



# REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR

Leveraging Policy for Education & Skill Development

**A DECADE OF RPWD ACT**

**THEME : "INTENT TO IMPACT"**



**Organized by Seva-in-Action  
In Collaboration with  
Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities  
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, GOI**

# Preface



The enactment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPwD Act) marked a significant milestone in India's journey towards a more inclusive and equitable society. For those of us working in the disability sector, the Act has been far more than a legal framework; it has served as a powerful instrument for advocacy, policy dialogue and action. At its core, the Act reinforces a fundamental principle that inclusion is not an act of charity, but a right grounded in dignity, equality and meaningful participation.

This seminar focussed on Chapters III and IV of the Act, which address education and skill development. These provisions clearly acknowledge that inclusive education, skill development and employment are deeply interconnected. They highlight the importance of supporting the transition from education to livelihoods through a continuum of enabling measures. Curriculum flexibility, reasonable accommodation, equitable assessment practices, responsive teaching approaches, access to assistive technologies and inclusive opportunities in skilling and employment are central to ensuring that persons with disabilities can participate fully and productively in society.

Nearly a decade after the Act came into force, several important policy developments have strengthened the landscape of inclusion. Initiatives such as the National Education Policy 2020 and the work of the National Skill Development Corporation have opened new avenues for inclusive education and vocational opportunities. Yet, significant gaps remain between policy intent and on-ground implementation. Practitioners in the field continue to witness both the progress made and the challenges that persist in translating policy commitments into meaningful outcomes for persons with disabilities.

Against this backdrop, the present seminar was organised to create a constructive platform for dialogue, reflection, and knowledge exchange. It brought together policymakers from the government, practitioners, educators, researchers, and civil society representatives to examine both opportunities and implementation realities in the disability sector. Over the course of two days, thematic sessions were deliberated such as inclusive assessments and pedagogy, invisible disabilities, teacher education, the role of technology and artificial intelligence, resource and support systems, skill development pathways and transitions to employment.

We are deeply grateful to the Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for their partnership and support in this important initiative. Their engagement reflects the vital collaboration required between government institutions and civil society to strengthen the implementation of inclusive policies across the country. We also extend our sincere appreciation to the chairpersons, speakers, panellists, and participants who have joined this seminar to contribute their insights, experiences, and perspectives.

Over the past four decades, Seva-in-Action has worked closely with Government systems and community stakeholders to advance the rights and opportunities of persons with disabilities. Our experience has consistently underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in translating policy frameworks into meaningful change at the grassroots level.

It is our hope that the recommendations emerging from this seminar will be actively considered and adopted by the concerned ministries and Government agencies, leading to their effective implementation focussing on life span approach and thereby strengthening inclusive education, skill development and employment pathways for persons with disabilities across India to live a life with dignity and valued in the society.

**Ruma Banerjee**  
**Vice chairperson**  
**Seva-in-action**

## Introduction

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 is a landmark legislation enacted to protect, promote, and fulfil the rights of persons with disabilities, in alignment with India's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), ratified in 2007. The Act represents a paradigm shift from a welfare-based approach to a rights-based framework, mandating equal opportunities, accessibility, and inclusion across sectors.

Chapter III of the RPwD Act defines inclusive education as a system wherein learners with and without disabilities learn together, supported by suitably adapted teaching-learning processes to address diverse learning needs. The Act has provided renewed momentum towards realizing the right to education for children with disabilities across educational settings.

While the Act recognizes 21 categories of disabilities, significant systemic gaps remain in translating policy intent into effective practice. Ensuring equitable access, appropriate accommodations, and individualized support requires strengthened infrastructure, enhanced institutional capacity, adequate resource allocation, and the strategic use of technology and assistive devices. Central to this effort is the sustained preparation and professional support of teachers to enable inclusive classroom practices.

Further, convergence between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, is critical to advancing a holistic and coordinated approach to education and development for persons with disabilities.

Chapter IV of the RPwD Act emphasizes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream and non-formal vocational education, skill development, and employment programmes, with particular attention to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There is a growing need to adopt a lifespan approach that integrates education, vocational skills, and life skills to facilitate meaningful participation in society and sustainable livelihoods.

Against this backdrop, Seva-in-Action is organizing this National Seminar to bring together policymakers, practitioners, academicians, educators, civil society organizations, and government departments to examine opportunities, identify gaps, and address implementation challenges related to Chapters III and IV of the RPwD Act, 2016.

### Objectives

- Critically examine the provisions of Chapters III (Education) and IV (Skill Development and Employment) of the RPwD Act, 2016, with a focus on effective implementation.
- Deliberate on curriculum flexibility and examination reforms necessary to ensure equitable access, participation, and learning outcomes for learners with disabilities across education systems.
- Explore alignment between teacher education frameworks, capacity-building initiatives, the RPwD Act, 2016, and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to strengthen inclusive education practices and vocational education.
- Identify the need for upscaling effective and replicable models of inclusive classroom practices, vocational education and skill development programmes that demonstrate measurable impact.
- Examine the need for policy coherence across education, vocational education and skill development frameworks to strengthen transition pathways for persons with disabilities.
- Deliberate on the challenges faced by persons with invisible disabilities in accessing provisions under the RPwD Act, 2016.

Anchored in the principles of equity, accessibility and appropriate use of technology, the deliberations aim to generate actionable recommendations and collaborative frameworks for inclusive and equitable education and skill development

## Programme Details

30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026

St John's College Auditorium, Bangalore

Organised by an NGO working in the field of disabilities Seva-in-Action in collaboration with office of the Chief Commissioner of Disabilities, GOI

### Inaugural Session

The National Seminar on “**Leveraging Policy for Education and Skill Development: From Intent to Impact**” was inaugurated with the presence of distinguished dignitaries from the Government of India, Government of Karnataka, and representatives from civil society organisations working in the disability sector. The seminar was organised by **Seva-in-Action** with the objective of reflecting on a decade of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016** and deliberating on strengthening inclusive education and skill development systems in the country.



The session commenced with a warm welcome to the dignitaries on the dais, including **Mrs. Srija**, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Education, Government of India (Chief Guest); **Mr. Govind Raj**, Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Government of India; **Mr. Praveen Prakash**, Deputy Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Government of India; and **Mr. Das Suryavamshi**, State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Government of Karnataka. Participants from various states, including policymakers, practitioners, educators, and civil society

representatives, were also welcomed.

In her opening remarks, **Ms. Ruma Banerjee**, Senior Vice Chairperson, **Seva-in-Action**, highlighted the significance of the **RPwD Act, 2016** as a landmark legislation that has strengthened the rights-based framework for persons with disabilities in India. She emphasized that inclusion must be viewed not as charity but as a fundamental right grounded in dignity, equality, and meaningful participation. She noted that inclusive education, skill development, and employment are deeply interconnected and require sustained attention from the classroom level to livelihood opportunities. The seminar aimed to deliberate particularly on **Chapter III (Education)** and **Chapter IV (Skill Development and Employment)** of the Act, examining both progress and challenges in implementation.



**Mr. Govind Raj**, Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, highlighted the role of the Office of the Chief Commissioner in monitoring the implementation of disability rights legislation. He emphasized that inclusive education can only be effective when supported by accessibility, appropriate infrastructure, trained professionals, and a positive mindset within institutions. He encouraged participants to use the seminar as a platform to review progress, identify gaps, and develop actionable recommendations that could be shared with relevant ministries.

**Mr. Das Suryavamshi**, State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Government of Karnataka, shared insights from field visits across districts in the state. He pointed out that while policies and schemes exist, challenges remain in ensuring effective implementation at the grassroots level, particularly in the areas of teacher preparedness, availability of trained special educators, and access to learning resources such as sign language and Braille. He also stressed the importance of expanding opportunities for higher education and skill development for persons with disabilities.





In his address, **Mr. Praveen Prakash**, Deputy Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, emphasized the importance of education as a pathway to empowerment and employment. Referring to key judicial interpretations and policy developments, he underscored that reservation and policy measures for persons with disabilities are intended to ensure **equalization of opportunities** rather than merely representation. He also highlighted recent policy progress, including the extension of reservation provisions in skill development programmes, and stressed the need to expand high-value skill opportunities for

persons with disabilities.

Delivering the **Keynote Address**, **Mrs. Srija**, Economic Advisor, Ministry of Education, Government of India, shared policy perspectives from the education sector. She highlighted the role of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** and the **Samagra Shiksha programme** in promoting inclusive education across states. She noted that despite progress, a significant proportion of children with special needs remain outside the formal schooling system, underscoring the need for improved accessibility, early identification, and targeted interventions. She also emphasized the importance of **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**, teacher capacity building, accessible infrastructure, and the integration of assistive technologies to ensure that inclusive education becomes a reality across the country.



The keynote address also highlighted the need for greater collaboration between the **Ministry of Education, state governments, and civil society organisations** to strengthen implementation mechanisms. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that inclusive planning is integrated into all educational infrastructure and programmes rather than treated as a separate component.



**Vote of thanks** for the inaugural session was delivered by **Ms Manjula Nanjundaiah, Director of Seva-in-Action** thanking all the dignitaries for the insightful speech for further deliberation during the technical sessions.

The inaugural session set the tone for the two-day seminar by underscoring the need to bridge the gap between **policy intent and ground-level implementation**. It emphasized that inclusive education and skill development must be pursued through collaborative efforts involving policymakers, practitioners, educators, and community stakeholders. The deliberations of the seminar were expected to culminate in **actionable recommendations and a policy brief** aimed at strengthening inclusive education and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities across the country.

## Technical Sessions

**DAY 1 – 30 January 2026**

**SESSION 1 – Assessments, Curriculum Flexibility, Pedagogy & Examination Reforms for Inclusive Education (Presentation & Q & A)**

**Chairperson:** Ms A. Srija, Economic Advisor, Dept of School Edn & Literacy MoE, GOI

### Speakers

- Ms Manju Balasubramanyam, Principal, DPS, North Bangalore
- Dr Bharti, Professor, MPD, CIET, NCERT, Delhi
- Ms Stuti Gaur, Academic Coordinator IE, Directorate of Education, GNCTD, Delhi

## Objective

To examine the adequacy of existing curriculum frameworks, pedagogical practices, assessment systems, and examination reforms in addressing learner diversity, and to assess alignment with the RPwD Act, 2016 and National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, with specific focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, early identification, and equitable evaluation mechanisms.

### Presentation by Ms Manju Balasubramanyam



During the technical session, **Ms. Manju** highlighted the growing importance of **inclusive education** and noted that disability, once considered a taboo, is now increasingly recognized within the framework of an equitable and progressive society. She emphasized that inclusion ensures that every individual, regardless of ability or background, has a sense of belonging and opportunity.

Referring to the corporate concept of **DICE (Diverse and Inclusive Community with Equitable Opportunities)**, she stressed the need to create environments where everyone can participate and succeed. She also acknowledged the efforts of educational boards such as **CBSE and NIOS** in promoting flexible and inclusive learning pathways.

She explained inclusion through the framework of the **“5 Ps”**:

- **Positive Attitude**
- **Placement**
- **Participation**
- **Purposeful Goals**
- **Supportive Practices**

Ms. Manju highlighted that **one in six people globally experiences some form of disability**, making inclusive education essential. She shared the example of **Karan Veer Anand**, a student with disability who became a Head Boy, demonstrating how supportive infrastructure, adaptable curriculum, and inclusive school environments can enable students to thrive.

She emphasized the **role of families**, particularly parents, in supporting children with special needs and encouraged schools to provide additional support such as remedial classes and alternative learning pathways through **NIOS** alongside **CBSE** curricula.

The session also addressed key challenges, including the **shortage of trained special educators** and the need for **capacity building and collaboration with specialized organizations**. She stressed the importance of **early identification of special needs—ideally by Grade 5 or earlier—and even from age three**, along with the adoption of **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** to provide multiple ways for students to access information and demonstrate learning..

Ms. Manju concluded by highlighting the distinction between **Intellectual Disabilities (ID)** and **Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)** and emphasized that inclusive education is a **shared responsibility of schools, families, and communities** to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn, participate, and succeed.



### Presentation by Dr Bharti



Dr Bharti shared about the **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)**, highlighting recent initiatives and policy directions aimed at strengthening inclusive and flexible education in India. The speaker discussed the concept of **curriculum flexibility**, which is emphasized in the **National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCF-FS 2022)** and the **National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE 2023)**. These frameworks promote a **multidisciplinary and holistic approach to education**, with the

objective of nurturing children as **analytical thinkers** while ensuring that learning is meaningful and relevant to their lives.

A strong emphasis was placed on the development of **functional life skills** and the integration of the **principles of equity and inclusion** within the school system. Schools are encouraged to create environments where every child experiences a **sense of belonging**, has **equal access to learning opportunities**, and learns in a **safe and supportive space free from discrimination and bullying**.

To translate these principles into practice, the speaker highlighted several strategies such as ensuring **safe and child-friendly school environments** and promoting inclusive communication methods, including **Indian Sign Language (ISL), Braille, and Assistive and Augmentative Communication tools**.



The presentation also outlined several **NCERT initiatives for children with special needs**. These include the **DTH Channel 31 in Indian Sign Language**, which broadcasts curriculum-based content and yoga sessions, and **live classes on the NCERT Official YouTube Channel** aired daily at 12 PM. These 30-minute sessions follow the **“One Class, One Subject, One Textbook, One Lesson”** approach for Classes 1 to 12, with every 13th session dedicated to themes related to **inclusive education**.

Further initiatives include **visual learning interventions** and the development of accessible educational materials such as **“Priya: The Accessibility Warrior,”** a comic series available in Hindi and English along with sign language videos, developed in collaboration with the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)**. The comic illustrates how schools can become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of children with disabilities.

NCERT has also developed **Teaching–Learning Resources in Indian Sign Language**, providing chapter-by-chapter interpretation of all NCERT textbooks in ISL. Another innovative initiative highlighted was **“Kitaab: Ek Padhe, Anek Padhe,”** an inclusive textbook format available in print and Braille. Using a scanning device, the books can be read aloud with **audio narration and picture descriptions**, enhancing accessibility for children with visual impairments. This initiative has currently been completed for **textbooks up to Class II**.



The session concluded with a demonstration of the **Priya Accessibility Initiative**, including a launch video developed in collaboration with **Google**, which will soon be hosted on a dedicated NCERT webpage to further expand accessibility resources.

Overall, the presentation underscored NCERT’s commitment to **inclusive, accessible, and equitable education**, ensuring that children with diverse learning needs are fully supported within the national education system.

#### Presentation by Ms. Stuti Gaur



The technical session also included a presentation by a **Special Educator from the Directorate of Education, Government of NCT of Delhi**, who shared insights into the initiatives undertaken by the Delhi Government to support the education of children with disabilities in government schools.

The speaker highlighted that **37,812 students with disabilities** have been identified across **seven school management systems in Delhi**, supported by **2,321 special educator teachers**. Efforts have been made to ensure that **almost every government school in Delhi has access to a special educator**, thereby strengthening inclusive education practices within mainstream schools.

The session emphasized the importance of **comprehensive assessment processes** to understand the needs of students with disabilities. Both **informal and formal assessments** are used. Informal assessments include **school and classroom observations, the buddy system, creative and expressive activities through co-curricular platforms, and parental inputs**. Formal assessments involve **standardized tests, intelligence testing, and**

**psychological evaluations.** Various assessment tools such as **PRASHAST, GLAD, BASIC-MR, MDPS, and FACP** are used to support this process.

The Directorate has also focused on **capacity building of teachers**, ensuring that training is provided not only to **special educators but also to regular teachers**, enabling them to effectively support children with diverse learning needs in inclusive classrooms.

A significant initiative highlighted was the establishment of **24 District Resource Centres for Students with Disabilities**, which provide **free therapeutic services** for children studying in government schools. These centres support students through specialized interventions and guidance.

To ensure consistency in learning support, **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)** are being **uniformly implemented across all Delhi Government schools**. Standardized formats for **Individual Plans (IP)** have been introduced to reduce discrepancies and ensure systematic planning for each child. Additionally, efforts are being made to **equip schools with appropriate infrastructure and accessibility provisions**.

The presentation also addressed the needs of students who are unable to follow the standard curriculum even after adaptations. For such learners, a **special skill-based curriculum** has been developed that focuses on **functional learning and skill development**. This curriculum is designed to help students progress to the next grade while strengthening their abilities and independence. Currently in its **second pilot phase**, the curriculum is being implemented for **students from Classes 1 to 8**, particularly those with **multiple disabilities and intellectual disabilities**.



The curriculum framework integrates key developmental domains including **physical development, social and emotional development, language and communication, comprehension, independent living skills, functional academics, and information skills**. Teachers are trained in advance to effectively implement the curriculum, and structured guidelines are provided to facilitate program planning.

The speaker also mentioned that **seven special schools under the Directorate of Education, GNCTD**, catering to various disabilities, are part of this initiative, with **one of these schools serving as a pilot site for the new curriculum**.

The session provided valuable insights into the **systematic and large-scale efforts being undertaken by the Delhi Government to promote inclusive, accessible, and skill-oriented education for children with disabilities**.

### Brief Summary of the Technical Session

The technical session focused on key issues and practices related to the implementation of **inclusive education in India**. Speakers emphasized that the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** and the **National Curriculum Frameworks (2022 and 2023)** place strong emphasis on **equity, inclusion, and curriculum flexibility**. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** was highlighted as an effective approach to address diverse learning needs by providing multiple ways for students to access, engage with, and express their learning.

Participants stressed the importance of **early identification of disabilities and timely provision of accommodations**, noting that delays in providing support such as scribes, subject exemptions, or alternative assessments can lead to academic stress and disengagement among students.

The session also discussed the need to **reform assessment practices**, moving beyond uniform written examinations toward more **flexible and competency-based evaluation methods**. Flexible learning pathways such as **NIOS** were recognized as valuable alternatives that support diverse learner needs, though misconceptions about such options still persist.

Another key theme was **teacher capacity building**, as the shortage of special educators requires regular teachers to be trained in **inclusive teaching strategies and differentiated instruction**. The session also highlighted several

**system-level initiatives**, including accessible textbooks, Indian Sign Language–based resources, assistive technologies, district resource centres, and standardized **Individualised Education Plans (IEPs)**.

Overall, the discussion underscored that **inclusive education requires coordinated efforts in policy implementation, teacher training, flexible curricula, and supportive infrastructure** to ensure meaningful participation of all learners.

## SESSION 2 – Invisible Disabilities under the RPwD Act, 2016: Policy Recognition & Lived Realities (Panel Discussion)

**Chairperson & Moderator:** Dr. Indumathi Rao Managing Trustee CBR Network

### Panellists

- Mrs Chitra Seshadhari, Trustee and Director Farm Hill Education Trust.
- Ms. Rajani Padmanabhan, Special Educator, Brindavan Education Centre,
- Dr Thomas Kishore Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS
- Dr Tulika Seth, HOD Haematology AIIMS

### Objective

To assess whether existing legal and administrative mechanisms under the RPwD Act, 2016 adequately recognise and respond to invisible disabilities, and to identify policy and implementation gaps across education, certification, assessment, skilling, and employment.

### Discussions of Technical Sessions



**Dr Tulika Seth** shared about the **revised guidelines for disability assessment and certification**, particularly for **blood disorders**, issued on **12 March 2024**. These guidelines were developed through a collaborative effort between the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** and the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment**, under the framework of the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**. The revision aimed to make the scoring system **more objective, user-friendly, and equitable**, addressing concerns raised by persons with disabilities, patient groups, and medical professionals regarding the earlier 2017 guidelines.

She explained that the committee responsible for revising the guidelines included medical experts as well as representatives from patient groups, ensuring that the perspectives of persons with disabilities were incorporated. The process emphasized understanding disability beyond medical diagnosis, focusing instead on the interaction between the individual and the environment, in line with the World Health Organization ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health) framework.

A key objective of the revised guidelines was to ensure that the assessment system is India-centric and accessible, especially for individuals in rural and resource-limited settings. The earlier system relied heavily on expensive laboratory tests, which were often unavailable outside major cities. The new guidelines instead prioritize functional ability, participation, and quality of life, making the assessment more holistic and practical.

The revised scoring system also addresses several limitations of the previous guidelines. It removes subjective scoring ranges, replacing them with clear, standardized whole-number scores to ensure consistency across assessment centres. The framework also avoids linking disability scoring to fluctuating symptoms such as anaemia levels or the number of disease crises, preventing situations where patients might delay treatment in order to obtain higher disability scores.

Another significant reform is the clarification regarding permanent disability certificates for inherited blood disorders such as thalassemia, sickle cell disease, and haemophilia. Since these are lifelong conditions, the new guidelines state that certificates should be permanent rather than temporary, reducing administrative barriers for patients seeking education, employment, or social support benefits.

The guidelines also simplify the documentation and certification process. Diagnosis now requires only basic confirmatory tests and minimal supporting medical records, allowing certification to be issued even in smaller hospitals. The certifying authority can include government or recognized non-government hospitals, and assessments can be conducted by general physicians if specialists are unavailable.

Additionally, the new framework introduces pain scoring and functional assessments to better reflect the lived experiences of individuals with chronic conditions. The overall approach emphasizes quality of life, functional independence, and equitable access to certification, ensuring that persons with blood disorders receive fair recognition of their disability without discouraging them from seeking treatment.

She concluded by highlighting that while the revised guidelines represent a significant improvement, they remain open to feedback and future refinement, reflecting a continued commitment to inclusive and patient-centred disability policy.

**Ms Chithra Sheshadri** who is an educator, therapist trainer, and parent of an autistic young adult, shared both professional insights and lived experiences regarding the implementation of inclusive education for children with autism. The discussion was framed within the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and its alignment with the National Education Policy 2020, highlighting the gap between policy commitments and on-ground implementation.



The speaker noted that while the legislation provides strong rights-based language and guarantees inclusive education, many families still struggle to access these rights in practice. Parents often have to independently navigate diagnosis, schooling, and support systems, indicating a lack of structured implementation mechanisms. Although more autistic children are now entering schools at the primary level, their numbers decline significantly in middle school, high school, and higher education, reflecting limited sustained support.

Another major concern raised was the lack of reliable national data on autism in India. Unlike countries such as the United States, where prevalence estimates are widely available, India lacks comprehensive research and statistics, which limits planning, resource allocation, and policy implementation.

The session emphasized that reasonable accommodations, though guaranteed under the law, are often implemented inconsistently. In many schools, accommodations are primarily provided during examinations—such as extra time, scribes, or alternative formats—but are rarely extended to daily classroom learning, assignments, and projects. This inconsistency largely depends on the awareness of teachers and the advocacy capacity of parents, rather than a structured system.

The panellist also highlighted a common institutional misconception that providing accommodations reduces academic rigor. This mindset discourages families from seeking accommodations and contributes to stigma around inclusive practices. The session stressed that accommodations are not concessions but rights, and they must be implemented systematically rather than as discretionary support.

To address these challenges, the speaker proposed the development of typologies and standardized manuals for autism, which could guide educators in identifying different learner profiles and providing appropriate accommodations. Such frameworks would allow teachers, therapists, health professionals, and parents to work collaboratively, ensuring that the child remains at the centre of the support system.



The importance of flexible curricula, multimodal teaching methods, and diversified assessment strategies was also emphasized. Instead of relying solely on written examinations, alternative methods such as oral presentations, projects, assistive technology, and collaborative tasks can better assess conceptual understanding and problem-solving abilities while reducing barriers for autistic learners.

**Dr. Rajani Padmanabhan** in her discussion during the technical session, emphasized that inclusive education must function through both a top-down and bottom-up approach. While strong policies are necessary at the national and state levels, the experiences of practitioners, schools, and educators must also inform implementation to ensure meaningful inclusion.



Focusing on three key enablers curriculum, infrastructure, and assessment—she highlighted the need for greater curriculum flexibility across mainstream boards such as CBSE and State Boards, similar to the flexibility offered by NIOS. Allowing students to complete board examinations over a longer period could support learners with neurodivergent and invisible disabilities, as well as students facing health or mental health challenges. She also recommended the integration of functional and skill-based learning pathways, beginning at the secondary level, to support diverse learner strengths and promote vocational skills.

The speaker further stressed the importance of recognizing the role of special schools within the inclusive education continuum, noting that they often support children who struggle in mainstream settings but later succeed academically and professionally. She called for easier recognition and support for special schools within the formal education system.

On assessment, she suggested reforms that focus more on the level of support required by the learner rather than only diagnostic labels, and advocated for expanding certification authorities to make assessments more accessible for families.



Finally, addressing the transition to employment, she highlighted the need for stronger support systems for young adults with disabilities, including clear documentation of support needs and workplace buddy systems. She emphasized that collaboration between schools, families, training organizations, and employers is essential to ensure that young adults with disabilities can become productive and independent members of society.

**Dr. Thomas Kishore** highlighted the complexities surrounding invisible disabilities, noting that unlike visible disabilities, these conditions often lack clear physical indicators and therefore require careful observation, professional expertise, and systematic assessment to identify appropriate support needs. He emphasized that India's disability policies have progressively evolved, particularly with the RPwD Act, 2016, which formally recognized conditions such as autism and specific learning disabilities (SLD) and subsequently introduced assessment guidelines.



The speaker discussed several challenges in current assessment practices, including limitations of existing tools such as the Vineland Social Maturity Scale for intellectual disability, the Indian Scale for Assessment of Autism (ISAA), and language-related constraints in SLD assessment batteries. He pointed out that these tools sometimes fail to fully capture the functional realities of children across different cultural and linguistic contexts.

Dr. Kishore also stressed the need for earlier identification and intervention, especially for conditions such as SLD and autism, as delays in diagnosis often reduce the effectiveness of educational support. He further highlighted a critical gap in recognizing and supporting psychiatric disabilities among children and adolescents, including conditions such as depression, anxiety, and OCD, which can significantly affect learning but often remain unaddressed within the current education and certification systems.

He concluded by emphasizing the importance of refining assessment systems, expanding culturally appropriate tools, and strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure that children with invisible disabilities receive timely identification, appropriate accommodations, and sustained educational support.

## Brief Summary of the session

**Dr Indumati Rao** During highlighted that invisible disabilities continue to remain systemically overlooked despite legal recognition under the RPwD Act. Limited incidence data, lack of awareness among service providers, and rigid institutional procedures often delay identification and restrict access to early intervention, inclusive education, and skill development opportunities.



Panellists noted that recent reforms in disability certification guidelines (March 2024) represent some important step toward more functional and objective assessment frameworks. However, challenges remain due to rigid score thresholds, language limitations, and age-based criteria that may not adequately capture the functional impact of many invisible conditions. The discussion also underscored that reasonable accommodation is often restricted to examination settings, while consistent support in classroom teaching, curriculum delivery, and ongoing assessment remains limited. As a result, access to accommodations frequently depends on parental advocacy and individual teacher initiative, rather than structured institutional systems.

Participants further highlighted the rigidity of mainstream curricula and assessment systems, which tend to prioritise uniform academic pathways and written examinations. This lack of flexibility restricts alternative or skill-based learning pathways and increases the risk of exclusion and dropout among learners with invisible disabilities.

### Session highlighted four key enablers for inclusive education:

- Reducing curriculum rigidity and enabling multiple learning pathways.
- Embedding inclusion in teacher training and professional development.
- Establishing multidisciplinary support teams within schools.



Finally, the session pointed to fragmented support systems and weak transition planning from education to employment. Certification documents rarely capture functional abilities or support needs, limiting their usefulness for employers. Strengthening multidisciplinary coordination, flexible education pathways, and employment-focused documentation was identified as essential for ensuring meaningful inclusion and economic participation for persons with invisible disabilities.

## SESSION 3: Teacher Education and Capacity Building for Inclusive Education: Gaps and Opportunities (Aligning NEP 2020 and RPwD Act). (Panel Discussion)

**Moderator:** Ms. Ruma Banerjee, Vice Chairperson, SiA, CABD member, MSJE, GOI

### Panellists

- Professor Dr Sujatha Bhan, Prof & Dean School of education and Department of Psychology, Lovely University, Punjab
- Professor Dr Ankur Madan, Director, School of Education, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru
- Quizabled an innovative pedagogy – A study report by NIAS & SiA – by Mr. Narasimha Swamy

### Objective

To examine whether current teacher education and capacity-building frameworks particularly under the RPwD Act, 2016 and NEP 2020 are adequately preparing teachers to address classroom diversity, and to identify structural, curricular, and regulatory gaps affecting the implementation of inclusive education.

## Discussions



The discussion by **Professor Sujata Bhan and Professor Ankur** highlighted that inclusive education remains largely rhetorical unless teacher preparation both pre-service and in-service is substantially strengthened. While curricula reflect a shift from special education to inclusive education, implementation on the ground remains uneven, with inclusion often limited to physical placement rather than meaningful pedagogical support.

Participants cautioned against undermining the role of special educators and special schools, particularly for learners with high support needs. At the same time, concerns were raised about the widespread practice of placing children with diverse and severe disabilities in mainstream schools without adequate interventions, support systems, or trained personnel.

### *Limitations of Current Pre-Service Teacher Education*

While acknowledging that teacher education curricula are evolving, speakers noted significant gaps:

- Special educators are typically trained in one disability area, leaving them underprepared to support the full range of diversities present in inclusive classrooms.
- Inclusive pedagogy is largely taught as theory, with insufficient practical exposure, supervised practice, or real-time engagement in inclusive settings.
- Early specialisation decisions now required at the post-secondary level under revised teacher education structures raise concerns about informed choice, given limited exposure to disability contexts at that stage.
- Though initiatives such as dual-degree and integrated programmes were acknowledged as promising, their long-term implications remain uncertain and require careful monitoring.

### *Inadequate Integration of Inclusion in Regular Teacher Training*

Professor Ankur highlighted a critical concern regarding the marginal positioning of inclusive education within mainstream teacher education programmes, particularly the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP). She noted that inclusion is frequently limited to a single, low-credit course, which is widely regarded as inadequate to meaningfully shape teaching practices or mindset.



Speakers stressed that inclusion cannot be addressed through standalone courses. Instead, inclusive perspectives must be embedded across all components of teacher education foundational courses, subject pedagogy, teaching practice, and assessments. Subject teachers, especially in areas such as mathematics and sciences, must be equipped to adapt content, processes, and assessments for diverse learners, in collaboration with special educators.

### *Capacity Constraints and Attitudinal Barriers*

The discussion acknowledged that regular teachers are central to inclusive education, yet often feel overburdened, under-supported, and inadequately incentivised. Resistance to additional training was framed not merely as an attitudinal issue, but as a systemic challenge linked to workload, lack of recognition, and absence of career incentives.

Speakers emphasised that inclusive education is fundamentally about good teaching practices supported by basic awareness of disabilities, empathy, flexibility, and collaborative problem-solving rather than specialised technical expertise alone.

## Regulatory Silos and Structural Barriers

Participants raised concerns regarding fragmented governance between regulatory bodies such as the RCI and NCTE, resulting in rigid certification norms and limited institutional innovation. Universities and organisations with demonstrated expertise in inclusive education face barriers due to lack of regulatory recognition, despite delivering high-quality blended and in-service programmes.



The absence of formal recognition affects teacher participation, institutional support, and career progression, ultimately limiting system-wide capacity building. Speakers called for greater regulatory flexibility and collaboration to enable diverse, practice-oriented models of teacher education.

### *Evidence from Practice: The “Quizabled” Model*

Findings from a decade-long study of Seva-in-Action’s Quizabled programme illustrated how accessible design can function as an embedded professional development tool for teachers.

#### *Key insights included:*

- Teachers gained hands-on exposure to reasonable accommodation through accessible formats, flexible response mechanisms, and disability-specific adaptations.
- Participation shifted teacher perceptions of student capability and raised aspirations among educators, students, and parents.
- Peer learning across disability contexts fostered knowledge-sharing and sustained changes in classroom practices.
- The initiative demonstrated that familiar pedagogical tools, when designed inclusively, can act as scalable and practical capacity-building models aligned with the RPwD Act’s principles of equality and participation.

#### *Summary of the Session*

- Reaffirmed that teacher preparation is central to the success of inclusive education under the RPwD Act.
- Highlighted the inadequacy of treating inclusion as an isolated curricular component rather than a cross-cutting pedagogical principle.
- Emphasised the need for integrated training of general and special educators through shared coursework, practicum, and collaboration.
- Called for stronger in-service training frameworks, with institutional support, incentives, and recognition.
- Urged regulatory bodies to move beyond silos and enable flexible, evidence-based teacher education models.
- Demonstrated the value of practice-led, accessible pedagogical initiatives as scalable capacity-building tools.



## SESSION 4: Leveraging Technology & AI for Inclusive, Accessible & Equitable Education (Presentation & Discussion)

**Chairperson:** A. Srija, Economic Advisor, Dept of School, Edn. & Literacy, MoE, GOI

#### **Speakers**

- Dr Bharti, Professor, MPD, Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT, New Delhi
- Dr. Indumathi Rao, Trustee CBR Network. Bangalore.
- Dr. Ajay Kumar, Supervisor IE, Directorate of Education, GNCTD, Delhi

#### **Objective**

To examine how technology and AI can be systematically leveraged to advance inclusive education under the RPwD Act, 2016 and NEP 2020, with a focus on access, capacity building, early intervention, assessment, and convergence across departments and delivery systems.

## Discussion

### *Technology as an Enabler of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*



**Dr. Bharti** highlighted national-level initiatives led by CIET–NCERT under the Ministry of Education that embed accessibility at the content design stage. A key example is PM e-Vidya DTH Channel 31, which delivers 24×7 curricular content in Indian Sign Language (ISL), supported by audio and visual elements. Since its launch in December 2024, the channel has significantly expanded its unique content duration and refresh frequency, reflecting growing institutional capacity and responsiveness to user engagement. This initiative demonstrated how inclusive content can be mainstreamed rather than treated as a parallel or add-on

system.

She emphasised that technology, when designed using UDL principles, can move inclusive education away from disability-specific interventions towards systems that benefit all learners.

### *Digital Infrastructure for Inclusive Education*

The role of DIKSHA as a national digital public infrastructure was discussed in detail. A dedicated CwSN vertical is being populated with inclusive and accessible learning resources contributed by states and national institutions.

In addition, dissemination through multiple channels including YouTube, DTH platforms, NCERT and Ministry portals was highlighted as critical for reaching learners and teachers across geographies, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

### *Capacity Building of Teachers through Digital Platforms*

Teacher capacity building emerged as a central theme. Dr. Bharti underscored the role of NISHTHA, one of the world’s largest teacher training programmes, in mainstreaming inclusive and equitable education.

#### *Key points included:*

- Inclusive education modules are embedded across NISHTHA programmes for regular teachers, early childhood educators, and school leaders.
- The focus is on translating curricular intent under the National Curriculum Framework into classroom practice.
- Boundaries between “regular” and “special” education are beginning to soften through shared training spaces, though further integration is needed.
- Short-term programmes, such as introductory Indian Sign Language courses, were highlighted as practical steps toward improving everyday communication and reducing social barriers within schools.
- Technology for Early Identification, Intervention and Rural Inclusion

**Dr. Indumathi Rao** emphasised that inclusive education must address the realities of rural, tribal, and remote contexts, where the majority of persons with disabilities reside. The session challenged the misconception that inclusive education is synonymous with disability-specific education, instead positioning it as a system-wide approach benefiting all learners.



#### **Technology-enabled tools were discussed as mechanisms to:**

- Support early screening, assessment, and dynamic Individualised Education Planning (IEP).
- Enable self-paced, interest-driven learning through learning stations, reducing over-reliance on teacher-centric models.
- Train local community facilitators to support inclusive learning, addressing teacher shortages without compromising quality.

- Establishing learning stations by integration of multilingual digital tools and voice-enabled technologies was presented as a means to enhance learner autonomy and engagement, particularly for first-generation learners.
- Convergence, Resource Centres, and Data-Informed Interventions

**Dr. Ajay Kumar's** focused on implementation models within government systems, particularly at the state level. While details varied, key themes included:



- The importance of convergence between education, social justice, health, and allied departments for effective inclusive education delivery.
- The role of technology-enabled resource centres in supporting schools, teachers, parents, and multidisciplinary professionals.
- Use of digital tools and AI-supported data analysis to flag learning needs, guide referrals, and inform classroom-level interventions.
- Continuous teacher training and mentoring linked to classroom observation, assessment data, and follow-up support.

The discussion reinforced that technology should not replace human support systems, but strengthen coordination, consistency, and accountability across them.

**Summary of the session**

- Affirmed technology and AI as critical enablers for implementing inclusive education at scale under the RPwD Act and NEP 2020.
- Demonstrated the value of national digital public infrastructure in mainstreaming accessibility and UDL-based content.
- Highlighted the role of digital platforms in teacher capacity building, particularly for regular teachers.
- Emphasised early identification, rural outreach, and community-based facilitation as priority areas for technology deployment.
- Reinforced the need for inter-departmental convergence and data-informed decision-making supported by technology.
- Cautioned that technological solutions must remain grounded in pedagogical intent and human support structures.



**Moderator:** Ms Manjula Nanjundaiah, Director, Seva-in-Action & EC member, Samagra Shikshana Karnataka, GOK

**Panellists**

- Mr, G. Ramnathan, Managing Trustee & Executive Director, SAMA Foundation, B'luru
- Mr Prateek Madhav, Cofounder & CEO, Assist Tech Foundation.
- Mr Janardhana AL, Lead Programmes, CBM India Trust

**Objective**

To examine the role of community-based resource support systems, assistive technology ecosystems and institutional frameworks in strengthening inclusive education, with a focus on accessibility, preparedness, dignity, and long-term sustainability under the RPwD Act, 2016.

Discussions

**Community-Based Resource Centres as the Foundation of Inclusion**



**Mr. G. Ramnathan** highlighted that inclusive education cannot succeed without localised preparation and support, particularly for children with intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, and autism. Drawing from lived experience, he stressed that inclusion without readiness leads to exclusion in practice.

A strong case was made for School Readiness Programme (SRP) centres functioning as community-level resource centres, located close to families rather than at distant district headquarters. These centres were described as cost-effective, family-centred, and capable of supporting 15–20 children annually with relatively modest financial investment.

***Essential Components***

- Daily therapy, preparation, and socialisation cannot be delivered through district-level rehabilitation models alone.
- Family attachment and community presence are critical for a child’s emotional security, confidence, and participation.
- Inclusion must begin with play, social interaction, and preparedness, not merely school admission.

***Addressing the Transition Beyond Schooling***

A major gap identified was the lack of structured pathways for persons with intellectual disabilities after the age of 18. The discussion highlighted the need to move beyond care-based models towards productive engagement and dignity of work. Community-based vocational exposure linked to locally available livelihoods such as household work, gardening, or assisted services was presented as a practical approach. Such models reduce the perception of persons with disabilities as dependents and support family acceptance and social inclusion.

**Assistive Technology as a System, Not a Product**

**Mr. Prateek Madhav** reframed assistive technology as an ecosystem, rather than isolated devices. He highlighted India’s emergence as a global hub for frugal assistive technology innovation, with over 500 startups working across disability domains.



**Key points included:**

- Assistive technology must be available, affordable, and adoptable to be effective.
- Adoption depends not only on cost, but also on awareness, training, and support systems.

- Experience and demonstration centres (“Sensate Centres”) play a crucial role by allowing families, teachers, and users to interact with technologies before adoption.
- The discussion emphasised AI-enabled personalisation, where technologies adapt continuously to individual learning and functional profiles, enhancing education, skilling, and independence.
- Affordability Through Innovative Business Models
- Affordability was discussed as a business model challenge, not merely a pricing issue. A three-tier approach was articulated:
- Direct purchase for those who can afford devices.
- Livelihood-linked or subsidy-supported models where technology enables income generation.

***CSR and public financing support for those unable to pay.***

This approach aligns with existing government schemes such as ADIP and highlights the need to integrate legacy welfare mechanisms with emerging technological solutions.

***Global Collaboration and Policy Alignment***

The session highlighted growing international collaboration in assistive technology, driven by Indian innovation. Cross-border partnerships, global alliances, and startup exchanges were cited as examples of how assistive technology can become part of broader trade, innovation, and development dialogues.

***There was a strong recommendation to recognise assistive technology as:***

- A strategic sector within national innovation policy.
- A candidate for inclusion in international cooperation and trade frameworks.
- Institutional Frameworks and Capacity Building

**Frame Work for Resource Centres Mr. Janardhana A.L.** presented CBM’s long-standing framework grounded in Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR), linking health, education, livelihood, and social inclusion.



***Key elements included:***

- Early identification and early intervention as the entry point for inclusive education.
- Resource centres serving as hubs for teacher training, parental support, assistive devices, and therapy services.
- Continuous human resource development through modular training programmes for teachers, parents, and community workers.
- Strong collaboration with government systems to scale impact and ensure sustainability.
- The session reiterated that inclusive education must be supported by infrastructure accessibility, trained human resources, UDL-based pedagogy, and community participation.

***Key Challenges Identified***

- Limited reach of rehabilitation and resource services beyond district levels.
- Inadequate physical accessibility in schools and public infrastructure despite policy mandates.
- Gaps in post-school pathways for persons with intellectual disabilities.
- Fragmented adoption of assistive technologies due to affordability, training, and awareness barriers.
- Need for stronger convergence between education, social justice, health, and livelihood systems.

**Summary of the Session**

- Strengthen and scale community-level resource centres as the backbone of inclusive education.
- Integrate assistive technology through ecosystem-based, affordable, and scalable models.
- Ensure physical accessibility is treated as a non-negotiable requirement, not a discretionary feature.
- Promote convergence across departments and partnerships with civil society and the private sector.
- Embed dignity, participation, and livelihood outcomes as core goals of inclusion.

## SESSION 6: Strengthening Vocational and Skill Development for Transition to Employment for persons with Disabilities (Panel Discussion)

**Chairperson & Moderator:** Ms. Shanti Raghavan, Founder & Managing Trustee, EnAble India

### Panellists

1. Mr Ravindran, CEO, Skill Council for persons with disabilities, GOI
2. Mr Kanaga Sabhapathy, Rehabilitation Officer, CRC, Davanagere.
3. Ms. Suman John, Cofounder & Managing Director, Diya Innovations Pvt Ltd.

### Objective

To examine the effectiveness, gaps, and future directions of vocational training and employment pathways for persons with disabilities under Chapter IV of the RPwD Act, 2016, with a focus on rural outreach, reasonable accommodation, institutional processes, market linkages, and long-term economic inclusion.

### Discussion

#### Evolution of the Disability Skill Development Ecosystem



**Mr. Ravindra Singh** traced the evolution of India's skill development framework, highlighting that disability-inclusive skilling gained structured policy attention after 2014, with the establishment of a dedicated Sector Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPwD) in 2015.

Over the last decade SCPwD has developed around 600 disability-specific and generic courses across 27 industry sectors.

These courses cover multiple disability categories, including locomotor, visual, hearing, speech, intellectual, and multiple disabilities.

#### **Close to 1.8 lakh persons with disabilities have been trained and certified nationally.**

He highlighted a significant improvement in outcomes, with placement absorption rates increasing from approximately 45% in the early years to 77%, and long-term retention remaining strong even after one year of employment. Importantly, industry engagement has shifted from hiring out of obligation to hiring based on productivity, proficiency, and performance parity.

#### *Economic Rationale for Inclusive Skilling*

The discussion strongly reframed disability inclusion as an economic imperative, not a welfare measure.

#### *Key points included:*

- Exclusion of persons with disabilities from the mainstream economy results in an estimated GDP loss of at least 5%.
- Skill development investments show high social and economic returns, with significant improvements in household income and long-term employability.
- CSR investments in skill development were shown to yield substantially higher returns than one-time assistive aid distribution.
- A strong recommendation emerged to explicitly recognise persons with disabilities within CSR frameworks, including earmarked allocations for disability-inclusive skilling and employment.

#### Role of Comprehensive Rehabilitation Centres (CRCs)

**Mr. Kanagasabapathy** highlighted the importance of one-stop, district-level rehabilitation and skill development centres, especially in underserved regions.



### **CRCs were described as integrated hubs offering:**

- Assessment, therapy, counselling, assistive devices, and vocational training under one roof.
- Device provision linked with training on usage and independent living.
- Skill development programmes tailored for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with strong emphasis on dignity, confidence, and certification.
- Residential training models were highlighted as particularly effective for: Increasing women's participation, building life skills, social skills, workplace readiness, addressing mobility, safety, and family-related barriers.

### Reasonable Accommodation as Universal Design



**Ms. Suman John** reframed reasonable accommodation as universal design, challenging the assumption that accommodations compromise productivity or standards.

#### **Using practical workplace examples, she illustrated how:**

- Cognitive, sensory, and task-structuring accommodations improve efficiency for all workers.
  - Job design based on strengths, predictable workflows, and task specialisation leads to faster output and better quality.
  - Structural accommodations are easier to enforce than attitudinal accommodations, which remain a major barrier in open employment.
- The concept of “includability” was introduced as a measurable competency encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitude, applicable to managers, teams, and institutions not just persons with disabilities.

### **Institutional and Policy Barriers in Skill Implementation**

#### **Operational challenges within government skill programmes were discussed candidly, including:**

- Delays in project approvals and funding cycles affecting continuity.
- Difficulty in retaining trained instructors due to project-based funding models.
- Rigid batch composition norms that restrict mixed-disability or inclusive training.
- Assessment systems that are overly complex for persons with intellectual and multiple disabilities.
- The need for disability-sensitive assessment reforms, including formative evaluation and certification based on training completion and demonstrated proficiency, was strongly emphasised.
- A recurring concern was the urban bias in skill development. With a majority of persons with disabilities residing in rural and tribal areas, the session highlighted the importance of:
  - Local livelihood pathways, family-based trades, and indigenous skills.
  - Preventing forced migration by strengthening rural employment ecosystems.
  - Recognising and supporting parents and family members as informal trainers through structured handholding and recognition mechanisms.
- There was a strong call for national mapping of family-based and indigenous livelihood practices, supported by data mining and district-level planning.
- Market Linkages and Procurement Reforms
- Participants stressed that training without market access leads to stagnation.

#### **Proposed solutions included:**

- Government procurement for PWD-run enterprises in low-complexity, high-volume goods.
- Price preference mechanisms to account for social return on investment.
- Inclusion of social impact weightage in tender evaluations.
- Development of accessible digital marketplaces to link PWD enterprises directly with consumers and institutions.

### **Gender, Safety, and Inclusion**

Gender disparities were acknowledged, with ongoing efforts to mandate minimum women participation in training programmes. Residential training models were identified as key enablers for women's participation,

safety, and confidence building. The need to strengthen inclusion for women with disabilities and transgender persons with disabilities was recognised as an emerging priority area requiring better data capture and targeted interventions.

### Ms Shanthi summarised Key Policy Challenges Identified

- Discontinuity in funding and project cycles affecting sustainability.
- Rigid eligibility, batch composition, and assessment norms.
- Limited rural outreach and market linkages.
- Persistent attitudinal barriers in workplaces.
- Inadequate recognition of family-based and informal livelihood systems.
- Gender and mobility-related participation barriers.



### Summary of the Session

Reframe disability-inclusive skilling as an economic growth strategy.

- Strengthen district-level CRCs as integrated skill and livelihood hubs.
- Reform assessment systems for persons with intellectual and multiple disabilities.
- Promote universal design and includability competencies in workplaces.
- Enable rural, family-based, and community livelihood models.
- Integrate market access, procurement reform, and digital platforms into skilling policy.
- Ensure continuity of funding and institutional capacity.

## SESSION 7: Discussions and Recommendations by Mr. Govindraj, Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, GOI

### Speakers

- Mr. Govindraj, Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD), Government of India.
- Mr Praveen Prakash, Deputy Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD), GOI

### Objective

To present the institutional role, functioning, and jurisprudential impact of the Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (CCPD) in enforcing the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and to highlight systemic gaps, administrative failures, and policy directions emerging from grievance redressal and quasi-judicial interventions.

### *Institutional Role*

- It functions as a quasi-judicial constitutional authority, entrusted with three core responsibilities:
- Redressal of grievances of persons with disabilities and organisations working in the disability sector
- Monitoring effective implementation of the RPwD Act, 2016 and utilisation of government funds allocated for disability-related schemes and projects



The Commissioner highlighted that the CCPD office often stands between the State and citizens, balancing public expectations of independence with government perceptions of alignment. In practice, the office acts as an impartial safeguard, issuing directions to government and quasi-government bodies strictly to uphold statutory rights under the RPwD Act. As the RPwD Act completes ten years, the CCPD Office has evolved from a passive oversight body into an active rights-enforcement institution, taking decisive action to correct administrative failures.

## *Mr Praveen Prakash shared Case-Based Policy Insights*

To demonstrate how statutory rights, translate into real outcomes, he presented multiple case illustrations that exposed systemic gaps and the corrective role played by the CCPD.



### *Right to a Scribe and Fair Examination Conditions*

- A case involving a high-performing student with visual impairment revealed serious procedural lapses during a national-level entrance examination. Despite clear eligibility, confusion between examination authorities resulted in:
- Denial of a suitable scribe, Last-minute substitutions, assignment of an unqualified scribe, rendering the examination ineffective

The CCPD intervened within days, issuing notices, conducting hearings, and passing urgent orders.

- **As a result:** The student was permitted a scribe of her choice, a re-examination was conducted for affected papers. The student secured admission to a reputed central university
- **Policy lesson:** Reasonable accommodation is not discretionary. Examination authorities must ensure clarity, accountability, and timely implementation of scribe-related guidelines.

### **Accessibility, Institutional Choice, and Equal Opportunity**

Another case involved a wheelchair user who was denied admission to an accessible government institution and instead allotted a private college lacking basic accessibility. Despite an available government seat, administrative rigidity forced her into an unsuitable and costly option.

#### **The CCPD's intervention ensured:**

- Immediate correction of institutional allocation, Admission within the same academic semester and
- protection of the student's academic trajectory
- Policy lesson: Accessibility must guide institutional allocation. Administrative convenience cannot override the right to accessible education under the RPwD Act.

### *Validity of Disability Certification and Procedural Fairness*

- A third case concerned denial of admission due to non-availability of a Unique Disability ID (UDID) by the deadline, despite possession of a valid disability certificate issued under earlier legislation.
- The CCPD reaffirmed that: Disability certificates issued under previous laws remain valid, procedural rigidity cannot defeat substantive rights and admission authorities must interpret rules in line with the RPwD Act
- Urgent intervention ensured issuance of the admit card before the next examination stage.

**Policy lesson:** Administrative processes must remain flexible and rights-oriented, especially where statutory protections are explicit.

### *Approach to Adjudication*

Commissioner highlighted that CCPD decisions are grounded not only in legal provisions, but also in moral, social, and ethical considerations, which are then aligned with statutory mandates. This integrated approach allows the office to deliver outcomes that are legally sound, humane, and impactful.

### *Performance and Institutional Capacity*

- The Commissioner shared operational data demonstrating the growing workload and responsiveness of the CCPD Office:
- Orders issued: 396 orders in 2024 and 453 orders in 2025
- Hearings conducted: Less than 300 hearings in 2024 and 1,039 hearings in 2025. Out of these, 975 cases were personally heard by the Commissioner, reflecting a high level of institutional engagement and leadership.
- Despite two months without hearings, the volume and pace of adjudication marked a significant strengthening of grievance redressal mechanisms.

### *Key Challenges Identified*

- Repeated procedural failures by examination and admission authorities
- Inconsistent understanding of reasonable accommodation obligations
- Lack of accessibility-based decision-making in institutional allotments
- Over-reliance on rigid documentation requirements
- Need for stronger accountability mechanisms across public bodies

### *Summary of the Session*

- Strengthen awareness of RPwD Act obligations among examination bodies, universities, and public institutions
- Standardise and strictly enforce guidelines on scribes, accessibility, and reasonable accommodation
- Ensure flexibility in procedural requirements where statutory rights are clear
- Enhance inter-institutional coordination to prevent last-minute rights violations
- Institutionalise time-bound grievance redressal mechanisms modelled on CCPD practices
- Use CCPD case law as a guiding resource for policy design and administrative training

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### SESSION 8: Recommendations to the Office of CCPD (6 Groups)

The participants were divided into 6 groups where detailed discussions were moderated by group leaders. The following are the recommendations.

#### **Group 1: Assessment, Curriculum Flexibility, Pedagogy & Examination Reforms for Inclusive Education.**

##### **Recommendations**



##### **1. Establish Uniform Assessment and Identification Frameworks**

- Develop and implement uniform national guidelines for disability assessment and identification across all States.
- Develop alignment between educational and medical assessment protocols to facilitate early identification and continuity of support services.

##### **2. Promote Early Identification and Preventive Interventions**

Introduce mandatory developmental screening for all children from birth to six years, strengthen early detection systems to identify developmental delays before school entry, and establish continuous monitoring mechanisms to identify conditions such as autism and other rare developmental disorders that may emerge during early childhood.

##### **3. Introduce Regulation and Monitoring of Pre-Primary Institutions**

Establish regulatory and monitoring mechanisms for play schools and pre-schools to ensure early identification of developmental concerns, and integrate structured screening and referral systems within early childhood education settings to facilitate timely support and intervention.

##### **4. Strengthen Resource Support Systems**

1. Establish State-level and district-level resource centres providing integrated services such as assessment, therapy, assistive devices, and parental guidance with accessibility and effective services.

##### **5. Reform Curriculum to Include Functional and Skill-Based Learning**

Develop flexible, state-adaptable functional curricula and adding pre-vocational skills and life skills education from early grades for all learners, not only children with disabilities.

##### **1. Diversify Assessment Methods**

1. In examinations introduce alternative modes of assessment, including oral examinations, project-based evaluation, portfolio assessments, and technology-enabled testing to Reduce over-reliance on scribal support.
2. Recognise and Support At-Risk Students by preventing misclassification of such learners under specific learning disabilities by providing appropriate academic support.
3. Introduce Comprehensive Exit Documentation by providing detailed learner profiles for students leaving school, documenting strengths, abilities, functional performance, and areas requiring support.
4. Strengthen the capacity and working conditions of special educators by implementing structured and mandatory professional training programmes their salaries as par with regular teachers improving workplace conditions, five-day working week, to prevent burnout and enhance their effectiveness.

## **Group 2: Invisible Disabilities under the RPwD Act, 2016: Policy Recognition & Lived Realities.**

### **Recommendation:**

#### **Strengthening Early Screening for Invisible Disabilities**

1. Establish a comprehensive early screening framework for invisible disabilities by ensuring the availability of standardized screening tools for paediatricians, community health workers, and parents; integrating screening mechanisms at the Community Health Centre (CHC) level; and promoting nationwide awareness campaigns – similar to public health initiatives – to normalise early identification and reduce stigma.
2. Expansion of government-supported insurance coverage, including under public health schemes and recognizing of invisible disabilities within insurance frameworks
3. Reimagining the UDID card as a unified access instrument, certification to function as a gateway to Medical services, Educational accommodations, Transport concessions Insurance and welfare benefits to reduce procedural burdens and improve continuity of care and support across sectors.
4. To develop appropriate transit procedures from inclusive education to employment. Employment opportunities, start-ups, and incubators for adults with invisible disabilities.
5. Educational Access and Continuity for invisible disabilities who might miss schools for health reasons through Flexible schooling models, Online and blended learning options and Academic continuity mechanisms during periods of illness
6. To adopt Social Accommodation Beyond the Workplace which extends inclusion beyond formal employment and education into everyday social life.



## **Group 3: Leveraging Technology & AI for Developing Inclusive Learning Practices.**

### **Recommendations**

#### **1. National Mapping of Existing Technology Solutions**

- The group proposed a systematic survey and mapping of existing mainstream technologies that are already being used often informally by persons with disabilities. Many widely available tools, such as smartphones, voice-based chat applications, and accessibility features, were not originally designed for disability inclusion but have proven to be highly effective in practice.
- A national repository mapping such technologies to specific disability-related needs in inclusive education settings.



#### **2. AI-Enabled Sunflower Tag for Invisible Disabilities**

- Building on the Sunflower Lanyard initiative used at airports (including Bengaluru International Airport), the group recommended an AI-enabled, wearable identification solution for persons with invisible or non-apparent disabilities.

#### **Key features proposed:**

- Wearable format such as a band or wrist device, GPS-enabled tracking for safety.
- QR code containing basic, consent-based information (health needs, emergency contacts)
- Easy access for first responders, educators, or the public during emergencies

#### **3. "Supportpedia": A Centralised Resource Platform**

- The group proposed the creation of Supportpedia, a digital platform (app and web-based) offering “help at one’s fingertips.”

**The platform would:**

- Aggregate information on services, schemes, therapies, assistive devices, and institutions
- Guide parents and caregivers on navigating systems and provide region-wise and disability-specific resources
- Support pedia was envisioned as interoperable with other platforms, particularly early identification tools and government portals.

**4. AI for Early Identification and Intervention (EI<sup>2</sup>)**

- Early identification (0–3 years) emerged as a recurring priority. The group proposed an AI-supported Early Identification and Intervention (EI<sup>2</sup>) system that would:
  - Offer structured, evidence-based screening checklists for parents and caregivers
  - Use AI-driven recommendations to suggest next steps and nearby support services
  - Integrate awareness-building, intervention guidance, and referral mechanisms
  - The system would have vertical and cross-linkages with Supportpedia and public health infrastructure.

**5. Preventive AI Tools for Pre-Conception Awareness**

AI-based awareness plugins integrated into popular digital platforms (including social and lifestyle applications). These tools would:

Provide evidence-based information on genetic risks, early intervention, and health planning

Encourage informed decision-making prior to conception Shift policy thinking from reaction to prevention

**6. AI-Enabled Study Buddy and Virtual Laboratories**

Fear, lack of preparedness, and absence of accommodations often result in forced subject changes.

**Proposed solutions included:**

- AI-powered “Study Buddy” avatars for personalised academic support
- Virtual and simulated laboratories to enable safe participation in practical subjects
- AI-based assessment tools to evaluate learning outcomes beyond physical lab access
- These measures would support continuity in education and prevent exclusion based on perceived risk.

**7. Inclusive E-Marketplace for PwD Enterprises**

- To address economic exclusion, the group proposed an exclusive e-marketplace for products created by PwDs and disability-focused organisations, modelled on large digital commerce platforms. To reduce dependency on event-based sales, facilitating national and international market access and enabling government and NGO partnerships

**8. Technology-Driven Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns**

- AI avatars, voice modulation, and multilingual translation to conduct large-scale awareness campaigns on: Disability inclusion, Early intervention, Vocational and educational opportunities
- Such campaigns would not rely solely on public figures and could be customised for regional and cultural contexts.

9. To establish UDL based multi utility learning stations for equitable inclusive education in rural schools or for a cluster of rural schools. (based MUL initiated by CBR NETWORK, SAMAGRA SHIKSHA -UNICEF Karnataka)

## **Group 4: Teacher Preparation and Capacity Building for Inclusive Education Aligning with RPD Act and NPE.**

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Regulatory Alignment between RCI and NCTE**
  - Formalisation of a long-pending Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). A unified regulatory framework is essential to streamline teacher preparation for inclusive education.
  - NCTE to mandate a minimum of 8 credits in inclusive education across all B.Ed./D.El.Ed. programmes
- 2. Development and expansion of comprehensive undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes in inclusive education, moving beyond short-term or add-on courses. Universities should be actively encouraged and supported to offer such programmes to address the acute shortage of trained human resources in inclusive and special education across the country.**



- 3. Establish a National Resource Centre for Inclusive Teacher Education with regional Hubs**

Universities should be encouraged to undertake systematic research in inclusive and special education to build an evidence base for policy and practice. The group highlighted the lack of disaggregated data including rural–urban distribution, disability-wise prevalence, and regional disparities which limits informed allocation of resources and evaluation of intervention effectiveness.

- 4. Bridge Courses for Teachers**

- Formalise and implement the bridge course initiated by NCTE for special educators transitioning into regular schools
- Develop bridge courses for in-service general teachers to effectively manage classroom diversity, including but not limited to disability

- 5. Integration of Inclusion across Subject Pedagogy**

Inclusive education components should be embedded within all subject pedagogy courses, particularly during curriculum revision processes. Inclusion must be treated as a cross-cutting pedagogical principle rather than a standalone topic.

- 6. Implementation of RCI In-Service Training Programmes**

RCI-developed 5-day and 15-day in-service training modules on inclusive education should be actively implemented at scale, similar to national initiatives such as NISHTHA. The group noted that the absence of institutional push has prevented these already-developed programmes from being utilised.

- 7. Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

- Inclusive education should be included as a mandatory theme within Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) programmes. The group recommended:
- Making inclusive education CRE mandatory for special educators
- Increasing annual CPD requirements in inclusive education from 6 to 10 hours

- 8. Recognition and Regulation of Parent Professionals**

Creation of bridge certification pathways for trained parent professionals who have completed courses from credible institutions but lack formal degrees. Blanket prohibitions on practice should be replaced with competency-based recognition frameworks, enabling regulated participation of parent professionals within the inclusive education ecosystem.

## 9. Accreditation of Private and NGO Programmes

Private organisations and NGOs offering programmes in special and inclusive education should be allowed to seek RCI accreditation, expanding training capacity while maintaining quality and regulatory oversight.

## 10. Impetus to Research

RCI and NCTE should publish journals that are Scopus indexed and timely released thus giving impetus to research by teachers and teacher educators.

11. To promote state level statutory bodies to develop locally relevant human resource development strategies for special, equitable inclusive education, ECCD and CBR services.

### **Group 5: Effective Use of Resource Support and Accessible Learning for Inclusive Education.**

#### **Recommendations**

##### **1 Single-Window System for Inclusive Education Services**

Establishment of a single-window digital portal for inclusive education, enabling parents, caregivers, educators, and students to access all relevant services at one point.



##### **2 Integration of Early Intervention and Early Education**

Early intervention and early childhood education must be converged with existing programmes such as School Mental Health Programme, District Mental Health Programme & Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)

##### **3 Equitable Attention to All Recognised Disabilities**

- Policy and resource allocation must ensure equitable attention across all 21 recognised disabilities under the RPwD Act.

##### **4 Regional Language Accessibility and Inclusive Media Outreach**

- Dissemination of information in regional and local languages
- Use of television, digital media, and community platforms
- Creation of a dedicated 24x7 inclusive education / disability awareness channel
- National Awareness and Advocacy Campaigns for strong visibility as pulse polio by identifying National ambassadors be identified for inclusive education

- 5 Inclusion of caregiver wellbeing in policy frameworks, Mental health support and counselling for caregivers besides formal recognition of caregivers as stakeholders in inclusive education

### **Group 6: Strengthening Vocational and Skill Development for Transition to Employment for Persons with Disabilities.**

#### **Recommendations**

##### **1. National Information and Dissemination Platform for Skill Development**

**Government to establish a centralised, publicly accessible repository detailing the following**

- Available skill development programmes (government, NGO, private)
- District- and state-level training locations
- Linkages to employment outcomes
- This platform should integrate existing mechanisms such as the National Career Service (NCS) portal and expand dissemination through web, mobile, and WhatsApp-based channels.



## 2. District-Level Skill Development Visibility and Coordination

- Strengthening district-level dissemination mechanisms by equipping district officials with updated skilling information
- Replicating NCS-style career facilitation services down to the district and block levels for last mile access and reduce reliance on informal networks.

## 3. Universal and Inclusive Skill Development Models

Inclusive skilling frameworks be developed to enable participation of persons with neurodevelopmental and high-support needs in mainstream skill programmes wherever feasible.

## 4. Expansion and Strengthening of District Resource and Skill Centres

- Establishment of district-wise resource and skill training centres, building upon existing models such as CRCs and DDRCs.
- Standardised national guidelines for district-level centres and Stronger coordination between CRCs, DDRCs, and skilling agencies

## 5. Promote Community-Based Skill Training

Develop home-based and community-based training models using assistive technology, AI platforms, virtual training modules, and remote work opportunities.

## 6. Strengthen Employer Engagement

Conduct employer sensitisation programmes, ensure structured industry partnerships, and provide on-the-job support and follow-up to improve placement outcomes.

## 7. Improve Utilisation of Government Job Reservations

Review recruitment processes to address barriers and ensure effective implementation of the 4% reservation for persons with disabilities, preventing vacancies from lapsing.



# Annexures

## Program Schedule

### RATIONALE

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 represents a shift from a welfare-based approach to a rights-based framework grounded in equality, non-discrimination, accessibility, and participation. Chapter III of the Act mandates inclusive education, enabling learners with and without disabilities to learn together through adapted pedagogies and assessments. Chapter IV reinforces the right of persons with disabilities to vocational education, skill development, and employment, calling for a lifespan approach that integrates education, skill, and livelihoods.

The recognition of 21 categories of disabilities—including invisible disabilities such as neurodiversity, neurological conditions, and blood disorders — strengthens India's commitment to inclusive education. Effective implementation requires institutional capacity, accessible infrastructure, appropriate technologies, and coordinated action aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and National Skill Development Framework.

Against this backdrop, Seva-in-Action convenes this National Seminar to bring together policymakers, educators, practitioners, civil society, and government stakeholders to strengthen implementation of Chapters III and IV of the RPwD Act, 2016.

### OBJECTIVE

- Examine implementation gaps and opportunities under Chapters III (Education) and IV (Skill Development & Employment) of the RPwD Act, 2016.
- Deliberate on curriculum flexibility, assessment accommodations, and examination reforms.
- Strengthen alignment between teacher education, RPwD Act provisions, and NEP 2020.
- Identify scalable, evidence-based models of inclusive education and skilling.
- Address challenges faced by persons with invisible disabilities.
- Deliberate around RPwD Act the legal right and state obligation, NEP 2020 that provides with systemic and pedagogical direction and Samagra Shiksha as the primary implementation instrument.

### THEMATIC SESSIONS

- Assessments Curriculum, Pedagogy & Assessment and Examination reforms**  
Assessments, Equity through UDL, differentiated instruction, and examination reforms.
- Invisible Disabilities: Policy Recognition & Lived Realities**  
Access and implementation challenges related to specific learning disabilities, neurodiversity, speech and language disabilities, and chronic neurological and blood disorders.
- Technology and AI for Inclusive Education**  
Assistive technologies, accessible digital content, and AI-enabled solutions aligned with RPwD Act, NEP 2020, SCPwD and NETF.
- Teacher Education & Capacity Building**  
Pre-service and in-service reforms, inclusive pedagogy, Indian Sign Language, Braille, leadership, and employment of teachers with disabilities.
- Resource Support Systems**  
Strengthening resource centres for meeting the specific needs of CwDs, AAC, assistive devices, accessible learning materials, and partnerships.
- Skill Development & Transition to Employment**  
Inclusive skilling pathways, reasonable accommodation, industry linkages, and access for persons with intellectual and multiple disabilities.

### OUTCOME

The Seminar will generate actionable recommendations and a policy brief to strengthen inclusive education, skill development, and employment for persons with disabilities, in alignment with the RPwD Act, 2016.

## NATIONAL SEMINAR

Leveraging Policy for Education and Skill Development

A Decade of RPwD Act

Theme:  
From Intent to Impact

Seva-in-Action (SIA)  
in Collaboration with  
Office of Chief Commissioner  
for persons with Disabilities, GOI

30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> January 2026

at St John's Medical College  
Lecture Hall 1, Gate 2  
Sarjapur Road, Bengaluru.

### PROGRAM COMPONENT

Day 1 - Friday, 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	
Time	Activity
09:30 am – 10:30 am	Registration & Tea  <b>Inaugural Session</b> • Silent National Anthem • Lighting of the lamp <b>Introduction &amp; Welcome Address:</b> Ms. Ruma Banerjee, Sr. Vice Chairperson, SIA Member, CABD, MoSJE, GOI <b>Opening Remarks:</b> Mr. Govindaraju, CCPO, GOI <b>Key note Address:</b> Ms. A. Srija, Economic Adviser, Dept of School Education & Literacy MoE, GOI <b>Guest of Honour:</b> Dr. Ashoka D. R., Director, Dept for the Empowerment of Differently Aabled & Senior Citizens, GOR, Shri. Das Suryavarambali, State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, GOR <b>Address by:</b> Chief Guest, Dr. Virendra Kumar, Hon. Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE), GOI <b>Vote of Thanks by:</b> Ms. Manjula Nanjundalah, Director, SIA EC Member Samagra Shiksha Karnataka
10:30 am – 11:30 am	<b>Session 1 - Presentation &amp; Q &amp; A</b> Assessments, Curriculum Flexibility, Pedagogy & Examination Reforms for Inclusive Education. <b>Chairperson:</b> Ms. A. Srija, Economic Adviser, Dept of School Education & Literacy, MoE, GOI 1. Ms. Manjula Balasubramanyam, Principal, DPS North Bengaluru 2. Dr. Bharti, Professor, MPD, CIET, NCERT, Delhi 3. Ms. Stuti Gaur, Academic Coordinator IE, Directorate of Education, GNCTD, Delhi
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	<b>Session 2 - Panel Discussions</b> Invisible Disabilities under the RPwD Act, 2016: Policy Recognition & Lived Realities <b>Chair &amp; Moderator:</b> Dr. Indumathi Rao, Trustee CBR Network <b>Panelists:</b> 1. Dr. Tulika Seth, HOD Haematology AIMS 2. Mrs. Chithra Seshadri, Director, Farm Hill Education Trust 3. Dr. Thomas Kishore, Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, NMHANS 4. Dr. Rajani Padmanabhan, Executive Director, Brindavan Education Centre
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm – 14:15 pm	<b>Session 3- Panel Discussions</b> Teacher Education & Capacity Building for Inclusive Education : Gaps and Opportunities. (Aligning NEP 2020 and RPwD Act)  <i>Continued on next page...</i>

Day 1 - Friday, 30 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	
Time	Activity
14:15 pm – 15:00 pm	<i>...Session 3 continued from previous page</i>  <b>Panelists:</b> 1. Professor Dr. Sujatha Bhan, Prof & Dean School of education and Department of Psychology, Lovely University, Punjab 2. Professor Dr. Ankur Madan, Director, School of Education, Aam Premji University, Bengaluru 3. Quizzable Innovative pedagogy - A study report by NIAS & SIA - Mr. Narsimha Swamy <b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Ruma Banerjee, Sr Vice Chairperson, SIA, CABD Member, MoSJE, GOI
15:00 pm – 16:00 pm	<b>Session 4 - Presentation &amp; Discussion</b> Leveraging Technology & AI for Inclusive, Accessible & Equitable Education <b>Chairperson:</b> Ms. A. Srija, Economic Adviser, Dept of School Education & Literacy, MoE, GOI <b>Speakers:</b> 1. Dr. Bharti, Professor, MPD, Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT, New Delhi 2. Dr. Indumathi Rao, Trustee CBR Network 3. Dr. Ajay Kumar, Supervisor IE Directorate of Education, GNCTD, Delhi
16:00 pm – 16:30 pm	Open House Wrap of Day 1 - Ms. Veena Shenoy, Founder & CEO, Inclusi <b>Tea Break</b>
Day 2 - Saturday, 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2026	
Time	Activity
09:30 am – 10:00 am	Recap of Day 1 & Setting the Context for Day 2 <b>Session 5 - Panel Discussions</b> Effective use of Resource Support & Accessible Learning for Inclusive Education. <b>Speakers:</b> 1. Mr. G. Rameshram, Managing Trustee & Executive Director, SAMA Foundation, Bhanu 2. Mr. Prateek Madhav, Co-founder & CEO at Assist Tech Foundation 3. Dr. Amitabh Mehrotra, Director, SPARC India, Lucknow 4. Mr. Janardhana AI, Lead Programmes, CBM India Trust <b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Manjula Nanjundalah, Director, SIA & EC Member Samagra Shiksha Karnataka
10:00 am – 11:15 am	<b>Session 6 - Panel Discussions</b> Strengthening Vocational and Skill Development for Transition to Employment for Persons with Disabilities. <i>Continued on next page...</i>
11:15 am – 11:45 am	Tea Break
11:45 am – 13:00 pm	<b>Session 6 - Panel Discussions</b> Strengthening Vocational and Skill Development for Transition to Employment for Persons with Disabilities. <i>Continued on next page...</i>

Day 2 - Saturday, 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2026	
Time	Activity
11:45 am – 13:00 pm	<i>...Session 6 continued from previous page</i>  <b>Chairperson &amp; Moderator:</b> Ms. Shanti Raghavan, Founder & Managing Trustee, EnAble India <b>Panelists:</b> 1. Mr. Ravindra Singh, CEO, Skill Council for persons with disabilities, GOI 2. Mr. Kanagasabapathy, Rehabilitation Officer, CRC, Davangere 3. Ms. Suman John, Co-founder & Managing Director, Dya Innovations Pvt Ltd.
13:00 pm – 13:15 pm	Setting the context for Discussions and recommendations by Mr. Govindraj, Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, GOI
13:15 pm – 14:00 pm	Lunch
14:00 pm – 15:15 pm	<b>Group Discussions and Recommendations to the Office of CCPO (6 Thematic Groups)</b> <b>Moderator:</b> Ms. Stuti, Academic IE Coordinator, DOE Assessment, Curriculum Flexibility, Pedagogy & Examination Reforms for Inclusive Education. <b>Moderator:</b> Dr. Tulika Seth & Ms. Chitra, Invisible Disabilities under the RPwD Act, 2016: Policy Recognition & Lived Realities. <b>Moderator:</b> Dr. Bharti & Dr. Indumathi Rao, Leveraging Technology & AI for developing Inclusive learning practices. <b>Moderator:</b> Dr. Sujata Bhan, Teacher Preparation and Capacity Building for Inclusive Education aligning with RPwD Act and NEP. <b>Moderator:</b> Mr. Janardhana, Effective use of resource support and accessible Learning for inclusive education. <b>Moderator:</b> Mr. Ravindra Singh and Mr. Kanagasabapathy, Strengthening Vocational and Skill Development for transition to Employment for Persons with Disabilities.
15:15pm-16:15pm	<b>Concluding Session</b> • Welcome Address. • Presentation of Recommendations by the representative of groups. • Address by Deputy Commissioner for disabilities CCPO. • Concluding remarks by Commissioner for disabilities. • Vote of thanks
16:45pm	Tea Break

## Seminar Chairpersons/Moderators and Speakers/Panelists Lineup

<b>Fri, 30 January 2026</b> <b>SESSION 1. Assessments, Curriculum Flexibility, Pedagogy &amp; Examination Reforms for Inclusive Education (IE)</b> <b>11:30 am – 12:30 pm</b>				
<b>Chairperson</b> 	<b>Speaker 1</b> 	<b>Speaker 2</b> 	<b>Speaker 3</b> 	
<b>Ms. Srija</b> Economic Adviser, Dept of School Edn & Literacy, MoE, GOI	<b>Manju Balasubramanyam</b> Principal, DPS North Bengaluru	<b>Dr. Bharti</b> Professor, MPD, CIET, NCERT, Delhi	<b>Ms. Stuti Gaur,</b> Academic Coordinator IE, Directorate of Edn, GNCTD, Delhi	
<b>SESSION 2. Invisible Disabilities under the RPwD Act, 2016: Policy Recognition &amp; Lived Realities</b> <b>12:30 – 1:30 pm</b>				
<b>Chair &amp; Moderator</b> 	<b>Panellist 1</b> 	<b>Panellist 2</b> 	<b>Panellist 3.</b> 	<b>Panellist 4</b> 
<b>Dr. Indumathi Rao</b> Trustee CBR Network	<b>Dr. Tulika Seth</b> HOD, Haematology, AIIMS, Delhi	<b>Mrs. Chithra Seshadri,</b> Director, Farm Hill Education Trust	<b>Dr. Thomas Kishore</b> Professor, Dept of Clinical Psychology, NIMHANS	<b>Dr. Rajani Padmanabhan,</b> Executive Director, Brindavan Edn Centre
<b>SESSION 3. Teacher Education &amp; Capacity Building for Inclusive Education: Gaps and Opportunities.</b> <b>2:15 – 3:00 pm (Aligning NEP 2020 and RPwD Act)</b>				
<b>Moderator</b> 	<b>Panellist 1</b> 	<b>Panellist 2</b> 	<b>Panellist 3</b> 	
<b>Ms. Ruma Banerjee</b> Sr Vice Chairperson, SiA, CABD Member, MSJE, GOI	<b>Prof Dr. Sujata Bhan</b> Prof & Dean School of education and Dept of Psychology, Lovely Professional University, Punjab	<b>Professor Dr. Ankur Madan</b> Director, School of Edn, Azim Premji University, Bengaluru	<b>Mr. Narasimha Swamy</b> Edn researcher	

<b>SESSION 4. Leveraging Technology &amp; AI for Inclusive, Accessible &amp; Equitable Education</b> 3:00 – 4:00 pm				
<b>Chairperson</b> 	<b>Speaker 1</b> 	<b>Speaker 2</b> 	<b>Speaker 3</b> 	
<b>Ms. Srima</b> Economic Adviser, Dept of School Edn & Literacy, MoE, GOI	<b>Dr. Bharti</b> Professor, MPD, CIET, NCERT, Delhi	<b>Dr. Indumathi Rao</b> Trustee CBR Network	<b>Dr. Ajay Kumar</b> Supervisor IE Directorate of Edn, GNCTD, Delhi	
<b>Sat, 31 January 2026</b> <b>SESSION 5. Effective use of Resource Support &amp; Accessible Learning for Inclusive Education</b> 10:00 – 11:15 am				
<b>Moderator</b> 	<b>Panellist 1</b> 	<b>Panellist 2</b> 	<b>Panellist 3</b> 	
<b>Ms. Manjula Nanjundaiah</b> Director, Seva-in-Action EC Member Samagra Shikshana Karnataka	<b>Mr. Ramnathan</b> Managing Trustee & Executive Director, SAMA Foundation	<b>Mr. Prateek Madhav</b> Co-founder & CEO at Assist Tech Foundation	<b>Mr. Janardhana</b> Lead Programmes, CBM India Trust	
<b>SESSION 6 Strengthening Vocational and Skill Development for Transition to Employment for Persons with Disabilities.</b> 11:45 – 1:00 pm				
<b>Chair &amp; Moderator</b> 	<b>Panellist 1</b> 	<b>Panellist 2</b> 	<b>Panellist 3</b> 	
<b>Ms. Shanti Raghavan</b> Founder & Managing Trustee, EnAble India	<b>Mr. Ravindra Singh</b> CEO, Skill Council for persons with disabilities, GOI	<b>Mr. Kanaga sabapathy</b> Rehabilitation Officer, CRC, Davanagere	<b>Ms. Suman John,</b> Cofounder & Managing Director, Diya Innovations Pvt Ltd.	

## PARTICIPANTS LIST

Sl. No.	Name of the Participant	Organization Name	Contact Number	State	District
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71	Radhika Dhiwakar	Parents Association for Differently abled Adults (PADA)	9845369872	Karnataka	Bengaluru
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107	Vishwakarma	Seva-in-Action	9572932164	Karnataka	Bengaluru
108	Vittal Krishna Ghat	MANONANDANA TRUST	9880001746	Karnataka	Bengaluru
109	Prithwipala	Seva Bharathi (R) Mangalore	9481149269	Karnataka	Dakshina Kannada
110	Preethi Mathur	DPS		Karnataka	Bengaluru
111	Arnab Guha	2nd Brain Foundation		Karnataka	Bengaluru
112	Rashika Rani			Karnataka	Bengaluru



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