

**Media Release**

## **Kotak and SOPAN Launch “Shanay Autism Resource Centre” at New Panvel, Maharashtra**

**Mumbai, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2021:** Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited (KMBL) and Society of Parents of Children with Autistic Disorders (SOPAN) today announced the launch of “Shanay Autism Resource Centre” (“Shanay” / “Centre”) – a Centre for training and rehabilitation of individuals with autism and associated disabilities, located at New Panvel, Maharashtra. Shri Atul Bhatkhalkar, Hon’ble MLA, Kandivali East, Mumbai and Shri Prashant Thakur, Hon’ble MLA, Panvel, Navi Mumbai inaugurated Shanay on 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2021.

Under its CSR Project on Education and Livelihood, KMBL has partnered with the Society of Parents of Children with Autistic Disorders (SOPAN) to create “Shanay” - an autism service facility, which is one of its kind in the country. The Centre includes Samarpan - a school and skill building unit, Saesha - a respite care facility and Suvidya - College of Special Education to train teachers by conducting teacher preparation programmes that will enable teachers to work with children with autism and related disabilities at New Panvel.

Individuals with autism often face challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviours, speech and non-verbal communication. At Shanay, SOPAN will provide comprehensive services to support rehabilitation of people with autism in the society, which includes early intervention, detection and remedial services, vocational skilling, a respite care unit, and a human resource development unit focusing on teacher training and research.

### **Shanay Autism Resource Centre offers the following facilities:**

- A respite care unit to provide temporary 24x7 care service for persons with disability
- A special school equipped with diagnostic, assessment, early intervention services; adaptive physical education and games; music and movement training; and guidance and counselling. The school has skill building for adolescents and young adults with autism and associated disabilities.
- A human resource development section to prepare teachers at pre-service and in-service levels. The focus here is to enable inclusive education and to document and conduct researches in the field of autism.

Rohit Rao, Joint President & Group Chief CSR Officer, Kotak Mahindra Bank said, “Shanay is born out of the pressing needs of children dealing with autism and the felt needs of their parents. While there is no cure for autism, its early treatment can make a huge difference in the life of the child. Shanay denotes the first rays of the sun and also symbolises the power of Lord Shani, the son of Surya. Our motto is to spread brightness in the lives of these children and their parents. Shanay will help develop social skills and self-care in autistic children. Experts at Shanay impart knowledge and skills pertaining to autism-specific teaching and management strategies to the parents.”

Shoba Srivastava, one of the founder trustees of SOPAN said, “Despite delays and challenges because of COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdowns, we are proud to present Shanay to you – a research centre equipped with the latest diagnostic and treatment facilities. Shanay will also serve as a common meeting ground for autistic kids and their parents to discuss their challenges with our well-trained teachers. We thought of building Shanay because our society requires more training facilities and resources to support children with autism and their families. We are grateful to Kotak Mahindra Bank for partnering us to build Shanay.”

### **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 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2021, Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd has a national footprint of 1,622 branches and 2,601 ATMs, and branches in GIFT City and DIFC (Dubai).

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

### **About Society of Parents of Children with Autistic Disorders (SOPAN)**

SOPAN (Society of Parents of Children with Autistic Disorders) began in 2002 to address the needs of children with autism and to support their parents. Samarpan Centre for Autism started in 2003 by SOPAN, focused on providing diagnosis, early intervention, therapies, special education and training to children and adolescents with autism, and counselling and training to the parents.

In 2010 Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation asked SOPAN to set up and manage a special school for them at Jogeshwari East. Today, a large number of children with autism and associated disabilities (between 6 to 18 years) from K Ward receive education and training at the Mahanagarपालिका Vishesh Shala (Divyang). Free therapeutic intervention and family counselling are also provided to children below 6 years at Spandan, a community-based early intervention unit of SOPAN in the slum area near JVLR, Mumbai. Since 2018, the collaboration with Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan has helped children with disabilities attending general schools get therapies. In order to facilitate gainful employment, SOPAN provides training in Computer Applications and Information Technology to high functioning adults with autism at Sanket Unit. All services are provided by qualified special educators, therapists, and psychologists.

In 2015, SOPAN established Suvidya College of Special Education and started the B.Ed. Special Education with specialisation in Autism affiliated to University of Mumbai and recognised by Rehabilitation Council of India, Delhi. When it began, this was the first B.Ed. Special Education programme in India that prepared teachers to work with children with autism, and is still the only such programme in Maharashtra.

For further information, please contact:

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