

January 2026

December marks the global observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD), a moment to recognise resilience, celebrate achievements, and reaffirm our collective responsibility to build a more inclusive world. Across India, trailblazers such as renowned dancer Sudha Chandran, who rose to global acclaim with a prosthetic limb, and Arunima Sinha, the first female amputee to scale Mount Everest, continue to challenge stereotypes and redefine what is possible.

Whether on international platforms or within local communities, such stories remind us of a powerful truth: when barriers are removed and opportunities are created, potential flourishes.

At the Association of People with Disability (APD), this belief lies at the heart of our work. Guided by a holistic, rights-based approach, APD focuses on equipping, enabling, and empowering Persons with Disabilities across the life cycle. Through Early Intervention, Inclusive Education, Rehabilitation, Livelihood training, Assistive Adaptive Technology, and community engagement, we work to ensure that Persons with Disabilities are not merely beneficiaries of support but active agents of change.

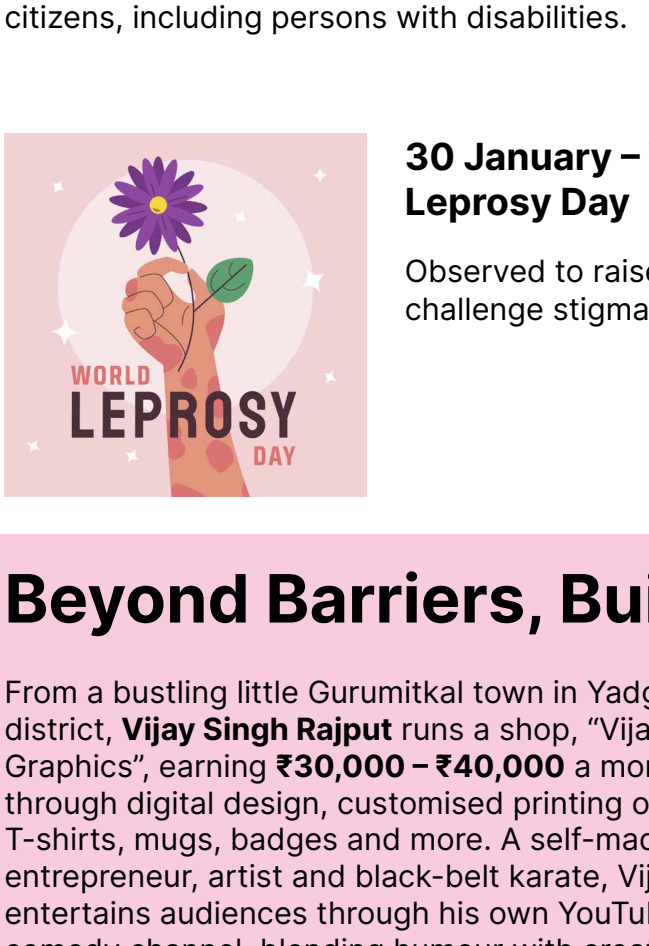
As we reflect on IDPD, this newsletter celebrates journeys of courage, inclusion, and dignity, stories that reinforce our commitment to building an equitable and accessible society for all.

Kalaangana 2026: Talent, Teamwork and a Truly Inspiring Honour



Shradhanjali Integrated Primary School participated in Kalaangana 2026 with remarkable enthusiasm, creativity and spirit. The school took part in a wide range of competitions, including Group Dance, Art Competition, Musical Band, TLM for Teachers, Rangoli for Parents, and Art Competition for Parents, reflecting the inclusive and collaborative ethos of the school community.

A total of 24 students participated across events and delivered performances that brought pride to the institution. The Group Dance team secured an impressive 3rd place, while students achieved 2nd and 3rd prizes in the Art Competition (CP category). Adding to this success, the parents' team won a Special Prize in the Rangoli Competition, highlighting the strong involvement and support of families in the learning journey.



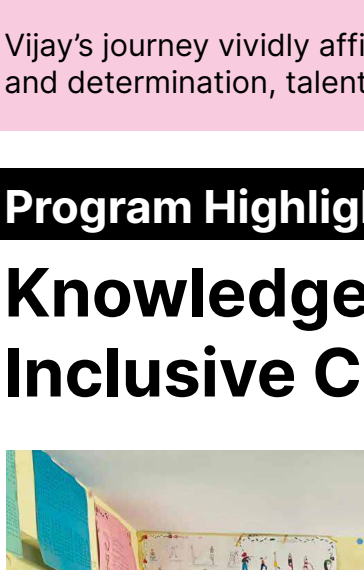
Kalaangana 2026 was a memorable and enriching experience for all participants. The platform provided students with valuable exposure, boosted their confidence, and gave them immense joy through creative expression and healthy competition.

The celebrations were made even more meaningful with a well-deserved personal honour.

Mr. R Srinivas, a devoted member of the Shradhanjali Integrated Primary School team for the past 13 years, was conferred the **Caregiver Excellence Award 2025** by the **Information and Resource Centre for Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities**, in association with **Rotary Bangalore West**.

This recognition stands as a tribute to his unwavering commitment, compassion and consistent dedication to supporting children and nurturing inclusive learning environments. The entire APD family extends heartfelt congratulations to Mr. Srinivas and thanks him for the lasting difference he continues to make every single day.

Dates That Matter:

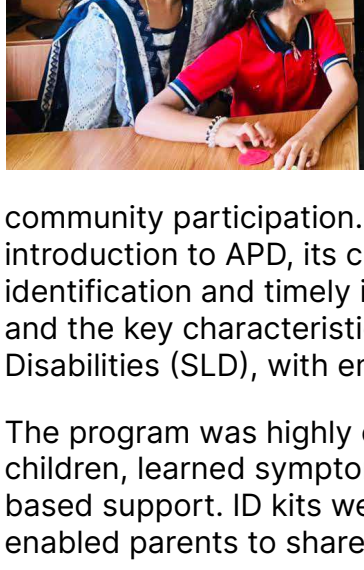
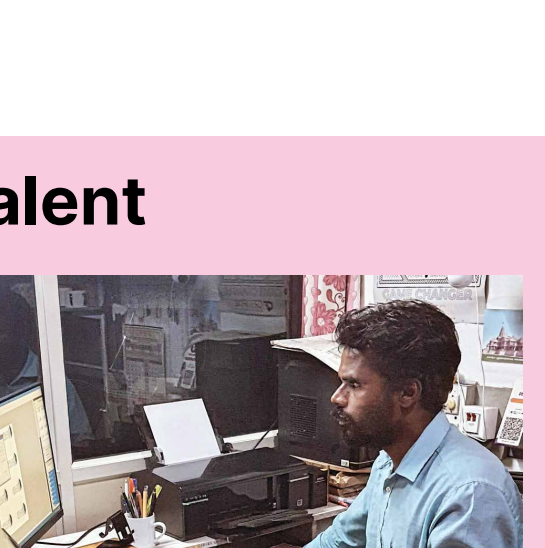


4 January – World Braille Day

Recognises Braille as an essential communication tool that supports literacy, education and independence for persons with visual impairments.

26 January – Republic Day

Commemorates the adoption of the Indian Constitution, which guarantees equality, dignity and justice to all citizens, including persons with disabilities.

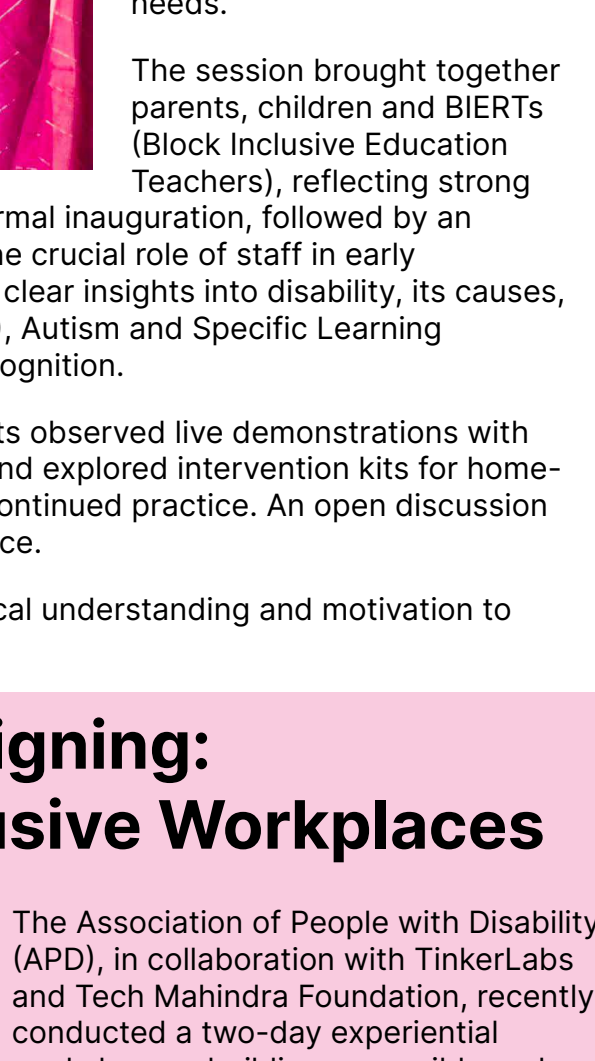


30 January – World Leprosy Day

Observed to raise awareness, encourage early treatment and challenge stigma, fostering dignity and social inclusion.

Beyond Barriers, Built By Talent

From a bustling little Gurumitkal town in Yadgir district, **Vijay Singh Rajput** runs a shop, "Vijay Graphics", earning **₹30,000 – ₹40,000** a month through digital design, customised printing on T-shirts, mugs, badges and more. A self-made entrepreneur, artist and black-belt karate, Vijay also entertains audiences through his own YouTube comedy channel, blending humour with creativity in inspiring ways.



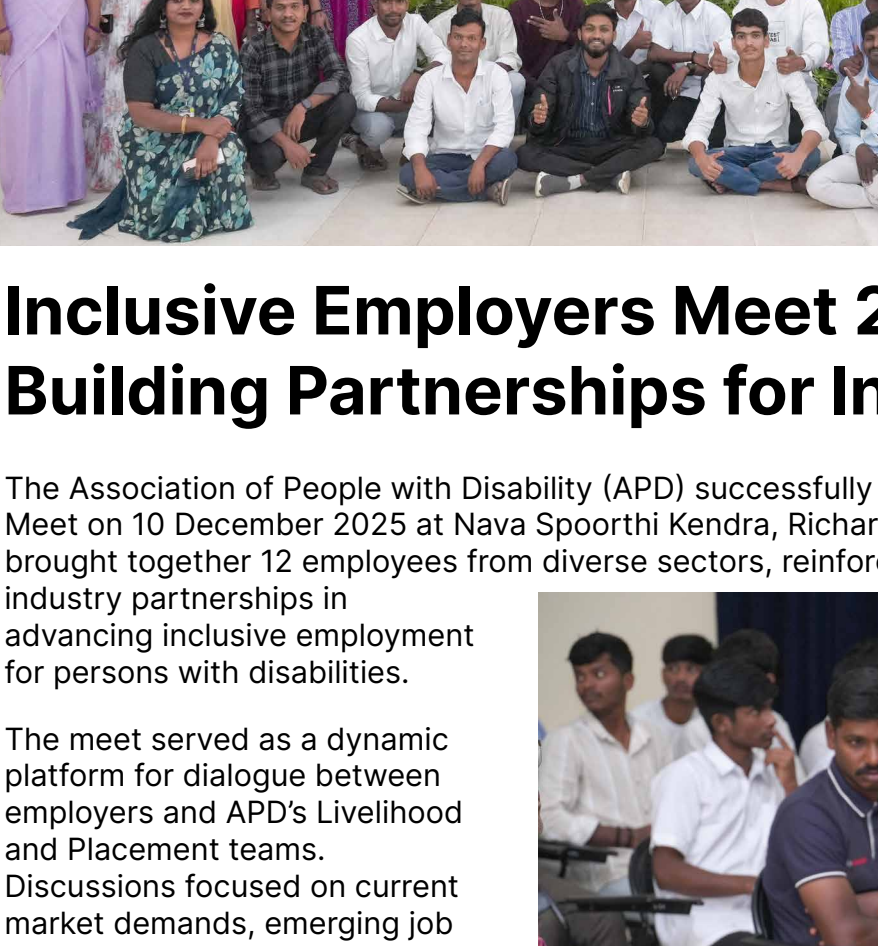
This confident, multi-talented achiever began life with immense challenges. Born with hearing and speech impairment and with no access to formal schooling, Vijay grew up relying entirely on observation, practice and perseverance. In the absence of teachers or textbooks, he taught himself tailoring, embroidery, electronics, mechanical repair and graphic design, transforming curiosity into skill and skill into livelihood.

APD played a crucial role in strengthening this journey. With Seed Fund support, Vijay received a T-shirt and mug printing machine that helped establish his enterprise. Through continuous coordination with government departments, APD also enabled Vijay to receive a ₹30,000 tender to conduct a drawing activity as part of an environmental awareness program during Yuva Janotsava at the Yadgir District Stadium.

Vijay's journey vividly affirms that disability does not limit potential. With opportunity, support and determination, talent finds its way.

Program Highlights

Knowledge to Action: Parents Leading Inclusive Change



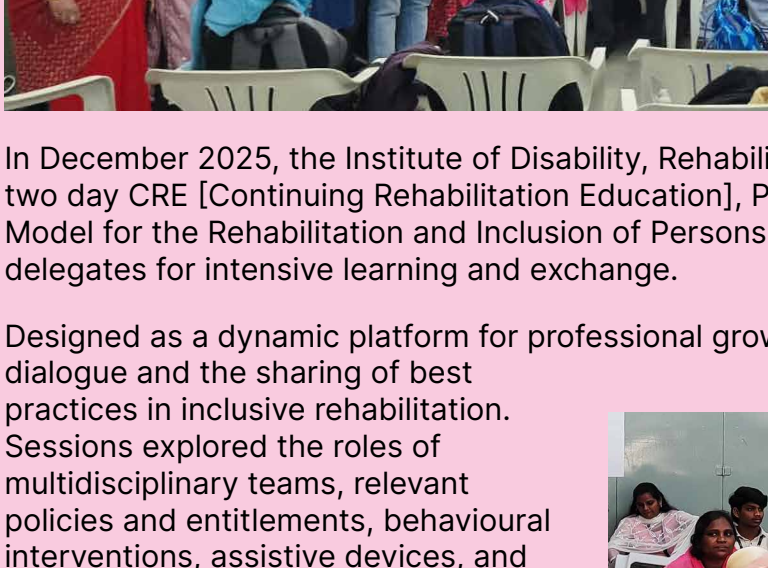
A Capacity Building Program for Parents was successfully conducted by the Inclusive Education Team in the North-1 Block in collaboration with the Education Department, with the support of the Mukul Mahadev Foundation. The program focused on strengthening parents' understanding and equipping them with practical tools to support children with developmental and learning needs.

The session brought together parents, children and BERTs (Block Inclusive Education Teachers), reflecting strong community participation. The program began with a formal inauguration, followed by an introduction to APD, its community-level impact, and the crucial role of staff in early identification and timely intervention. Parents received clear insights into disability, its causes, and the key characteristics of Intellectual Disability (ID), Autism and Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), with emphasis on early symptom recognition.

The program was highly engaging and practical. Parents observed live demonstrations with children, learned symptom-management techniques, and explored intervention kits for home-based support. ID kits were distributed to encourage continued practice. An open discussion enabled parents to share experiences and seek guidance.

Impact: Parents reported increased confidence, practical understanding and motivation to actively support their children's development.

Listening, Learning, Designing: A New Approach to Inclusive Workplaces



The Association of People with Disability (APD), in collaboration with TinkerLabs and Tech Mahindra Foundation, recently conducted a two-day experiential workshop on building accessible and inclusive workplaces. Designed for corporate leaders, HR and DE, [Diversity, Equity and Inclusion] professionals, civil society actors, and persons with disabilities, the workshop moved beyond policy discussions to centre lived experience as the foundation for inclusive design.

Through panel conversations and human-centred design exercises, participants explored real workplace journeys, from recruitment and onboarding to commuting and everyday facility use, through the lens of Persons with Disabilities. Colleagues with disabilities shared firsthand accounts of navigating systems not designed with them in mind, shifting the conversation from sympathy to rights, accountability, and structural change.

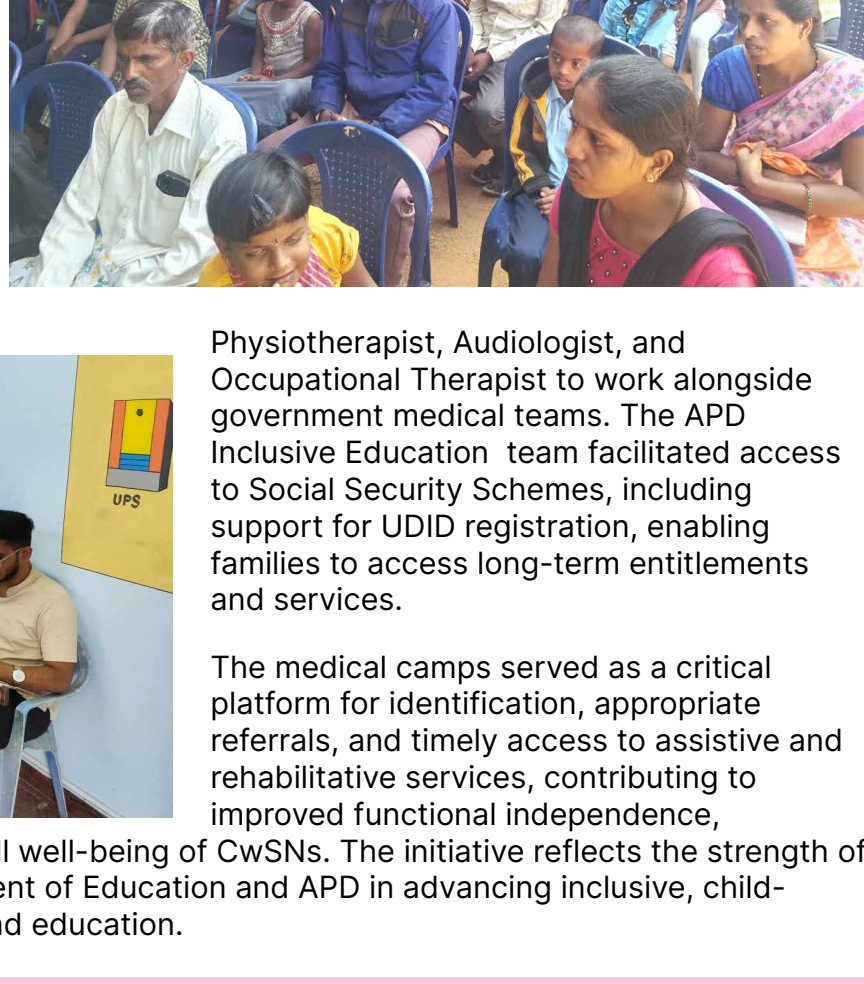


Working in mixed teams, participants identified physical, digital, and procedural barriers and co-created practical, scalable solutions. Case studies from organisations such as SAP, Microsoft, and Lemon Tree Hotels reinforced that accessibility is not an add-on but a core element of effective systems. The workshop reaffirmed a shared message: inclusive workplaces are built not through charity, but through intention, empathy, and thoughtful design grounded in lived realities.

Inclusive Employers Meet 2025: Building Partnerships for Inclusive Hiring

The Association of People with Disability (APD) successfully organised the Inclusive Employers Meet on 10 December 2025 at Nava Spoorthi Kendra, Richards Town, Bengaluru. The event brought together 12 employees from diverse sectors, reinforcing the importance of strong industry partnerships in advancing inclusive employment for persons with disabilities.

The meet served as a dynamic platform for dialogue between employers and APD's Livelihood and Placement teams. Discussions focused on current market demands, emerging job roles, inclusive workplace practices, and the need for accessibility and reasonable accommodation. Employers actively shared insights on evolving skill requirements and industry expectations.



The event was organised by the Livelihood Department and Placement team, under the guidance of Mr Malikarjuniah, Director – Skilling & Academics. He highlighted the critical role of employers in driving inclusion beyond compliance and embedding it within organisational culture.

APD also showcased its employability skills training programs, highlighting job-ready candidates trained across multiple domains and its end-to-end support model, including assessment, training, placement facilitation, and post-placement follow-up.

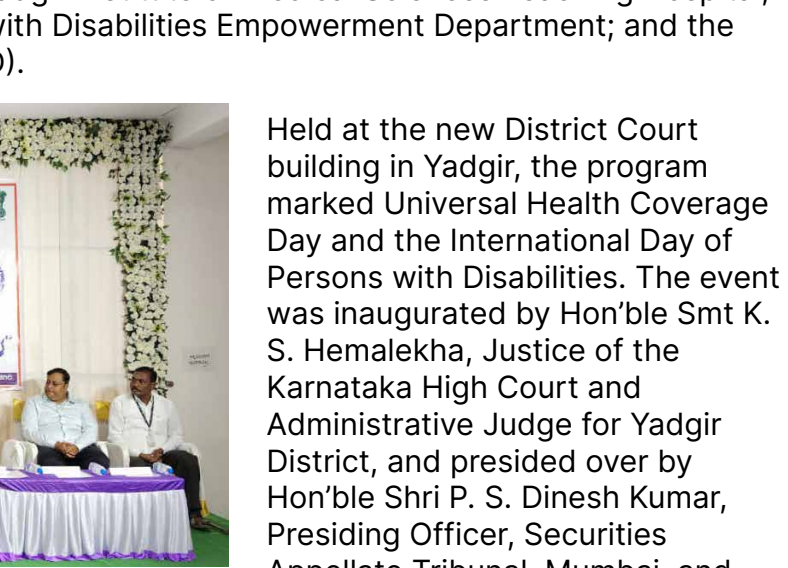
As a significant outcome, one employer offered 250 job openings, reflecting strong confidence in inclusive hiring. The meet reaffirmed employers as key partners in APD's inclusion journey, strengthening pathways towards sustainable and dignified employment.

Capacity Building and Professional Learning | CRE Programme



In December 2025, the Institute of Disability, Rehabilitation and Research (IDRR) conducted a two day CRE [Continuing Rehabilitation Education], Program on A Holistic Multidisciplinary Model for the Rehabilitation and Inclusion of Persons with Disability (PwD), bringing together 50 delegates for intensive learning and exchange.

Designed as a dynamic platform for professional learning, the Program fostered interdisciplinary dialogue and the sharing of best practices in inclusive rehabilitation. Sessions explored the roles of multidisciplinary teams, relevant policies and entitlements, behavioural interventions, assistive devices, and family and community-based approaches to rehabilitation.

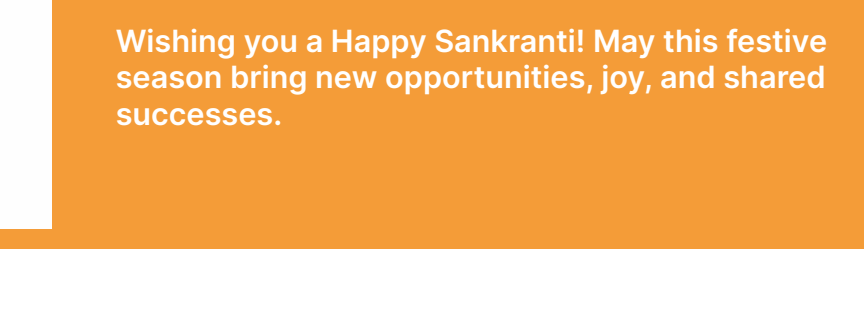


Participants included professionals from within APD as well as practitioners, service providers, and Persons with Disabilities from outside the organisation, reflecting IDRR's commitment to building capacities across the sector. The active engagement and diverse perspectives enriched discussions and grounded learning in real world practice.

Through initiatives such as this, IDRR continues to strengthen knowledge, skills, and collaboration among individuals and organisations, reinforcing APD's long standing commitment to inclusive rehabilitation and continuous professional learning.

Strengthening Access to Medical and Assistive Support for Children with Special Needs

The Department of Education organized block-level medical camps across Bangalore Urban North and South, Bangalore Rural, and Kolar districts to ensure systematic health assessments and access to essential aids and appliances for Children with Special Needs (CwSNs). A total of 10 medical camps were conducted, with technical and professional support from the APD Inclusive Education (IE) team, strengthening the quality, accuracy, and inclusiveness of the initiative.



Overall, 1,052 CwSNs, accompanied by their parents, participated in the camps and underwent detailed need analysis, functional evaluation, and precise measurements for Assistive and Adaptive Technology (AAT). To enhance the depth and quality of assessments, APD deputed a

Physiotherapist, Audiologist, and Occupational Therapist to work alongside government medical teams. The APD Inclusive Education team facilitated access to Social Security Schemes, including support for UDID registration, enabling families to access long-term entitlements and services.

The medical camps served as a critical platform for identification, appropriate referrals, and timely access to assistive and rehabilitative services, contributing to improved functional independence, educational participation, and overall well-being of CwSNs. The initiative reflects the strength of collaboration between the Department of Education and APD in advancing inclusive, child-centred systems of Rehabilitation and education.

Leading the Way in Inclusive Mobility

APD facilitated the Wheelchair Distribution Program for Persons with Spinal Cord Injuries (SCI) in the Tumkur District of Karnataka, reinforcing its commitment to rehabilitation, independence, and social inclusion of Persons with Disabilities. Through this initiative, 81 individuals with SCI received customised Motivation Wheelchairs designed to meet their specific physical and functional needs, enabling greater mobility and participation in everyday life.

This program marked a significant first for Karnataka, as Motivation Wheelchairs were provided through government support for the first time. Owing to their advanced design and higher cost, government support had earlier been limited to standard wheelchairs. APD played a key facilitative role by coordinating assessments, customisation, and distribution, ensuring that each beneficiary received a wheelchair best suited to their condition.

The initiative was implemented with the support of the Tumkur Zilla Panchayat and the District Disabled Welfare Office (DDWO), Tumkur, at a total project cost of ₹31,15,000. APD successfully coordinated distribution across multiple locations in Tumkur district on the same day, ensuring accessibility and reach for all beneficiaries.

This initiative is a prominent step among APD's continued efforts in fostering inclusive community development and empowering persons with disabilities through appropriate assistive technology and rehabilitation support.

Health Equity and Social Justice, A Top Priority Towards Enhancing Lives of Persons With Disabilities

A comprehensive public welfare program was successfully organised on 14 December 2026 in Yadgir District through the collective efforts of the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, Bengaluru; District Legal Services Authority, Yadgir; District Bar Association, Yadgir; District Health and Family Welfare Department; Yadgir Institute of Medical Sciences Teaching Hospital; the District Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Department; and the Association of People with Disability (APD).

Held at the new District Court building in Yadgir, the program marked Universal Health Coverage Day and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The event was inaugurated by Hon'ble Smt K. S. Hemalekha, Justice of the Karnataka High Court and Administrative Judge for Yadgir District, and presided over by Hon'ble Shri P. S. Dinesh Kumar, Presiding Officer, Securities Appellate Tribunal, Mumbai, and

former Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court. The program witnessed the presence of judicial officers, advocates, medical professionals, and representatives from key welfare departments.

Major highlights included the distribution of assistive devices such as wheelchairs, hearing aids, crutches, and tricycles, along with free health check-ups and a blood donation camp. The initiative reinforced a shared commitment to social justice, health equity, and the empowerment of people with Disabilities.

The program concluded with felicitations and closing remarks by Sri Mariyappa, Senior Civil Judge and Member Secretary, DLSA Yadgir, and Shri Ramesh Kattimani, Yadgir Taluk Coordinator.

From Stiffness to Strength: A New Life

Jagannath N.S., a resident of Avathi, faced a daunting recovery following major head and neck surgery. As a cancer survivor, he struggled with severe neck pain and stiffness, fearing his inability to perform basic movements was permanent.

His outlook changed at the Avathi Primary Health Centre, where he discovered the Rehab on Wheels program of APD. Experts Ms Andrea, Dr Sangeeta, and Dr Nawaz explained that structured therapy is essential for regaining independence post-surgery. Despite initial discouragement, the team's clinical knowledge and constant encouragement kept Jagannath focused on his home exercise program.

The transformation was remarkable. By his third session, pain significantly reduced; by the fifth, he regained neck mobility. Now back at work, Jagannath credits the team's tailored, empathetic approach for his recovery.

"Rehab on Wheels restored my confidence," he says. For survivors like Jagannath, accessible rehabilitation is the bridge to a normal life, proving that dedicated therapy can truly turn the tide and provide a second chance at independence.

As we celebrate Makar Sankranti, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your continued support and belief in building a more inclusive and equitable world for persons with disabilities. Your partnership makes meaningful change possible.

Wishing you a Happy Sankranti! May this festive season bring new opportunities, joy, and shared successes.