

My Path to Inclusion & Belonging

Ishwar Achanta

The word “inclusivity” did not mean much to me, until the day, just a few years ago, I walked into the Lady Andal School auditorium to spend a few spellbinding hours, experiencing myriad emotions, at the CAVINKARE ABILITY AWARDS.

That I went on to serve in the jury of two subsequent editions and now, am President of Ability Foundation, does not speak volumes of any achievements but the fact that, I am now fully and wholly committed to inclusivity. Thank you Bharathi, for opening my eyes.

Since then, as an Administrator for the game of Golf, I have been able to introduce a commitment into the MOA of the Indian Golf Union, the apex body for Golf in India and join the European Disabled Golf Association (EDGA), the leading collective for inclusive Golf. Post COVID, we will launch initiatives that will showcase inclusive golf in India.

As President of Ability Foundation, my role is to be the catalyst to propel the organization into the future, learning from the 26-year experience of our founder Jayshree, her senior colleagues Janaki Pillai & Bharati Shekar, a team of dedicated colleagues and benevolent support of our Trustees.

Having enthused the think tank, to rack their grey matter and evolve a strategy plan, a refreshed Vision statement and a whole new Mission statement has emerged. The success of this plan revolves around the three keystones, “Empathize”, “Include” and “Compete”.

While not wanting to drive a square peg into a round hole, each of our colleagues has been tasked with specific duties, building on their efforts in the past & their desire to deliver new initiatives. Their passion & dedication in this space, inspires me and I look forward to leading this team.

I see myself, given my 35 years in industry & business, focusing on extremely specific areas, as in:

- Sensitizing corporates and their huge workforce and seeking their financial support,
- Working with our Social media team to drive Ability Foundation’s visibility, including going global,
- Expanding our association with universities & bringing schools into the ambit &
- Working closely with Central & State Government authorities to expand the inclusivity footprint, across India.

COVID 19 has disrupted so many of us, in so many ways but I am an eternal optimist, and I take my inspiration from the words of the greatest of them all, Helen Keller, *“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.”*

Hasta la Vista

Ishwar Achanta, President of Ability Foundation
(Also, Board Member of Asia Pacific Golf Federation and Admin Committee Member of the International Golf Federation (IGF)).