

Organized by Odisha Rising Foundation, Bhubaneswar



ODISHA INCLUSIVE SUMMIT REPORT- 2023

Celebrating Inclusion ...Unlocking opportunities.....



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Foreword



Dear Esteemed Readers,

It is with immense pleasure and a profound sense of fulfillment that I present the report encapsulating the proceedings and outcomes of the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023. As the Chairman of Odisha Rising Foundation, it is an honor to share our collective journey toward fostering inclusivity and empowerment of PWDs making Odisha a sustainable state for all.

This summit stands as a testament to the collaborative efforts, unwavering commitment and shared vision of numerous stakeholders, organizations, and individuals who graced this event with their presence and expertise. At its core, this report embodies the spirit of unity, dedication, and the pursuit of a more inclusive world for everyone.

The Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 was a convergence of minds, ideas and aspirations, where the discourse on inclusivity was not merely a conversation but a catalyst for actionable change. Throughout the event, we witnessed vibrant discussions, invaluable insights, and remarkable initiatives that have significantly contributed to our collective understanding of inclusivity and its multifaceted dimensions.

As we delve into the pages of this report, I invite you to embark on a journey that encapsulates the depth and breadth of our discussions, the innovative approaches proposed and the significant strides taken toward building a more inclusive society. It is a testament to the indomitable human spirit and the power of collaboration in paving the way for a brighter, more equitable future.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all contributors, participants, volunteers and supporters whose unwavering dedication and enthusiasm have made this summit and this report a resounding success. May this document serve as a beacon of inspiration and a roadmap for further endeavors toward an inclusive and harmonious society.

Shri Akhaya Sagar (Chairman)
Odisha Rising Foundation

Message



Dear Esteemed Participants,

I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who contributed to crafting the exceptional report summarizing the profound insights and recommendations stemming from the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023. Your unwavering dedication and collaborative spirit have charted a course toward invaluable recommendations that will undoubtedly steer our path toward a more inclusive society.

The summit served as an incubator for robust dialogues, innovative ideas and pragmatic solutions. The recommendations put forth signify our collective determination to confront challenges and seize opportunities, fostering inclusivity across all facets of society.

I applaud the Odisha Rising Foundation for their steadfast commitment and unwavering support in spearheading inclusivity initiatives across the region. The concerted efforts of our sponsoring partners, corporate entities, NGOs, government representatives, and individuals have been instrumental in shaping these visionary recommendations.

I firmly believe that the summit's triumph doesn't solely reside in the recommendations but in our shared commitment to translating these insights into actionable measures. Each recommendation serves as a guiding light, directing us toward creating an environment that empowers every individual, irrespective of ability or background.

Let us persist on this journey with unwavering determination, ensuring that these recommendations evolve into the blueprint for genuine and impactful change. Together, let us endeavor to construct an inclusive society that not only acknowledges but celebrates the potential of every individual.

Shri Ashok Chandra Panda

Cabinet Minister, Deptt. of Science &
Technology, SSEPD & PE Government of Odisha

Message



Dear Fellow Advocates of Inclusivity,

It is with immense pleasure that I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all contributors and supporters of the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023. This impressive report stands as a testament to our collective dedication toward fostering an inclusive society where every individual thrives.

The unwavering commitment, insightful contributions and tireless efforts of Odisha Rising Foundation have been the driving force behind the success of this summit. The collaborative spirit, diverse perspectives, and innovative ideas exchanged during the event have laid the groundwork for transformative change in promoting inclusivity across various spheres of society.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the SSED department, Govt. of Odisha, our esteemed sponsoring partners, corporate entities, NGOs, government representatives, and all individuals who passionately dedicated their time and expertise to make this summit a resounding success. Your steadfast commitment to the cause of inclusivity serves as a beacon of inspiration.

The involvement of differently-able children, partner organizations, schools, volunteers, and dedicated staff members has enriched the discourse, infusing our collective vision with invaluable insights and perspectives. Each contribution has woven a tapestry of progress, shaping this summit into a platform for meaningful dialogue and actionable outcomes.

Let us carry forward the collaborative spirit and dedication showcased during this summit. May we continue to work hand in hand, fostering a society that embraces diversity and offers equal opportunities for all individuals to flourish.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and relentless efforts in championing the cause of inclusivity.

Shri Preetiranjana Gharai

Hon'ble Minister, Rural Development,
Skill Development & Technical Education
Government of Odisha.

Message



Esteemed Readers,

It's with great pleasure that I extend my heartfelt commendations to all involved in shaping the comprehensive report encapsulating the proceedings and insights garnered from the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023. The commitment, dedication, and collaborative spirit of Odisha Rising Foundation demonstrated during this summit have been truly commendable.

Having the privilege to serve in various capacities, including as the Commissioner of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD), I've witnessed the earnest efforts and strides made in fostering inclusivity across our region. The Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 stands as a testament to our collective resolve to build a more inclusive society, leaving no one behind.

This report encapsulates the diverse perspectives, innovative ideas and invaluable recommendations put forth during our discussions. It stands as a testament to the dynamic exchanges, visionary initiatives and collaborative endeavors undertaken by stakeholders across sectors and backgrounds.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to all contributors, stakeholders and participants whose insights and dedicated efforts have enriched this report. Each recommendation, insight, and contribution in this document is a stepping stone toward realizing a more equitable, inclusive and empowered society.

Let us all rally behind these recommendations and work collaboratively to transform ideas into

Smt. Bratati Harichandan
Retired IAS Officer
Commissioner, SCPD

Acknowledgement

In the vibrant tapestry of this summit's success, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the SSED P department, Govt. of Odisha, for their steadfast support and unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity. The invaluable contributions of our esteemed sponsoring partners, VGuard Industries Ltd, Assotech Pride, Kalinga Hospital, and Quest Alliance, have been instrumental, reflecting their dedicated alignment with our shared vision of empowerment.

We extend our deepest appreciation to the corporate entities, NGOs, and government representatives whose active engagement and profound insights have profoundly enriched our discussions and initiatives. The presence and participation of the differently-abled children have been a guiding light, inspiring our collective efforts toward tangible and meaningful change.

Our profound gratitude goes to the partner organizations and schools from the Navadarshan Project, whose unwavering dedication to inclusivity and education sets an inspiring example for all. The tireless efforts of volunteers from KIIT and Ramadevi Universities have formed the bedrock of this event's success, fostering an atmosphere of enthusiasm and collaborative spirit.

Special recognition is extended to the dedicated staff of Odisha Rising Foundation for their unwavering support and to IMRC/RMRC for generously providing the auditorium, creating an environment conducive to the exchange of ideas and collaboration.

To each contributor, supporter, and participant, your commitment and collective efforts have intricately woven the fabric of this summit, shaping it into a resounding success and a testament to the transformative power of collaborative endeavors in creating a more inclusive world.

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to the print and electronic media for their invaluable coverage and support in amplifying the voices and initiatives shared during this summit. Your commitment to spreading awareness has been an essential element in fostering a more inclusive society.



Executive Summary

The Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 was an unprecedented convergence on the International Day of Persons with Disability, orchestrated by the Odisha Rising Foundation. This landmark event served as a powerful catalyst, igniting conversations and catalyzing actions to rewrite the narrative of inclusivity and empowerment for individuals with disabilities. At its core, the summit was an audacious step towards sculpting a future where equity, opportunity, and dignity know no boundaries.

Amidst the vibrant tapestry of conversations and deliberations, the summit bore testament to a collective commitment: to redefine, reimaging and reconstruct the societal framework encompassing individuals with disabilities. It was an assembly that transcended mere discussions, forging a pathway towards actionable strategies and profound transformations. At its essence, the summit galvanized stakeholders, advocates, and thought leaders into a shared pursuit of dismantling barriers and fostering an inclusive society for all.

The resonance of the summit reverberated through the assembly of diverse stakeholders, impassioned advocates and seasoned experts. Their collective wisdom, impassioned dialogue, and innovative strategies illuminated the path towards a more accessible, equitable, and empathetic society. Through an amalgamation of unique perspectives, the summit became a crucible for forging partnerships, nurturing collaboration, and seeding actionable initiatives poised to shape the destiny of inclusivity.

With an unwavering focus on action-oriented strategies, the summit carved a paradigm where inclusivity thrived. It was a forum that birthed ideas, insights, and methodologies aimed at not just conceptualizing but realizing comprehensive frameworks for equitable opportunities. The discussions navigated the terrain of skill development, employment avenues, and societal inclusion, laying the groundwork for actionable blueprints designed to empower and elevate individuals with disabilities.

The summit culminated not just in conversations but in the inception of a collective vision—a vision that extends beyond the event's confines. It birthed a trajectory where challenges metamorphose into opportunities, where barriers crumble in the face of concerted action, and where inclusivity becomes a norm, not an exception. It infused hope, inspiration, and a rallying cry for continued efforts, serving as a catalyst for sustainable change and a foundation for a more equitable and compassionate tomorrow.

Event Overview

The monumental summit unfolded its significant discussions and collaborations on the 10th of December 2023 within the prestigious confines of the ICMR Conference Hall in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. This groundbreaking event brought together a congregation of more than 250 attendees, representing a diverse spectrum of stakeholders. Among these participants were eminent government representatives, dedicated NGOs, influential industry leaders, visionary educators, and passionate individuals united by their commitment to championing the rights and empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The summit served as a pivotal platform for fostering inclusive dialogue, harnessing collective expertise, and forging partnerships dedicated to the holistic advancement and advocacy for the disabled community.

Event Objective:

The summit had two primary objectives:

1) Creating More Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) after Providing Skill Training:

Purpose:

To strategize and implement measures that ensure effective employment placement for individuals with disabilities who have undergone skill training programs.

Focus:

Identifying barriers to employment, exploring partnerships with companies, and devising support systems for PwDs in the workplace.

Goal:

To enhance the employability and job placement rates of PwDs post-training.

2) Increasing the Number of Sign Language Interpreters:

Purpose:

To address the shortage of sign language interpreters in Odisha, aiming to improve accessibility for the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Focus:

Developing plans for training programs, incentivizing individuals to pursue interpreter training, and establishing a network of qualified interpreters.

Goal:

To expand the pool of proficient sign language interpreters in the region.

These objectives align with the broader event goal of celebrating the International Day of Persons with Disability 2023. The event's focus is on promoting the rights, dignity, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in Odisha. By working on increasing employment opportunities and improving accessibility through more interpreters, the meeting aims to contribute directly to this overarching goal.



The inaugural dance performance by the Surya jyoti Kalakendra Academy during the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 was a captivating and culturally immersive experience. Led by the renowned Odissi dancer Mrs. Jyotirmayee Das, the performance showcased the academy's commitment to preserving and promoting the cultural legacy of Odissi dance.

Through their mesmerizing performance, the academy not only showcased the grace and beauty of Odissi dance but also provided a glimpse into the cultural richness and traditions of the region. Their performance added a touch of artistic brilliance to the summit, setting a tone of cultural appreciation and celebration of Odisha's artistic legacy.



Inauguration Session

The grand inauguration of the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 commenced with a dignified and esteemed panel, gracing the event with their presence and inaugurating the proceedings. The collective assembly of influential personalities and esteemed guests marked the ceremonial inauguration, symbolizing a unified commitment towards fostering inclusivity and empowerment.



Shri. Akhaya Sagar, Chairman
Odisha Rising Foundation (ORF)

Chairman Shri Akhaya Sagar of Odisha Rising Foundation set the tone for the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023, emphasizing its pivotal role in transforming the landscape of inclusivity and empowerment. The summit, aligned with the International Day of Persons with Disability, aimed to redefine equal opportunities in Odisha. With a focus on inclusive employment, the foundation's mission prioritized specialized skill development for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), aiming to bolster their confidence and financial stability. By fostering integration through corporate exposure and training modules, the foundation facilitated job placements and organized specialized fairs for trained candidates. Upholding a commitment to sustainable employment, the foundation's strategies included meticulous job mapping and sensitization workshops for inclusive workplaces. Advocating for societal inclusivity, the foundation championed the collective effort needed to empower PWDs across diverse strata. This summit, not just an event but a symbol of dedication, aims to ignite a change towards a more inclusive and compassionate society, leaving no one behind."



Shri. Pritiranjana Gharai,
Hon'ble Minister of
Rural Development, Skill Development &
Technical Education in the Government of Odisha:

As a distinguished representative of the government, Shri. Priti Ranjan Gharai's presence added gravity to the inauguration, signifying the government's commitment to inclusive development, particularly in rural areas. His opening remarks emphasized the significance of societal inclusivity and equitable opportunities for all segments, including Persons with

The deliberations underscored a fundamental truth—the government holds a positive outlook and is receptive to the recommendations and decisions put forth during this summit. The government's focus transcends specific groups, aiming to cater to the needs of every section of society for the overall economic growth of the state.

Highlighting the government's proactive stance, they've established a specialized ITI in Jatni dedicated to empowering Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Additionally, plans are underway to initiate more such ITIs across the state. These endeavors signify crucial job opportunities for PWDs, aligning with the government's commitment to creating inclusive employment prospects.

The unanimous agreement during the discussions is that every ITI should incorporate specialized skill training programs tailored for PWDs, ensuring their enhanced employability and inclusion in the workforce.

His presence and remarks echoed the government's resolute stance on prioritizing inclusivity and echoed the sentiment that initiatives like specialized ITIs for PWDs align with their vision for a more equitable and inclusive state.



Ms. Kasturi Mahapatra,
Editor Utkala Prasanga & Odisha Review, I & PR Dept GoO

Ms. Kasturi Mahapatra's pivotal role at the summit underscored the paramount importance of upholding the rights and ensuring the accessibility of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Odisha. As a representative from the Office of Rural/Urban Planning and Information & Public Relations, her involvement showcased the essential alignment between governance and public relations in propelling inclusive agendas and fostering extensive awareness.

Emphasizing the significance of the PWD Act, Ms. Kasturi Mahapatra underscored the critical need for robust legal frameworks and policies safeguarding the rights and interests of PWDs. Her advocacy for the implementation and strict adherence to the PWD Act highlighted the imperative of comprehensive accessibility measures spanning across Odisha's governmental, non-governmental organizations, and various institutions.

Furthermore, she echoed the urgency for a transformative shift in mindset and attitude towards individuals with disabilities. Gratitude was extended to the Odisha Government for championing the term 'Differently abled' over 'Disability', urging a nationwide change in this perception. A call was made to ICMR to create disable-free auditoriums and emphasized the indispensable requirement for reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities. This comprehensive approach symbolizes a commitment to bridging governance initiatives with public awareness, recognizing that effective communication and dissemination of information are instrumental in ensuring established accessibility measures are not only known but also effectively utilized. This cohesive collaboration between governance and public relations acts as a catalyst in nurturing an environment where PWDs have equitable access and opportunities in all aspects of society, aligning with the principles of inclusivity and empowerment."



Shri. Priyadarshi Mishra,
Ex-MLA, Bhubaneswar

Shri. Priyadarshi Mishra, the distinguished former Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Bhubaneswar, stands as a paragon of administrative excellence and social dedication. His notable portfolio in the state's administration brings forth a wealth of experience and insight, making his participation in the event a significant and impactful endeavor. Mr. Mishra's presence at the summit served as a testament to the convergence of administrative prowess and a deep-seated commitment to social causes. By actively participating in initiatives that advocate for inclusivity, he has positioned himself as a torchbearer of positive change. His involvement underscored the state's unwavering dedication to collaborative efforts aimed at fostering a more inclusive Odisha. Shri. Priyadarshi Mishra's role in the summit exemplifies a harmonious blend of administrative leadership and a genuine commitment to societal betterment.

Panel Discussion 1

Policy frameworks & collaborative strategies in advancing Inclusion and employment opportunities of PwDs in Odisha

The panel discussion, expertly moderated by Smt. Aparajita Biswal, an Associate Professor at Ramadevi Women's College in Bhubaneswar, brought together distinguished individuals in the realm of policy-making, administration, and specialized initiatives to deliberate on strategies to



Smt. Bratati Harichandan, IAS(Rtd)
Commissioner SCPD, Govt. of Odisha

An esteemed retired IAS officer and Commissioner of the SCPD, brought a wealth of experience and expertise to the discussion on policies promoting inclusivity for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Leveraging her extensive administrative background, she offered invaluable insights into the development and implementation of policies crucial for fostering an inclusive environment.

Drawing from her multifaceted administrative experience, Smt. Bratati Harichandan emphasized the necessity of establishing robust frameworks aimed at addressing the myriad challenges confronted by PWDs. Her emphasis on a comprehensive approach highlighted the need for policies that don't operate in isolation but rather intersect across various domains such as education, employment, and societal integration.

Her insights underscored the importance of a holistic strategy that goes beyond token measures and delves into the intricacies of empowering PWDs. This involves not only ensuring access but also facilitating their full participation and integration into different facets of society. By advocating for a multifaceted approach, Smt. Bratati Harichandan highlighted the significance of policies that not only focus on immediate challenges but also foster long-term sustainability and empowerment for PWDs.

Furthermore, she stressed the importance of inclusive policies that don't segregate PWDs but instead integrate them seamlessly into mainstream society. Addressing the need for a change in mindset, she highlighted the criticality of ensuring that policies and initiatives aren't seen as separate programs but as integral components within the broader societal framework. This, she emphasized, is fundamental in ensuring that PWDs feel integrated and not sidelined.



Shri. Sannyashai Ku. Behera,
OAS, Deputy Secy. SSEPD, Govt. of Odisha

A distinguished figure in administrative services, contributed invaluable practical insights to the discourse on policy implementation for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). His authoritative voice in administrative services (OAS) brought forth a wealth of experience that proved instrumental in illuminating the intricate dynamics involved in executing policies and programs aimed at fostering inclusivity.

With a pragmatic approach, Shri. Sannyashai Ku. Behera emphasized the need for nuanced governance understanding at various levels while implementing policies. Drawing from his extensive experience in SSEPD, he underscored the crucial aspects of effectively translating policy mandates into actionable measures, especially concerning the inclusivity of PWDs.

His contributions served as a crucial lens through which to comprehend the challenges and opportunities inherent in policy implementation for PWDs. He stressed the necessity for policies and strategies not only to be well-crafted but also rooted in the practicalities of governance and societal realities.

Furthermore, Shri. Sannyashai Ku. Behera raised pertinent questions about the technological world's accessibility issues for individuals with disabilities. He highlighted L&T's commendable provision of opportunities for 5000 disabled individuals within their company, urging other public sectors to follow suit. He questioned the delay in this transformative change towards inclusivity and expressed gratitude to ORF for organizing the Inclusive Summit 2023, shedding light on the urgency to address the current environment's lack of inclusivity."



Shri. Amarjit Jena,
CEO of Mo School Abhiyan Govt of Odisha

He brought invaluable insights that greatly enriched the discourse on empowering Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). His contribution shed light on specialized initiatives geared towards fostering empowerment among PWDs, particularly focusing on tailored education and skill development programs designed to enhance their employment prospects.

Mr. Jena's insights were pivotal in showcasing the crucial role of targeted programs in complementing government-led efforts for inclusivity and empowerment. His emphasis on specific initiatives dedicated to PWDs underscored the necessity of a focused approach in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by this community.

Education was a primary focal point of his discussion, emphasizing the significance of educational interventions tailored to cater to the diverse needs of PWDs within government schools. Mr. Jena highlighted the importance of providing inclusive educational environments that ensure accessibility for PWDs, aligning with the broader objective of promoting equal opportunities in education.

Furthermore, Mr. Jena's insights extended beyond education, emphasizing the pivotal role of skill development initiatives in enhancing the employability of PWDs. By stressing the importance of acquiring skills aligned with market demands, he highlighted the need for programs that equip PWDs with the necessary tools to secure employment and lead independent lives.

Mr. Jena also addressed the existing gaps in policies or programs and pointed out the current mindset lacking in the service provider sector. He highlighted a need for inclusion in schools to ensure quality education and advocated for a campaign mode approach to create an inclusive ecosystem within schools in the next few years. Stressing the importance of coordination between departments to address inclusiveness, Mr. Jena asserted that implementing inputs from the summit could bring transformative change in the education system, setting an example for other states in promoting inclusive education."



Smt. Aparajita Biswal
Associate professor, Department of Economics, Rama Devi Women's University

An Associate Professor, brought a wealth of academic expertise and experience to the discussion on policy frameworks and collaborative strategies advancing inclusion and employment opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Odisha. Her contribution was deeply rooted in a comprehensive understanding of policy formulation, implementation, and social dynamics, offering a scholarly perspective on the complexities inherent in fostering inclusivity.

Given her academic background, Biswal likely delved into the theoretical underpinnings of inclusive policies, exploring the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in existing frameworks concerning PWDs. Her insights might have offered a critical analysis of the policy landscape, examining the practical challenges in implementation and potential solutions to bridge the gap between policies and tangible benefits for PWDs.

During the discourse, Biswal might have emphasized the necessity of robust policy implementations, shedding light on the importance of collaboration among stakeholders to create a conducive environment for the holistic development of PWDs. Her inputs likely focused on the need for synergy among governmental policies, administrative directives, and specialized initiatives, aiming to overcome barriers hindering the inclusion of PWDs.

The collaborative strategies and discussions facilitated by the panelists aimed to shape inclusive policies that pave the way for improved opportunities and enhanced quality of life for PWDs in Odisha. The discourse encapsulated the significance of aligning policies and collective efforts to create a society that values and empowers every individual, irrespective of ability, fostering an inclusive environment where all can thrive.



Shri. Soumendra Priyadarshi
IPS, Twin City Commissioner:

Shri. Soumendra Priyadarshi's presence at the summit radiated the unwavering commitment of law enforcement to nurture a society where inclusivity thrives and where the rights of every individual, regardless of ability, are safeguarded. His role as a distinguished IPS officer underscored the pivotal stance law enforcement holds in cultivating a supportive environment for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

His participation resonated deeply with the summit's core values, amplifying the urgency of societal inclusivity. Shri. Priyadarshi eloquently emphasized law enforcement's pivotal responsibility in safeguarding the rights and fulfilling the needs of PWDs, reaffirming the collective commitment to create an environment where everyone can flourish without barriers.

Amidst this pivotal summit, it is undeniable that the escalating numbers of Persons with Disabilities underline an urgent call for action. The challenge we face today is in the mainstreaming of PWDs. I implore for suggestions—let's collaboratively pave the way forward, initiating impactful steps toward a more inclusive society.

Recognizing that responsibilities cannot solely rest with the government, the corporate and private sectors must step up. It is their corporate responsibility to seamlessly integrate PWDs, opening avenues for their contribution.

He earnestly urges ORF to share law enforcement-specific insights relevant to this summit. The outcome of every summit should yield tangible takeaways: actionable steps that can be immediately implemented, mid-term objectives that are feasible, and long-term strategies that ensure sustainable inclusivity.



Shri. Sumanta Pradhan
State Head, V-GUARD Industries Ltd.

He discoursed from VGuard Industries Ltd. portrayed an extensive landscape of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) engagements specifically tailored for Odisha. His narrative vividly highlighted VGuard's unwavering dedication to supporting communities during times of disaster, showcasing the company's swift and substantial aid in calamities.

The Navadarshan Project, in collaboration with the Odisha Rising Foundation, stood out as a testament to VGuard's commitment to addressing intellectual disabilities, showcasing their investment in impactful collaborations for societal welfare. Their active involvement in bolstering educational institutions underscored their holistic approach to community development. The announcement of "SUNO," a forthcoming initiative targeting the empowerment of the hearing-impaired populace in Odisha, illustrated VGuard's proactive stance toward inclusivity. This initiative signals the company's innovative resolve to uplift and improve the lives of those with hearing impairments, further solidifying their commitment to creating positive societal change.

A Session on Cause & Treatment Opportunities for PwDs – Technicality



Dr. Kusum Dash, Gynecologist, Kalinga Hospital

a seasoned Obstetrics and Gynecology Consultant at Kalinga Hospital Ltd., discussed the critical factors leading to congenital anomalies, specifically highlighting the profound influence of maternal infections and illnesses on fetal development. She emphasized the necessity of early identification by outlining crucial prenatal tests and interventions. Dr. Dash detailed trimester-specific precautions and interventions, advocating proactive prenatal care as an essential approach in mitigating potential birth defects and genetic anomalies for the well-being of both mothers and infants.



Dr. Ankita Bhagat,

Pediatric, Kalinga Hospital a Consultant Neonatologist and Pediatrician at Kalinga Hospital Ltd, illuminated the various categories of disabilities and their distinctive care requirements, particularly during childbirth and the early phases of a child's life. Stressing the importance of skilled healthcare personnel during delivery and immediate post-birth care, Dr. Bhagat emphasized the significance of early childhood interventions. She underscored comprehensive rehabilitation measures encompassing physical, educational, and economic facets, advocating for an inclusive environment and specialized services for children with disabilities.

The insightful discussions by Dr. Kusum Dash and Dr. Ankita Bhagat at the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 shed light on crucial aspects of maternal health, fetal development and early childhood care. The call for comprehensive rehabilitation measures and an inclusive environment echoed the need for holistic support and specialized services to ensure the well-being of children with disabilities. Both discussions emphasized the significance of early interventions and proactive measures in ensuring a healthier future for mothers and children alike.

Panel Discussion 2

Inclusion of Health and Education / Corporate responsibility in enhancing employability and inclusion of PwDs in workplaces

In the Panel Discussion 2 of the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023, the conversation was divided into two significant themes: Inclusion of Health and Education, and Corporate Responsibility towards enhancing employability and fostering inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in workplaces. Shri. Akshaya Biswal, representing Heifer International, took charge as the moderator, guiding the discourse toward strategies aimed at fortifying inclusion in health and education sectors specifically tailored for PwDs.

In the panel discussion, Shri. Manish Kumar Pandey of Infosys Foundation, Shri. Bijoy Ketana Panda from TCS, and Prof. Narayana Pati of Chetana contributed a multifaceted view on the role of corporations in fostering inclusive workplaces for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Each panelist highlighted various aspects of corporate responsibility in shaping environments that are accommodating and supportive of PwDs.



Shri. Manish Kumar Pandey
Trustee of Infosys BBSR CSR Group

He representing Infosys, passionately highlighted the imperative of fostering supportive work environments within corporations for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). His insights revolved around the essential elements needed for inclusivity: adaptable infrastructure, inclusive policies, and a culture valuing diversity that ensures equal opportunities for PwDs.

Shri. Pandey emphasized the need for organizational awareness programs and sensitization sessions to cultivate an inclusive atmosphere that nurtures talent equally, offering a clear career path and requisite training. His emphasis on a respectful environment across sectors and the provision of special interview panels for PwDs echoed the need for a holistic approach to foster happiness and success among employees.



Shri. Bijoy Ketana Panda,
Manager, TCS, Bhubaneswar

Shri. Bijoy Ketana Panda, representing TCS, delved into the pragmatic execution of programs dedicated to integrating Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) into diverse industries. His focus was on devising and implementing specialized initiatives tailored to address the unique needs and skill development of PwDs, thereby ensuring their smooth integration into the workforce. Shri. Panda highlighted the pivotal role of targeted training programs and the adaptation of work processes to create viable employment avenues for PwDs.

Additionally, he shed light on the critical importance of physical, digital and social accessibility, pinpointing existing gaps in legislation that fail to specify the percentage of PwDs to be employed in corporate or private sectors. He advocated for the establishment of Employ Resource Groups (ERG) as a potential solution, emphasizing the need for legal clarity and support to bridge these gaps for the comprehensive inclusion of PwDs."



Prof. Narayana Pati
Secretary of Jewel International School

He provided insights into Chetana's strategic approach to corporate responsibility, emphasizing skill enhancement, job readiness, and career development for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). His discussion revolved around initiatives targeting the augmentation of skills and aligning them with industry requirements. Pati highlighted collaborative endeavors with corporations, aiming to bridge the gap between the skill sets possessed by PwDs and the demands of different sectors.

Additionally, he underscored the significance of inclusive education, emphasizing the need for comprehensive infrastructure and teaching aids in schools. He stressed the importance of provisions such as special educators in each school, high-quality training for special education teachers and the widespread adoption of software-based education to facilitate an inclusive learning environment. Mr. Pati's multifaceted insights aimed to address systemic gaps and promote inclusive education practices that pave the way for the holistic development of PwDs.



Ms. Abha Mishra, State Head UNDP

Her perspectives as a panelist from UNDP, the discussions highlighted critical points that demand our immediate attention. MS. Mishra emphasized the necessity to prioritize understanding the needs of PWDs and shifting our focus from solely providing help to fostering inclusion. Addressing the shortage of expertise and special educators, she stressed the importance of redefining language and technology approaches to better serve the diverse needs of PWDs.

Ms. Mishra commended initiatives such as TCS, recognizing their impactful approach that transcends mere voluntarism, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive impact assessment model that others should emulate. She underscored the importance of actively including Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in all facets of society rather than solely providing assistance. Her recommendations align with this vision, advocating for clear and concise policies to facilitate inclusive practices, a comprehensive understanding of disabilities, enhanced and accurate data collection for informed decision-making, the implementation of a certain percentage of reservations in corporations for inclusivity, prioritizing accessibility improvements, promoting awareness campaigns to challenge societal perceptions, biases, and explicitly defining inclusion strategies for PWDs in corporate Terms of Reference (ToR). Ms. Mishra's insights illuminate the path toward a more inclusive and equitable society.

Ms. Mishra highlighted UNDP's commitment to inclusivity by providing spaces that cater to special needs, urging for a more inclusive society.

The trajectory outlined by Ms. Abha Mishra underlines the essence of the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023, by Odisha Rising Foundation—a dedication to reshaping societal structures, policies, and mindsets. It's a call to action for sustained dialogue, policy reforms and concerted efforts across sectors, steering us toward a more inclusive future, where every individual's potential is celebrated and realized.

Collectively, the panelists emphasized the necessity for corporations to embrace inclusive practices, from fostering accommodating work environments to implementing specialized programs that equip PWDs with the necessary skills for meaningful employment. Their discussions highlighted the pivotal role of corporations in driving societal change towards greater inclusivity and equity for PWDs in the workforce.



Shri Akshaya Biswal, Heifer International:

In his concluding remarks as the Moderator, emphasized several pivotal takeaways from the insightful discussions. Foremost among them is the imperative need for a profound shift in societal mindsets toward inclusivity, recognizing it as a critical factor for transformative change.

He stressed the importance of continued discourse on inclusivity, emphasizing that sustained and ongoing conversations are indispensable for driving meaningful and enduring changes in societal perceptions. Furthermore, Shri Biswal underscored the significance of awareness and visibility, noting that the summit report's public accessibility is crucial. This visibility ensures that the report reaches government authorities and the media, thereby amplifying its impact and fostering broader awareness of the issues discussed during the summit.

The discussions held during the summit delved comprehensively into various facets of fostering inclusivity, particularly within health, education, and corporate sectors. Central to these discussions was the shared understanding that collaborative efforts and strategic initiatives are pivotal in amplifying opportunities and integration for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

The discourse consistently underscored the importance of collective action and a unified approach in tackling the challenges faced by PWDs. The overarching aim remains the creation of a more inclusive, accommodating and equitable society.

Panel Discussion 3

NGO Initiatives, shaping inclusive communities for PwDs – Focusing more on skill building & employability

The diverse panelists, including, Shri. Sameer Nair from Youth 4 Jobs, Shri. Kumar Raju from UNFPA, Prof. Ulrike Zeshan from UCL, UK, Shri. Sibaji Panda representing Happy Hands and Md Azim ud Doula from Quest Alliance shared insightful perspectives on how their respective organizations are actively engaged in shaping inclusive communities for PwDs.



Shri. Sameer Nair, Operations Head, Youth4 Jobs emphasized the pivotal role of NGO initiatives in fostering sustained growth and development for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) on multiple fronts. He shed light on the intricate challenges that go beyond the scope of government initiatives, emphasizing the crucial interventions carried out by NGOs at various levels. According to Shri. Nair, the seemingly straightforward goal of skill-building and employability entails a multi-layered process that necessitates advocacy and mindset shifts across diverse communities.

He articulated a comprehensive strategy focusing on two fundamental aspects: advocacy within communities with disabilities and the economic empowerment of PwDs through sustainable livelihoods. Shri. Nair stressed the imperative need for a systemic mindset change within educational institutions, promoting an environment conducive to the active participation of PwDs in educational schemes. His approach emphasized creating opportunities at multiple levels, including altering institutional mindsets and fostering inclusive educational spaces through peer group integration. Additionally, Shri. Nair advocated for policies that not only promote the hiring of PwDs but also ensure their sustained opportunities, irrespective of any mandated quotas, by sensitizing employers and society at large. He underscored the importance of accessibility beyond physical infrastructure, highlighting the need for inclusive workplaces and adaptive technology. Shri. Nair's approach emphasized comprehensive skill development tailored to different educational levels, ranging from basic literacy to advanced vocational courses, aimed at providing diverse PwDs with the requisite skills for meaningful employment. Ultimately, he articulated that NGOs focusing on mindset change, accessibility, skill development, and employment could substantially enhance the integration of PwDs into mainstream society.



Shri. Kumar Raju (UNFPA) expressed gratitude to ORF for providing an invaluable platform to address the diverse needs of children with disabilities across different life stages. He emphasized the evolving needs of children, citing various stages requiring distinct interventions: from therapeutic and medical necessities during early childhood (ages 0-6) to specialized education and eventually economic independence in adulthood.

Shri. Raju underscored the pivotal role of skill development, not only in Odisha but nationwide and globally, as a fundamental pillar for the employability of individuals with disabilities. He referenced international legal frameworks such as the UNCRPD and Goal 8 of the SDGs, emphasizing their focus on vocational training and rehabilitation, reinforced by national legislation like the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, particularly Section 3 emphasizing vocational rehabilitation and economic activities.

Highlighting NSSO data from 2011, Shri. Raju pointed out that over 52% of persons with disabilities fall into an employable age group, necessitating access to skill training for economic engagement. He commended the efforts of both the Government of India and the Odisha state government for their initiatives, notably mentioning the exemplary Special ITI in Jatni, setting a benchmark for inclusive employability training. Stressing the significance of early skill development, Shri. Raju advocated for integrating skill-building into school curriculums, encouraging children's interests and hobbies to transform into valuable skills that could be pursued as careers.

He emphasized the need for standardized course curricula across various trades, tailored vocational training based on individual abilities, and proper evaluation before imparting job-specific training. Raju stressed the importance of catering to diverse disabilities, including intellectual impairment, urging the government to bolster efforts to provide skill training centers for such individuals. He concluded by underlining the need for inclusive skill development programs catering to the visually impaired, hearing impaired, and intellectually impaired, ensuring equitable opportunities for all disability types. Within the context of UNFPA's initiatives, Raju highlighted their commitment to



Prof Ulrike Zeshan from UCL, UK: Gratitude was extended to ORF for the gracious invitation to the splendid program. The cultural performances, especially the captivating Sambalpuri singing and dancing, were thoroughly enjoyed. Throughout the day, important discussions unfolded, and a concise summary was prepared to encapsulate these crucial points.

Recurring throughout the day were discussions on identifying existing gaps. One speaker in the morning emphasized the need to consider an ecosystem approach, citing the insights shared by representatives from TCS, Infosys, academic professionals, and education experts. The perspective highlighted that solutions are not derived from singular software packages or gadgets but rather from an interconnection of various elements—a genuine ecosystem approach.

Drawing from her extensive 25-year engagement with the deaf community in India, she highlighted the evolution of understanding over time. Initial endeavors often faltered due to an inadequate comprehension of the ecosystem. Currently, she is involved in research in the UK, exploring ecosystem change. This research extends beyond the deaf community to embrace a broader context, akin to ecosystem management for poverty reduction or climate change. Deaf culture has instilled invaluable methods—visual aids, collaborative settings, chalks, and posters—essential elements in building and disseminating an effective ecosystem. Settling in Odisha alongside Happy Hands School, she and her husband have fostered an ecosystem encompassing education and ecology, exemplified by their residence in Sikha village.

Their efforts have materialized into an interconnected ecosystem—a school for 50 children amidst chemical-free farming practices, symbolizing a serene, harmonious garden. Their NGO's distinctive advantage lies in the absence of profit-driven targets, allowing meticulous work over five years to craft this ecosystem. However, the challenge persists in scaling and replicating this ecosystem model across diverse contexts. Conventional initiatives in international development often falter due to their narrow focus on singular issues, failing to embrace the holistic ecosystem approach.

As they navigate these challenges, there emerges a critical need for a unifying theory and method to propagate ecosystem models universally. Their ongoing pursuit involves devising these frameworks, ensuring that every place can foster its unique, effective ecosystem—a testament to their relentless dedication to this transformative cause.



Shri. Sibaji Panda (Director, Happy Hands School for the Deaf, Subarnapur)

Addressed the audience with gratitude, acknowledging the efforts of the ORF team and volunteers contributing tirelessly throughout the day. He highlighted the diverse mix of people present, including NGOs, government officials, academicians, and corporate individuals, all contributing to the discourse on disability.

Sharing his personal journey of acquiring deafness later in life, he expressed that despite facing fewer barriers himself, he understood the challenges profoundly. He stressed the need for addressing societal problems rather than framing disability as a personal issue.

“First, fix the problems within society—lack of ramps, educational inadequacies, and workplace barriers—before attempting to ‘fix’ us,” he urged. Emphasizing his imminent pursuit of a Ph.D., he asserted his capability to overcome any obstacle. He challenged the notion that the deaf community's educational deficiencies were the cause of the disability, noting that their deaf school functioned effectively. Shri.Sivaji called for dignity in addressing the gaps within the ecosystem, particularly in educational realms, advocating for a successful deaf education system.

Reflecting on his efforts in Delhi and elsewhere, he expressed frustration at not being heard and recognized despite proposing impactful changes. He lauded the presence of interpreters in the Odisha summit, emphasizing the necessity of qualified interpreters in deaf education.

Shri.Sivaji then delineated the approach of his school, Happy Hands, emphasizing its integration with the mainstream system. He rejected the labeling of their institution as a "special school," emphasizing their use of sign language within their ecosystem. Shri.Sivaji passionately spoke about the challenges faced in implementing a localized approach in rural areas, safeguarding their educational sanctity from external disruptions. He emphasized unity and integrity within their community.

The talk culminated with Shri.Sivaji's poignant plea for fair treatment, respect, and acknowledgment of individual capabilities, asserting that when the ecosystem is inclusive, employability becomes an inherent outcome.

Contrasting this perspective, Shri. Sibaji Panda (Happy Hands) from the Happy Hands organization elaborated on holistic strategies for nurturing skills and talents among PWDs, emphasizing creative mediums for skill development and showcasing their potential for substantial contributions.



Shri. Azim ud Doula (Quest Alliance): In the reverberating halls of the Summit, he found himself immersed in the invaluable insights shared by the esteemed speakers, Shri.Sivaji and Prof.Erika.

While he may not hail from the realm of PWDs, his journey at Quest Alliance, dedicated to empowering the youth across the nation, has been profoundly enlightening. The courage required crafting programs that embrace and work alongside individuals with disabilities is immense. Learning from the experiences shared by Shri.Sivaji and Prof.Erika to infuse inclusivity into their initiatives is a beacon of aspiration. When confronted with the topic of 'inclusion,' he found himself questioning the term 'disability' itself. Despite improvements highlighted by data—only 2% of the 75 lakh enrolled students are classified as having a disability—he strongly believes this percentage falls short.

Delving into the study of inclusion, he discovered a new dimension. Beyond persons with disabilities, women and minority communities also face exclusion. True inclusion demands consideration of the entire ecosystem. Discrimination, stigma, and decision-making failures persist as barriers. Yet, the onus partly rests on civil society, often seeking funds but shying away from bold recommendations. He firmly believes in their responsibility to create and champion recommendations that catalyze change. They must move beyond mere physical infrastructure, looking deeper into specialized training and transforming mindsets. It's an arduous journey, but civil society's role is pivotal in challenging norms and recommending novel solutions. Demonstrating possibilities is equally crucial.

For schools to become more accommodating to those with disabilities, teacher training is imperative. With UNESCO reporting that 330 million lack access to basic hygiene while discussing ramps, there's a stark contrast in priorities. Engaging students in such endeavors shouldn't be seen as an optional activity; it must become an integral part of their education.

In his dedicated work with schools, he has carefully considered a range of strategies to promote inclusion. Firstly, he advocates for engaging school leaders actively in this transformative journey, recognizing their pivotal role in effecting change. Emphasizing the importance of a vision for inclusion within schools, he works towards fostering an environment that prioritizes diversity and embraces differences. Additionally, providing teachers with specialized training on managing small or peer groups is a cornerstone of his approach, empowering educators to create inclusive learning environments. The establishment of reflection circles within school premises serves as a practical tool for introspection and continuous improvement. However, he acknowledges that there is much more to be accomplished, emphasizing the necessity of collaborative efforts involving NGOs, corporate social responsibilities (CSRs), and governmental bodies to bring about meaningful and sustainable change in the educational landscape.

Each panelist's insights converged on the common goal of promoting skill-building, employability, and fostering inclusive communities for Persons with Disabilities, underscoring the impactful role of NGOs in driving these initiatives forward. Their collective efforts aim to break barriers and create opportunities for meaningful engagement and empowerment for PWDs.



Award and Recognition

The Awards and Recognitions segment of the summit was a momentous occasion dedicated to honoring and celebrating the remarkable contributions of individuals, organizations, and community leaders in the sphere of empowering and fostering inclusion for persons with disabilities in Odisha. This segment served as a platform to acknowledge the relentless efforts and exemplary initiatives undertaken by various stakeholders. Through these awards, outstanding achievements were spotlighted, honoring the dedication, innovation, and impact of those who have made substantial strides in advocating for and advancing the rights, opportunities, and well-being of persons with disabilities across the region. The following CSOs / Individuals have been conferred with Odisha Inclusive Summit

1 Open Learning System, Bhubaneswar

2 Chetana , Bhubaneswar

3 Ramadevi Sishu Vihar, Cuttack

4 SNDAYP, Puri

5 Maa Bhagababiti Seva Sangha, Puri

6 ULTRA, Khurdha

7 SEVA, Nayagarh

8 Jitendra Foundation, Nayagarh

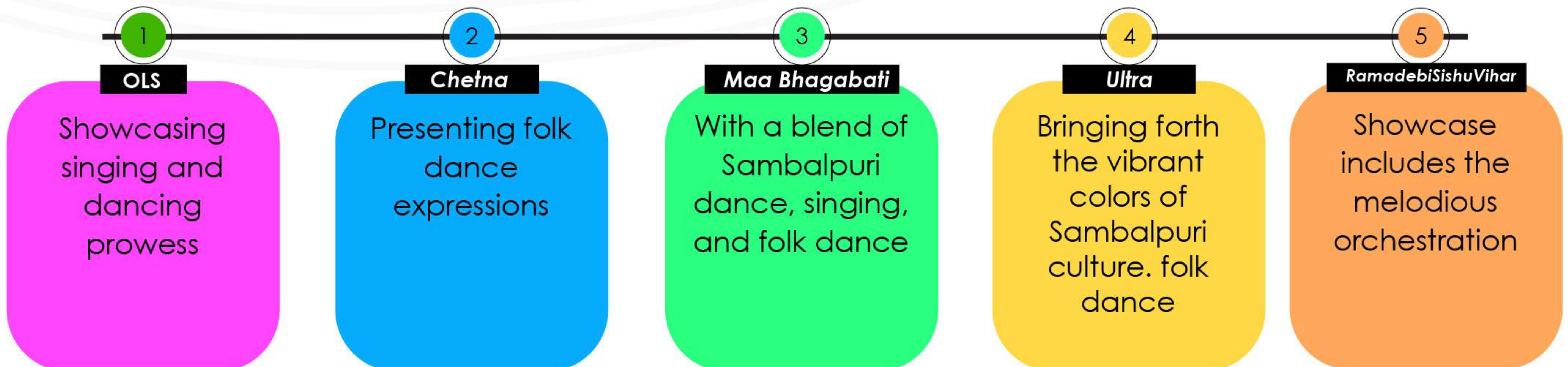
9 EKTA, Koraput

10 Manas, Koraput



Cultural event by PWDs

The Art and Culture Showcase within the program stands as a testament to the creativity and talent of individuals with disabilities. This celebratory event will spotlight various artistic performances encompassing dance, music, and singing. Among the highlights are performances by remarkable groups and individuals:



Additionally, the showcase includes the melodious orchestration by RamadebiSishu Vihar. These performances aim not only to entertain but also to celebrate and recognize the artistic brilliance and creativity of individuals with disabilities.





Vote of Thanks

Ms. Rajlaxmi Dash, the esteemed Trustee of Odisha Rising Foundation, concluded the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 with a gracious Vote of Thanks, capturing the essence of the summit and extending gratitude to all involved.

Her closing address was a heartfelt acknowledgment of the collective dedication that drove the summit's success. Ms. Dash expressed profound thanks to every participant, speaker, sponsor, partner and volunteer whose concerted efforts steered this significant event to success. Notably, she highlighted the invaluable contributions of speakers, moderators, and experts, acknowledging their enriching insights that amplified the cause of inclusivity for Persons with Disabilities. Additionally, Ms. Dash extended heartfelt appreciation to ICMR/RMRC for providing the Auditorium and thanked the Print and Electronic media for their crucial role in amplifying the summit's discussions and messages. Her resounding message underscored the transformative power of engagement and commitment, inspiring actionable initiatives that propel us toward an increasingly inclusive society.

Inputs from the Participants in the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023

Parents of PWDs:

"The summit was an eye-opener! It provided a platform where our voices as parents of differently-able children were not just heard but actively included in discussions. It's heartening to see initiatives and dialogues that aim to create a more inclusive society where our children can thrive without barriers."

- **Ms.Barsha Jena, OLS**

"As a parent, attending the summit was a deeply enriching experience. The comprehensive discussions and actionable strategies shared have given me hope for a future where our children will have equal opportunities. It's reassuring to witness a collective commitment to ensuring our children's inclusion in all spheres of life."

- **Ms. Ruhina Bano**

Input from the Children with disability:

"The summit made me feel heard and seen. I hope for more opportunities and understanding in our communities."

-**Mr. Bulu Behera, ULTRA**

"It was cool to see people talking about us and our needs. I wish there were more events like this."

.-**Ms. Aridita Chakraborty, OLS**

"I liked songs and dance from others like me. I want to do more things like this!"

-**SK. Shakil, Ramadevi Sisu Vihar**

Volunteers Input:

"Volunteering at the summit was an enlightening experience. Witnessing the collaborative efforts and passionate discussions around inclusivity has motivated me to actively advocate for a more accessible and equitable society. The summit's impact has inspired me to contribute further to initiatives supporting Persons with Disabilities."

- **Mr.Satya Subham Das, KIIT University**

"Being part of the volunteer team at the summit was an eye-opening journey. The summit wasn't just about talks; it was about action. Engaging with various stakeholders and witnessing their dedication has fueled my commitment to creating environments that cater to everyone's needs, irrespective of ability."

-**Ms.Puspita Sahoo, Ramadevi University**

"The summit allowed me to witness firsthand the power of collective action. The unity among volunteers, speakers, and attendees to push for inclusivity was inspiring. This experience has instilled in me a sense of responsibility to advocate for more accessible spaces and opportunities in our communities."

-**Ms. Shuvra Dash, Intern**

"Volunteering at the summit was a transformative experience. The commitment shown by diverse stakeholders reaffirmed my belief in the importance of inclusivity. This summit was a catalyst for change, encouraging me to actively contribute towards creating a more inclusive society."

-**Sambhab Dash, NMIMS, Hyderabad**

Input from the Participants:

The summit was an eye-opener! Engaging discussions, diverse perspectives, and actionable strategies shared during the event have empowered me to advocate for inclusivity in my workplace and community."

- Ms.Rajashree Pal, Sadhana

"Attending the summit was an enlightening experience. The voices of Persons with Disabilities were heard loud and clear, emphasizing the need for societal changes and policy reforms. I feel motivated to be a part of this movement for a more inclusive society."

-Shri K. Ananda, Ganjam District Orthopedically Handicapped Welfare Association

"The summit was a crucial platform that highlighted the challenges faced by PWDs. It offered practical solutions and emphasized the role each of us plays in ensuring inclusivity. I've gained valuable insights to implement in my organization."

- Mr. Jyoti Prakash, Aide et Action

"Being a participant at the summit was inspiring. The personal stories shared by PWDs showcased their resilience and talents. It's time for us to break barriers and create opportunities for everyone, regardless of ability."

- Mr.Sudhir Patro, Raspberry PI Foundation

"The summit encouraged collaborative thinking and action. It's evident that inclusivity is not a singular effort but a collective responsibility. I'm leaving the event with a renewed commitment to champion the rights of Persons with Disabilities."

-Ms. Moumi Sengupta, Quest Alliance

Input from the Odisha Rising Foundation Staffs:

"Working behind the scenes at the summit was incredibly rewarding. The dedication and hard work put in by the team to ensure the success of this event were inspiring. Witnessing the collective efforts to promote inclusivity has reinforced my commitment to our mission of empowering Persons with Disabilities."

-Ms. Saira Sunny, Director Operation of ORF

"Being part of the Odisha Inclusive Summit was a defining experience. Collaborating with passionate individuals striving for inclusivity was motivating. This summit has reinvigorated our team's dedication to creating a more accessible and inclusive environment for PWDs across Odisha."

-Ms. Barnali Behera, Program Manager

"The summit was a testament to the impact we can create when we work together. Our team's coordination and efforts have set the stage for meaningful discussions and initiatives for the betterment of PWDs in our community. It's truly empowering to be part of this journey."

-Ch. Aishya Prakash, Senior Program Manager

"The summit was a culmination of hard work, dedication, and a shared vision. The enthusiasm and commitment shown by our team have strengthened our resolve to continue advocating for PWDs' rights and fostering an inclusive society."

-Alok Parichha, ORF Staff

"Being part of the organizing team for the summit was an enriching experience. It was incredible to see how everyone's contributions came together to create a platform that amplifies the voices of Persons with Disabilities. This has motivated us to further our efforts and bring about tangible changes in our community."

.-Diptimayee Jena, Communication and Partnership Manager

“Empowerment through Inclusion” Recommendations from Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023

“ Skill Building Programs for PWDs' Employability:

One of the key outcomes of the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 was the emphasis on skill-building initiatives tailored specifically for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The summit underscored the necessity of comprehensive skill development programs aimed at enhancing the employability of PWDs. Collaborations between educational institutions, vocational training centers, and corporations were highlighted to design and implement skill-building programs that cater to the unique abilities and requirements of PWDs. These initiatives focused on imparting specialized training, fostering adaptive skills, and offering mentorship programs to bridge the skill gap and facilitate meaningful employment opportunities across various sectors. 📄📄

“ Employability for PWDs in Various Sectors:

The summit laid the groundwork for enhancing employability prospects for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) across diverse sectors. Collaborations and discussions among stakeholders highlighted strategies to bridge the gap between skills and employment opportunities, fostering an environment conducive to inclusive hiring and professional growth for PWDs. 📄📄

“ Increase the Number of Sign Language Interpreters in Odisha:

A crucial outcome was the advocacy for inclusivity in communication. The summit advocated for the introduction and promotion of sign language in government speeches, emphasizing the need for linguistic accessibility to ensure the inclusion of the hearing-impaired community in governance and public discourse. 📄📄

“ Accessibility of PWDs in Establishments:

Recommendations garnered from the Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 underscored the imperative need for substantial accessibility enhancements across governmental, non-governmental, and institutional establishments to promote inclusivity for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). The recommendations emphasized the urgent implementation of measures aimed at creating barrier-free environments that cater to diverse needs. This encompasses physical infrastructure modifications to accommodate mobility aids, digital accessibility improvements for online platforms and information dissemination, and the incorporation of assistive technologies. The feedback reiterated the significance of universally accessible spaces and technology, ensuring that PWDs encounter no barriers while navigating public, private, or institutional settings, thereby fostering a more inclusive society. 📄📄

“ Diverse Engagement and Collaboration:

The summit served as a focal point for diverse stakeholders, fostering collaborations and partnerships spanning various sectors. It provided a platform for networking, enabling organizations and individuals committed to disability rights to connect, share resources, and collaborate on initiatives that drive societal inclusion and equality. 📄📄

“ Knowledge Dissemination:

Insights and best practices shared during expert panels, workshops, and interactive sessions equipped attendees with actionable strategies. The dissemination of knowledge facilitated the implementation of inclusive employment practices, empowering stakeholders to create more accessible and equitable opportunities for PWDs. 📄📄

Platform for Voices of PWDs:

“ The summit was instrumental in amplifying the voices of PWDs, offering a platform for them to share their experiences, challenges, and aspirations. This elevated visibility not only highlighted the barriers faced by PWDs but also emphasized their capabilities and contributions, fostering a more inclusive and empathetic societal perspective. ”

Continued Advocacy for Inclusive Employment Policies and Programs:

“ The summit recommends a sustained advocacy effort aimed at influencing policy reforms that promote inclusive employment. This involves actively engaging with governmental bodies and industry stakeholders to ensure the implementation of policies facilitating equal opportunities for PWDs in the workforce. Moreover, supporting and scaling existing programs geared towards skill-building, vocational training, and job placements for PWDs is paramount for long-term success. ”

Strengthening Collaborative action Among Stakeholders for a Sustained Impact and Outreach:

“ The summit strongly advocates for strengthened collaborations among diverse stakeholders, including governmental bodies, NGOs, private corporations, and community organizations. Building robust partnerships will enable the pooling of resources, sharing of best practices, and amplification of impact. Collaborative efforts are instrumental in creating a sustained and widespread outreach, ensuring that initiatives for PWDs have a lasting and far-reaching effect across various sectors and regions. ”

Holistic Skill Development Programs:

“ Develop skill-building initiatives tailored to different life stages of persons with disabilities (PWDs), encompassing therapeutic needs in early childhood, specialized education, and vocational training for economic independence in adulthood. ”

Policy Emphasis on Vocational Training:

“ Align national and international legal frameworks (e.g., UNCRPD, SDG Goal 8) with national legislation like the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, emphasizing vocational rehabilitation and economic activities for PWDs. ”

Integrate Skill Training Early:

“ Incorporate skill development modules into school curriculums to nurture and channelize children's interests and hobbies into viable career paths. ”

Standardized Course Curricula:

“ Implement standardized course curricula across trades to ensure uniformity and adequacy of vocational training for PWDs. ”

Tailored Vocational Training:

“ Provide vocational training based on individual abilities and comprehensive evaluations, ensuring a proper fit for the job roles and enhancing employability. ”

Enhanced Accessibility:

“ Improve accessibility not only in terms of physical infrastructure but also in workplace environments and technological tools utilized by PWDs. ”

Inclusive Employment Policies:

- “ Sensitize employers and create accommodations in workplaces to ensure a more inclusive environment and job opportunities for PWDs. ”

Diverse Skill Development for All Disabilities:

- “ Create skill training centers focusing on intellectual disabilities, ensuring comprehensive coverage for all types of disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments. ”

Collaboration for Sustainable Livelihood:

- “ Collaborate with NGOs, government bodies and private enterprises to create sustainable livelihood opportunities and inclusive employment strategies for PWDs. ”

Continued Advocacy for Inclusivity:

- “ Advocate for continued policy reforms, awareness campaigns, and collaborations to ensure sustained efforts in fostering an inclusive society for PWDs. ”

These recommendations aim to foster a more inclusive environment, providing comprehensive skill-building opportunities and advocating for the rights and empowerment of individuals with disabilities across various life stages and sectors.



Way Forward for the Odisha Inclusive Summit:

The Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 has marked a pivotal moment in our journey toward fostering inclusivity and empowerment for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). It is not just an event but a catalyst for sustained change—a commitment to reshaping societal norms and dismantling barriers faced by PWDs.

Moving forward, our vision is to make the OIS Summit an integral part of the government's agenda, scheduling it annually alongside the International Day of Persons with Disabilities from 1st to 3rd December. By engaging stakeholders from across India, we aim to blend this summit seamlessly with the celebrations on 2nd December, creating a powerful platform for discussions and actions.

Our plan includes setting up Abilitea Cafe and Ability Bazaar in all blocks and districts by 2030. This initiative will not only provide employment opportunities for differently abled youths and their parents but also serve as inclusive spaces for engagement and empowerment.

The summit's significance transcends a singular event. It signifies an enduring commitment to convert conversations into tangible outcomes. This necessitates a multifaceted approach—advocating for policy reforms, challenging societal perceptions through comprehensive awareness campaigns, and implementing practical initiatives to enhance accessibility and professional opportunities for PWDs.

To ensure a lasting impact, collaboration and collective responsibility among stakeholders across sectors are vital. Building partnerships and nurturing an ecosystem of shared accountability will be pivotal in realizing the ultimate goal of holistic empowerment for PWDs.

Our aspiration extends beyond inclusion; it's about enabling active participation and celebrating the rights and potentials of individuals with disabilities. This trajectory demands sustained dialogue, innovative approaches, and an unwavering dedication to crafting a more equitable and inclusive society—where boundaries dissolve, and the spirit of change extends far beyond Odisha's borders.

The Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 isn't merely an event's legacy; it's a commitment to a transformative movement—a movement that reverberates globally, championing the cause of individuals with disabilities and shaping a brighter, more inclusive future for all.



Photo Gallery



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Odisha Inclusive Summit Held

Bhubaneswar: Today on behalf of Odisha Rising Foundation a very important programme to unlocking opportunities for persons with Disabilities "Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023" has hosted at ICMR/MRC Auditorium. The Summit is a fitting commemoration of the International Day of Persons With Disabilities bringing together a diverse spectrum of stakeholders committed to fostering an inclusive society.

The Odisha Inclusive Summit 2023 aims to galvanize collective action and discussion on pivotal areas such as policy advocacy, accessibility, healthcare, education and corporate initiatives focused on enhancing for Persons with Disabilities. Notable dignitaries, government officials, corporate entities, educational institutions, NGO's and policy makers are attending this programme and discuss various issues related to support the disability persons for employment and maintain livelihood. They also coverage to engage in transformative discussion and chart pathways towards a more inclusive future and the government will accept the conclusion point that open after the large scale discussion by the eminent experts.

The eminent Speakers and

Thoughy leaders attended the programme among those are Hon'ble Minister of SSEPD, Govt of Odisha, Ashok Chandra Panda, Hon'ble Minister Rural Development Sri Priti Ranjan Ghadei, Chairman OSFC Priyadarsi Mishra, Ms Kasturi Mahapatra, Editor, OR/UP, I&PR, Govt of Odisha, Police Commissioner Bhubaneswar / Cutack Soumendra Priyadarsi, Principal Secretary SSEPD Sri

Bishnupada Sethi, Ms Shruti Mahapatra, CEO Swabhimana, Sanyasi Behera OAS, Dr Sasmit Patra, MP Rajya Sabha, Kusum Dash gyanocologist Kalinga Hospital etc are present at the panel discussion.

According to the sources of Akhya Sagar the Chairman and Co-founder of this institution the ongoing initiatives the odisha rising foundation strongly advocates for the integration of persons With Disabilities into various sectors. We actively engage in facilitating employment opportunities within IT sectors, Hospitalities and self employment through Abilitia Cafe, and Everyday Bazar. This effort is further bolstered by indirect support to 2000 Persons with Disabilities children and a network of 3000 supportive parents. These collaboration aim to pave the way for inclusive society where individuals of all abilities thrive and contribute meaningfully.

Spiritual Exhibition of Brahmo



BHUBANESWAR 11 Dec, 2023



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