

**256 SPECIAL OLYMPICS BHARAT: THE INDIAN PERSPECTIVE ON DISABILITY SPORT**

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Special Olympics International is a worldwide non-profit organisation for benefiting the intellectually disabled through the medium of sports. Special Olympics Bharat is the national accredited programme of Special Olympics International, meeting its high accreditation standards. Special Olympics Bharat is the National Sports Federation (NGO) in India recognised by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, as the sports federation for the intellectually disabled. In India, the programme has so far drawn over 23 000 coaches to work with over 550 000 athletes across 32 State Programmes. India being designated a Priority Nation by Special Olympics International, the goal is to extend the Special Olympics programme throughout the country and reach over 1 000 000 people with intellectual disability by end 2012. The presentation will include issues, challenges and endeavours in establishing and operating this predominantly volunteer driven programme across the country. The presenter will also highlight international linkages and its impact on the programme. In addition speak about what the future is looking like.