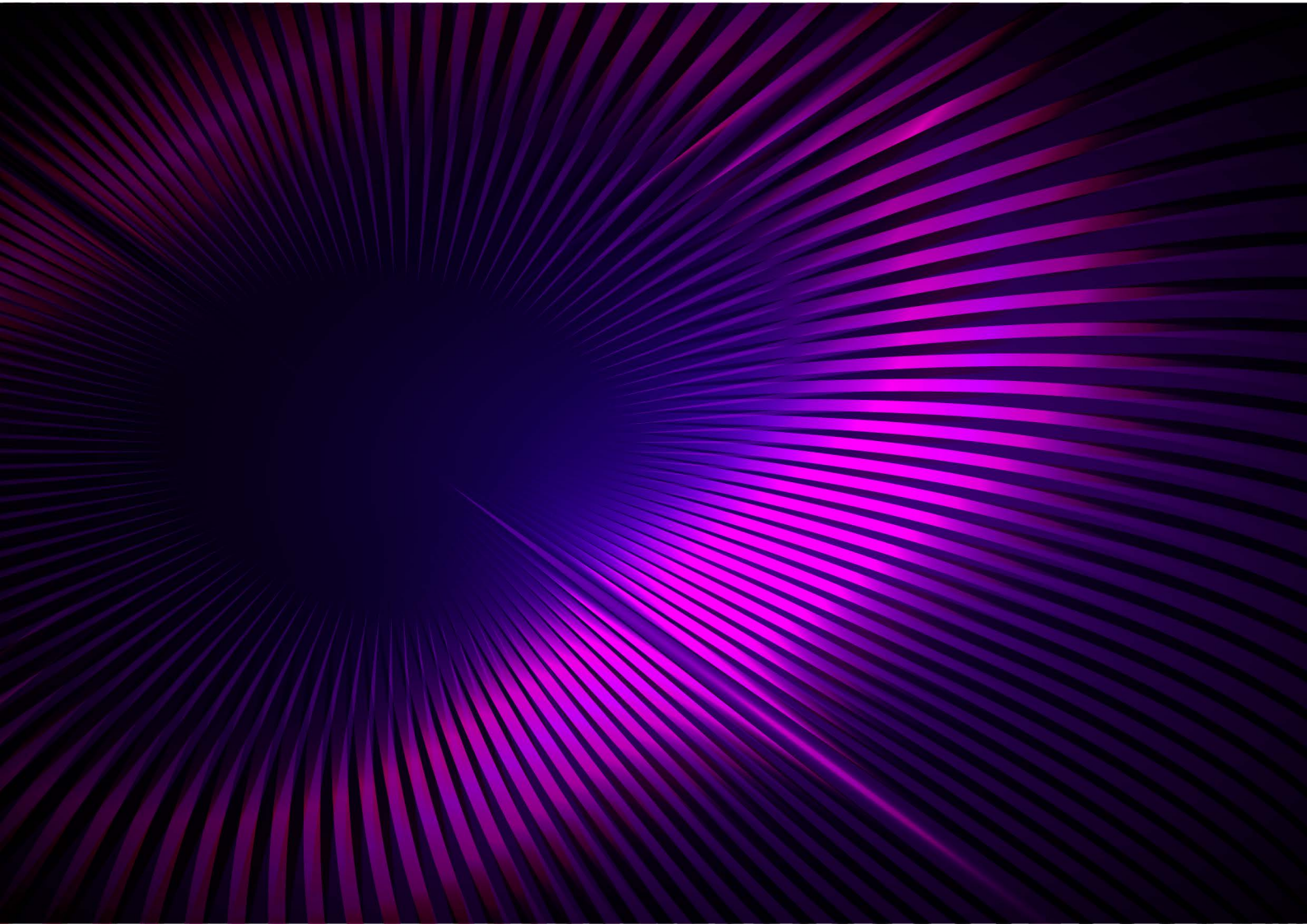


EQUITY ECHO

OUR JOURNEY IN INCLUSION



Foreword



Dear Friends,

Ability, identity, and access define the boundaries of opportunity for most people. Deeply entrenched biases continue to be barriers – often insurmountable – for those who are marginalised. Removing these barriers calls for sustained structural change and an unwavering commitment to inclusion and fairness. Therefore, at Avian We. DEI is a shared responsibility that informs how we lead and collaborate.

In this spirit of growing together, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the inaugural edition of Equity Echo, Avian We.'s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) newsletter. This platform marks a significant step forward in our journey to build a workplace where every individual feels valued, respected, and equipped to succeed.

A key highlight of this edition is our internship programme for neurodiverse individuals, developed in collaboration with AIMS Media. This initiative welcomed two interns who contributed meaningfully to our design work, while also offering us the opportunity to understand, adapt, and improve our own systems to better support diverse ways of working. As we move forward, our focus will be on scaling this initiative and creating a sustainable model that allows for deeper engagement.

Equity Echo also brings perspectives from individuals who have championed inclusion across sectors. Through their leadership and lived experiences, they remind us that equity is not a destination, but a continual process of listening, learning and acting with purpose. Their stories reflect the very ethos we seek to uphold – where equitable opportunities and access are not tick boxes, but core values that shape how we work and progress.

We hope this issue inspires dialogue and action within and beyond our workplace. We look forward to your reflections and continued support.

Warm regards,
Nikhil Khanna

Voices that Matter



Prateek Khandelwal,
Ramp My City

Prateek Khandelwal is a social entrepreneur and Founder & Managing Director of RampMyCity, a physical accessibility start-up dedicated to making cities more inclusive and accessible for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and the elderly. Since its inception in 2020, the company has made over 500 public places accessible.

#01

How long has RampMyCity been working on creating accessible infrastructure, and what inspired this journey?

RampMyCity began as a movement in 2018, and we officially became a company in 2020. While our focus initially started with ramps, we soon realised that we needed to offer complete accessibility solutions to make spaces genuinely barrier-free for everyone. The journey has been about creating inclusive environments, not just adding ramps, but thinking about accessibility holistically.

#02

What are the main challenges you face when working with governments and businesses?

Even though there are laws in place, they are often not enforced with the urgency they deserve. A large chunk of our population, 32% to 40%, are persons with disabilities, persons with temporary or invisible disabilities, senior citizens or pregnant women are left out of many areas such as schools, transportation systems, workplaces and entertainment avenues. Local governments must take a stronger stance on enforcing laws like the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 and impose penalties to ensure everyone takes them seriously.

Tokenism around diversity and inclusion is rampant in the corporate world. Ramp My City often finds companies with no budgets or poorly implemented accessible infrastructure. Genuine inclusion needs more than lip service.

#03

In your ideal workplace, what should inclusive policies for people with disabilities look like?

We believe real solutions come from those facing challenges daily. By engaging directly with communities, we gain insights that shape our projects, ensuring we address what truly matters. In an ideal world, we would focus on four key “E”s:

Employment by actively hiring and ensuring a percentage of employees are people with disabilities; **Enable** by providing tools and infrastructure for their success; **Engage** by fostering respectful collaboration through training; and **Empower** by offering growth opportunities without glass ceilings, ensuring equal access to leadership roles.

#04

How do you engage with communities to understand their needs?

At RampMyCity, we take a very hands-on approach. We are constantly interacting with communities, asking about their daily challenges and the places they find difficult to access. We believe that real solutions come from the people who face these issues every day. Their feedback shapes our projects and ensures that we are always working on what truly matters to them.

#05

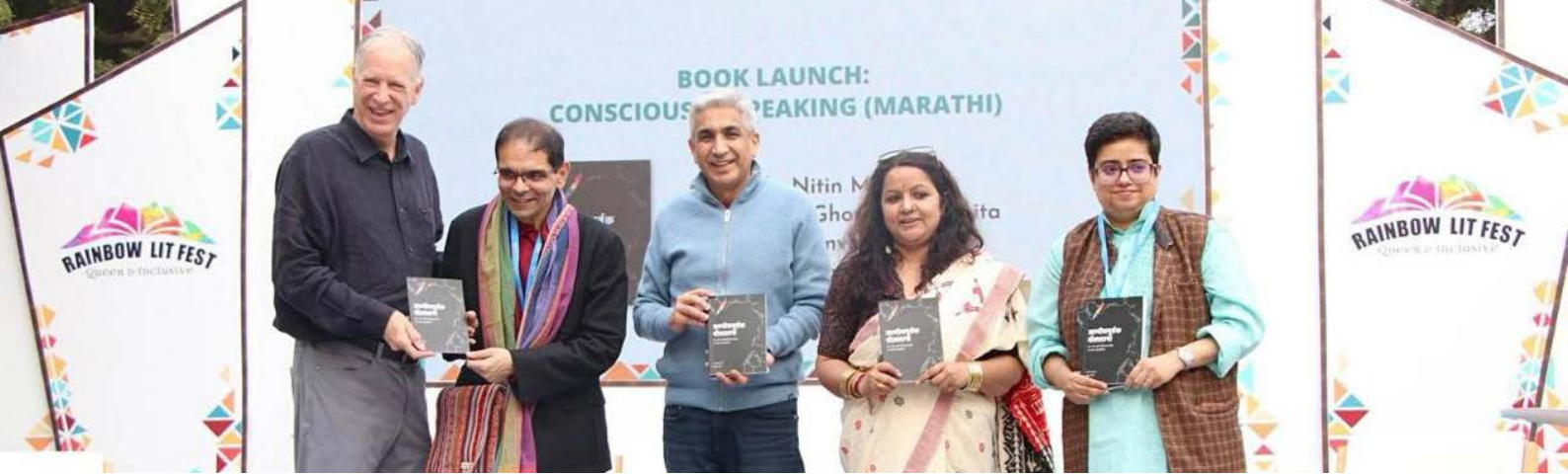
Can you share a few examples of impactful projects that RampMyCity has worked on?

We partnered with HDFC Bank to make rural schools accessible for children with special needs, providing inclusive toilets, classrooms, sports facilities, and study materials. During COVID-19, we made 75 healthcare centres accessible in three months. In Bangalore, we transformed Church Street, making 30 establishments accessible, enabling inclusive enjoyment for all.

#06

How can individuals and organisations get involved with RampMyCity?

There are several ways to get involved! If you are an individual, you can volunteer with us and even help us gather data on accessible places. We are building a digital map of accessible locations, so any help collecting that data is always appreciated. Organisations can support us by funding specific projects that will make a real difference in people's lives. We are always looking for partners who want to be part of the solution.



Avian We. Updates:

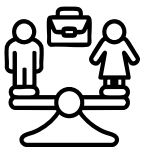
Action For Inclusion

Since its inception in November 2024, the DEI Employee Resource Group at Avian We. has continued to make meaningful progress toward fostering an inclusive and equitable workplace.



**Internships for
Neurodiverse Talent**

Our inaugural internship programme for neurodiverse individuals, in collaboration with AEMP, recently concluded. Our two promising interns, brought fresh creativity to our design projects— and created the DEI ERG logo. To enhance future cohorts, we held a reflection session with the interns, their families, and AIMS Media mentors. Plans are underway to formalise this as a longer-term programme, providing extended learning and real-world experience.



**Advancing Equal
Opportunities with
Inclusive Workplaces**

We partnered with AEMP to produce a short video that highlights how supportive environments can unlock the potential of neurodiverse individuals. Screened at the ACE Awards and now being shared with partners and clients, the video serves as a powerful tool for awareness and empathy-building.



**Promoting
understanding of
gender and sexuality**

We launched Jaanivpoorvak Boltana, the Marathi adaptation of Consciously Speaking, at the Rainbow Lit Fest 2024. Following our Hindi version Satrangi Bhasha, this resource explains key LGBTQIA+ terminology for 84 million Marathi speakers. Since 2021, Consciously Speaking has defined essential gender and sexuality terms, earning recognition from the Press Council of India.



**Marathi Edition
of Consciously
Speaking Launched
at Rainbow Lit Fest**

We launched the Marathi edition of Consciously Speaking, titled Jaanivpoorvak Boltana, at the Rainbow Lit Fest in New Delhi. Recognised by the Press Council of India, Consciously Speaking promotes inclusive, respectful language on gender and sexuality. Following the success of the Hindi edition Satrangi Bhasha, the Marathi version broadens access for over 84 million speakers, makes conversations on gender and sexuality more rooted in India's cultural diversity.



Mr. Rakesh Dhasmana,
Founder & CEO, AEMP



As someone deeply passionate about inclusivity, I am thrilled to be part of the DEI collaboration between AvianWe, a trailblazer in the media and entertainment industry, and AEMP: Inclusive & Accessible Tech-Ed, a leader in empowering Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) through cutting-edge, industry-aligned education.

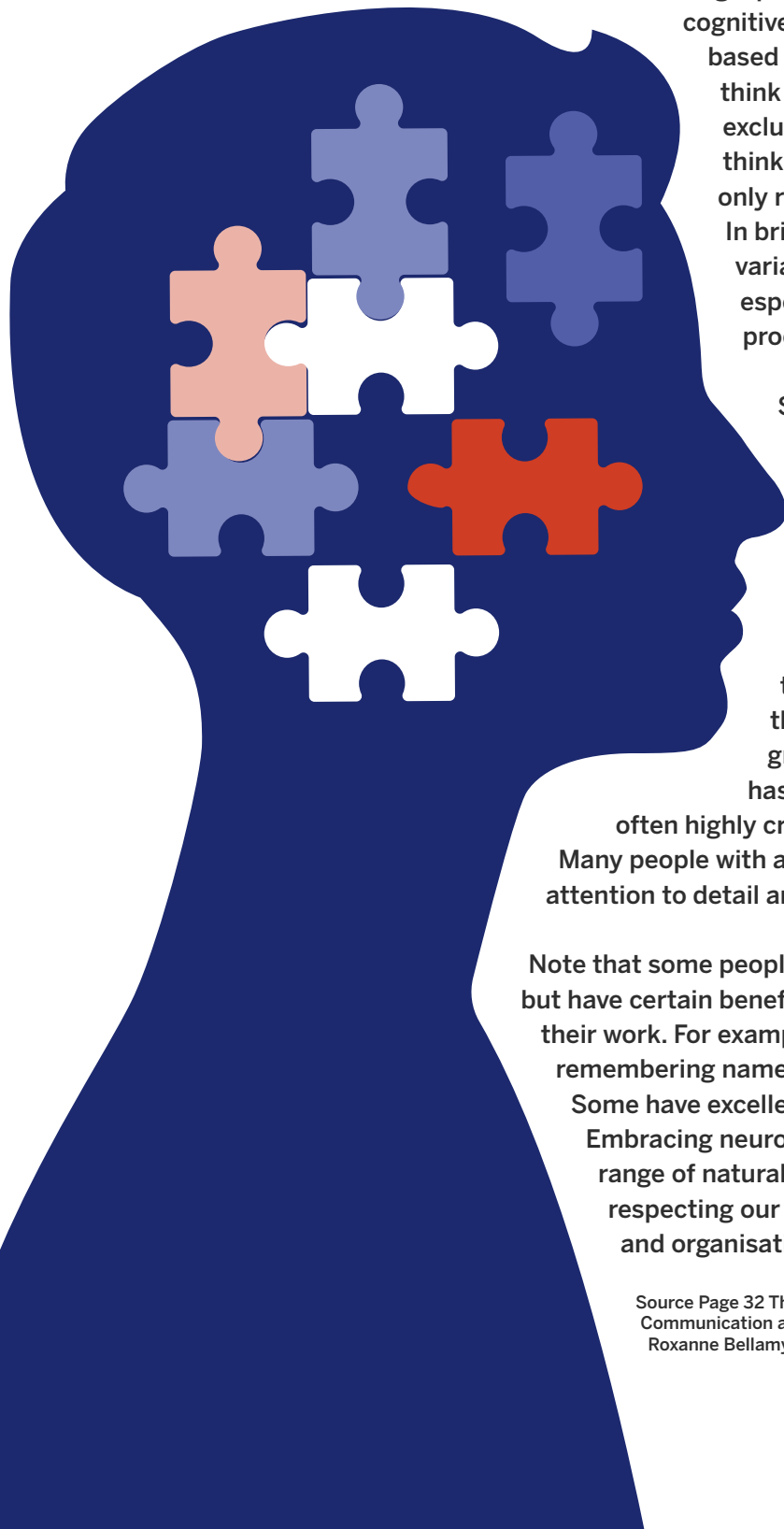
DEI campaign creates global opportunities for which AEMP is offering its expertise by equipping students with the industry relevant skills they need to thrive in today's competitive job market while raising awareness about the unique strengths and diversity PwDs bring to workplaces. AvianWe amplifies this impact by offering internships, outsourcing projects for economic independence, organizing industrial visits and fostering inclusive hiring practices, creating real opportunities for these talented individuals to succeed professionally.

Together, we are building a future where diverse perspectives fuel creativity and innovation, shaping an industry that truly embraces diversity, equity and inclusion. It's inspiring to see education and employment come together to make meaningful change!



DEI Deep Dive

Understanding the Meaning of Neurodiverse



Defining a person's complete identity by their cognitive processing (such as he is ADHD) is based on false construct that some people think 'normally' while others do not. It excludes people with diverse ways of thinking, or neurodiversity. This term has only recently gained wide acknowledgment. In brief, neurodiversity refers to the natural variations in human brain functions, especially around learning, thinking and processing information.

Still the term is often applied too narrowly, only to people with autism spectrum disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or dyslexia. It's important to consider this concept more broadly by recognizing that neurodiversity is not a deficit, abnormality or problem to be solved. Rather, it is a difference that people and teams can leverage for greater results. For example, research has shown that people with ADHD are

often highly creative, innovative and entrepreneurial. Many people with autism show greater than average attention to detail and display strong focus skills.

Note that some people may not have a medical diagnosis but have certain beneficial ways of thinking and organizing their work. For example, some people are excellent at remembering names, others at remembering numbers.

Some have excellent drawing and visualization skills.

Embracing neurodiversity means recognizing the broad range of natural human cognitive functioning and respecting our differences as strengths within teams and organisations.

Source Page 32 The Inclusive Language Handbook, A Guide to Better Communication and Transformational Leadership, Jackie Ferguson and Roxanne Bellamy

DEI IN THE NEWS



Future Generali India Insurance Company (FGII) receives the DI-verse - India's First Disability Inclusion Certification, for its initiatives in setting new benchmarks in corporate disability inclusion.

<https://www.asiainsurancereview.com/News/ViewNewsLetterArticle/id/91144/Type/eDaily/India-Insurer-honoured-for-initiatives-in-corporate-disability-inclusion>



Godrej Industries Group (GIG), Radhika Piralal (Executive Director, VIP Industries & Trustee, Dasra UK) and the Keshav Suri Foundation, in collaboration with Dasra, announced the launch of India's first dedicated LGBTQIA+ philanthropy fund, The Pride Fund

<https://www.prnewswire.com/in/news-releases/godrej-industries-group-radhika-piralam-and-keshav-suri-foundation-come-together-with-dasra-to-launch-the-pride-fund-indias-first-lgbtqia-philanthropy-fund-302371178.html>



Manipal Academy of BFSI (MABFSI) and Axis Bank have launch a women-only cohort under the Axis Bank Young Bankers Program to enhance gender diversity

<https://www.changeincontent.com/axis-bank-young-bankers-program/>



Chamar India reclaims a casteist slur as a symbol of pride, challenging deep-rooted discrimination and empowering Dalit identity.

<https://www.changeincontent.com/chamar-studio-empowering-dalit-artisans/>



Some US MNCs are slowing down or pausing their DEI initiatives due to political pressures, including executive orders from Donald Trump. However, Indian companies are continuing their DEI efforts, encouraged by government mandates like BRSR reporting and various diversity laws.

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/hr-policies-trends/some-us-mncs-may-slow-dei-efforts-but-indian-companies-not-to-let-up-momentum/articleshow/118124415.cms?from=mdr>

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