



## **17<sup>th</sup> CavinKare Ability Awards 2019 honors five exemplary achievers with disabilities from across the country**

**Chennai, 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2019:** In an effort to recognize and spotlight the achievements of some amazing persons with disabilities, CavinKare and Ability Foundation jointly organized the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of the CavinKare Ability Awards in the city today. Held at Sir Mutha Venkatasubba Rao Auditorium, the awards function showcased exemplary success of five people with disabilities from across the country. The event was attended by stalwarts from diverse walks of life and the esteemed panel of jury.

The members of jury this year were Dr. Mariazeena Johnson, Pro Chancellor, Sathyabama Institute of Science & Technology; Dr Vinod Surana, CEO & Managing Director Surana & Surana International Attorneys; Mr. Abhaya Srisrimal Jain, Chairman, LifeCell International Pvt Ltd; Mr Rajiv C Lochan, MD & CEO, The Hindu group; Mr Radhamohan, film maker; Ms Latha Krishna, Executive Director, Krishnaswamy Associates.

Challenging status quo, these five star achievers of this year, set an inspiring mood for the evening with their power packed deeds and speech. Enthralling the audience with their boundless energy and confidence, the outstanding awardees shared their life journey vividly. The evening ended on a high-note with both the recipients of the awards as well as the audience leaving as inspired and empowered individuals.

The cultural highlight of the evening was the piano performance by Nithila, a student of Sri Surojeet Chatterji of A. R Rahman's K.M. Music Conservatory. A person with disability herself, it is also a point to be made that her disability is of little consequence and has not stood in the way of her dreams and aspirations.

This one-of-its's-kind national level award conceived and curated by Mr. C.K Ranganathan, CMD, CavinKare Pvt Ltd and Ms. Jayshree Raveendran, Founder & Hon. Executive Director, Ability Foundation, to showcase the latent talents of people with disabilities and dispel stereotypes. The nomination process for the award begins as early as 3 months ahead of the event through announcements in all national media and through sister organizations. The nominations thus received are meticulously screened and shortlisted, based on the awardees' difficulty levels, triumph over adversity and uniqueness of the task accomplished.

Commenting on the occasion, **Mr. CK Ranganathan, Chairman and Managing Director - CavinKare** said, *"Today as we step into a new year of Ability Awards,*



*bringing into limelight five more achievers our hearts are filled with pride and happiness. This award over the years has become a landmark for grit, courage and desire to achieve great heights by overcoming barriers steadily. We are happy to be celebrating the positive spirit of these achievers and hope to inspire many through them.”*

In its 17 year journey, the CavinKare Ability Awards has recognized admirable achievements of people with disabilities. Over 65 awardees have stood testimony for breaking stereotypes and challenging the mindset of the society towards disability.

Said Ms. Jayshree Raveendran, Founder & Honorary Executive Director, Ability Foundation, *“Way back in 2003, when we brought out the first edition of the Awards, I remember saying that there are more role models among persons with disabilities than anywhere else. Today, seventeen years hence, I reaffirm and reiterate this statement. The kind of things we witness year after year, with each one of our recipients, has been nothing short of breathtaking and awe inspiring. And I am really proud and honoured to have played a role, however small, in bringing this to the fore and in furthering their path to success.”*

#### **About CavinKare Ability Awards**

The *CavinKare Ability Award for Eminence* salutes the achievements of a person with disability, who has not only overcome great odds but has also initiated his/her own organization to contribute to the society. This award carries a citation, a trophy and a cash prize of Rs. 2 lakhs.

The *CavinKare Ability Mastery Awards* are presented to three individuals with disabilities in recognition of their extraordinary achievement in any field of their choice and not succumbing to popular opinion on their cans and can'ts. The recipients of this award receive a citation, trophy and a cash prize of Rs. 1 lakh, each.

*Over and above these awards, there is also a recently instituted “CavinKare Ability Special Recognition Award”, which is yet another category of the award given to a person with disability who is also an acknowledged leader in the disability sector with exceptional achievements - either on the personal or the organizational front - inspiring admiration and meriting a special mention at the Awards. This honorary award, carries a citation and a trophy.*

#### **This year's achievers are:**



**CavinKare Ability Special Recognition Award - BHARGAVI V DAVAR Pune, Maharashtra**

Bhargavi V Davar, Ph.D., comes from a family of users of psychiatric services in India, who have experienced violence and abuse within the system. She works with a strong identity as a survivor, having made conscious choices not to opt for psychiatry. Having been exposed to mental hospitals, shock treatment, confinement, etc. since childhood, she is passionate about systematically addressing the human rights gaps within the mental health system in India. She started the Bapu Trust for Research on Mind and Discourse, Pune, in 1999, to give public vision and visibility to user/survivor-centred mental health advocacy. She has developed several critical projects with high policy impact. She is a known figure in the disability sector and a forerunner in regional and national level campaigns for human rights in mental health.

**CavinKare Ability Award For Eminence - DANISH MAHAJAN Shahpur Kandi, Punjab**

Danish Mahajan hails from a small village in Pathankot district. His voice and vision, however, reverberate across the globe. Getting over personal trauma of going blind as an adolescent and the consequent breakdown in education, Danish Mahajan rose, like a phoenix to make a career for himself. Recognising the void in media attention on disability issues and programming for people with disabilities, he spearheaded the launch of the pioneering, 24X7 online radio service, Radio Udaan. Almost all RJs of Radio Udaan are visually impaired. Today, Radio Udaan has become a virtual lifeline for blind persons across the world, giving them access to news, discussions on disability issues, chat shows, expert-speak, screen reader software training, book reviews, and more.

**CavinKare Ability Mastery Awards - VENKATACHALAM M Gudiyatham, Tamil Nadu**

Venkatachalam M is one of India's outstanding para athletes. Overcoming the trials and tribulations of a road accident which not only left him with a severe disability but also claimed the life of his sister, with grit and determination, he went on to become a trailblazer in sports. Hailing from the small town of Gudiyatham in Tamil Nadu, earning his bread-and-butter from a small mobile phone recharge shop, his fantastic feats in sports include several gold and silver medals at the 2018 International Para Games held in Thailand. Not content with sports, Venkatachalam also campaigns to raise awareness on disability rights and on the importance of sports and hassle-free access for people with disabilities.

**CavinKare Ability Mastery Awards - MAJOR DEVENDER PAL SINGH Gurgaon, Haryana**



Major Devender Pal Singh is India's first ever blade runner. The injuries he sustained during the Kargil war left him an amputee, besides partial hearing impairment and several other devastating injuries all over his body. Undeterred, he found a new calling in marathons. He has completed 26 half-marathons so far. Determined to shore up the attitudes of people with disabilities and the wider society towards disability, he founded 'The Challenging Ones' (TCO) that makes marathons a platform and a tool for perception building, besides nurturing para athletes. TCO members who are flung far and wide, across the country, also function as a peer support group for persons who undergo amputation. To Major Devender Pal Singh goes the credit of the massive and unique SwachhAbility Runs.

### **CavinKare Ability Mastery Awards - AKSHAY BHATNAGAR Jaipur, Rajasthan**

Akshay Bhatnagar is perhaps the first and only graduate with autism from Rajasthan so far. He overcame challenges such as speech impairment and epileptic attacks, besides stiff resistance to his pursuit of academics right through school and college. Undeterred by these obstacles, he petitioned with the Commissioner (Disability), Government of Rajasthan and secured admission in a college affiliated with the University of Rajasthan. He won the Highest Academic Award for securing second position in B.A. in the entire college. He followed it up with a diploma in computers, cleared the competitive exam for the post of Lower Division Clerk of Rajasthan High Court and is well employed today.

**About CavinKare Pvt. Ltd:** About CavinKare Pvt. Ltd: CavinKare is a diversified FMCG major with business interest in personal care, professional care, dairy, snacks, foods, beverages & salons. The brand portfolio consists of Shampoos (Chik, Meera, Karthika and Nyle), Hair Wash Powders (Meera & Karthika), Coconut Oil (Meera), Fairness creams (Fairever), Deodorant & Talc (Spinz), Pickles & Snacks (Ruchi, Chinni's & Garden), Hair Colours (Indica), Retail Salon Products (Raaga Professional), Beverages (Maa), Dairy (Cavin's), and Beauty Salons (Green Trends & Limelite). Most of the brands are clear winners in their respective product categories. A dedicated R & D center equipped with latest equipment and technologies constantly supports the divisions in their endeavor. Today, with a turnover of over Rs. 1600 crore, CavinKare has achieved significant milestones and a competitive edge with sound understanding of mass marketing dynamics and has established a firm foothold in the national market. CavinKare's success is based on it being firmly grounded to its corporate mission 'we shall achieve growth by continuously offering unique products and services that would give customers utmost satisfaction and thereby be a role model'.

**About Ability Foundation:** Established in 1995, with a philosophy much ahead of its times, Ability Foundation today, stands tall as a national cross disability umbrella organization that has incessantly worked across the country towards an equitable society for every citizen with disability. Headquartered in Chennai, the Foundation focuses on empowerment, inclusion and highlighting the potential of



all persons with disabilities, and moves steadfastly towards bridging the divide between people with and without disabilities. The areas of Ability Foundation's involvement include information dissemination, advocacy, promotion of inclusive education, diversity in the workplace, rights and public policy. Towards these, Ability Foundation's activities range from publishing, employment, media, culture, implementation of policy, legislation and human rights. Ability Foundation works on the strong conviction that the disability per se, is not as handicapping as people's attitudes and man-made barriers. Given the right opportunities at the right time, so much more is possible. All it takes is an open mind.

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