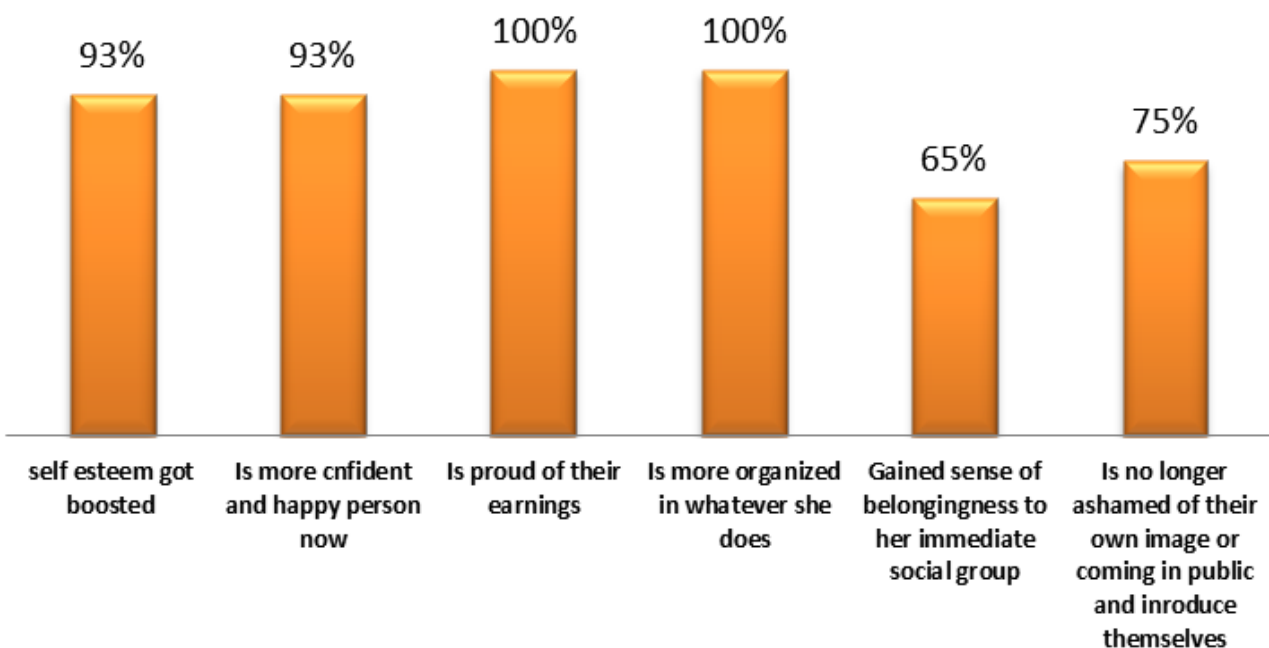


Has the association with OMC brought changes in her/his skills?

## Extremely improved skills of young adults at OMC



## Other changes in their personality

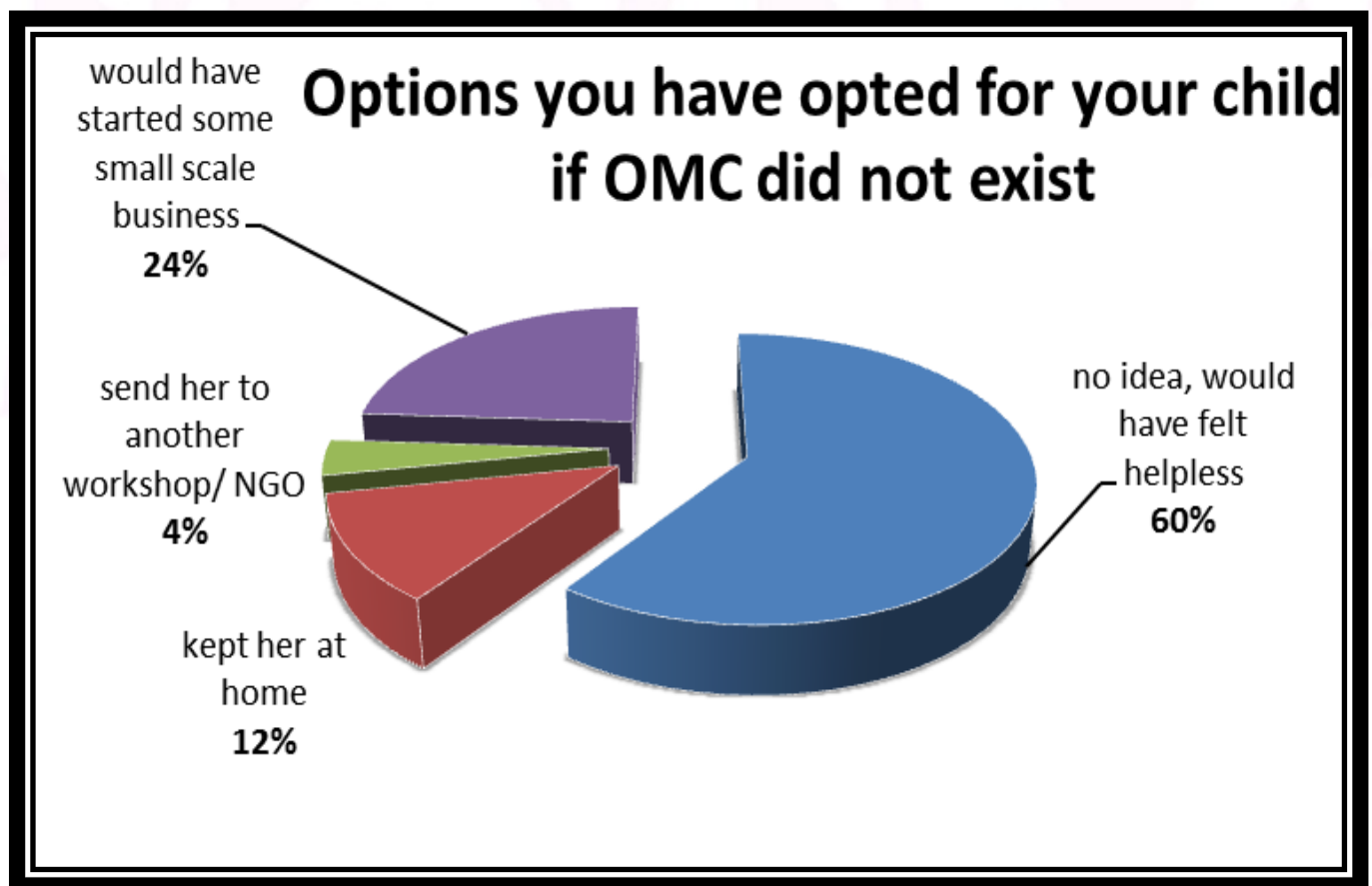


**44% of the young adults were under medical treatment. 64% of the total say that their child's illness got reduced through therapeutic healing at OMC**

**It is being reported by the parents and guardians (100%) that employability at OMC has brought changes to the personalities of their young adults in manifold ways such as-**

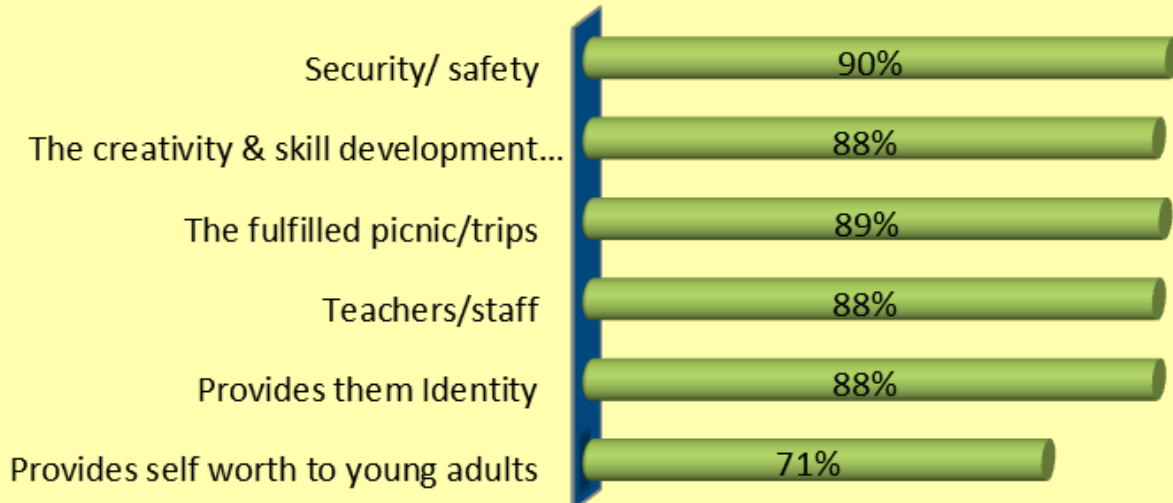
**There are many occasions where the young adults felt self-pride by the best usage of their earnings (87%). Buying surprise gifts like bouquets, birthday dress, food items to big purchases like television and scooter for the family, the young adults do things that surprise their family with happiness.**

**How the overall contributions of OM Creation Trust help to mold your child and her future?**

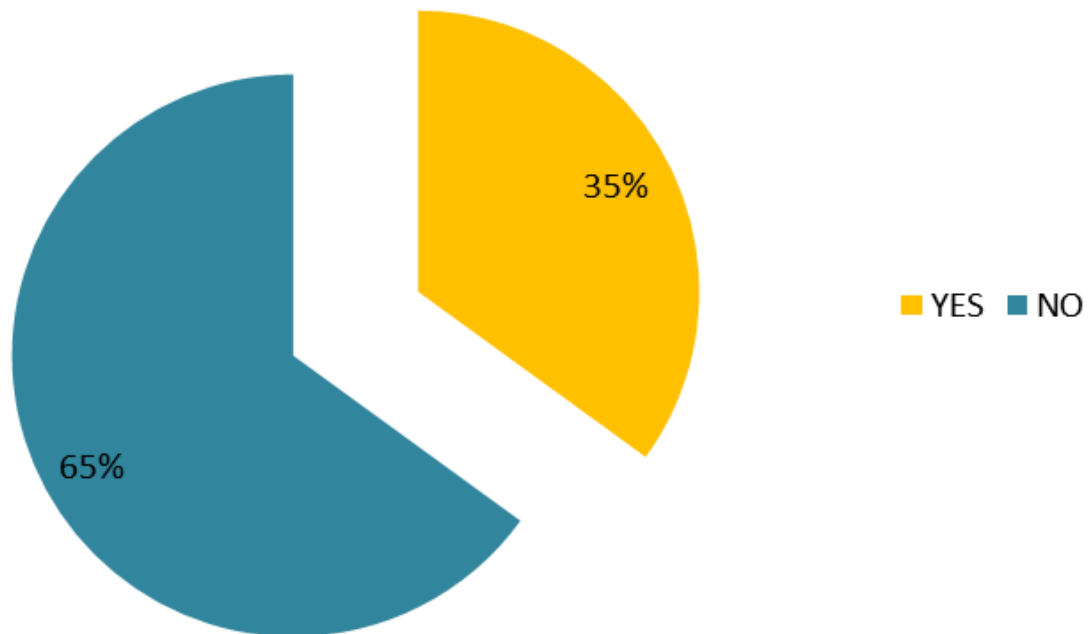


What is the best thing you like about OMC?

## Best thing liked by parents/guardians about Om Creations Trust



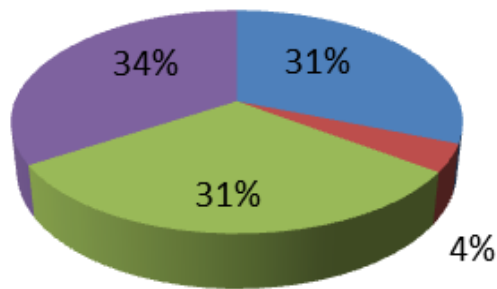
## DO YOU WORRY FOR YOUR CHILD?





## Future plan for your young adult

- Family members will look after
- Have opened a trust
- Planning for admitting in OM abode
- Hoping for further association with OMC



## CHAPTER 4

### The Extended Impact of OM Creations

The work of OM Creations reaches far beyond the Center, impacting many different constituencies through innovative social welfare practices.

As noted in the self-published book entitled *Insights into a successful integral enterprise. Surging beyond the bottom line*, “Innovation has become the prime focus for many institutions in the government, private sector and civil society, however most of the global focus lies on technological innovation, whereas social innovation lags behind” .

#### Innovative Leadership Impact:

One means of social innovation incorporated at OM Creations is that of “Integral Management”. This is described as “a cutting-edge framework which allows organisations to navigate through the ‘chaos’ and ‘order’ dynamic of their function (p.4). Integral management is recognized as a very important tool for social innovation as it allows organisations to capture value in those things which are often hidden in a capitalistic economy, some examples of which include beliefs, values, systems and the culture of an organization (Insights, p.4). OM Creations practices and lives by strong morals and values, based on the philosophy of the founder trustees. Living and practicing values-based leadership has led to great strides for the organization, far beyond the original expectations of an inventors and stakeholders.



Harvard University Faculty and students

## Teaching and Learning Impact:

Another area of extended innovative practice at OM Creations has been its ability to inspire other organizations through on-site learning opportunities with the staff and the young adults of the Center. Faculty and students from Harvard University in the United States have visited Om Creations several times to observe and learn first-hand the values-based leadership and teaching practices used at the Center to inspire and engage the young adults in their creative work activities.

School children from the Mumbai-area schools visit OM Creations, and through these visits are better able to understand the many talents of persons with differing abilities and disabilities, and through these experiences they develop compassion, empathy, and appreciation for the wider scope of humanity. Green Lawns school children observe and learn at OM Creations

## Strategic Marketing Impact:

It is the OM Creations philosophy that good marketing happens through the building of personal contacts and relationships. Positive relationships with the corporate world and others are the key to the development of strategic marketing strategies and approaches. By developing personal contacts with Swith CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) leaders as well as personnel in HR (Human Resource) departments and persuading them to visit Om to see the working of the organisation, for themselves goes a long way in building rapport.

Once a client comes to Om, they experience a sense of belonging to the place and there is continuous relationship, akin to home and family. Additionally, they can observe the hygienic conditions and care by which the products are products, particularly the food items, which opens

### Few words by the Board Members of the John F Kennedy Harvard University who volunteered at Om Creations

"We cannot commend you enough for the high level of success you have attained with, and for, these women and girls. We commend you also for not being complacent and for the establishment of the VasudhaJain Fellowship Programme which will allow you to expand the scope of your efforts. We look forward to staying in touch and continuing a relationship."



Green Lawns school children



doors to new marketing opportunities.

Om Creations also help smaller NGOs, one such NGO is Akanksha. By offering continuous feedback of fund utilization, financial updates, invitation for special occasions and promotional sales, Om Creations helped this NGO set up the tap faucets needed for their continuing programs.

### **Environmental Impact:**

Om Creations is working to take care of the environment as well. The area of offices where OM Creations is housed is an old, previously abandoned military barracks installation. This site is surrounded by large numbers of beautiful trees, forming a “green space” in the midst of downtown Mumbai. Without the work of Dr. Khanna and the Board of Trustees to secure and preserve the space for OM Creations and other NGO organizations, this site was scheduled to be razed and then filled with more office buildings. Instead, the site is a beautiful botanical oasis in Mumbai, creating a healthy environment not only for the organization and its participants, but also for the city as a whole.

Additionally, OMC has integrated material recycling and other positive environmental practices into its daily operations. One recent example is the production of environmentally friendly Ganesh idols made with natural materials and with tulsi seeds placed inside, so that following their use they can be recycled by planting them in the ground and growing new life in the plants.



**Ganesh idols made with natural materials**

### **Business and Organizational Impact:**

Over the course of its 25 years of operation, Om Creations has made significant impact on not only its own OMC community, but through its methods, models, approaches and outreach has made significant impact on many businesses and organizations. Here is a sampling of some of the businesses and programs that have been positively influenced by OMC participants, staff, and leadership:

**\*Management Training.** The SPJIMR Management College at Andheri, India has been planning and partnering with OMCT for the over 12





years. Initially, just two students would come to work at the Center for a period of 2-3 days, however now many different management programs from the college come and visit for a day, and the international management program comes to work at the Center for a period of 3-4 weeks and completes a collaborative project focused on an area or areas in which OMCT needs assistance.

**\*International Consulate Collaboration.** Dr. Radhika Khanna was invited to present about OMC programs in Israel. Due to connections made through these presentations, the Center now collaborates with the Israeli consulate, who purchase and use OMC products. Over many years, the Israeli consulate has ordered special chocolates for distribution at



their various annual meetings, and they also promote OM Creations and the products of OMCT at meetings and programs throughout the year, expanding the understanding of the capacities of the intellectually challenged.

**\*Foreign Governments.** Dr. Khanna has developed a strong relationship with groups of French artists and students who seek to study with OMCT. The students receive scholarships from the French government, and OMCT is listed in their curriculum as an academic and experiential resource.

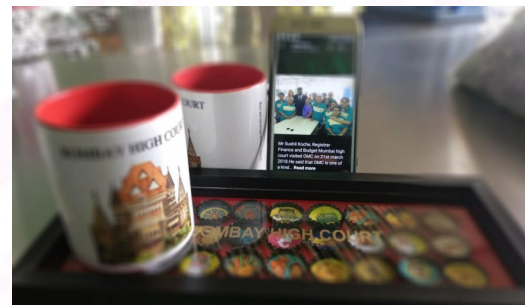
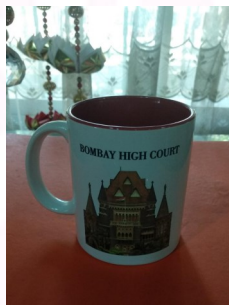
**\*Religious Organizations.** Om Creations has a strong, ongoing relationship with the Jewish Development Center (JDC) of the United States. On a regular basis, a variety of students, adults, and businessmen from the JDC visit Om Creations, often up to up to 300 at a time, to better understand OMC young adults and their capabilities, and to grow their understanding of others who may have intellectual or developmental challenges, as well as gifts. During these visits, the JDC visitors often make at least 70 Challah breads for Sabbath per week with the OMCT young adults, do Hebrew prayers, and interact with the young adults. The JDC visitors are so happy, since all bakeries are closed when the Sabbath challah breads need to be made, and OMCT helps them to get this done.

**\*Shared Community Enrichment.** In June of 2019, OMCT sponsored a “Healthy Food” training program for a mixture of staff, parents, OMC culinary faculty, and others from the community. The week-long program was held in collaboration with The Art of Living Ashram of

Bangalore and concentrated in developing both an understanding of healthy eating habits, and the skills involved in preparing and cooking healthy foods. The program took place at OMC and was taught by one of the Art on Living's master chefs. Here is a picture of the "Healthy Food" program graduates.

#### Products made by students for Bombay High Court

**\*Judicial Agencies.** The Bombay High Court regularly supports OMCT by purchasing various products for meetings of the high court judges. Over the years, the High Court has recognized and commented on the great improvements that have been made in these products, further expanding the judges understanding of the true capabilities of intellectually challenged young adults who work hard to develop their natural skills and talents at OMC.



**\*Multinational Banks.** Many of Mumbai's multinational banks collaborate with OMCT to have their employees spend their volunteer days at the Center, participating in a wide variety of projects. These banks and their employees gain a great deal from these experiences.



CSR activity at Om Creations



**Multinational Companies.** The Johnson and Johnson Corporation was planning the celebration of its 200<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Following a board meeting, the leadership of Johnson and Johnson came to OM Creations and spent a day painting as volunteers, after which a ceremony was held to honor **Mrs. Shastri**, an executive from Johnson and Johnson who was on the OMCT Board. She was presented with an award for her years of service as co-founder of OMCT Board – an example of the strong connections that exist between business and OMCT.

The above examples are a small sampling of the significant extended impact of OMCT upon the community-at-large. Through the dedicated work of the OMC young adults, staff, families, stake-holders, and board members, the reach of OMCT is broad and deep, and stands as a positive example of what is possible when individuals come together in their beliefs that EVERYONE is capable, and work together to build the environment where this can take hold and grow. OMC is that environment.

**Dr. Radhika Khanna with Mrs. Shastri, an executive from Johnson & Johnson**



## CHAPTER 5

### THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

With the wealth of experience gained through the work of OM Creations, as well as a deep understanding and concern for expanding opportunities in India for those with developmental and intellectual disabilities, Dr. Radhike Khanna envisions the next important steps for the organization - to develop a home for young adults, to bridge the gap of inability to capability, a home full of growth - physically, educationally, emotionally, and neurologically.. Such a home should serve to create positive perceptions of the students and develop a balance in their lives for all aspects of living. Aging is often feared and can build a barrier in the mind that interferes with their clear thinking about life. The young adults need not age quickly. According to Dr. Khanna, the health of the young adults can be enhanced to a great extent if the right balance of spiritual and emotional support is provided to them in both work and life experiences. On the basis of Indian scripture, Viswakarma, the lord of skilling- if we follow what he says our young adults can develop the vision to have confidence and skills in their personal potential, and thereby are capable of becoming more contributing citizens of the world. **OM ABODE** is that home - a vocational/educational/residential site that will equally provide growth in academic learning, innovative personal development and creative designs for skill growth and competence.



**Therapy & Wellness**

The Institute lays special emphasis on the holistic wellbeing of the young adults. A daily regime of yoga and outdoor activities are combined with a host of prescribed therapies and activities such as music, dance, drama, among others, and administered at the Therapy Centre in accordance with specific requirements.

**Facilities at a glance**

- Administration Wing+ Cafe+Store
- Meditation Space
- 4, 5, 6, Female Dormitories
- Integral Education Centre
- Skill Development Workshops
- Workshops
- Assembly Area (Convention Hall)
- Dining & Amphitheatre
- Faculty Quarters
- Therapy & Wellness Centre
- 16, 17, 18, Male Dormitories
- 20, 21, Staff Quarters
- 22, 23, Guest House
- 24, 25, Reservoirs

**Project Status**

Om ABODE is visualized over two phases. Construction work for Phase I is nearing completion. It will be ready to welcome the first batch of 80 resident pupils by April 2019 when the Institute will be inaugurated. When fully realized, it will be able to accommodate 320 pupils to live, learn and work on its sprawling campus.

**Top-of-the-line Security**

Besides an attentive, alert and trained team of careworkers, staff and security personnel, the entire campus, including the common areas and pathways are integrated with CCTV cameras for enhanced security.



**Dining Hall & Amphitheatre**

The Dining Hall is conveniently situated at the centre of the site, close to the workshops and the dorms. The adjoining kitchen area ensures that all meals served are fresh and hot. The Amphitheatre is the social hub of the Institute and an ideal venue for events and performances.



**Faculty Quarters**

Situated at one of the highest points of the site overlooking the Dining Block, the Faculty Quarters are in close proximity to the male and female dormitories as well as the Workshop Block. The units, with a living room, bedroom and kitchenette, are functional and spacious.



**Female & Male Dormitories**

The rooms are designed to accommodate young adults on a twin- and triple-sharing basis with attached bathrooms. A bed, study table and chair, book shelf and wardrobe is allocated per student along with dressing. Lively and spacious interiors with ample natural light and ventilation are enhanced by cheerful wall graphics. Each dorm also has a courtyard for interacting and improve their social skills while generating a sense of familial bonding. The dorms also house a resident Caregiver (couple) and an Assistant Caregiver for 24/7 assistance.



**Skill Development Workshops**

Arranged in a cluster-like formation, the Workshop blocks comprise large, airy spaces with high ceilings, natural lighting and ventilation in addition to inspiring views that make learning and working a joyful and stimulating experience. Each workshop is issued with the necessary tools, equipments and materials to facilitate the training process.



**Reception & Administration Wing, Cafe & Store**

Located by the entrance, the Reception & Admin. wing is the operations centre of the Institute. It also houses a spacious cafe that will serve wholesome and nourishing food and a Store that will display and sell the creations made by the young adults.



Site Plan of Om ABODE



**Water & Energy Management**

Om ABODE adopts an ecologically-sensitive approach in utilizing the natural resources on site. A sustainable and regenerative environment is maintained through efficient rain and groundwater management as well as treatment of waste water and use of solar energy.



**Medical Facilities**

The health, fitness, mobility and flexibility of the young adults is of prime concern and given the utmost priority. An in-house team of doctors and medical support staff conduct regular check-ups to ensure that your ward's health is in safe and caring hands.



Inclusion research and documentation will play an even more prominent role at OM ABODE. With its rich environment of vocational, therapeutic, and educational facilities, as well as residential housing for students, staff, and faculty, strong relationships can be developed with national and international universities and rehabilitation support services. Also, through its strong spiritual connection with the community, we envision the day when an OM ABODE is established in every state of the country to cater to the needs and develop the potential of a maximum number of intellectually challenged young adults. Dr. Khanna aims to add more skills and an even more efficient work environment for developing these new skills.

Also, by establishing more OM ABODE sites, OM Creations Trust's vision includes finding ways to help in the surrounding towns and areas in manifold ways - through work opportunities, job training, and supporting local businesses and suppliers. When an OM ABODE site comes to a community, everyone will benefit.

The year of 2020 will mark the anniversary of 30th year of OM Creations - growing from its initial days as a small supportive educational program designed to offer a positive alternative for the education and training of one young Downs Syndrome woman by her dedicated and forward-thinking mother, to today's full functioning arts and vocational training center for young adults with intellectual disabilities, where they can discover their own pathways to self-empowerment, skills training, spiritual fulfillment, community acceptance, and financial independence. Through this study of the impact of OM Creations, the enormous positive effects of the OMC programs and services, the innovative instructional approaches, dedicated staff, strong community connections, creative and forward-thinking administration, and supportive stakeholders have certainly been revealed. Regardless, Dr. Khanna and her staff and supporters are not satisfied with the status quo.

The next-generation model for service delivery through OM ABODE is already being realized. This unique residential campus offers unlimited opportunities for educational and business collaborations and for taking support programs for those with intellectual disabilities in India to the next important level of development in the field of disability rehabilitation and training. With sufficient support from government and private entities who believe that persons with intellectual disabilities deserve the same opportunities available to others, the future of these young adults, of OM ABODE and of OM Creations Trust as a whole, shall certainly prove to be very, very bright.

***NOTE: This study was conducted in 2018-2019 in Mumbai, India***

## In Conclusion

OM Creations Trust, as a model under the guidance of Dr. Khanna, has proved that showing a path for the trainers is very important to bring out the best of the young adults. She has taken hours and years to train teachers to help them to see the potential of each student, and bring it to scale. Innovative professional development sessions, such as the recent multi-day staff workshop on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which was developed and led by Dr. Elizabeth M. Dalton, an internationally-recognized consultant in innovative educational program development, help to lead the way to empower staff with knowledge and tools they need, in order to help every young adult to succeed and be fully included in life. The OMC organization has had numerous experiences when the visitors would doubt the capability of young adults at the first meeting.

However, by being immersed in this model, the students are not only given the strength to improve themselves, but also the opportunities to learn many things through osmosis. Our students need space to learn for themselves. Our teachers require learning that the space components create an incubation period where the students get the coverage to break their own barriers and take the initiative to try out and perform various skills. Such an approach to learning gives the students great joy and it encourages them to create better products and works of art than anyone can imagine. They have the opportunity to share about themselves to the world in a way that every person's talent can be explored and nurtured.





## Appendix

### Opinions and feedback from stakeholders

#### Mrs Durga Jain, Founder Trustee

As per Durga Jain, her basic idea to start OM Creations Trust was to engage the young adults full time after graduating from their academic or vocation education as it was difficult for the family/ parents to keep them engaged productively at home. With this vision Mrs Durga Jain founded OM Creation Trust in 1991 to engage the young



adults creatively that also would provide them with financial independence. "Our major focus starting up this organization was to provide a platform for the intellectually challenged young adults where they could realize their creative self and harness their potential to stand on their feet by being productive and earning members of the society. "As a founder of the organization, I have envisaged to facilitate the journey of the intellectually challenged young adults from crisis to stability and merging them into mainstream society and enable them to function in society with the right to self dignity".

#### Mrs. Ranjana Mahadevia, Trustee at OMC

Being a trustee and a special educator at Sadhana, I have associated with Om Creations Trust from the year 2000. With the background of teaching special kids in hospitality and catering after they graduate from the organization, I got associated to help and support them to mainstream them to the outer world by being independent. The most challenging problem I have faced over the years as a management person was to change the mindsets of students



and staff. The warmth and the desire to learn expressed by the young adults compelled me to keep coming regularly. And the best reward I consider here is to see the section/place growing

from small to big, and to see happy faces. They teach us how to be eternally honest and happy within. The major areas OMC has impacted as per my view are: a) building self-esteem; b) skill development; and c) improved health (both physical and mental). The Realm Model by Dr. Radhike has been the primary basis to bring the requisite change in the organization's methodology. For us, it was an eye-opener that put us to thinking what normalcy is and that there is more to achieve than only academics.

As a social enterprise, we are quite successful, but we also can do better to facilitate more and to reach out more. The current status of Om Creations is the hard work of everyone involved and I feel very proud of it. OMCT is globally very forward. A lot of freedom of expression is provided to the young adults here who are also not restricted to any government norms. So, the young adults are able work to their own optimum levels.

### **ARUNDHATI BHATTACHARYA, Trustee, OM Creations Trust & OM Abode**

My association with OMCT is from 2016. I like the aim of Om Creations Trust of supporting young adults with multiple disciplines and ensuring they lead a life of dignity. The leadership bandwidth is stretched. It needs more people to ensure that proper processes and policies are followed and governance standards are maintained. The best reward I consider about my association with Om Creations is the satisfaction of having supported a worthwhile activity. The major areas I see the OMC has impacted are the young adults are more self-dependant and have developed a sense of self-worth. The intervention of the Realm



model by Dr. Radhike has surely helped in the capacity building of young adults. The young adults have surely developed in the activities that they have undertaken. As a social enterprise, it has made a mark. Commercial success is not fully realized yet, and OMCT has to be focused on making itself fully sustainable. There is already an adequate emphasis on creativity and joyful workspace. To reach full sustainability, an emphasis on marketing, creating value chains and put in place, processes and governance standards will ensure sustainability



## **BINU ADVANI, Ex-teacher, and well-wisher**

Om Creations Trust is a center for transitioning young adults from school to a work environment. As a teacher, this was a challenging proposition but was made possible by Dr. Khanna's vision. It was interesting to see students cope with working conditions rather than a school setting. Nothing could be more rewarding than seeing your training bear fruit when you saw these young adults create beautiful pieces that were sold in the market and for them to be gainfully employed in a sheltered environment. Transitioning the student to a work environment was the most difficult task as they had to learn how to handle work pressure in spite of all behavioral issues. It took months and sometimes years for them to adjust and accept their workspace, especially those that were autistic. It took significant time to decide which skill set they should be moved into. These were the realities we all had to face and overcome. Seeing Om Creations products being used worldwide and knowing that their products are unique and greatly admired and appreciated by everyone is the most rewarding experience I have had. I buy all my gift bags from Om Creations and use them in the USA and the first comment I get is "what a beautiful bag" - sometimes they think the bag is the gift without looking at what is inside!

"When my husband first came to Om Creations, he was struck by the fact that all these young adults seemed so happy being together, interacting socially with each other and at the same time enjoying the work they did. Om Creations has given them the perfect social environment. The fact that they love what they do and earn a wage at the end of the day brings them great joy – Om Creations has been greatly instrumental in impacting their lives in every aspect, mentally and socially.

As a social enterprise, Om Creations is successful in every way. It has created a perfect environment for young adults with different abilities and at the same time created certain products that have become an Om Creations trademark, which has caused them to grow commercially, getting them bulk orders for weddings and many other events. It can improve commercially by marketing themselves worldwide rather than nationwide. This would not be easy but it could be a future that would help them expand their network far and wide. Through their products, they can bring more awareness globally as an organization that believes in supporting young adults with developmental challenges, and at the same time keeps worldwide standards in everything they market. This would prove to the world that a social enterprise can be financially viable and at the same time play an important role in uplifting young adults with social and behavioral issues, who have proven that they can learn and work competitively, given the right circumstances and opportunities.

**AJIJA TYABJI HYDARI, Trustee, AURED**

Om Creations, with the help of very few parents, started with very few students. They have grown bigger now in numbers and are doing a wonderful job to make the special adults independent in life. The livelihood program has made these young adults so far partially sustainable and independent. The dedication, commitments and efforts contributed by the parents and staff are commendable. I see OMC as a very successful social enterprise, in fact, their growth is far better than many of us (the neighbor organizations). Om Creations Trust has inculcated the concept of having self-respect in young adults for who they are and what they are capable of. The organization is very successful in making them independent and contributing members of the country.

**CLOTILDA D'SOUZA, Manager, Cancer Institute**

The major areas in which the OMCT organization has impacted young adults are: a) building self-confidence; and b) Skill development, becoming capable enough to start something of their own for livelihood. We have been regular customers of the sandwiches for our staff and guests for many years. Right from the taste of the sandwiches to its delivery and packaging, it is just best in this locality. Besides, all are surprised that such a tasty product is made by people who are intellectually challenged. Besides food, the other art and craft products are also of very nice quality.

**SWATHI MUKHERJEE, Trustee, Vatsalaya**

Association with OMCT is purely how it should be with your neighbors, very cooperative and helpful. We have had many celebrations together like birthdays, Ganpati celebrations, etc. We are also regular customers of some of the products created by young adults. Being a front door neighbor organization, sometimes we help each other in times of need. Here is one small example: one day a young adult came to OMCT not knowing it was a holiday and when she found out the office was shut she got very violent and the driver got scared to handle her. Mrs. Swathi came to her rescue and intervened in the situation and calmed her down. It was discovered that she wanted to use the washroom badly. After that incident, she had a sweet bonding with the trustee. Similarly, there are many other cases through which the young adults developed a special bonding with the neighboring organizations. One of the Ganpati idols made with love by young adults of OMCT is still kept, not immersed due to its excellent work at Vatsalaya. I believe OMCT is an established social enterprise with a very good quality of the products.

## **TRISHITA KHANDERIA, Media handling for Om Abode**

I have visited the center through a friend's recommendation. I got inspired by the young adults, seeing how compassionate they are and always enthusiastic about their work at OMCT. The major areas OMCT has impacted are:

- a) Boosting confidence.
- b) Compassionate understanding.
- c) Their potentials have been brought forth.
- d) OMC never slotted them into categories; instead, let every individual adult grows naturally without forcing them in any into a particular area.

Every individual adult's talents are identified and given the importance of marvel in their respective talents. My first impressions when I visited were: "I found the place a very happy environment/open space. The young adults will teach you how to be enthusiastic about everything, be happy for no reason, be extrovert, be confident despite limitations and be outspoken." As a social enterprise, OMCT is quite successful and OM Abode is the result of its success. The forward-thinking nature of Om Creations Trust is bringing about the result of Om Abode. At the moment OMCT needs to be more active on social media, which should be the key focus to reach out and make maximum people aware of its cause and aware of the products made by the young adults.

## **REKHA MEHTA, Trustee, Shraddha charitable org**

I have been associated with OMCT for the last 19 years. As a brother organization, we are connected to OMC through Dr. Radhike who is also a trustee at Shraddha. Many times we merged some of our activities and events as per the need. As per my observation from the last many years, I feel OMCT has rehabilitated and changed the lives of so many young adults. Dr. Radhike's focus always has been on making the young adults self-confident. She tells to them always "If you are happy you can't fall sick".

Her visions/interventions (Realm model) are always different than others. There is nobody like her anywhere, who can devote their entire life for the betterment of others (the young adults). I am so happy her works and dedication are recognized at different forums.

As a brother organization, we support each other in every step and shall work hand- in-hand always to excel more.

**ADITYA JAISWAL, Consultant Contractor, OM Abode**

I have come in contact with OMC through a friend 5 months back. My association is more than 5 months old, especially for the Om Abode project. As a contractor, I felt the project needed a lot of help to execute and to go in the right direction. The challenges that the project was facing were mainly missing of deadlines by PMCs (Project Management consultants), the architects and contractors, which was needed to be brought in line. I feel very fortunate in giving back to society through working for these young adults. The young adults at OM Creations have proven that they are not liabilities to anyone, but are independent in their ways and are more confident and happy with their abilities. I consider Om Creations Trust is an asset to the society and is a successful social enterprise with the right intention. To bring the center to a more upgraded level, we must have a strong social marketing team.

**AISHWARYA BARIDE, Curriculum designer for special education & Mother of ex-student of Dr. Radhike who has Down's syndrome**

My Son Sahil studied in Sadhana school. I as a parent have witnessed Dr. Radhike's model of teaching the children with special needs. The Realm model of Dr. Radhike is very well designed, where she concentrates more on giving life skills to develop independence in the young adults. Dr. Radhike has always emphasized the issue of employability options for the young adults once they complete their education, to make them independent. My son Sahil, who was trained at Sadhana school in hospitality, is an independent boy working as a Chef at Grand Hyatt, Santacruz. As a mother, I always say that these special children can be trained, can follow a structure, are good at their work and are extremely sincere. It is just a matter of understanding their potentials; then they are like any other youth who can be independent.

"I strongly believe that if companies and service providers come forward and tie up with organizations like OMCT, they will be benefited with dedicated employees, and our young adults would get better exposure to the job market."The certifications of their training programs don't have any government or any other recognition, which should be developed, as it is very important for them to mingle more with the outer space."



**Uday Shetty, Akansha Shetty's father, CEO, Cornerstone:**

My daughter Akansha Shetty, who is developmentally challenged, is a happy employee of OM Creations Trust. Besides, I have been helping in FUNDING AND DONATIONS FOR THE ORGANIZATION. I have been associated with extending my help to OMCT organizing trips and photography, too, in various capacities. The major areas I think OMCT has contributed are the **sense of self-worth** and **the belongingness to society**. Due to Dr. Radhike, OMCT has come to the current status; no one can replace her. OMCT as a social enterprise is successful and I am very sure it will touch sky high very soon. To do so OMCT needs to focus more on reaching out to more funds to develop a better infrastructure and the working facilities.



## Case Studies

### **ELAVANI RIYAN**

Age - 25

Born into a family who could hardly make ends meet, Elavani was born autistic. Her parents, for lack of knowledge, admitted her into a normal school and after several years of not being able to cope she quit school and became extremely hyperactive at home. Elavani's father passed away and the burden of the home fell on her mother who started working as domestic help.

Elavani was admitted into Om Creations wherein under the supervision of specialized trainers she has blossomed into a master in the ceramics department. Elavani's hidden talent was brought out at Om Creations where she works in the ceramics section making beautiful products. Being at Om Creations has taught her how to interact with others, make friends and enjoy her work.

Not only has Om Creations helped Elavani develop into a happy and confident working young lady, but it has also added tremendously to the family's efforts of providing a decent life for themselves. Today, Elavani adds her contribution to the household income helping her mother out from the wages she receives at Om Creations for her hard work.

Elavani's smiling face when you appreciate her products is a testimony to the fact that with the correct guidance and support she has become a confident and independent young adult.





## AKANKSHA SHETTY

Age – 27

Akanksha has been with Om Creations for the past 3 years. In the last 6 months, she was facing many issues relating to behavior. Some obsessive behavior was observed at home and the parents were concerned about this. Dr. Khanna visited Akanksha at her house, to try and help her and her house, and to understand the situation at home. After Dr. Khanna's visit, some decisions were taken to try and help Akanksha. Different therapies were started with her on a twice a week basis to help her open up, share her concerns in a relaxed manner and then to help her overcome her anxieties. Dr. Khanna is also working on a special Art therapy for her. This is the philosophy at Om Creations Trust, every child is special and needs to be happy and reach her full potential. Care is taken to help everyone. When Akanksha's issues were brought up to Dr. Khanna immediately decided to visit her at home and help her out. This is one of the many stories that happen at Om Creations, and as always we work to make the end and the journey both happy.



## References

- (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://berardaitwebsite.com/>: <https://berardaitwebsite.com/>
- (WHO), W. H. (2007). *Intellectual Disability- A Manual for CBR workers*. New Delhi: Regional office for South East Asia.
- (2019, January). Retrieved January 2019, from <https://aucd.org/>: [https://aucd.org/template/news.cfm?news\\_id=13943&parent=318&parent\\_title=Letters&url=/template/page.cfm?id%3D318](https://aucd.org/template/news.cfm?news_id=13943&parent=318&parent_title=Letters&url=/template/page.cfm?id%3D318)
- ADAPT-Free our people. (2019). Retrieved 2019, from <https://adapt.org>: <https://adapt.org/our-journey/>
- Autism Europe. (2019). Retrieved 2019, from <https://www.autismeurope.org/what-we-do/>
- Coleridge, P. a. (2010). Community Approaches to Livelihood Development: Self-help Groups in India. *Poverty and Disability* , pp.177-213.
- Department for International Development. (2000). *Disability, poverty and development*. British Department for International Development.
- Groce N, L. J. (n.d.). *Intergenerational Poverty and Disability: The implications of inheritance policy and practice on persons with disabilities in the developing world*. Retrieved June 10, 2019, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5890974/#pone.0194105.ref055>
- India Today. (2018, December 20). *Lok Sabha passes Autism Bill: Things you need to know*. Retrieved January 2019, from [www.Indiatoday.in](http://www.indiatoday.in): <https://www.indiatoday.in/fyi/story/autism-bill-2018-lok-sabha-passed-cerebral-palsy-disabilities-1414059-2018-12-20>
- India's New Law on Disability Extends to Private Employers*. (2017, June 30). Retrieved January 2019, from [www.nishithdesai.com](http://www.nishithdesai.com): <http://www.nishithdesai.com/information/news-storage/news-details/article/indias-new-law-on-disability-extends-to-private-employers.html>
- Islay Mactaggart, L. M. (2018 Apr 9). Livelihood opportunities amongst adults with and without disabilities in Cameroon and India: A case control study. *PLOS/ One, A peer reviewed open access journal* .
- John, C. L. (2017, Jan-March). *The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016: Does it address the needs of the persons with mental illness and their families*. Retrieved January 2019, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5419007/>



*Men and Women (with disabilities) at Work*. (n.d.). Retrieved February 2019, from <https://docplayer.net/160131260-Chapter-1-introduction-men-and-women-with-disabilities-at-work.html>

Munyi, C. (2012). Past and Present Perceptions towards Disability: A Historical Perspective. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 32(2), 2-10.

O'Manique, J. (1990). Universal and Inalienable Rights: A Search for Foundations. *Human Rights rights*, 465-485.

Palmer M, G. N. (2015). The economic lives of people with disabilities in Vietnam. *PloS one*, 10 (7).

PLoS One. (2018, April). *Livelihood opportunities amongst adults with and without disabilities in Cameroon and India: A case control study*. Retrieved November 2018, from [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5890974/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5890974/)

Ranna Parekh. (2017, July). <https://www.psychiatry.org>. Retrieved March 2019, from [https://www.psychiatry.org: ww.psychiatry.org/patients-families/intellectual-disability/what-is-intellectual-disability](https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/intellectual-disability/what-is-intellectual-disability)

Ravichandra S. Karkal, I. T. (2014). Disability benefits for persons with mental illness in India: Challenges for implementation and utilization. *Delhi Psychiatry Journal*, 50-62.

Rehab Council. (n.d.). Retrieved 2019, from [http://rehabcouncil.nic.in/](http://rehabcouncil.nic.in/writereaddata/mr.pdf): <http://rehabcouncil.nic.in/writereaddata/mr.pdf>

Ritu Kalgotra, J. S. (2017). Intellectual Disability in India: An overview. *Journal of Disability Studies*, 7.

S. Ganesh Kumar, G. R. (2012, Jan-Jun). *Disability and Rehabilitation Services in India: Issues and Challenges*. Retrieved January 2019, from [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3893941/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3893941/)

Sapra, D. I. (2014). [https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/16129/10/10\\_chpter%201.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/16129/10/10_chpter%201.pdf). Retrieved JUNE 10, 2019, from [https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/16129/10/10\\_chpter%201.pdf](https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/16129/10/10_chpter%201.pdf)

Schalock, R. L. (2004). The concept of quality of life: What we know and do not know. , 48, . doi:10.1111/j.1365-2788.2003.00558.x. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 203–216.

Sharpe, M. E. (1977). *PARENTS OF MENTALLY RETARDED PEOPLE*. Retrieved January 2019, from <https://mn.gov>: <https://mn.gov/mnddc/parallels2/pdf/70s/77/77-IJH->

*Women more prone to disability than men, and particularly vulnerable to discrimination and violence.* (2011, May 17). Retrieved February 2019, from [www.womenlobby.org](http://www.womenlobby.org): <https://www.womenlobby.org/Women-more-prone-to-disability-than-men-and-particularly-vulnerable-to>

World Health Organization. (2019). *World Report on Disability*. Retrieved 2019, from [www.who.int](http://www.who.int): [https://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/report/en/](https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report/en/)

**\*\* Note: The questionnaires are available at OM Creations Trust upon request.**



**You can help us grow by .....**

**By understanding our cause and spreading awareness amongst family, friends and colleagues**

**By buying our products regularly**

**By introducing our products to food shops and boutiques in your neighborhood  
By marketing our products**

**By volunteering your time and skills**

**By donating towards the needs of our under-privileged trainees as well as for our meals, equipments and corpus**

**By sponsoring stipends / resources**

**All donations are exempt from Income Tax under u/s 80G  
Foreign Registration no: 083780753**



**REDEFINING THE CAPABILITIES OF THE  
DEVELOPMENTALLY CHALLENGED**

**Om Creations Trust**

**Anand Niketan, King George V Memorial Project, Dr E Moses Road, Mahalaxmi**

**Mumbai - 400011**

**91-22-2497 2294 / +91 88792 11312**

**omcreationtrust@gmail.com**

**www.omcreationtrust.org**

**<https://goo.gl/maps/MS88HUkAnAjftGxN7>**