Giant Leaps Forward...

BUILDING A WORLD OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF SWABHIMAN

Volume : VII | Issue : III | Oct - December 2025

Swabhiman (State Disability Information and Resource Centre)

It's a certified non-profit organization, registered under 12A and 80G of Income Tax Act, 1961, all contribution are tax deductible. It is a FCRA approved organization eligible to receive foreign contribution.

The fourth quarter of 2025 has been marked by engagement with youth, thought leadership in national dialogues, expansion of inclusive education initiatives, and active participation in policy and governance forums. It is marked by deepening of our commitment to education and holistic development. Below is a comprehensive glimpse of the quarter's key highlights.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- The Second Volunteer Meeting for Anjali
- Nature Walk, Meditation and Paper Craft Session
- Art and Inclusivity Musings at the Museum
- Interclass Art Competition
- Science Workshop at Regional Science Centre
- Anjali Festival 2025 Silver Jubilee Edition
- Odisha Vikash Conclave 2025
- Dialogue with CSOs and Corporates
- State Level Workshop on Cross Disabilities Early Intervention
- State Level Conference on Disability Inclusive Societies IDPD 2025
- Spinal Cord Injury Mela 2025
- Volunteer and Internship Programs

The Second Volunteer Meeting for Anjali

12/10/2025: The second volunteer meeting for Anjali was organised on 21 September 2025 at the Swabhiman office, bringing together nearly 100 students from eight colleges. The orientation introduced participants to the philosophy, departments, and evolving structure of Anjali, along with the carnival narrative that has shaped the festival over the past two decades. Presentations outlined the spirit of inclusion, volunteer ethics, and the importance of youth leadership in sustaining Anjali's legacy.

Dr. Sruti Mohapatra and Swadhin Kumar Khatua led interactive sessions highlighting Anjali's 24 year journey, milestones, and the diverse roles played by volunteers in planning and execution. The meeting concluded with departmental group discussions, where participants were divided into nine facilitated groups to share personal backgrounds, skills, and areas of interest, laying the foundation for meaningful engagement during the festival.

Nature Walk, Meditation and Paper Craft Session

24/10/2025: As part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of Anjali Children and Youth Festival 2025, Swabhiman successfully organised a Nature Walk, Meditation and Paper Craft session at Ekamra Kanan (Regional Plant Resource Centre), Bhubaneswar. The programme was conducted in collaboration with Banalata Creatives, Regional Museum of Natural History (RMNH), and Folded Universe.

The event brought together 30 students and four teachers from BBC School for the Deaf, along with 12 students and seven parents from the Parents' Intellectual Association. The objective was to promote environmental awareness, experiential learning, and creative expression among children with disabilities by providing an inclusive learning space beyond the classroom.

The programme began with a guided nature exploration led by Debi Priyadarshini, Scientist, RMNH. She introduced students to medicinal plants and explained their traditional and health benefits. She shared, "Nature is the greatest teacher; when children learn directly from plants and biodiversity, they build respect and responsibility towards conservation."

This was followed by an engaging Origami workshop by Santrupti Dash from Folded Universe. Through paper-folding inspired by elements of nature, students enhanced concentration and fine motor skills. She remarked, "Origami helps children express creativity silently, yet powerfully."

A theatre workshop facilitated by Biswajit Dash from Banalata Creatives encouraged expressive movements and role-play. He stated, "Theatre creates a safe space where every child can communicate beyond words."

Student Sankar Jena (BBC School for the Deaf) expressed his joy, saying, "I felt happy learning about plants and making paper art with my friends."

The programme concluded with a reflection session. The Nature Walk successfully combined environmental education, mindfulness, and art-based engagement, strengthening confidence, inclusion, and awareness among participating children.

Art and Inclusivity Musings at the Museum

25/10/2025: Swabhiman successfully organised "Musings at the Museum" at the Regional Museum of Natural History (RMNH), Bhubaneswar, as a pre-event activity of the Anjali International Children and Youth Festival 2026. The programme was conducted in collaboration with Devi Priyadarshini (RMNH), Folded Universe led by Santrupthy Das, and Banalata Creatives represented by Biswajeet Das and Mahua Maharana.

A total of 41 Deaf students from BBC School for the Deaf participated in this inclusive learning experience. The session commenced with an insightful address by Devi Priyadarshini, who underlined the importance of nature education and the role of museums in nurturing curiosity among

young learners. She elaborated on the mission of RMNH in preserving natural. She highlighted that learning is not confined to textbooks but can be deeply enriched through real-life observation and engagement.

The students were then taken on a guided tour of the museum galleries, where preserved animal specimens and exhibits on natural history were explained in detail. The session was made fully accessible with the support of Srikant Sahu, who facilitated communication as a sign language interpreter, ensuring meaningful participation for Deaf students.

The programme further included a creative origami workshop conducted by Santrupthy Das in the museum auditorium. Students enthusiastically created multiple origami models, experiencing the joy of hands-on learning.

The event concluded with an interactive theatre workshop led by Biswajeet Das and Mahua Maharana from Banalata Creatives. Through dance, dialogue, and acting exercises, students were encouraged to express themselves confidently and collaboratively.

Interclass Art Competition

28/10/2025: An Interclass Art Competition was organised for students of B K College of Arts and Craft as part of the Anjali International Children and Youth Festival 2025. The themes are disability inclusion, diversity, empowerment and accessibility. 77 students participated, presenting artworks that reflected originality, technical skill and powerful personal expression. The competition provided a platform for young artists to engage with themes of diversity, imagination and social sensitivity.

The competition was judged by Padmashree Adwaita Gadanayak, Director General of the National Gallery of Modern Art, and renowned artist Veejayant Dash. The artworks were assessed based on the following criteria: understanding and interpretation of the theme; creative and indirect infusion of the concept; artistic skill with conceptual clarity; and relevance

and overall presentation. The top ten students received support through the Anjali Scholarship by Swabhiman.

Science Modelling Making Workshop at Regional Science Centre

03/11/2025: A science modelling workshop was conducted by Swabhiman in collaboration with the Regional Science Centre, Bhubaneswar, for children with disabilities and their parents. During the workshop, participants prepared and demonstrated several innovative models, including the Two-Stick Weight Balance, rotational motion and Spinning Iron experiment. The Two-Stick Weight Balance helped students understand the principles of balance and centre of gravity. Parents provided continuous step-by-step support in creating science models for children with intellectual disabilities. Teachers from BBC School for the Deaf also extended guidance through sign language and step-by-step demonstrations to support S&HI students, making the modelling process simple and accessible.

40 children participated, including 30 deaf students from Bipin Bihari Choudhury Deaf School and 10 children from the Intellectual Disabled Parents Association. The workshop was facilitated by Kapil Jain and Nikunja Bihari Sahoo.

Anjali Festival 2025 Silver Jubilee Edition

In 2025, Anjali marked its Silver Jubilee with a vibrant five-day celebration that reflected 25 years of commitment to inclusion, participation and dignity.

A total of 1,636 children and young adults participated, including divyang students from OSEPA schools across 15 districts, children from NGOs in nine districts, international participants, divyang college students, and students from local schools, supported by 200 college volunteers. The festival featured workshops, contests, talent shows, debates, science exhibitions, art displays, installations, educational tours and scholarships, and was honoured by eminent dignitaries and community leaders, making it a truly people driven celebration.

Odisha Vikash Conclave 2025

26/11/2025: At the Odisha Vikash Conclave 2025, civil society organisations were recognised for the first time for their sustained and selfless contributions to social development in Odisha. Joe Madiath, Founder of Gram Vikas, received the Lifetime Achievement Award, while Dr. Sruti Mohapatra, Founder and CEO of Swabhiman, was honoured with the Odisha Accessibility and Equity Leadership Award.

The programme featured eminent dignitaries and a fireside interaction with distinguished personalities. In her acceptance address, Dr. Mohapatra emphasised ethical leadership, the need for good human beings in nation building, and the importance of embedding accessibility and disability inclusion across all development initiatives and SDG aligned programmes.

The program was graced by Jagadananda, Founder and Mentor of CYSD and a key organiser of the conclave; Ananga Kumar Patnaik, former Judge of the Supreme Court of India who participated in the high-level dialogues; along with eminent dignitaries including Jatin Das, acclaimed artist and Padma Vibhushan awardee, and Advaita Gadanayak, renowned sculptor and Padma Shri awardee, who enriched various sessions of the conclave with their presence and insights.

Dialogue with CSOs and Corporates

27/11/2025: A dialogue with civil society organisations and corporates focused on the need for coordinated and collective action to strengthen Odisha's climate resilience. Discussions highlighted the importance of moving from parallel efforts to people centred partnerships that prioritise inclusion, trust building and shared responsibility.

Speakers emphasised livelihood protection, Indigenous knowledge, youth leadership, shared infrastructure and accessible climate communication. Dr. Sruti Mohapatra stressed that the language of climate change must be demystified to enable meaningful participation of communities, including persons with disabilities.

Dignitaries reinforced this call:
"We are working in parallel but not together" – Dr Suprava Patnaik

"Not at the cost of livelihoods" – Srestha Banerjee

"Climate change understanding depends on our selfishness" – Dr Pratyush Panda

"OVC is all about inclusion" – Dr Jagadananda

"The language of climate change should be demystified" – Sujit Mohapatra.

"We need to understand, think about, promote and strengthen access" – Dr Shruti Mohapatra.

State Level Workshop on Cross Disabilities Early Intervention

27/11/2025: A two day state level workshop on

Cross Disabilities Early Intervention was organised by SISER under the SSEPD Government of Odisha, with Hon'ble Minister Nityanand Gond attending as Chief Guest. The workshop brought together professionals, practitioners and caregivers to strengthen early intervention practices across disability categories.

Dr. Mohapatra, Guest of Honour, highlighted that early identification and timely intervention form the foundation for individual growth and collective social development. The workshop reaffirmed Odisha's commitment to building responsive, inclusive and effective systems for children with disabilities.

The program was graced by Director SSEPD, and Jitendra Kumar Biswasl, Disability Rights Activist who enriched various sessions of the workshope with their presence and insights.

State Level Conference on Disability Inclusive Societies IDPD 2025

02/12/2025: A state level seminar was organised by the SSEPD Government of Odisha at SOA University to mark the International Day of Persons with Disabilities 2025. Over 200 participants, including policymakers, experts and practitioners, engaged in discussions on disability inclusion and social progress.

Dr. Sruti Mohapatra referred to the UN Report on Disability and Development, highlighting poor SDG outcomes for persons with disabilities globally and stressing the urgent need for data, accessibility, political will and financial commitment. The programme also included felicitation of para athletes and cultural performances by students with disabilities.

Chaired by R.S. Gopalan, Principal Secretary SSEPD, the conference reminded everyone that inclusion is not an option; it is a commitment we must honour.

Insights flowed from P.K. Nanda, Vice Chancellor, SOA; Dr. Patitapaban Mohanty, Director,

SVNIRTAR; and Hon'ble Justice Durga Prasanna Choudhury, Chairman, Lingaraj Temple Committee, each amplifying dignity, accessibility, and equal rights.

With a powerful message from Dr. Garimella Subramaniam, Member, Programme Advisory Committee of Sightsavers India, the conference renewed a shared resolve, to build a society where every ability is embraced, and every voice matters.

Spinal Cord Injury Mela 2025

05/12/2025: The Spinal Cord Injury Mela 2025 was organised at Pipili by Thee Trust in collaboration with Swabhiman and Mana Gobinda Charitable Trust. Twenty eight persons with spinal cord injury from Odisha and other states participated, creating a shared space for empowerment, dignity and mutual learning.

The mela addressed health care access, rights awareness and social inclusion through medical check-ups, sessions on the RPwD Act 2016, adaptive yoga, games and cultural programmes. Awareness sessions were facilitated by Tanmayee Sahu and Kamalakatha Lenka, with coordination by Aplok Banerjee. The presence of Dr Sruti Mohapatra served as a source of inspiration for participants striving toward independent and dignified lives.

Volunteer and Internship Programs

Students from Sailabala Women's College, U.N. Autonomous College, NISSWAS, BJB Autonomous College, Bijupattnaik College of Social Work,

Kamala Nehru Women's College, Rama Devi Women's University, and Indian Institute of Mass Communication participated in an orientation session conducted by Swabhiman.

The objective of the session was to familiarise students with different types of disabilities and the specific accommodations required to support children across various disability categories. Participants were sensitised through interactive talks, simulation exercises, and informative presentations, enabling them to better understand inclusion and accessibility in practice.

From October to December 2025, a total of 10 interns and 130 volunteers actively worked with Swabhiman, contributing their time and commitment towards promoting disability inclusion and community engagement.

Swabhiman
(State Disability Information and Resource Centre)

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor : Dr. Sruti Mohapatra
Data Compilation : Team Swabhiman
Photography : Team Swabhiman
Design : Team Swabhiman