

Skills training for young adults with special educational needs for transition into employment

*SULATA AJIT SANKARDAS and
JAYASHREE RAJANAHALLY*

The research reported here was conducted to investigate the perception that people with disabilities find it a challenge to seek employment (Hernandez *et al.*, 2007). It is suggested that this situation could be due to a lack of specific employment-based training. Hence young adults with special educational needs (SEN) may require job-specific training before they seek employment (Flannery *et al.*, 2007). This research investigated the importance of specific skills training for young adults with SEN and also looked at opinions about that training in the area of the retail sector for young adults above the age of 18 years with SEN, and subsequently their success in seeking employment. The research was conducted in Chennai in the state of Tamil Nadu. The views of vocational instructors, parents and professionals in the retail sector were analysed, and conclusions were drawn as to whether this sector is a viable proposition as a career option for young adults with SEN.

Key words: skills training, transition, employment, retail, vocational skills.

Introduction

For most young adults, one of the crucial periods of their life is when they have to make a career choice after completing secondary education (Ankeny *et al.*, 2009). This holds true for students with disabilities, as parents and students with special educational needs (SEN) want to ensure that they make the appropriate choices in seeking training toward employment (Williamson *et al.*, 2010). The transition from school to work is a critical period for young adults as it can determine their future career path. The matching of the child's skill sets to the requirements of a job and finding job placements can be equally challenging (Koen *et al.*, 2012). The school-to-work transition can be made easier by proper career preparation; this can help the young person toward attaining employment and enhancing career outcomes. Parents too play an important role in this transition (Ankeny *et al.*, 2009) as, along with their child, they decide on career availability and choose options for training toward employment, considering the child's strengths, interests and weaknesses.

Considering this need, Sankalp Trust, a non-government organisation (NGO) working for the welfare of people with specific learning disabilities and autism spectrum disorder based in an urban area of Chennai in Tamil Nadu, a southern state of India, started a unit called Sankalp Vocational Sahayika (SVS), which caters to the needs of young adults with SEN from the age of 18 years. The centre provides skills training required for jobs and assists by providing work placements.

This study reported here aimed at answering the following questions:

- How important is it to provide specific skills training for young adults with SEN above the age of 18 years?
- Is skills training in the retail sector a good option for gainful employment?

Adolescence is a period of stress and turmoil; all the more so for children with disabilities and their families. Parents, along with the young person, experience a great amount of stress in trying to help decide a career pathway or vocational option for their child (Ankeny *et al.*, 2009). According to Lindsay *et al.* (2012), young adults with disabilities find the transition to adulthood and seeking employment a challenge because they lack marketable skills. They face discrimination, problems with accommodation and a lack of training when they look for job opportunities. Hence, training in employable skills becomes important, and this

must start at an early age. According to Stodden and Ianacone (1981), ideally vocational skills training should start in the very early years of a child's education. It should also be an ongoing process and the programme should provide a smooth transition into a skills training or a vocational rehabilitation programme.

According to a report submitted by the International Labour Office Skills and Employability Department and the Government of Flanders (2007), persons with a disability should be able to access training in skills which are relevant to the labour market; it should also suit their abilities and interests. The training imparted should be relevant to the latest trends in the market, and should also have relevance to available job opportunities. For example, a course in radio repairs or service may not be of relevance in today's world, as the number of people who own a radio has come down drastically. Hence, parents have to keep exploring to find training programmes which will ultimately lead a young adult with disability to a job and financial independence.

Many special schools have pre-vocational and vocational training programmes, and in India the schools often absorb young adults into sheltered workshops. Sheltered workshops have been a subject of controversy for many years, with researchers such as Butcher and Wilton (2007) being of the view that these isolate people with disabilities from mainstream society. On the other hand, researchers such as Lawer *et al.* (2008) state that the sheltered environment is an ideal place for young people with disabilities who have severe difficulties and may not be able to function in a regular environment. Butcher and Wilton (2008) have also observed that these workshops are often exploitative and pay low salaries. By contrast, Lawer *et al.* (2009) are of the view that children trained under a sheltered workshop benefit from these programmes, and that they are a stepping stone to community-integrated employment or competitive employment in the open market. According to the findings of Ciemera *et al.* (2011), however, only a few children from sheltered workshops obtain transition into integrated employment. They also feel that the training imparted in sheltered workshops does not make a significant difference to young adults' performance when placed in competitive employment within the community.

A transition-planning process should aim at moulding the child for independent living, imparting knowledge in areas such as time management, problem solving, interview skills, writing a resume, general office skills, team-building skills, organisational skills, skills to develop self-confidence and communication skills (Lindsay *et al.*, 2012).

Neubert *et al.* (1989) state that there is an assumption that people with milder disabilities are able to shift from school to work without difficulty, and that these individuals require only a short duration of training to transit into employment. The study results showed that one of the areas chosen for job training and trial was that of sales attendant (merchandising stock) in the retail sector. These placements were considered ‘pockets of opportunity’. But the researchers also found job-related difficulties in a few categories, such as inability to perform the job tasks, difficulty in following instructions, problems with attendance and punctuality, difficulties with hygiene and grooming and problems with social and interpersonal adjustment.

The retail sector as an employment opportunity for persons with SEN: an Indian outlook

In India, the retail industry is growing at a rapid pace: according to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Report (FICCI) (2012), it is India’s second largest employer, employing 33 million people.

A retail report from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII, 2009) states that to ensure retention of people with disabilities (PWD) in the workforce, industries need to create an inclusive workplace wherein people with disabilities enjoy equal opportunities and are equitably represented. Retail research in India reveals that there is an overall high employee attrition rate; however, ironically, the attrition rate when employing PWD is significantly lower. The CII (2009) retail report states the attrition rate of PWD is low as 3.3%, compared to the industry rate of 6.8%. The report also claims that employing PWD improves the brand image of a company.

Method

For this study, a non-probability, convenience sample was used which cannot be said to be representative of a wider population (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). As mentioned by Marshall (1996), a convenience sample chooses the most accessible subjects. In this study the participants were all from Chennai, the city where the study was conducted. A convenience sample was thought appropriate to this study as the individuals who served as respondents were particularly chosen for a

specific reason; that being that all participants were directly or indirectly involved in working with children with special needs or were working in the retail sector. The main criteria for selection of the sample for this study was expertise and the possession of information necessary for answering the research questions, and accessibility of the participants.

Sample selection

The sample group consisted of parents of children above 16 years of age who study in Sankalp. The employers were those working in leading retail stores in Chennai. The vocational instructors were from reputed training institutes; they are involved in training people with special needs and are also responsible for placement of young adults with SEN into open employment.

In this study, the participants consisted of eight parents (P) of children with SEN, 12 vocational instructors (VI) and six employers (RE) in the retail sector who responded to questionnaires, while the sample for the interview consisted of a total of six participants: heads of vocational training institutes (two persons from two different institutes), two parents of young people with SEN above 16 years and two managers from retail outlets.

Data collection

The study involved gathering primary data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Secondary data was obtained by literature review and document scrutiny in order to triangulate the data.

Preparation for data collection

Having obtained informed consent from the trustees of the institution, namely the Sankalp Trust, to interview the school's parents and staff, the researcher then established contact through phone calls and emails and arranged appointments with vocational instructors, special educators, retail personnel and parents. Consent letters and questions for the questionnaire and interviews were drafted and sent to the sample group.

Code	Description
NST	Need for Specific Training
CW	Capability of Working
SER	Scope of Employment in the Retail sector
AAT	Awareness and Attitude toward Training
AE	Attitude toward Employment

Figure 1. Code for data analysis

The questions for the questionnaire were drafted with particular attention given to ease of access for respondents. The researcher formulated codes (see Figure 1) to make preparation of the questions easy. The codes were based on the main aim and objective of the research and the research questions. The questions which were used were mostly the ‘Yes’ or ‘No’-type closed questions, with a few open-ended questions seeking more in-depth qualitative data. The questionnaire was piloted with a small group of five special educators. This enabled the researcher to assess if the participants had any difficulty in answering the questions, and to ensure that the data obtained was providing insights to the research questions. Bell (1993) suggests that a questionnaire should be ideally piloted on a group similar to the one that will represent the sample group. Hence, for this study the questionnaire was piloted among special educators, who were aware of the challenges faced by young adults with SEN while choosing a career. After piloting the questionnaire and getting the opinion of the pilot group, the researcher made the following changes: a few more open-ended questions were added and questions with personal details were omitted. The modified questionnaires were hand-delivered and distributed to 15 vocational instructors, ten retail employers and ten parents. Out of the total number of 35 questionnaires distributed, the researcher received written responses from 27 participants: 13 vocational instructors, six retail employers and eight parents. After receiving the completed questionnaires from the participants, the researcher scanned the

answers to ascertain the broad responses, which helped to further frame the questions for the interview. These questions needed more in-depth and elaborate answers from the participants.

Data collection in the field

Appointments for the interviews were fixed by sending emails and through phone calls according to each person's convenience. The researcher interviewed two vocational instructors (VI), two retail employers (RE) and two parents (P). A separate consent letter was circulated to seek permission for the interview and for recording.

Cohen *et al.* (2007) identify various types of interviews. For this research study, the interview conducted was in semi-structured form, as this method provided flexibility and freedom for both the interviewer and the interviewee. According to Robson (2002), in a semi-structured form, questions are guided by the situation and responses received during the interview. A few questions can be left out or new ones added as the interview progresses, as guided by the flow of the participant's responses. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a quiet room with minimal noise levels and the responses were audio-recorded.

Findings

The summarised findings of the interview and questionnaire for each sample group, which consisted of vocational instructor (VI), retail employer (RE) and parent (P), were as follows.

Need for specific training (NST)

The vocational instructors felt that training was an absolute necessity. They were of the view that the curriculum for training should be programmed according to the needs of the employer. The training should be job-specific, and should be customised according to the disability, the existing qualification and the skillsets of the person with a disability.

The retail employers (RE) believed that the training should be a combination of classroom teaching and on-the-job training (OJT).

According to the parents, even if a person with SEN completes a full school curriculum, he definitely needs training in some career-related skill; hence they recommended skills training.

Capability of working (CW)

The VIs felt that

‘The capability of working will depend on the job requirement and the skills needed for that particular job, the skills required for the job have to be matched with the existing skills of the person with disability; if it matches then the young adult is capable of working in that particular job.’

According to the REs, once the young adults’ existing skills are assessed, they can be employed in various departments. They were also of the view that these young adults would be ideally suited for working in retail outlets.

The parents felt that capability to work will depend on the level of disability and were of the view that their children may not be employable in all jobs.

Scope of employment in retail sector (SER)

According to the VIs, the retail sector has been at the forefront of hiring people with disability. The industry has welcomed the initiative of employing PWD and many organisations have provided sufficient enablers to ensure comfortable work. The attrition rate is low among people with SEN.

According to the REs, retail outlets have many departments and a person with SEN can be placed in many of these departments after assessment of the person’s interest and aptitude. Parents felt that the scope of employment in the retail sector is good if the young adult could be placed in areas such as back-of-store department work for data entry or inventory management. The parents expressed their

displeasure in placing their children as customer service assistants as they felt that their children had minimal communication skills and would not be able to handle customers' queries.

Awareness and attitude toward training (AAT)

The VIs expressed the view that there were very few training programmes specifically for people with specific learning disabilities (SLD). Most of the vocational skills were imparted in special schools and these young adults were absorbed into sheltered workshops. According to the VIs, awareness of specific skills training is present among parents and young adults with SEN, but the interest and willingness to enrol in a skills training programme is lacking.

The REs feel that before placing the candidate in OJT, training in a mock shop would be ideal, as it would provide the young adult with an opportunity to work in a simulated environment before tasks were assigned to him/her in a shop.

The parents were ignorant of the fact that there were training programmes for different disabilities and that there were specialised training programmes for specific jobs. They were apprehensive about sending their children for training as they were not sure about the content and utility of the training programme.

Attitude toward employment (AE)

According to the VIs, *'There has been a significant change of attitude among employers from 1997 to 2013 toward employing people with special educational needs'*. Employers are willing to help but do not know how to help the young adults with SEN to adapt to the working pattern of the organisation. The employers do not want them to be a liability; they want them to be productive members of the team.

REs are now open to accepting people with disabilities. They are of the opinion that the attitudes of team members have also changed, from sympathy to acceptance. During job fairs, recruiting agents are on the lookout for people with special needs, but are unable to fill the vacancies as they do not find a sufficient number of candidates in the PWD category.

The majority of parents are of the view that employers are not willing to employ people with SEN. They feel that the employers are not ready to accept PWD and do not know how to handle these young adults. The parents are also worried about co-workers' attitudes toward these young adults with SEN. They were of the view that the co-workers may not be sensitive enough and the young adults with SEN may end up being bullied and teased.

Analysis and discussion

Need for specific training

The literature review, semi-structured interview and questionnaire clearly indicate that there is an urgent need for a training programme to be implemented before young adults with SEN venture into open employment. As mentioned in the interview with the VIs, the training should be driven by the employer or market requirements. The literature supports this view: the State Employment Mission (2012) state that youth have to be enabled through market-linked vocational training programmes.

Reports by Shearman and Sheehan (2000) advise that skill development should be linked to the needs of the labour market. This can be achieved by placing the employers in the driving seat with regard to determination of skills requirements.

In the semi-structured interview, the REs were of the view that OJT should be provided before the young adults are placed in shops for mainstream employment. Shearman and Sheehan (2000) were of the view that there should be a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. They mentioned that since people with SEN have difficulty in transferring skills, it is ideal to teach these young adults in the environment in which they have to work, and hence recommend OJT. It is evident in the findings from this research and the literature review that skills development is an important component, as this decides the level of success of transition into employment.

Capability to work

The American Disability Act of 1990 supports the protection of people with mental disabilities and promotes placement of people with SEN for open

employment. However, some of the literature clearly indicates otherwise; authors such as Scheid (2005) state that many people are of the view that individuals with mental disorders are not employable as they have less concentration, stamina, organisational skills, time management skills, money concept and travel skills. There is little reason to believe that this would not also be the case in India.

The findings of the questionnaire given as part of the researcher's study also point out that parents were of a similar view, that people with SEN may not be capable or suitable to be employed in all kinds of jobs. But the findings of the interviews with the VI and the RE indicate that if the young adults with SEN are trained in specific skills, they will adapt well and can be employed.

A retail report published by FICCI (2012) says that interacting with customers makes people with SEN more self-confident and plays an important role in their personality development. The report mentioned that PWD were more productive than employees without disabilities and also become a source of inspiration to other employees.

Though the literature review and the findings of the questionnaire and interviews all give contradictory views, this researcher feels that parents of people with SEN should explore all possibilities and opportunities for their children undergoing specific skill training.

Scope of employment in the retail sector

The findings from the semi-structured interview reveal that the retail sector has been at the forefront in employing people with SEN in India. The literature review also supports this view, as do reports from Rao and Sairam (2009). According to these researchers, the retail industry, with its wealth of employment opportunities, can play a pivotal role in the employment of people with SEN.

The findings reported here indicate that VIs, REs and parents agreed that the retail sector has many opportunities for employment for people with SEN. The added advantage is that modern retail outlets in India are situated in malls, which provide all facilities for PWD as employees. The study by the State Employment Mission (2012) supports the VIs' assertion that absenteeism and attrition rates are low among PWD.

Hence, from the various studies and from the researcher's study findings, one can find that the retail sector is a possible career option if the candidate with disability has the aptitude for and interest in this career.

Awareness and attitude toward training

The VIs were of the view that there were very few training programmes for people with learning disabilities. Research too validates this, as Dipeolu *et al.* (2012) indicate that training programmes should be geared toward promoting skills that are needed to succeed in the job market. They were also of the view that there are not enough training programmes for people with LD. The VIs also mentioned that most vocational programmes were imparted in special schools as extended programmes for young adults above 16 years, as part of sheltered workshops. The VIs and the REs were of the opinion that work adjustment skills related to problems with attendance and punctuality, personal hygiene and grooming issues and social and interpersonal adjustment problems should be provided during training programmes. Parents stated during the interviews that they were not aware of training programmes suitable for their adolescents. Hence it can be seen that there are fewer job training programmes for people with milder disabilities. Moreover, training programmes need to cater to specific areas of improvement for people with disabilities.

Attitude toward employment

According to Peck and Kirkbride (2001), the underlying cause for employers' apprehension toward employing people with disabilities is fear: fear of lack of awareness of the disability and how to handle the person's needs or their disability.

In the researcher's study findings, too, some of these issues were brought up by parents, who felt that employers are not sensitive toward the needs of PWD and do not employ this category of people easily. On the other hand, the VIs mention that employers' attitudes are changing. They feel that employers are open to the idea of including people with disabilities in their companies. According to the VIs and the REs, during job fairs for the disabled, posts available exclusively for disabled people are not filled as there are not enough candidates to recruit from.

When analysing the literature and the researcher's study findings, we see contrasting views – as mentioned by Hall and McGarrol (2012), who state that one of the reasons why people with SEN are unable to get into open employment may be that they are not able to build friendships and face discrimination and abuse. Parents in the interview had the same feelings and talked about their children being bullied. But on the other hand, the REs and VIs were of the view that team members and customers were very empathetic and accommodative with people with SEN.

Hence, from the literature and the research findings, one can conclude employers have a mixed attitude toward employing people with disabilities: some employers are open, well aware of legislative policies and ready to employ PWDs, but there are a few who are still not ready due to fears and uncertainties about what is expected from their side; they do not know much about disability, and hence are hesitant to employ due to the fear of accommodations required on their part and customer reactions. On one hand, there is positive feedback about employment of PWD; on the other, there remain many negative and contradictory views and doubts over the employment of PWD.

Conclusion

Limitations of the study and scope for development

This study was conducted with a limited sample group and clearly cannot be generalised beyond the specific context. Many more options and views need to be gathered from a larger number of employers, parents and vocational instructors in order to paint a detailed picture of employment opportunities for people with SEN.

In this study, the views of people with disabilities were not sought. This could have added another dimension to the study, wherein people with disabilities' views regarding working in an inclusive environment could be recorded. Their positive experiences could be shared and the difficulties they face could be highlighted.

A comparative study could be conducted wherein pre- and post-training functioning of candidates could be monitored and recorded. The experiences of candidates after placement in a job could be observed, and this could be conducted using the

additional methodology of observation. Candidates' experiences after placement in a job would give insights as to whether the training is effective and any changes, if needed, could be analysed.

People with disabilities constitute a significant section of our population. The retail industry has the potential to provide a sustainable livelihood for them. By working toward providing employment opportunities for this community, retail organisations will fulfil not only their corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives, but also their long-term goals. Inclusive work environments, customised training, infrastructure and ample career advancement opportunities will be critical to ensure the success and empowerment of PWD in the retail industry. Strong determination and the commitment of the senior leadership teams will be key to creating and implementing policies for PWD equality and inclusion. Since this area of inclusion is a new concept in India, and the inclusion of people with disabilities is even more recent, there are a limited number of people from whom experiences can be recorded. However, it also needs to be recognised that even though it is a fairly new phenomenon, with experience and a little enablement, PWD inclusion in the retail industry can open up more job opportunities. Sensitisation programmes have to be conducted and awareness has to be created for inclusion to succeed. In India, while many barriers are faced, making progress is a difficult but not impossible proposition.

References

- ANKENY, E. M., WILKINS, J and SPAIN, J. (2009) Mothers' experiences of transition planning for their children with disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 41, 6, 28–36.
- BELL, J. (1993) *Doing Your Research Project*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- BUTCHER, S. and WILTON, R. (2008) Stuck in transition? Exploring the spaces of employment training for youth with international disability. *Science Direct Geoforum*, 39, 1079–1092.
- CIEMERA, R. E., WEHMAN, P., WEST, M and BURGESS, S. (2011) *Do Sheltered Workshops Enhance Employment Outcomes for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder?* University of Northampton: National Autism Society.
- COHEN, L., MANION, K and MORRISON, K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*, 8th ed. London: Routledge.
- CONFEDERATION OF INDIAN INDUSTRY (CII) (2009) *A Values Route to Business Success-The Why and How of Employing Persons with Disability*. [Online at <http://www.deoc.in/index.php/cii-manual>]. Accessed 16/04/2014.
- DIPEOLU, A. O., HARGRAVE, S., SNIATECK, J. L. and DONALDSON, J. (2012) Improving prediction of significant career-related constructs for high school students with learning disability. *The Centre for Development*, 60, 207–220.

- FEDERATION OF INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (FICCI) (2012) *The Indian Kaleidoscope – Emerging trends in retail*. [Online at http://www.pwc.in/en_IN/in/assets/pdfs/industries/retail-and-consumer/retail-report-300812.pdf]. Accessed 16/4/2014.
- FLANNERY, K. B., SLOVIC, R., BENZ, M. R and LEVINE, E. (2007) Priorities and changing practices: vocational rehabilitation and community colleges improving workforce development programs for people with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 27, 3, 141–151.
- HALL, E. and MCGARROL, S. (2012) Bridging the gap between employment and social care for people with learning disabilities: local area coordination and in-between spaces of social inclusion. *Geoforum*, 43, 1276–1286.
- HERNANDEZ, B., COMETA, M. J., VELCOFF, J., ROSEN, J., SCHOBER, D and LUNA, R. D. (2007) Perspectives of people with disabilities on employment, vocational rehabilitation and the ticket to work programme. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 27, 191–201.
- INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY DEPARTMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF FLANDERS (2007) *Strategies for Skills Acquisition and Work for Persons with Disability in Southern Africa Zambia*. [Online at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/@ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_107784.pdf]. Accessed 05/01/14.
- KOEN, J., KLEHE, U. C and VAN VIANEN, A. E. M. (2012) Training career adaptability to facilitate a successful school-to-work transition. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 81, 3, 395–408.
- LAWER, L., BRUSILOVSKIY, E., SALZER, M. S. and MANDELL, D. S. (2009) Use of vocational rehabilitative services among adults with autism. *Journal of Autism Developmental Disorder*, 39, 4, 87–94.
- LINDSAY, S., ADAMS, T., MCDUGALL, C. and SANFORD, R. (2012) Skill development in an employment-training programme for adolescents with disabilities. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 34, 3, 228–237.
- MARSHALL, M. N. (1996) Sampling for qualitative research. *Family Practice – An International Journal*, 13, 6, 522–552.
- NEUBERT, D. A., TILSON JR, G. P and IANACONE, R. N. (1989) Postsecondary transition needs and employment patterns of individuals with mild disabilities. *Journal of Exceptional Children*, 55, 6, 494–500.
- PECK, B. and KIRKBRIDE, L. T. (2001) Why businesses don't employ people with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 16, 71–75.
- RAO, R. R. and SAIRAM, M. (2009) *Human Resources and Skill Requirements in the Organised Retail Sector*. National Skill Developmental Council (NSDC). [Online at www.nsdcindia.org]. Accessed 17/4/14.
- ROBSON, C. (2002) *Real World Research – A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner Research*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Blackwells.
- SCHEID, T. L. (2005) Stigma as a barrier to employment: mental disability and the Americans with Disability Act. *Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 28, 6, 670–690.
- SHEARMAN, F. and SHEEHAN, C. (2000) *Vocational Skills Training for People with Intellectual Disability*. Pathway Conference. [Online at www.adcet.edu.au/?download=attachment&i=5165-1]. Accessed 08/02/2014.
- STATE EMPLOYMENT MISSION (2012) Market Linked Skill Development Training Programme for Unemployed Youth. Bhubaneswar: Government of Odisha.
- STODDEN, R. A. and IANACONE, R. N. (1981) Career/vocational assessment of the special needs individual: a conceptual model. *Exceptional Children*, 47, 8, 600–608.

WILLIAMSON, R. L., ROBERTSON, J. S and CASEY, L. B. (2010) Using a dynamic system approach to investigating postsecondary education and employment outcomes for transitioning students with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 33, 2, 101–111.

Correspondence

sulata.ajit@sankalpnet.org