



**“Everything and Anything is Possible, once you put your mind into it”**

Sharing an incident that happened a few days ago.

Having founded [Prakramika Vocational Institute](#), my work was only towards empowering people with special needs. I have been working in three domain areas, mainstream inclusion, vocational training, and skill-based training. My main aim is to support special needs learners to the maximum so that they can be included in the workplace. There had been many success stories. I always had the habit of documenting all my work though not in a structured manner.

Last year, I met a government official, in New Delhi, who ignited my thinking caps. During a potential discussion, all of a sudden, she mentioned that my work and talk contradict each other. Though taken aback for a while, I was keen to know the reason, as I always like the people who give me critical comments. It spurs us to improvise and retrace to walk on the right path. I requested her to explain as to what made her think so. She mentioned that I was speaking a lot about inclusion in school, inclusion in society, and inclusion at the workplace, yet, contrastingly, I have brought a curriculum for special school which implies that I was excluding them

from regular school. I mentioned that we have learners with varied challenges who might face difficulties in the mainstream. But she mentioned that “A learner is a learner”, and an institution is a place that facilitates a learner and not selective learners. Then she nudged me to think along those lines and articulate and true inclusion. I left her office pondering on the subject.

Her words kept ringing in my ears. When I reached Muscat, I took out all the documents that I had recorded and decided to take a deep dive into the subject.

After looking at various possibilities and months of thinking, I came out with a new framework, Unifying Pathways – One School, Many Abilities. This book speaks about educating all students under one roof.

While writing the book, I felt like sharing book space with my students, as I felt this would be unique and a good value addition. So, my book, to be released shortly, has contributions from several students from different streams; 10 cover pages made by the designer stream, and 18 articles in the introduction section by the data analysis stream. 7 articles from the hospitality stream on infrastructure and inclusion in events, 12 articles on teaching methodologies from the ‘early childhood education’ stream, and other articles from my students from the yoga, art, public speaking, and communication streams. With almost 250 pages of my work and 100 pages of my students’ contributions, the book looked holistic.

As I was nearing completion of the book, feeling exhausted, on a particular day, around 12.30 the night, I saved the manuscript and closed my laptop. Just before going to sleep, an idea popped into my mind, and I wanted to add that. When I opened the document, to my astonishment, I found around 150 pages of my manuscript were missing. I remember that I had saved it correctly. It was really an earth-shattering moment for me. Our entire family put in efforts to recover the file but of no use. The document contained only 107 pages instead of 250. It was a technical book and to rewrite the whole document seemed next to impossible. After

many failures to retrieve the document, feeling utterly dejected, I decided that I would not go for the book launch and went to bed.

But I just couldn't sleep. I was feeling heartbroken for losing all my hard work. All of a sudden, I remembered the work of my students. Even they had worked hard to pen down their thoughts. I felt like letting them down. I just couldn't bear that thought at all.

The thought of my students gave me the push to jump out of the bed. I told to myself that the data in the computer might have been lost but not the data stored in my brain. I told to myself, don't let the hopes down, anything is possible with a will to accomplish. At 1.30 midnight, I was sitting with my laptop again. The whole night and day, for the next few days, I sat to recreate the lost content. After almost 72 hours of hard work with a bare minimum of sleep, I managed to retrieve all the data stored in my brain and put them back into the document but this time in a better fashion. I felt very satisfied that this version of the manuscript had come out even better. After those 72 hours of work, when I mailed the manuscript to the publisher, for printing, I felt a sigh of relief. I was happy that I managed to complete but more than that I was happy that I did not let down my students.

Though, momentarily, I had lost hope of publishing the book, I managed to complete it. This incident was an eye-opener to me. I understood that anything and everything was possible with our mindset. Nothing is over until it is over. So, why close the door when we have many paths to achieve success? Let us think of a way to achieve the goal and never quit.

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