

# The Defining Day



Capt Louis George coaching Team Member.

**T**he 29th June 2019, GMADA Sports Complex, Sector 78, Multipurpose Sports Stadium, Mohali, Punjab, Maharashtra Women Wheelchair Basketball Team **Retained First Position & Gold Medal** within just two years of forming the Maharashtra Women Wheelchair Basketball Team in **April 2017**. Maharashtra Men Wheelchair Basketball Team was already three time National Champions, but there was no Women Wheel Chair Basketball Team of Maharashtra but there were wheelchair bound sports women in Maharashtra in other disciplines. The Wheelchair Sports is designed for Paraplegic Persons. "Paraplegic" is a

medical word for being paralyzed from the waist down who can't move his legs or anything below the waist, and has no feeling in those areas either, such situation arises due to unforeseen circumstances that causes fatal injuries on spinal cord. *Captain Louis George's unflinching professional quest, determination with deep sense of responsibility and commitment was driving force to initiate move to form Maharashtra Women Wheelchair Basketball Team and strengthen Government commitment of **RPWD Act-2016** [Revised Persons With Disabilities Act-2016].* Shri Abraham Poulouse responded to call and DON BOSCO School, Matunga, Mumbai, witnessed the first one of its kind meeting in Jan 2017 attended by few basketball players and wheelchair bound sports women to work out detailed plan to form Maharashtra Women Wheelchair Basketball Team and from there, the journey started. Untiring efforts put at grass root levels to search potential talent, the task was challenging in particular winning over the confidence of potential talents and their immediate family members due to trending challenges, societal barriers & voids in the proactive field based initiatives for equal opportunity & full participation. With great difficulty a team of SEVEN women players was selected in **April 2017** and they took part in Fourth National Wheelchair Basketball Championship at Hyderabad and for the First time while representing Maharashtra in that discipline, the team secured Fourth Position. The sublimation of the factual narrations of work rejuvenated community spirit, enhanced people participation with state apparatus bestowed complete faith on Captain Louis George efforts and vision. After the Hyderabad Nationals, rigorous practice sessions were undertaken and various school and



2019 National Women Basketball Champion - Maharashtra, with Union Sports Minister Shri Kiren Rijju



Champions-2019 National Women Basketball Team.

institutions extended support making their basketball court available for practice covering areas from Borivali to Kalina in Mumbai. **In Sep 2018** in home ground at ERODE-Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra Women Wheelchair Basketball Team **dethroned holders** Tamil Nadu and created history of putting Maharashtra for the First Time as Fifth National Women Wheelchair Basketball Champion. These lessons of phenomenal adaptability of Maharashtra Women Wheelchair Basketball Team and people's participation have given impetus to RPWD Act-2016 besides restoring the dignity of persons with different abilities with a message to stake holders and policy makers to carry out synergy of citizens with state apparatus and activate field based activities to strengthen the **Inclusive Nation Building Process**. Then next decisions were taken and work started from **Oct 2018** to search district wise of Maharashtra for potential talents and train Women Wheelchair Basketball team along with Men Wheelchair Basketball team at **Vibhagiya Krida Sankul, Yerawada-Pune**.

**Captain Louis George** professionally MTech&M.Phil. from Indian Institute of Technology [IIT] Powai-Mumbai and carries thirty seven years of illustrious service with Indian Navy. An alumnus of National Défense Academy [NDA] with proven outstanding skills in training & human resources management with technical expertise on board ships. He was awarded Chief of Naval Staff Commendation Card as well as Flag Officer Commanding in Chief Southern Naval Command Commendation Card for devotion to duty. Captain Louis George is outstanding basketball player and captained the Indian Navy team for ten years from 1979 to 1989 in national Championships. He represented Services Team [Selection of Playing Members from Indian Armed Forces viz- Army, Navy & Air Force] in National Basketball Championship **1980** held at Indoor-Madhya Pradesh. He is Qualified FIBA Levels 01, 02 & 03 for Basketball Coach conducted by International Basketball Association [FIBA] besides "A" panel referee for State & National Level Basketball Championship for last fifteen years accredited by Basketball Federation of India [BFI]. He is also recipient of "**Distinguished Alumni Certificate**" from Indian Institute of Technology [IIT] Powai-Mumbai for initiating Alumni interactions with present IIT students with proven abilities in sports from IIT-Powai, 2005 batch onwards. He is coach for Maharashtra Women Wheelchair Basketball Team since 2017 and Head Coach of Indian Wheelchair Basketball Team for **Asia Oceania Championship** held in Thailand from 27th Nov 2019 to 08th Dec 2019 for Paralympics Qualifiers which was scheduled to be held in June 2020 at Japan and not materialized due to pandemic COVID-19.

Captain Louis George commitment demonstrates a "**Selfless Soldier**" with determination, discipline conviction, courage to make inclusive development & growth a reality with a vision to create better tomorrow. Every citizen is "Soldier" with moral binding to serve the nation, that inculcate the responsibility to discharge the same in "Soldierly" manner: By bringing out this stories we hope to raise some awareness on the importance of people's participation & need of inclusive Nation Building Process. It is only through sustained effort in disseminating correct, unprejudiced facts about the incidents past, present and future that the public at large as well as policy makers will continue to acknowledge that there is urgent need of continuous process of reforms that demand citizens' synergy with state apparatus to make inclusive growth a reality with people participation.

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**Tapash Chatterjee**, is a veteran and decorated Indian Army Officer, columnist of "Behind The Headlines" & Social Entrepreneur.

He has conceptualized the Mission 'Ability Beyond Disability' in 2005 & operationalized it Pan-India as Nodal officer with Indian Army & Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment Government of India, aimed to strengthen Inclusive Growth & Development with an objective to reach the unreached, underserved & connecting rehabilitation professionals with those in need at their doorstep levels with a message & commitment "**People Matter Results Count**" & **Together We Can Make it Happen**.