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NIIT Foundation Organises 'Beacon of HOPE' - A Tryst Towards Bringing Equal Opportunity for the Specially-Abled

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NIIT Foundation, a not-for-profit education society organised 'Beacon of HOPE' - a tryst towards bringing equal opportunity for the specially-abled, in New Delhi on 12th of February 2020. The day-long event was a mix of panel discussions, success stories, experience sharing and demonstrations on technology inclusive education. The key highlights were, a panel discussion on 'Transformation towards Inclusive Education' and a lively skit performed by the specially- abled students.

NIIT Foundation and Microsoft India have been working together on several projects to make the specially-abled digitally inclusive and employable. This event was organised to raise awareness of the role of technology to address the challenges emerging in this area.

The Beacon of HOPE event showcased Microsoft India and NIIT Foundation's projects that are working towards making 'digital learning' accessible to thousands of underprivileged children and youth. The projects are designed to provide employability skills to these students and empower them to build a career for themselves.

Many stakeholders including government officials, NGOs, special educators and employment partners working in the area of disability were invited to this event. **Ms. Juthika Patankar** - IAS, Addl Secy, MSDE - Government of India was the Honorable Chief Guest. Other key guests included **Ms. Manju Dashmana** - CSR Lead Microsoft India, **Ms. Ruma Roka** - Founder, Noida Deaf Society, **Mr. Manindar Singh Nayyar** - Co-Chairman, Assocham India, **Dr. Maneesh Mishra** - Head, Sankalp, MSDE, Govt of India, **Mr. Anup K Srivastava** - CEO, SCPwD, **P. Rajendran** - Joint Managing Director, NIIT Ltd, and senior leadership from NIIT Foundation were also present at the event.

"To bring about a positive transformation for the specially- abled, it is important for the entire eco-system to come together towards this cause. The government, NGOs, corporates and educators need to work together to create and ensure the inclusion of PwD," **Ms. Sapna Moudgil, Director, NIIT Foundation.**

The key discussions during the event highlighted the efforts made by Corporates and NGOs in this direction, and the emerging demand for right training, environment & tools to make the specially-abled employable. Also, the need for government and corporates towards providing more placement opportunities.

The corporate stakeholders present at the event indicated, that the need for technology has always been there but projects like these showcase the realistic benefits of technology.