

Media Release

Principal Scientific Adviser to the Govt. of India Launched Beta version of “SwarajAbility”- India’s first AI triggered Jobs Platform For Persons with Disabilities on 3rd February, 2022

Mumbai, 9th February 2022: The Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Govt of India - Prof. K. VijayRaghavan, launched Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (“Kotak” / “KMBL”) and its CSR Partner Youth4Job Foundation’s (“Youth4Jobs” / “Y4J”) Beta version of “SwarajAbility”- India’s first Artificial Intelligence (AI) triggered Jobs Platform for Persons with Disabilities on 3rd February, 2022. The launch event was held on a virtual platform and attended by Ms. Meera Shenoy, Founder CEO, Y4J, Mr. Jayesh Ranjan, IAS and Principal Secretary - IT, I&C in Telangana government and Advisor to Y4J, Mr. Prakash Apte, Chairman, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, Prof. B. Murthy, Director, IIT Hyderabad and Dr. Maunendra, Associate Prof. IIT Hyderabad.

“SwarajAbility” is a combination of two words *Swarajya* – which means independence - and Ability. The development of *SwarajAbility* is a multi-stakeholder collaborative effort for betterment of life of persons with disability. While the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH) contributed by developing India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) based job platform for persons with Disabilities, PSA's office monitors and gives useful suggestions and Visual Quest India develops the Job Portal. Youth4Jobs brought its rich experience in skilling, disability, and job linkages, and Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, under its CSR Project for Education and Livelihood, has funded the entire *SwarajAbility* Project.

SwarajAbility, will provide independence to persons with disabilities, through 21st century training and jobs. Accessibility and ease of use for youth with disabilities is key.

Rohit Rao, Joint President, & Group Chief CSR Officer, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited said, “Under its CSR Project for Education & Livelihood, Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL) has collaborated Youth4Jobs Foundation (Y4J). Over the years, Kotak and Y4J have been working together with a common goal to create equal education & livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities so that they can lead a dignified and independent life. Kotak Mahindra Bank’s CSR funded *SwarajAbility* project, which is being implemented by our CSR Partner Youth4Jobs Foundation, is our sincere effort towards reaching that goal.”

Meera Shenoy, Founder-CEO, Youth4jobs said, “*SwarajAbility* – the name reflects Gandhian values we believe in and Independence for persons with disabilities through technology, trainings and job linkages. The job platform is a user-friendly platform available on the web as well as mobile that will be accessible to less educated and educated youth with disabilities. Government, NGOs, youth, community, companies who work in the disability space will collaborate with this platform. There are 21 million persons with disabilities in India. About 70 per cent of them are unemployed or underemployed. The Right of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 for the first time highlights the rights of persons with disability for education and employment. *SwarajAbility* is a step in the direction to ensure that No One vulnerable gets left behind.”

Kotak Karma is the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) identity of Kotak Mahindra Group.

About Youth4Jobs

Youth4Jobs is a not-for-profit organization started in 2012 provides placement - linked skilling for youth with disability. It is led by Meera Shenoy who has the unique experience of working in senior government positions, and with multilateral funders like World Bank and UNDP across South East Asia.

The focus of Youth 4 Jobs is to move the disabled from their present vicious cycle of poverty to the virtual cycle of opportunity. In the last ten years, our work has been a **system changer** – changing mindsets that youth with disabilities cannot work -in villages, on one hand, and companies on the other. To demonstrate this at scale, Y4J has set up 27 residential centres in 18 states of India and works in 24 colleges/universities focusing on youth with locomotor disabilities, speech, and hearing impaired, low vision and visually impaired from poor families.

Youth 4 Jobs' (Y4J) vision is a hands-on, grass-roots transformation of Persons with Disability lives at the country level and emerging as a thought leader at the global level. The work is driven by the mantra that hiring Persons with Disability makes business sense

To date, Y4J has trained 28000+ youth with disabilities and reached out to more than 7.8 million community members across 7000 villages. On the demand side, Y4J works closely with 980 companies to ensure the youth hired is productive and helps business.

The work is challenging but transformational. Youth4Jobs has won the highest national and international awards, ranging from National Award for Empowerment of Persons with disabilities from the President of India and Asia winner of MITs prestigious Future of work award, MIT Inclusion Innovation Challenge.

For more information, please visit Youth4Job's website at <https://www.youth4jobs.org/>

About Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited

Established in 1985, Kotak Mahindra Group is one of India's leading financial services conglomerates. In February 2003, Kotak Mahindra Finance Ltd. (KMFL), the Group's flagship company, received banking license from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), becoming the first non-banking finance company in India to convert into a bank - Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd.

The Bank has four Strategic Business Units – Consumer Banking, Corporate Banking, Commercial Banking and Treasury, which cater to retail and corporate customers across urban and rural India. The premise of Kotak Mahindra Group's business model is *concentrated India, diversified financial services*. The bold vision that underscores the Group's growth is an inclusive one, with a host of products and services designed to address the needs of the unbanked and insufficiently banked. As on 31st December, 2021, Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd has a national footprint of 1,647 branches and 2,609 ATMs, and branches in GIFT City and DIFC (Dubai).

For more information, please visit the Company's website at <https://www.kotak.com>

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