

Dr. Sruti Mohapatra has been selected as Honorable member (Local Community) of Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of the Rama Devi Women's University, Bhubaneswar.



## About Swabhiman

Founded in 2001, Swabhiman is a registered nonprofit, a cross disability organization, advocating for and serving persons with disabilities in Odisha, India and South Asia. It advocates for the human rights-based approach to disability implying that all persons with disabilities need to participate in all spheres of society on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers.

Swabhiman has been in the forefront of several policy changes that have positively impacted the lives of persons with disabilities. It specifically focuses on supporting education, strengthening youth for availing employment opportunities, increasing public awareness on the issue of disability, working towards accessible cities and conducting research for enabling advocacy.

Swabhiman works at the international level with DPI (Disabled People's International), at national level with NDN (National Disability Network), and in local level with its network (Odisha State Disability Network) of district chapters to create a strong and impressive network of civil rights advocates promoting and protecting rights of persons with disabilities at all levels.

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# GIANT LEAPS FORWARD

## International Women's Day Celebration

Women's Grievance Redressal Committee (WGRC) of Indian Institute of Technology Bhubaneswar, celebrated International Women's day with an awareness programme, various competitive events and cultural programmes. Dr. Sruti Mohapatra was invited to share her life story and also create awareness on the women rights and legal aspects March 5, 2017 (Sunday) at IIT Bhubaneswar.



## BE BOLD for a CHANGE

In line with the International Women's Day celebrations, DGM Personnel of Rourkela Steel Plant invited Dr. Sruti Mohapatra as the Chief speaker on the theme 'Be Bold for Change.'

## From the Editor's Desk

In this third issue of 2017 we have the activities of Swabhiman like Educational tour to Regional Museum of Natural History on a bus by SBI. Celebrations of International Women's day, Establishment of IAWG at National and State Level, Telegraph's Infocom Award-Advantage Odisha 2017 to the Chief Executive and other eminent achievers from different fields and seminar on Smart Accessibility Solutions in Bhubaneswar, also made a mark on this issue. In the pages in international news it has the latest of disability sector from round the globe. National Disability Arts Collection and Archive (NDACA) getting a new address and March, proclaimed by Governor Eric Holcomb, together with the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities as the disability awareness month. In National News, the state's highlights related to disability have found space. Indian Teens addressing the lack of inclusiveness in web accessibility and making web accessible to dyslexics and visually impaired. Along with it, India to have its first Wheelchair Beach Festival in Candolim Beach, Goa.

The function was held on 8th March 2017 at the Civic Centre in Rourkela Steel Township. Rourkela Steel Plant, in Rourkela, Odisha is the first integrated steel plant in the public sector in India. It was set up with West German collaboration with an installed capacity of 1 million tonnes in the 1960s.

She addressed and inspired a huge gathering of over 500 employees and other guests. she spoke about the necessity of being "Bold for a Change." CEO Aswini Kumar called for a standing ovation.



## Establishment of IAWG at National and State Level

On 6<sup>th</sup> of March, UNESCO team of Min Bista, Acting Chief of Education, UNESCO New Delhi, and Ms. Huma Masood, National Programme Officer, Gender and Education, visit Swabhiman. UNESCO under the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD) has undertaken an initiative which is complementary and aimed at promoting inclusive education for children with disabilities. The initiative focuses on effective coordination and policy implementation on the cross-cutting issue of children with disabilities' right to quality education by establishing an Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) at the national and state level. The project aims to do this by enhancing dialogue and convergence among key stakeholders on policy issues involving disability and education. At the national level, the IAWG has been set up and the first meeting was held in January. The meeting was attended by key representatives from line ministries/government agencies,



UN agencies and civil society organizations involved in education activities for children with disabilities. Towards the formalization of the coordination mechanism at the state level, UNESCO New Delhi's Education Sector team met Dr. Sruti Mohapatra and Mihir Mohanty.

## Educational Tour to RMNH on a Bus presented by SBI

Swabhiman on 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2017, initiated a new component in the education of children from underprivileged backgrounds through its educational tours. Congratulations to Tapas, Santosh, Satya and Pushpita for successfully conducting the maiden tour to Regional Museum of Natural History. 13 children with disabilities and couple of parents from BJB UP school visited RMNH. Children and parents were enthralled. The bus is a gift from SBI, Mrs. Arundhati Bhattacharya, Chair-Managing director of the State Bank of India, in response to a communication from Dr. Sruti Mohapatra. It was flagged off by Dr. Annapurna Devi, Dr. Sangram Mohapatra and Mihir Mohanty. Views of Parents: Abhijit Bhuinya's (MR child) mother Srimati Kalyani Bhuinya spoke a few words about the museum that it was her first visit to the RMNH and it's a great platform for children's to explore themselves. Trupteepriya Behera's (OH) mother said there are ramps inside the museum to reach all the galleries for a wheelchair user like my daughter.



Views of Children: Raja Das was delighted that he got to know about a lot of things and would like to visit once again. Partha Sarathi Nayak (OH) asked a lot of questions to Santosh and closely observed the skulls of dinosaurs.

## The Telegraph's Infocom - Advantage Odisha 2017



On 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017, in Bhubaneswar on Thursday, The Telegraph's Infocom awards were presented in association with the Life Insurance Corporation of India. The awards were handed over to 10 achievers, who have made their mark in their respective fields.

The winners include Paramita Mahapatra, who has made a mark as an entrepreneur, educationist and social activist Achyuta Samanta, Cardiff University-educated entrepreneur Supreety Mishra, rural development worker Yugabrata Kar, social development worker and rights activist for differently-abled Sruti Mohapatra, development activist couple Achyut Das and Vidhya Das, Odissi dancer and choreographer Saswat Joshi, economist and social worker K.C. Mishra, founder of Samvab, a low-cost health care facilitator, Dr Debasish Bebartta and e-governance expert Priyadarshi Nanu Pany. Owing to her health condition Dr Sruti Mohapatra was represented by her dynamic mother, Dr. Annapurna Devi, in the occasion.

## Smart Accessibility Solutions in Bhubaneswar

To design and emphasize the need for a more inclusive and accessible approach to Smart Cities, a seminar was organised in Bhubaneswar, Odisha on 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2017 by Swabhiman and BDA as part of Urban lectures being organized by BDA. National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP), BMC (Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation) Bhubaneswar Smart City Ltd and Mphasis partnered the project.



the project. It stressed on the importance of integrating elements of Universal Design right at the design and development stages of the smart city initiatives. Among the panelists were international accessibility expert and Vice-President, Global Initiative for Inclusive Information and Communication Technologies (G3ict), James Thurston who heads the global campaign on 'Accessible Smart Cities' at G3ict; R. Balakrishnan, IAS, Development Commissioner-cum-Add. Chief Secretary to Govt. of Odisha; Krishna Kumar IAS, Vice Chairman BDA and Commissioner BMC; R. Vineel Krishna, IAS, CEO, Smart City Bhubaneswar; Javed Abidi, Global Chair DPI -International and Honorary Director, NCPEDP; Shilpi Kapoor, Founder, Barrier Break; Meenu Bhambhani, VP and Head - CSR, Mphasis, and Dr. Sruti Mohapatra, Chief Executive Officer, Swabhiman. The whole session was interpreted by sign language expert Mr. Pramod Mohapatra.



## Paradigm Shift in Inclusive Schooling by TISS



A team from Swabhiman participated in a National Level Conference on "Paradigm Shift in Inclusive Schooling" organized by TISS at Mumbai. Lipika Mohapatra presented a paper on "An Experience of Swabhiman with SMC". Asit Behera and Mihir Mohanty were the other team members who participated in the programme. Total 43 papers were presented by the participants on different issues of Inclusive Education at the conference. It was a great learning and wonderful exposure for the Swabhiman team.

Life skill trainings, slot for physical activity at ICRC, Orientation for SMC and School Cabinet, Pairing of Children, IQ test to identify children with learning disability and also Sitting arrangements of CwDs having ADHD should be changed for was discussed.

## Acharya Harihar Regional Cancer Centre, Katak

One every Monday Volunteers from Swabhiman visit AHRCC to conduct activities for children. Story telling sessions were taken along with crafts making, painting and drawing by our volunteers. On 6<sup>th</sup> of March, 2017 Monday evening our volunteer Sarah Banoo conducted a story telling sessions with the kids who enjoyed listening stories by her.



## International News

### National Disability Arts Collection and Archive gets a new HOME !

University to provide a home for NDACA disability arts collection, BY JOHN PRING ON MARCH 30, 2017 ARTS, CULTURE AND SPORT. A collection and archive that tells the 40-year history of the disability arts movement will have a permanent home from next April, the project has announced.

The latest stage of the £1 million **National Disability Arts Collection and Archive (NDACA)** project will see a wing of Buckinghamshire New University's library, on its High Wycombe campus, devoted to hundreds of the movement's most significant pieces of work. As well as some of the collection being displayed in the university's nearby art gallery, other parts of the archive that have been copied digitally and cannot be shown publicly for copyright reasons – including a detailed timeline of the disability arts movement, illustrated by some of its most significant works – will be available for private inspection in the new NDACA Wing for Learning. The three-year NDACA project – delivered by the disability arts organisation Shape Arts – is bringing together original art works, photographs, film footage and other material, including 2,600 digital files. All of the NDACA catalogue will eventually be available to view through a new website. As well as donated art works, the physical archive also includes hundreds of posters, photographs, postcards, tee-shirts, catalogues, and a complete set of the Disability Arts in London magazine. Some of this will be archived by the university, while other parts will be stored by organisations partnering Shape in the project – DaDaFest, Disability Arts Online, Zinc, Graeae, Holton Lee and the disabled-led digital arts agency filmpro. The digital archive will be made available through the interactive website, while some elements of the collection – such as films in now-obsolete formats – will be available



for more detailed inspection by students, researchers and academics, by appointment, when the wing opens next April. And this summer, NDACA will be producing up to 50 new short films of interviews with some of the movement's most significant "contributors and leaders". David Hevey, NDACA's project director, told Disability News Service that he believed that both the website and the new wing would secure worldwide attention.

He said: "Our story is that disability arts was arguably one of the most successful political arts movement in the world. "Had there not been a cultural intervention from the disability arts movement, I don't think the Disability Discrimination Act would have gone through.

"It's a campaign that did change the world. It's quite a story." Hevey said he hoped the "shining light examples" of the disability arts movement that are being archived and collected by NDACA will help "counter the reactionary stuff" that disabled people have faced at the hands of successive governments. The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Arts Council England and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

<http://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/university-to-provide-a-home-for-ndaca-disability-arts-collection/>

## March - Disability Awareness Month

INDIANAPOLIS — Governor Eric Holcomb, together with the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, has proclaimed the month of March as Disability Awareness Month. Disability Awareness Month aims to bring attention to the positive impact people with disabilities make in our communities and promotes a message of inclusion and acceptance for everyone. The campaign theme emphasizes that people with disabilities want to be treated just like anyone else.

"Too often, people with disabilities are called inspirational for simply living their daily lives, like going to work, playing sports, or taking care of their yard," said Christine Dalhberg, executive director of the Governor's Council. "People with disabilities don't want to be objectified, like when the undefeated high school wrestler lets a competitor with Down syndrome win or when classmates elect two students with severe autism as homecoming king and queen. They don't want to be the subject of someone's college application essay or featured in an inspirational Facebook meme. They are people with complex lives, hopes and dreams, and want to be treated just like anyone else." For more than two decades, the Governor's Council has spearheaded



Disability Awareness Month through a unique statewide grassroots campaign that includes creating theme-specific educational materials, distributed free of charge. The Council asks all people to participate in the side-by-side social media campaign by using the hashtags #Side By Side and #Not our Inspiration. [http://www.goshennews.com/news/march-is-disability-awareness-month/article\\_0f5ac80e-f5ce-50bd-8778-3a6233923df4.html](http://www.goshennews.com/news/march-is-disability-awareness-month/article_0f5ac80e-f5ce-50bd-8778-3a6233923df4.html)

## National News

### INDIAN TEENS MAKING WEB ACCESSIBLE TO CwD's

At just 16 and 18, these Delhi teens are using tech to make the web accessible to dyslexics and the visually impaired Anand Chowdhary, Co-founder of Oswald Foundation, shares his experience with YourStory.

"Two months before I was born, in October 1997, W3C announced WAI, an initiative to add web functionality for people with disabilities. The founder of W3C and inventor of the Web, Tim Berners-Lee, said, "The power of the Web is in its universality. Access by everyone, regardless of disability, is an essential aspect."

The web has always been accessible. Browsers have had zoom and font customisation features from the start. Still, somewhere, Anand felt that it lacked in inclusiveness, remaining untouched by a huge section of society. Taking the clock back to August 15, 2016, Oswald Foundation found its way into the world, born with the aim of making technology accessible to everyone, regardless of disability, literacy, age, or financial barriers. To make the web what it stood for. So, what is Oswald Foundation and how does it help the disabled to access the web? Oswald Foundation is an accessibility technology company. Established in 2016 by then 18-year-old Anand and 15-year-old Nishant Gadihoke, it helps build products for individuals suffering from disabilities. The duo was soon joined by Mahendra Raghuwanshi as the third co-founder of the company and senior most member of the team.

Before taking the plunge, Anand was a consultant for startups and had worked with the Government of Delhi. Mahendra is an engineer, and had gained significant experience in radio technology and telecommunications, while Nishant has interned with companies like Google, Khan Academy, and the Wikipedia

Foundation. Oswald Foundation's work is based on independent research done by the British Dyslexia Association and the World Wide Web Consortium. It helps customise a webpage's typography and style based on your reading preferences. The foundation has been named in honour of Oswald Berkhan, the German physician who first identified dyslexia in 1881. Here's what New York-based educator and occupational therapist for dyslexic children Loreto Dumitrescu has to say about the Oswald Foundation—"I just read an article about you guys and installed the extension. I love it!!!! I work with students with disabilities and myself often use visual modifications. Your extension is one of the best out there. All the best and THANK YOU!!!!!"

How badly do we need it?

In India alone, the potential for impact is huge, with close to half a billion people - 325 million illiterates, 100 million senior citizens, and 45 million of the visually impaired - being in a position to benefit from Oswald Foundation's efforts.

Is the Government of India backing this initiative?

The work done at Oswald is in sync with the Government of India's latest initiatives, like the Accessible India Campaign, Digital India, and Make in India. Two of the company's mentors, Siddharth Shetty and Nikhil Kumar, work at India Stack, being part of the team behind Aadhaar, UPI, and eKYC. Oswald is helping them install these in the heart of their smartphone technology.

Future Strategy in 2017

Oswald is launching two new products, one of which is "Agastya", an end-to-end accessibility tool. Web developers can add Agastya to their websites by adding one line of code. Their entire website will then become accessible to people with dyslexia and visual impairment. Users can personalise their experience on the web, and change font size and colour based on their comfort. It has features for the blind, employing technologies like advanced deep learning image recognition and speech synthesis. It not only reads out the content of a web page, but also understands what is in pictures on the page.

It can, for instance, read out, "This is a photo of Lionel Messi playing football."

Oswald is also introducing "Shravan", what it claims to be the world's first accessible smart phone operating system. Shravan is an Android-based OS that uses a patent-pending combination of vibrations, speech, and touch to allow illiterate, blind, dyslexic, and elderly, or otherwise disabled Indians, to use a smart phone. It has Digital India features like Aadhaar and UPI built-in, and works in over 25 native Indian languages. To make Shravan multidimensional, they have tied up with PayTM for cashless transactions. They are also in talks with Times Internet to incorporate the inshorts app for the news section. They have tied up with Airtel for Wync music app and Khosla Labs for Aadhar integration. These apps will come with Shravan (in all 25 regional languages) with biometric security features enabled.

Now, can you imagine a blind person paying his/her phone bills by talking to Shravan? Ain't that progress? Tata Trust is to incorporate their product, Dhruv, with Shravan. Post integration, people will be able to access content related to education and agriculture. Oswald was Incubated at the Berlin-London-based Eye Focus Accelerator and was also a part of IBM's global entrepreneur program. The venture is also supported by Cross Border Angels & Investors.

<https://yourstory.com/2017/03/just-16-and-18-delhi-teens-web-accessible-dyslexics-visually-impaired/>



## Sun, sand and inclusion: What India's first wheelchair beach festival is all about

Entrepreneur and disability rights activist Sunita Sancheti Fri, 31 Mar 2017-02:15pm , Mumbai , DNA For the first time in India a beach festival in Goa will give wheelchair users an uninhibited taste of the sun, sand and surf. A five-day event beginning on April 5 on Candolim beach has been organised by UMOJA, an online travel platform, NGOs ADAPT and Disability Rights Association, Goa (DRAG), Silver sands Hotel and Drishti Lifesaving, which provides professional lifeguard services on Goa beaches.

Around 60 persons with disabilities from all over India, including 20 from Goa, will take part in Beachfest 2017. A part of the beach will be covered by special mats for free movement of wheelchairs. On the edge of the water, they will be shifted to beach wheelchairs to help them float. "The organisers will put up participants in disable-friendly hotels and arrange for their transportation to the beach," says Sunita Sancheti, an entrepreneur and disability rights activist. "There will be several activities for entertainment such as kite-flying, sand-castle-building competition and parasailing," says the member of ADAPT, who is also a motivational speaker. The package ranges between Rs10,000 and Rs19,000 for two people, including a caregiver, for 3 nights and four days. Sunita Sancheti, entrepreneur and disability rights activist enjoys the sounds and sights of the beach Tapping into a recourse pool "The idea is to inspire the Goa government to turn at least one beach disable -friendly," says Yeshwant Holkar, co-founder and CEO of UMOJA, the primary organiser. "By conservative estimate, there are nearly 90 lakh wheelchair users in India and yet the country can't boast of a single beach that takes care of their needs," rues Holkar. The driving force behind this effort is to make travel inclusive. "In December last year we had published a digital

guide marking the hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions in Goa that are wheel-chair friendly.

The enthusiastic response to the guide inspired us to launch an online petition to the Prime Minister's Office, Accessibility India Campaign and Ministry of Tourism, Goa, recently," says Holkar. The inclusion theory Yeshwant Holkar, co-founder and CEO of UMOJA

The irony is most Indian beaches fall under the Coastal Regulation Zone that bars any permanent construction. If one has to build a pathway/ramp, it will have to be temporary. This is ridiculous!. Why should the elderly and the disabled be denied the right to enjoy on the beach with friends and families? "It is not only a matter of human rights, but also a revenue-drainer.

The government should realize that a huge disability population, not just in India but worldwide, can boost tourism if Indian beaches and other tourist spots are made accessible. Holkar wants to create an ideal beach model that can be replicated elsewhere in India. The beach fest is the first step in that journey. "We need to build an entire ecosystem, which should include restaurants with disable-friendly toilets on the beach and mats over the sand along with transportation in accessible vehicles and disable-friendly hotels and cottages," he says. First hand recall The current infrastructure is not only inadequate but in most cases faulty. In 2011, when Sancheti crisscrossed the country in 84 days covering 19,200 kms with three friends on wheelchairs, she found most places inaccessible. Sunita Sancheti, disability rights activist, We had undertaken the trip to find out how difficult the country is for tourists and students who use wheelchairs. Travelling by train is a nightmare and though air-travel is expensive, it is hardly a smooth affair, especially at the airports.

We had requested CISF personnel to allot a separate room for wheel-chair users during security check, but they asked us to take the matter up with the airport authorities,

On the road, she had suffered too because of paucity of disable-friendly toilets. "We found only a few petrol pumps in Bihar, Punjab and Haryana run by Bharat Petroleum, which are conducive," says the 46-year-old activist, who has been to UK, Singapore and Dubai where she could manage with minimum support. The only silver lining is rising awareness in India about disability rights and facilities. But to achieve a disabled-friendly environment appears to be a far cry at this point.



## Odisha State Disability Network State Level Meeting

Odisha State Disability Network organized a state level meeting on 27th March, 2017 to share all recent happenings, decide on a united action plan for 2017, and work collectively for empowerment of all persons with disabilities. Total 60 participants, 32 NGOs from 20 districts, 8 students from different colleges and universities of 8 districts participated. Javed Abidi, Honorary Director, NCPEDP, New Delhi and Global Chair DPI and shared his views on disability scenario of India and the World in Post UNCPRD, SDG and RPwD Act Scenario.

