



Proceedings of the 12th National Conference on Disability (NCD) 2025

Theme: *Sustainable Development Goals & Disability Inclusion*

Dates: 20–21 November 2025 | **Venue:** CSOI, Vinay Marg, New Delhi

The 12th National Conference on Disability convened government leaders, corporates, technologists, PwD champions, academia, and media to accelerate inclusive development aligned with India's SDG roadmap. High-impact panels highlighted policy action, workplace inclusion, early intervention, innovation, and leadership by persons with disabilities.

Day 1 – 20th November 2025

Panel 1: Partnering for an Inclusive India

(SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals) - 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

Moderator: *Mr. Atul Bhatnagar, Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust*

Panelists:

- **Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda** – Additional Secretary, DEPwD
- **Mr. Rajeev Taneja** – Operating Officer, Honda India Foundation
- **Ms. Richa Kapoor** – Sustainability Lead, Evalueserve
- **Mr. Prabhakaran Balasubramanian** – Head CSR, Mahindra Auto
- **Ms. Anantika Singh** – General Manager CSR, Pernord Ricard

Key Takeaways

- Multi-year CSR partnerships (3–5 years) highlighted as essential for sustainable disability inclusion.
- *Purple Portal* introduced as a government–CSR interface enabling beneficiary-document integration and targeted support.
- Corporates encouraged to embed disability inclusion into HR structures, not isolated projects.
- Emphasis on hiring for invisible disabilities and strengthening accessible workplace infrastructure.

- Retail and manufacturing networks recognised as high-potential hubs for Tier-3/4 PwD employment.

Summary

Sustained disability inclusion now depends heavily on long-term CSR collaborations, ideally running for three to five years. A new government-backed system, the Purple Portal, is being positioned as a bridge between CSR funders and verified beneficiaries. Companies are being urged to weave disability inclusion directly into their HR frameworks instead of treating it as a standalone effort. There's also increased attention on recruiting individuals with invisible disabilities and improving overall accessibility at workplaces. Meanwhile, retail and manufacturing networks are emerging as strong channels for expanding PwD employment in smaller towns.



Inaugural Panel: SDGs & Disability Inclusion

(Cross-cutting – All 17 SDGs) – 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Panelists:

- **Prof. Vineet Joshi – Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC)**
- **Mr. Himal Tewari – Chief HR Officer & CSR Trustee, Tata Power**
- **Mr. Nitumani Goswami – Zonal Operation Director North & East, Amazon India**
- **Mr. Lov Verma – Former Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)**
- **Mr. Krishan Kalra – Former President, National Abilympic Association of India (NAAI) & Advisory Board Member Sarthak Educational Trust**
- **Dr. Jitender Aggarwal – Founder & CEO, Sarthak Educational Trust & Secretary NAAI**
- **Mr. Siddhartha Rastogi – MD, Ambit Asset Management & Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust**

Key Takeaways

- Higher education reforms: flexible assessments, assistive technologies, and faculty training.
- Accessible electoral processes positioned as non-negotiable democratic rights.
- Corporate models such as Tata Power's neurodiversity program cited as replicable templates.
- RPWD Act expansion, cross-ministerial integration, and data transparency central to policy progress.
- National Testing Agency's accessible examination systems improving national-level participation.
- Sarthak's national skilling ecosystem showcased as scalable.

Summary

Reforms in higher education are moving toward flexible assessments, better assistive tech, and trained faculty to support diverse learners. Ensuring fully accessible elections is being framed as a fundamental democratic obligation. Corporate initiatives—like Tata Power's neurodiversity model—are emerging as strong, repeatable examples for others. Policy discussions now focus on expanding the RPwD Act, coordinating across ministries, and improving data transparency. The National Testing Agency's accessible exam systems are helping widen national participation, while Sarthak's large-scale skilling network is being highlighted as a model that can be replicated.



Panel 2: Champions of Equal Opportunity

(SDG 8 – Decent Work; SDG 5 – Gender Equality) - 2:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Moderator: *Dr. Sudhir Gupta, Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust*

Panelists:

- **Ms. Richa Shanker** – Deputy Director General, DEPwD
- **Ms. Aradhana Lal** – Senior - VP Sustainability, Lemon Tree Hotels
- **Ms. Divya Gupta** – Area Director Human Resources, IHCL
- **Mr. Vikram Sharma** – Multi Property Director Human Resources, The Westin Gurgaon & New Delhi
- **Ms. Richa Bansal** – Founder & Director, Saarathee
- **Mr. Dhananjay Tiwari** – Senior VP HR, Vindhya Info-media

Key Takeaways

- Lemon Tree's inclusive workforce (18–20% PwDs) demonstrated productivity and retention advantages.
- Policy integration and universal design emphasized for workforce readiness.
- AI tools (e.g., *Hirable*) easing recruitment, training, and workplace accommodations.
- Early campus-level inclusion (ages 15–17) critical to bridging formal education gaps.
- Corporates stressed merit-based hiring and equal performance expectations for PwDs.

Summary

Lemon Tree showed that an 18–20% inclusive workforce not only works but delivers higher productivity and stronger retention. Discussions stressed the need for universal design and tighter policy alignment to prepare India's workforce for inclusion at scale. AI-driven tools like *Hirable* are beginning to simplify hiring, skill assessment, and workplace support. Building inclusion early—especially at the 15–17 age group—was identified as essential to closing education-to-employment gaps. Corporates also underlined a non-negotiable principle: merit-based hiring with the same performance standards for persons with disabilities.





Panel 3: Future-Ready Beginnings – Early Intervention & AI

(SDG 3 – Good Health; SDG 4 – Quality Education) – 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Moderator: *Dr. Sunil Pahilajani, Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust*

Panelists:

- **Mr. Sameer Nigam – Founder & CEO, Stratbeans Learning Solutions & Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust**
- **Dr. Rajive Bhatia – ENT Surgeon**
- **Mr. Anil Joshi – Former Program Director, IBM; Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust**
- **Dr. Swarn Lata Sah – Assistant Professor, Miranda House**
- **Ms. Preeti Johar – CEO, Family of Disabled**
- **Prof. Suraj Singh Senjam – Professor, Community Ophthalmology, Dr. R.P. Centre, AIIMS**

Key Takeaways

- AI-enabled early screening tools can scale to 7,000+ blocks and 14 lakh anganwadis.
- First 0–3 years identified as the non-negotiable intervention window for hearing/vision impairments.
- Call for first-information kits for families, improving awareness and navigation.
- Teachers require enhanced pedagogical skills, not diluted curricula.
- Vision and hearing screening must integrate into school and community health systems.

Summary

AI-driven early-screening systems are now capable of operating at scale, reaching more than 7,000 blocks and roughly 14 lakh anganwadis across the country. Experts stressed that the 0–3 age window remains the decisive period for addressing hearing and vision impairments. Families need clear, first-information kits to navigate early signs and available services. Teachers must be equipped with stronger pedagogical skills rather than simplified curricula. Finally, routine vision and hearing checks should be embedded directly into school and community-level health systems to ensure universal coverage.



Panel 4: Tech for All – Innovations Driving Inclusion

(SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure; SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities) –
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Moderator: *Mr. Rajive Gulati, Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust*

Panelists:

- **Dr. Jatinder Singh** – Deputy Secretary General, PhD Chamber of Commerce & Industry
- **Mr. Roman Jagota** – Director of Clinical Services, Ottobock India
- **Mr. Suket Amin** – Founder, Sunbots

- **Mr. Manan Issar – Founder, Piltover Technologies**
- **Mr. Amit Panwar – Founder, Sunqulp**

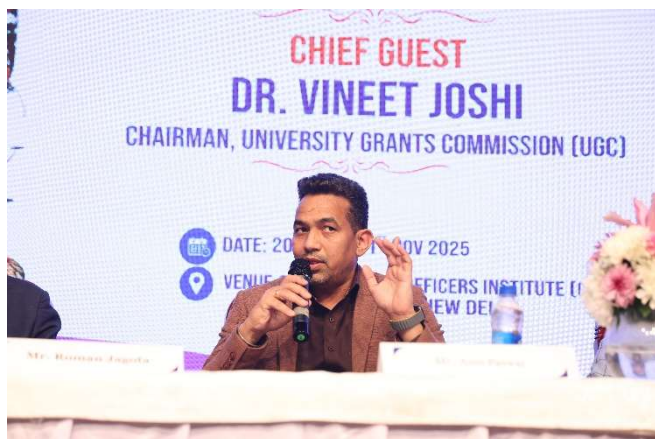
Key Takeaways

- Technology transfer enabling India-based manufacturing of high-tech prosthetics under national schemes.
- AI-driven accessible content creation (PDF-to-accessible conversion, smart glasses, multilingual delivery).
- Navigation wearables enhancing safe mobility for visually impaired users.
- Startups underline need for CSR-led testing ecosystems, subsidies, and multi-language interfaces.
- Chambers and government procurement crucial for scaling disability tech.

Summary

India is beginning to localize advanced prosthetic manufacturing through technology-transfer models tied to national schemes. AI is driving a new wave of accessible content tools—from automated PDF conversion to smart-glass interfaces with multilingual support. Navigation wearables are improving independent and safe mobility for people with visual impairments. Disability-tech startups are calling for CSR-backed testing platforms, subsidies, and language-inclusive product design. Industry chambers and government procurement mechanisms are emerging as the critical levers for scaling these technologies nationwide.





Day 2 – 21st November 2025

Panel 5: Nothing About Us, Without Us

(SDG 16 – Institutions; SDG 5 – Gender Equality) – 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Moderator: *Mr. Siddhartha Rastogi, Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust*

Panellists:

- **Mr. Digvijay Sujlana** – Head of Public Policy & Government Relations, Delhivery
- **Ms. Rupa Bhanushali** – Project Manager, Ambition Marine Services
- **Mr. Ankur Dhama** – Para Athlete, Long Sprint
- **Mr. Atul Kaushik** – Para Athlete, Discus Throw
- **Ms. Nupur Jain** – Managing Director, GAIL
- **Mr. Sannyashai K. Behera** – Deputy Secretary, SSEPD Department, Govt of Odisha
- **Mr. Prashant Ranjan Verma** – General Secretary, NAB Delhi

Key Takeaways

- PwD leadership essential in policymaking, monitoring, and governance.
- Gender-based challenges require targeted interventions for women with disabilities.
- Para-sports recognized as a strong empowerment and visibility channel.
- Persistent access gaps in transport, education, and digital services demand urgent action.
- State-level accountability and peer support networks highlighted as foundational.

Summary

Stronger representation of persons with disabilities in leadership roles is being positioned as central to shaping and monitoring policy. The distinct challenges faced by women with disabilities call for focused, gender-specific solutions. Para-sports are emerging as a powerful route for empowerment and public visibility. Major access gaps in transport, education, and digital systems still require immediate corrective action. State-level accountability mechanisms and robust peer-support networks are seen as core pillars for sustained progress.



Panel 6: Skills Beyond Limits – Abilitympics & IDEA

(SDG 4 & SDG 8) – 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Moderator: *Mr. Suresh Gupta, Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust*

Panelists:

- **Dr. Sushma Goel** – Former Vice Principal & Professor, Lady Irwin College, DU
- **Ms. Priyanka Sharma** - Sr. VP & Head Corporate Communications, Lumax World
- **Dr. Jayant Nasa**, Assistant Professor, IIM Udaipur
- **Mr. Bharat Chhabra** – Chief Social Impact Group & Chief Ethics Counsellor, Tata Power
- **Dr. Gurpreet Kaur** – Director Apparel Training & Design Centre, ATDC

Key Takeaways

- Abilitympics positioned as national accelerators for skills, recognition, and employment.
- Systemic teacher training essential for inclusive education.
- Rural outreach strengthened through local skill centers and digital literacy.
- CSR storytelling can reshape societal attitudes and employer behavior.
- Research-driven policymaking urged for scaling quality interventions.

Summary

Abilympics are being framed as key national drivers for skill development, visibility, and employment opportunities. Strengthening inclusive education will depend heavily on systemic teacher training. Rural inclusion is expanding through local skill hubs and digital-literacy initiatives. Effective CSR storytelling is emerging as a tool to shift public perception and influence employer behavior. Finally, there's a strong push for research-based policymaking to scale high-quality interventions sustainably.



Panel 7: Media Matters – Shaping Inclusive Narratives

(SDG 16 & SDG 17) – 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Moderator: *Mr. Supriyo Gupta, Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust*

Panelists:

- **Mr. Kalyan Ranjan** – Assistant Vice President, Public Affairs & Communications
- **Dr. John Dayal** – Former President, All India Christian Council
- **Mr. Vijay Jodha** – Filmmaker, Writer, Photographer & Advisory Board Member, Sarthak Educational Trust
- **Ms. Divya A** – Senior Assistant Editor, Indian Express
- **Mr. Satish Kapoor** – Founder & Director, Brotherhood & Wecare Film

Key Takeaways

- Need for balanced, dignified, stereotype-free depictions of disability in media.
- Training journalists in disability sensitivity crucial for narrative correction.
- Digital platforms key for outreach, community mobilization, and multilingual dissemination.
- Cultural and arts-based storytelling can drive inclusion at scale.
- Investigative media plays a watchdog role in advancing disability rights.

Summary

Media must move toward balanced, respectful portrayals of disability that break away from outdated stereotypes. Training journalists in disability-sensitive reporting is essential for shifting mainstream narratives. Digital platforms are becoming powerful channels for outreach, community mobilization, and multilingual communication. Cultural and arts-based storytelling can amplify inclusion at a broader scale. At the same time, investigative journalism has a critical watchdog role in pushing forward disability rights and accountability.





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The 12th NCD concluded with a collective commitment: to move India from tokenism to transformative inclusion powered by policy innovation, technology, long-term partnerships, and leadership by persons with disabilities.

Tata Power Workshop: Preparing India's Abilympians for the Global Stage

As part of the NCD 2025 learning track, Tata Power curated a high-impact capacity-building workshop designed to equip Abilympics participants with the confidence, professionalism, and global readiness required for international platforms—especially the upcoming Finland Abilympics.

The programme opened with an immersive **Dance Movement Therapy session** led by *Ms. Shubham and Ms. Shreshtha from Kolkata Sanved*. Using movement-based techniques to enhance mind-body balance, grounding, and emotional resilience, the session helped participants develop calmness, body awareness, and confidence—skills crucial for high-pressure competitive environments.

This was followed by a powerful motivational segment on **Representing Yourself with Confidence & Finesse at International Platforms**, facilitated by *Mr. Hemprakash, Founder, SoftHear Pvt. Ltd.*

The discussion unpacked practical travel etiquette—from airport processes and flight familiarity to cultural nuances and behavioral norms. Participants also received an introduction to Finland's history, geography, food, and social culture, enabling first-time international travellers to feel prepared and self-assured.

In the second half, the programme shifted to competition-specific skill building. *Ms. Dolly Nemi Mittal (HR & DEI Head, TCS)* conducted a session on **Preparing to Be Globally Ready in ICT-based Abilympics**, highlighting global benchmarks, ICT expectations, and the role of digital proficiency in international competition workflows.

A hands-on module on **Digital Literacy for Inclusion** followed, delivered by *Ms. Asha Rana from Tata Power (IT)*. Participants explored practical tools such as MS Office, Google Drive, Sheets, and online meeting platforms including Zoom, Teams, Webex, and Meet. The session ended with team formation exercises to encourage collaboration, peer learning, and digital task ownership.

The pre-lunch session concluded with *Ms. Priyanka Namtoar from Tata Power*, who guided participants on **Expressing Your Work to the Jury**. The conversation emphasised adaptive thinking, clarity in presentation, and creative approaches to showcasing one's work beyond the competition theme—critical elements that influence jury evaluation at global events.

Key Highlights

- Comprehensive orientation tailored for PwD competitors representing India internationally.
- Blend of wellness, communication, travel preparedness, and cultural sensitivity.

- Strong emphasis on digital literacy as a core competency for ICT-based Abilympics.
- Real-world etiquette training relevant to hospitality, F&B, and customer interaction categories.
- Enhanced focus on confidence building, self-representation, and professional conduct.

This workshop demonstrated Tata Power's commitment to transforming skill development into global opportunity—moving beyond competition to long-term employability, leadership, and self-representation.



NAAI Nationals: Celebrating Skills, Excellence & India's Medal-Winning Talent

The **National Abilympics**, hosted by NAAI, served as India's premier platform to celebrate vocational excellence among persons with disabilities and to identify top talent for international competition. This year's nationals showcased remarkable proficiency across *ICT, Craft, Hospitality, and Service* categories—reinforcing the belief that ability, skill, and passion transcend disability.

Across four verticals, participants demonstrated innovation, precision, creativity, and technical mastery. The championship concluded with an impressive **26-medal tally**, underscoring India's growing global competitiveness in vocational skills.

Medal Tally Snapshot

Category	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
ICT	3	4	4	11
Craft	1	2	2	5
Hospitality	2	2	2	6
Services	2	2	0	4
Grand Total	8	10	8	26

Category Highlights

- **ICT** emerged as the strongest discipline, with stellar wins in Engineering Design, Character Design, and Photography Studio.
- **Hospitality & Cleaning Services** reflected world-class precision, preparation, and professional discipline.
- **Craft Categories**, including Basket Making and Crochet, showcased artistic finesse and cultural craftsmanship.
- **Services**, especially Hair Dressing and Massage, demonstrated high technical skill and client-oriented excellence.

Why the Nationals Matter

- They provide a merit-based platform for PwDs to compete, showcase talent, and gain national recognition.
- Winners advance into global training pipelines, preparing for the International Abilympics in Finland.
- The competition builds confidence, employability, and industry visibility for participants.
- It strengthens India's positioning as a serious contender in global vocational skill championships.

The NAAI Nationals stood as a testament to grit, talent, and possibility—reminding the nation that when skill meets opportunity, champions emerge.

