

# DIALOGUES IN DISABILITY

**#ANJALI2021 - Partnering For Change**

## **DISABILITY & RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD.**

**12th November, 2021**

**04:30 - 6:30 PM IST | 11:00 - 1:00 PM GMT**

Despite many efforts like the UNCRPD, inclusive SDGs and local laws like ADA in the USA and RPwd Act in India, the rights of the disabled, across the globe are not always upheld. This is largely because the intersection of disability and religion stipulates the manner in which disabled people are treated within societies, communities and countries. This dialogue in the format of a panel discussion will explore how distinctive religions of the world represent, understand, and respond to disability. It will play a critical role in how the rights of disabled people will be acknowledged and inclusion engaged in, in a given religious-cultural context.

Four decades of experience have shown that the promotion and protection of human rights are essential for preventing disability-based discrimination. In 2006, all UN member states made a commitment to strengthen laws that eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities and in 2016 the RPwD Act further strengthened the environment in India, by enabling an environment that safeguards those rights and helps to reduce the impact of disability. Yet, people with disabilities continuously struggle to maintain a normal quality of life. Their battle becomes that much more difficult when society ignores them, mocks them, or treats them differently because of their condition or need for assistance. This attitude cannot be changed by law alone. It requires a change in understanding and attitude.

To create an understanding of the issue, the impact of an inclusive society and development, to allay all fears – Swabhiman has conceptualised “Dialogues in Disability.” The dialogues take many forms – seminars, panel discussions, radio talks, TV discussions, workshop, group discussion etc.

During the event, experts from across the world will speak on major religions and find out ways for acceptance of the disabled as regular people in the society and thwart conflating disability with sin or as virtuous suffering; and perception of charity. The discourse will lead to empowering the disabled as people with human rights for full social, economic, and political participation.

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## COVID-19 PANDEMIC - DISABILITY INCLUSIVE DISASTER MANAGEMENT

**14th November, 2021**

**04:30 - 6:30 PM IST | 11:00 - 1:00 PM GMT**

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare 4 critical facts – the *necessity* of effective disaster management systems, and the *gaps* in the working of these systems in reaching persons with disabilities. From lack of social protection responses, inaccessible information, and neglect of healthcare needs and support services, to being sidelined or ignored for priority vaccination, people with disabilities have been left out from the Disaster Management Systems being followed in many countries.

Swabhiman in collaboration with NCPEDP (DLU), New Delhi and Commonwealth Disabled People's Forum, UK, is organizing a Panel Discussion titled '**COVID-19 Pandemic and Disability Inclusive Disaster Management**' during the 4th Dialogues In Disability in 20th Anjali International Children & Youth Festival 2021 on **14th of November, 2021**.

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During the event, key findings including the recommendations of Swabhiman's and DLU-East's various reports on COVID-19 impacts to governments and international bodies will be shared. This dialogue will also focus on the experiences of persons with disabilities and the challenges being faced by them during India's devastating first and second wave of COVID – 19. The panel discussion will explore both the gaps and good practices in the disaster management systems in India, as well as the policies and potential for collaborative efforts between the Government, Civil Society and persons with disabilities to ensure Disability Inclusive Disaster Management Systems for Building Back Better.

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## **CELEBRATING DIVERSITY - DISABILITY & INCLUSION IN ARTS & CULTURE**

**17th November, 2021**

**04:30 - 6:30 PM IST | 11:00 - 1:00 PM GMT**

Diversity is one of the creative opportunities of our time. Equal access to culture enables the ability to have personal self-expression, full access to existing culture as well as equal opportunities to produce culture, all of which leads to acceptance of differences and celebration of diversity. Importantly, art and culture should not just be viewed as a form of therapy or recreation for persons with disabilities, but also as a professional practice in which they can drive the direction of mainstream culture. The wider cultural sector also has a role to play in the inclusion of persons with disabilities, such as policymakers in promoting cultural policy aimed at eliminating the cultural exclusion of persons with disabilities, highlighting that creating more inclusive spaces is a cultural, as well as a disability, issue; universities in developing an inclusive culture, arts and literature departments; and art and entertainment industry in promoting inclusive productions and exhibitions.

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## **DISABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT**

**18th November, 2021**

**04:30 - 6:30 PM IST | 11:00 - 1:00 PM GMT**

Disability- Inclusive Development means that all stages of development processes are inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities. It requires that all persons be afforded equal access to education, health care services, work and employment, and social protection, among others. In both developed and developing countries, the world's more than one billion persons with disabilities experience poverty and exclusion than persons without disabilities. Attitudinal and environmental barriers to participation have profound social, economic and cultural effects on persons with disabilities, resulting in exclusion and creating often insurmountable obstacles in relation to health services, education and employment. This panel discussion will explore the links between disability and development, as well as how the Sustainable Development Goals are pushing the globe towards sustainable and inclusive development and how the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides for and mandates disability-inclusive development. It will also set out approaches for ensuring that all aspects of national development efforts are inclusive of persons with disabilities.

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In 2018, the first UN report after the adoption of inclusive SDGs found that despite the progress made in recent years, persons with disabilities continue to face numerous barriers to their full inclusion and participation in the life of their communities. It shed light on their disproportionate levels of poverty; their lack of access to education, health services and employment; and their underrepresentation in decision-making and political participation. The 2040 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs provide a powerful framework to guide local communities, countries and the international community toward the achievement of disability-inclusive development. The 2040 Agenda pledges to leave no one behind, including persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups and has recognized disability as a cross-cutting issue across the development platform. To create an understanding of the issue, the impact of an inclusive society and development, to allay all fears – Swabhiman has conceptualised “Dialogues in Disability.” The dialogues take many forms – seminars, panel discussions, radio talks, TV discussions, workshop, group discussion etc.

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## DISABILITY IN LITERATURE, POETRY, ODISHA SCULPTURES & FOLK TALES

**19th November, 2021**

**04:30 - 6:30 PM IST | 11:00 - 1:00 PM GMT**

Over the years, literature has evolved in western countries to become more inclusive. More novels are exploring disability and narrating stories featuring disabled people. When disabilities are represented in literary texts, it helps bring a stigmatised topic to the centre of public discussion. It highlights the fact that like LGBTQ+ characters and wider ethnicities, a disability is just another aspect of humanity, and needs to be mainstreamed. The absence of knowledge about the lived experiences of the disabled and the preconceived notions about normalcy allows to attach different social meanings to impaired bodies and these meanings question the knowledge of the disabled. Academic discussions are needed to understand disability from the Hinduism and predominant Jagannath culture and ancient Odia society perspective. In Odisha, in most devotional songs, the incompleteness of Jagannath's idol is often highlighted. Is there a deeper meaning to Jagannath's incompleteness? Does Jagannath embody a disabled person to remind 'abled' beings that we must not lose sight of those who are different from us? Does it express the essential incompleteness and imperfection of all things around us?

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For the creation of disability equity, treating disability from a legal, rights or development perspective is not enough. One needs to understand and examine disability as a social, cultural and political phenomenon and how prejudice against disability is sustained through literature and other forms of culture. The panel discussion will explore the representation of disability in literature and show how disability is not just a functional impairment that needs to be clinically "fixed" or "cured" or legally empowered, but a literary construct that finds its meaning within a social and cultural context.