

Pulse

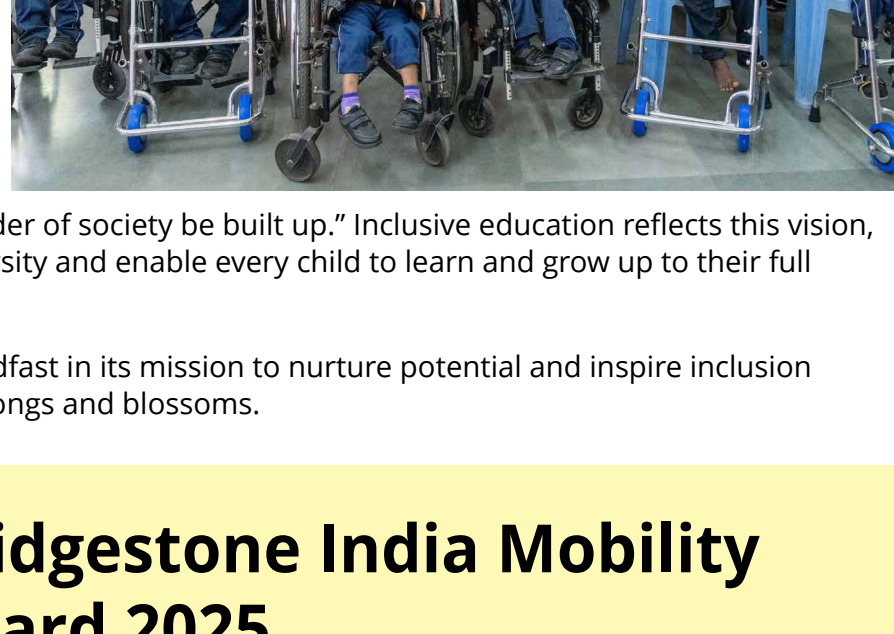
The Voice of APD



December 2025

As we look back on Children's Day, Jawaharlal Nehru's timeless words continue to inspire us: "Children are like buds in a garden and should be carefully and lovingly nurtured, as they are the future of the nation."

At the Association of People with Disability (APD), we believe that nurturing potential begins early. Through our Early Intervention initiatives, we identify developmental needs and provide essential therapy, guidance, and family support ensuring that every child, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to flourish.



Nehru reminded us that "Only through right education can a better order of society be built up." Inclusive education reflects this vision, creating classrooms that celebrate diversity and enable every child to learn and grow up to their full potential.

As we move forward, APD remains steadfast in its mission to nurture potential and inspire inclusion building a society where every child belongs and blossoms.

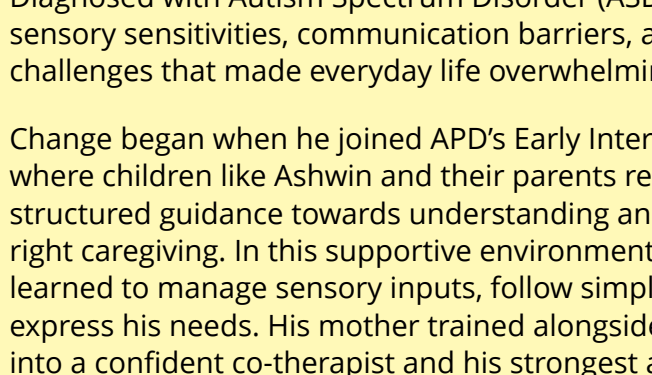
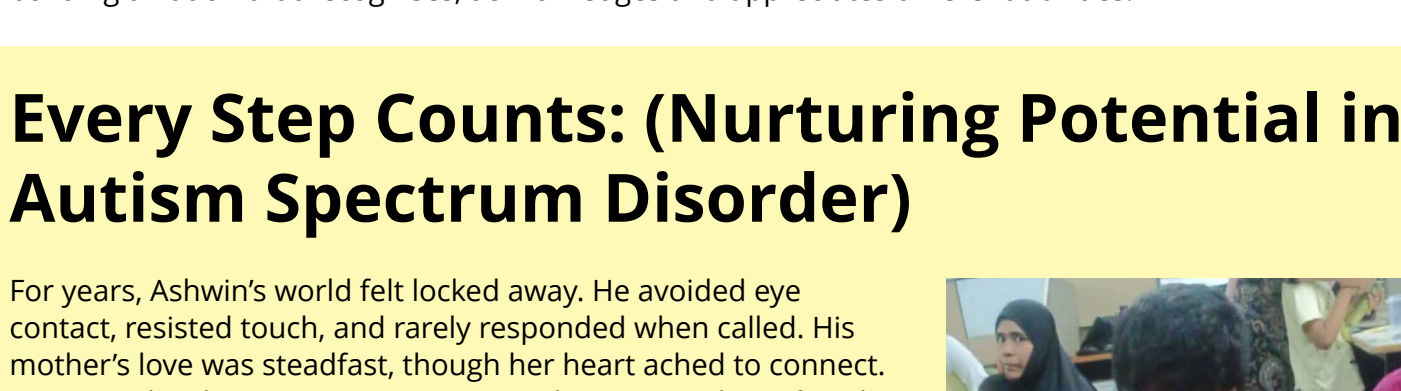
APD Receives Bridgestone India Mobility Social Impact Award 2025



The Association of People with Disability (APD), Bengaluru, has received the Bridgestone India Mobility Social Impact Award 2025 in the category Empowerment of Vulnerable Communities for its flagship initiative, **Rehab on Wheels (ROW)**. This recognition highlights APD's efforts to bring rehabilitation and therapy services to the doorsteps of people with disabilities across urban and rural Bengaluru.

This recognition celebrates our commitment to delivering rehabilitation services to those who need them most right at their doorsteps. Over the years, ROW has enabled access to therapy, wellness camps, geriatric outreach and much more across urban and rural Bengaluru, striving to dismantle barriers of distance, cost and mobility.

A Day of Honour: The 8th N.S. Hema Memorial Lecture & 9th Awards



On 4th October 2025, APD celebrated the life and legacy of its founder, N.S. Hema, through the 8th N.S. Hema Memorial Lecture and the 9th Memorial Awards. The event honoured changemakers advancing inclusion, dignity, and independence for persons with disabilities.

Distinguished guests included Prof. Dr. C.N. Manjunath (MP, Bengaluru Rural), Shri Das Suryavanshi (State Commissioner for PwDs), and Dr. Meenu Bhambhani (State Street Corporation).

The N.S. Hema Memorial Award 2025 recognised two outstanding NGOs, People with Hearing Impaired Network (PHIN) and Atchayam Trust, for their exemplary contributions to inclusive education and social rehabilitation.

11 individual awardees such as Dr. Malathi Holla, Prateek Khandelwal, and Ganga Mandel were an inspiration through their achievements and leadership. The event reaffirmed APD's mission towards building a nation that recognises, acknowledges and appreciates different abilities.

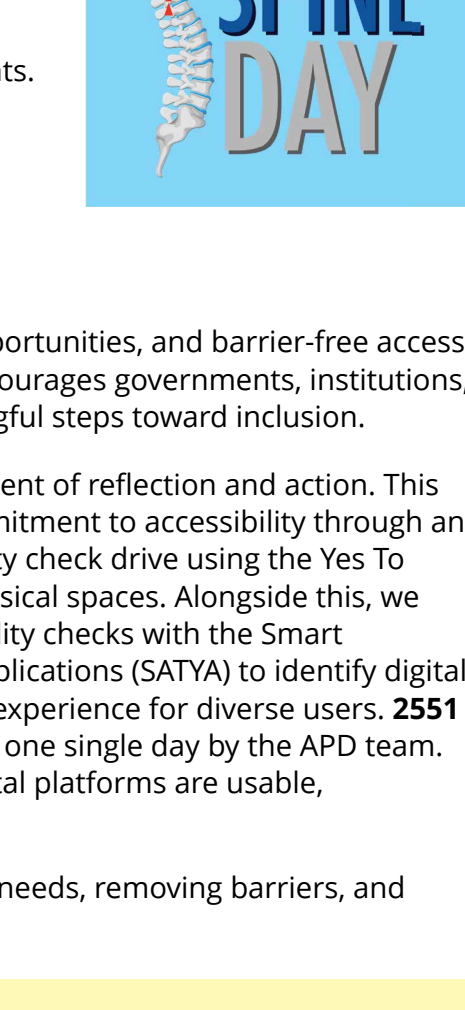
Every Step Counts: (Nurturing Potential in Autism Spectrum Disorder)

For years, Ashwin's world felt locked away. He avoided eye contact, resisted touch, and rarely responded when called. His mother's love was steadfast, though her heart ached to connect. Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Ashwin faced sensory sensitivities, communication barriers, and behavioural challenges that made everyday life overwhelming.

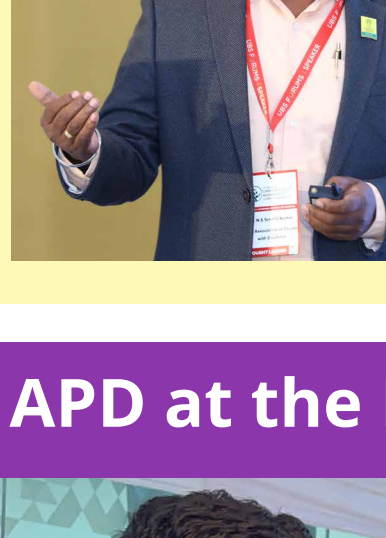
Change began when he joined APD's Early Intervention Program, where children like Ashwin and their parents receive patient, structured guidance towards understanding and practising the right caregiving. In this supportive environment, Ashwin gradually learned to manage sensory inputs, follow simple routines, and express his needs. His mother trained alongside him, growing into a confident co-therapist and his strongest ally.

Step by step, Ashwin began to eat varied foods, dress independently, and communicate through gestures. His world slowly opened, filled with calm, connection, and smiles that had long been missing.

With early support and understanding, children with autism can grow to their full potential. Every small step in this journey becomes a window to new possibilities.



Dates That Matter:



10th October: World Mental Health Day

A reminder to stand up for the rights of persons with mental illness, championing empathy, inclusion, and a world where every mind is valued and supported. The Community Mental Health Program team of APD conducted mental health awareness programs in the Kalburgi, Belagavi, Haveri and Mysore District of Karnataka and Salem District of Tamil Nadu

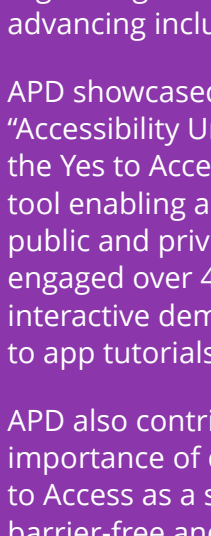
16th October: World Spine Day

A reminder to prevent spinal injury, promote spinal health and rehabilitation, core to APD's work in enabling mobility and independence. The occasion was observed at APD Jeevan Bima Nagar with inclusive sports, community interactions, and legal awareness sessions focusing on the RPwD Act and employment rights. The day fostered empowerment, dialogue, and camaraderie among beneficiaries, staff, and guests.



3rd December: International Day of Persons with Disabilities, [IDPD]

Serves as a global reminder of the need to ensure dignity, equal opportunities, and barrier-free access for people with disabilities. Established by the UN in 1992, IDPD encourages governments, institutions, and communities to reflect on ongoing challenges and take meaningful steps toward inclusion.



International Day of Persons with Disabilities
3 DECEMBER

For APD, IDPD is both a moment of reflection and action. This year, we deepened our commitment to accessibility through an organisation-wide accessibility check drive using the Yes To Access app to assess our physical spaces. Alongside this, we carried out website accessibility checks with the Smart Accessibility Tool for Your Applications (SATYA) to identify digital barriers and improve online experience for diverse users. **2551**

total audits including digital and physical audits were conducted in one single day by the APD team. These combined efforts aim to ensure that physical spaces and digital platforms are usable, welcoming, and supportive of independent participation.

APD's initiatives reflect the larger spirit of IDPD: recognising diverse needs, removing barriers, and championing inclusion across every part of society.

Listening to Lead: APD at the 15th CSR Summit & Awards 2025



At the 15th CSR Summit & Awards 2025 by UBS Forums, held at ITC Gardenia, Bengaluru, APD joined leaders shaping India's CSR landscape. Representing APD, Dr N. S. Senthil Kumar, CEO, emphasised the need for the shift from a Medical Model to a Bio-Psycho-Social Model across government, corporates, and communities to truly empower persons with disabilities. The event highlighted the importance of listening, empathy, and data-driven, human-centred collaborations in building an equitable, inclusive future, echoing APD's six-decade mission inspired by its founder, N. S. Hema.

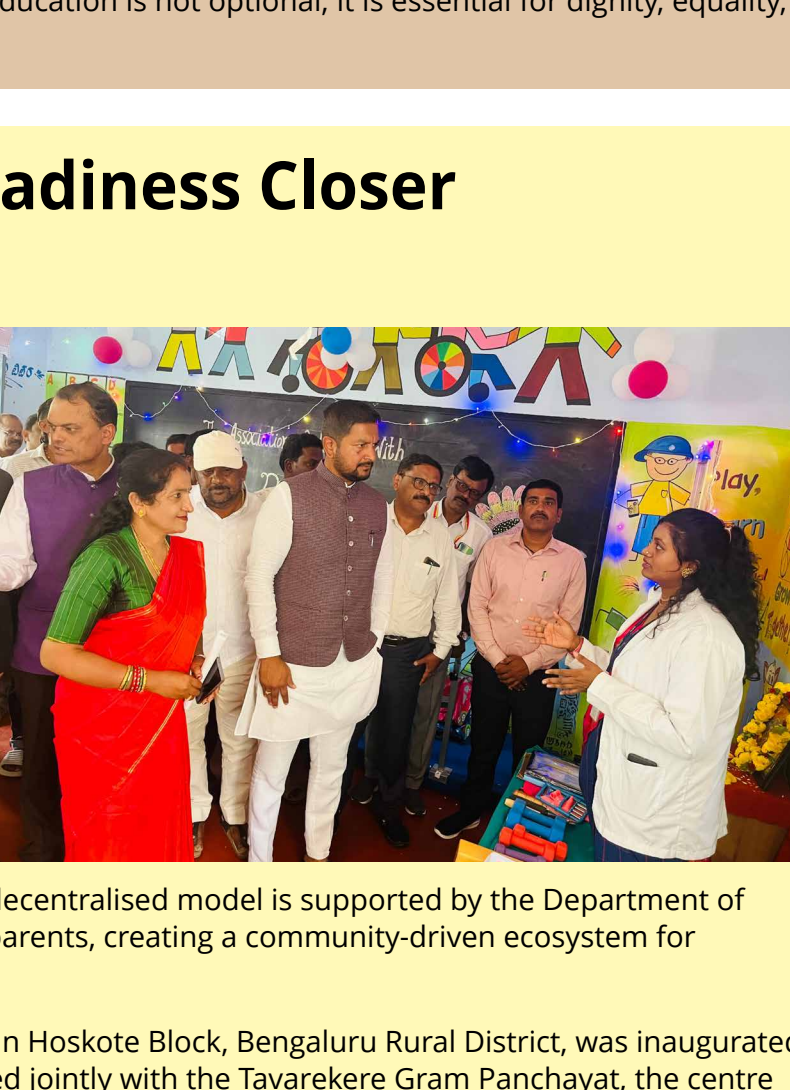
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APD at the Purple Fest 2025



The Association of People with Disability (APD) participated in the International Purple Fest 2025 held in Goa - a landmark celebration of diversity, accessibility, and empowerment of persons with disabilities. Organized by the Government of Goa in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the United Nations, the festival brought together global voices and innovations advancing inclusion.

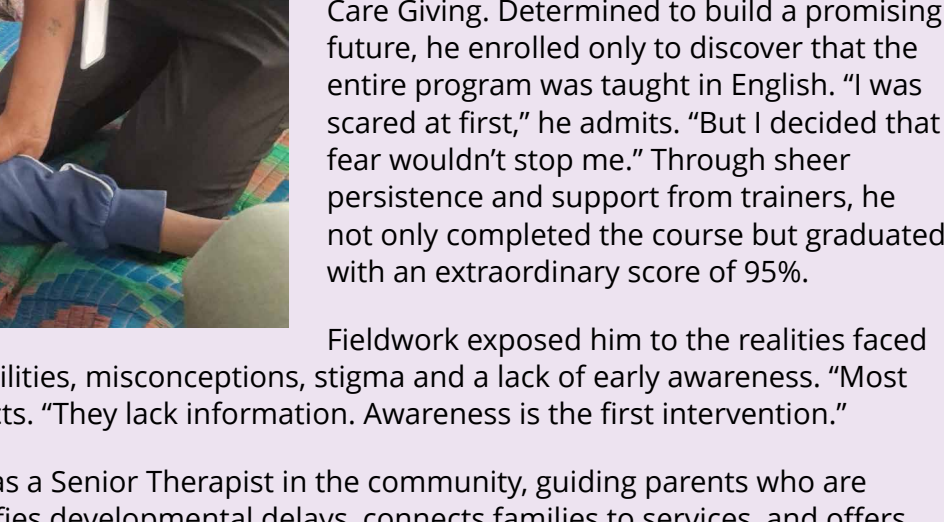
APD showcased its flagship initiative, the "Accessibility Unlocked" stall, featuring the Yes to Access app, a citizen-led digital tool enabling accessibility assessments of public and private spaces. The stall engaged over 400 visitors through interactive demonstrations, the creative "Thread Wall" activity, and QR-based digital materials linking to app tutorials, feedback forms, and APD's accessibility projects.



APD also contributed to key sessions, including Purple Talks and the inaugural panel, emphasizing the importance of data-driven, participatory approaches to accessibility. The discussions spotlighted Yes to Access as a scalable solution bridging policy and community action, reinforcing APD's vision of a barrier-free and inclusive India.

Building Inclusive Communities: APD at Volcon+ 2025

Volcon+ 2025, held in Aerocity, Delhi on 10th October 2025, marked the countdown to the International Year of Volunteering 2026, bringing together changemakers and volunteer leaders from across India and Asia. The event, powered by Good Deeds Day, featured inspiring talks, interactive workshops, and collaborative sessions focused on strengthening civic engagement and building resilient, inclusive communities through the power of volunteering.

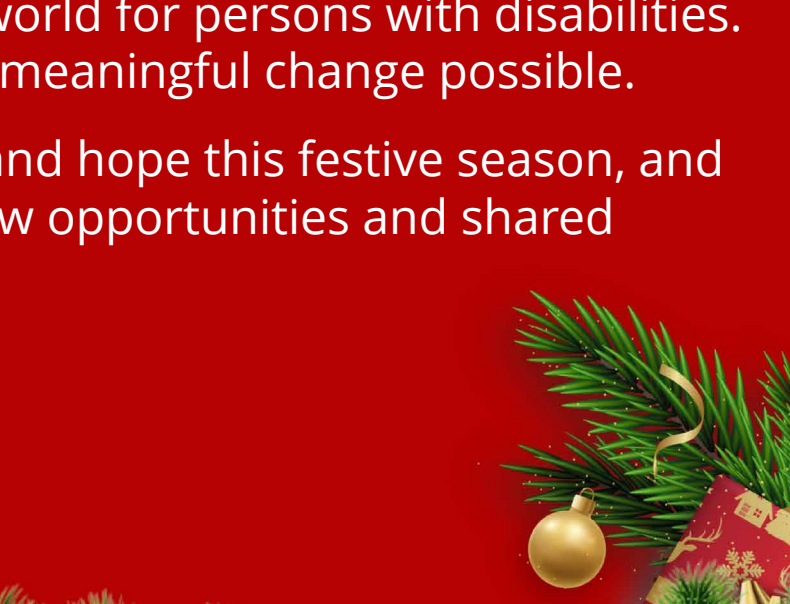


Archit Majumdar, Yes to Access - Coordinator, The Association of People with Disability (APD), presented the Yes to Access initiative in the event, engaging with volunteer leaders and sharing insights on community led accessibility mapping through the Yes to Access App. He also built networks to explore collaboration opportunities for inclusive volunteering initiatives.

Education as a Right: APD at the UN OHCHR Social Forum

The Association of People with Disability (APD) was proud to participate in the 2025 UN OHCHR Social Forum at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, where discussions centred on education as a driver of human rights.

APD's side event "Inclusive Education in India - Realising Rights of Persons with Disabilities" highlighted the urgent need for inclusive education as a human right priority for persons with disabilities in India. Speakers including Ms. Bhumika Modh (Head - Policy Research and Coordination, APD), Mr. Guruprasad Pawaskar (The State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Government of Goa), and Dr. Sachin Sharma (Associate



Professor of Law, Himachal Pradesh National Law University) moderated by Ms. Shramana Majumder (Senior Manager - Research, APD) shared insights, evidence, and lived experiences showing how accessible education can break stigma and expand opportunities.

From showcasing APD's Shradhanjali Integrated Primary School, where children with and without disabilities learn together, to reaffirming India's commitments under the RPwD Act and

UNCPRD, the message was clear: Inclusive education is not optional; it is essential for dignity, equality, and justice.

Bringing School Readiness Closer to Every Child

The Department of Education mandates one School Readiness Centre (SRC) per block to support Children with Special Needs (CwSNs). However, many children in remote villages struggle to access these centres due to distance, poor transport, and financial barriers. To bridge this gap, APD has begun establishing community-based SRCs at the Gram Panchayat or Block level, especially in areas where many CwSN cannot reach block headquarters. These centres ensure consistent therapy, learning support, and early intervention, strengthening children's preparedness for inclusive schooling. This decentralised model is supported by the Department of Education, Gram Panchayats, SDMCs, and parents, creating a community-driven ecosystem for inclusive education.



On 30th October 2025, the Tavarekere SRC in Hoskote Block, Bengaluru Rural District, was inaugurated by Sri Sharath Baccagowda, MLA. Established jointly with the Tavarekere Gram Panchayat, the centre will support 25 CwSNs from nearby villages.

"Lighting the Way: Hanumantharaya's Journey from Learner to Leader"



Hanumantharaya grew up in a humble household in rural Karnataka. With eight siblings and limited income from daily-wage farm work, the family often struggled to meet basic needs. After completing Grade 10, he worked as a vegetable vendor to support the household. Higher education seemed out of reach.

Everything changed when he heard about APD's Institute of Disability Rehabilitation and Research (IDRR) and its Certificate Course in Care Giving. Determined to build a promising future, he enrolled only to discover that the entire program was taught in English. "I was scared at first," he admits. "But I decided that fear wouldn't stop me." Through sheer persistence and support from trainers, he not only completed the course but graduated with an extraordinary score of 95%.

Fieldwork exposed him to the realities faced by families of children with disabilities, misconceptions, stigma and a lack of early awareness. "Most families don't lack love," he reflects. "They lack information. Awareness is the first intervention."

Today, Hanumantharaya serves as a Senior Therapist in the community, guiding parents who are navigating uncertainty. He identifies developmental delays, connects families to services, and offers reassurance grounded in lived experience and professional skill. "People trust me now," he says with quiet pride. "They know I stand with them."

Hanumantharaya's journey embodies IDRR's mission, empowering individuals to become catalysts of change, strengthening communities through knowledge and compassion.

Season's Greetings!

As we celebrate Christmas and welcome the New Year, we thank you for your continued support and belief in a more inclusive and equitable world for persons with disabilities. Your partnership makes meaningful change possible.

Wishing you joy, peace, and hope this festive season, and a New Year filled with new opportunities and shared successes.