

DISABILITY WEEK 2018

I Signature Campaign: Disha organizes a signature campaign during disability week each year with the purpose of sensitizing mainstream schoolchildren about abilities of persons with disabilities. A team of special educators and children visits two or more schools in a decorated van having a large canvas for writing down signatures. The schoolchildren are sensitized about the life and abilities of children with disabilities. The schoolchildren become aware of the needs of special children and learn that such children can also leave normal lives and have successful careers, and that the society needs to accept and support them. The schoolchildren put their signatures on the canvas mounted on the bus to pledge their support to persons with disabilities. The children also make token donations to show that they will continue to support special persons throughout their lives.



This year the Disability Week celebrations at Disha began with flagging of the signature campaign. The Chief Guests of the day Mr. Alok Ranjan, CEO, Zila Parishad, and Mr. Rajiv Kohli, General Manager, SBI Network 1, Jaipur were welcomed by Ms. Rainu Singh, Director and Ms. Saroj Kanwar, Coordinator, Disha. Mr. Rajiv Kohli interacted with the children and encouraged them to study and take up careers of their choice. Mr. Alok Ranjan appreciated the zeal and talents of the children and wished them success in their studies. The Chief Guests flagged off the bus and the children released coloured balloons in the air to mark the launching of the signature campaign.



The campaign team made their first visit to Subodh Public School. The Principal welcomed the team and spoke about the rights of persons with disabilities. Teachers from Disha made a

presentation on the organization, its work with special children and sensitized the audience about rights and abilities of children with disabilities. Children of the host school cut a cake and had a dance with students of Disha. They also put their signatures as well as donation of Rs.20 per child to mark their solidarity with persons with disabilities.

The next visit was to SV Public School. The Principal welcomed the Signature Campaign team. Students of few classes listened to a presentation about Disha and its work. The students expressed their solidarity with persons with disabilities through their signatures and make token donations in their support.

1. **Road Show:** Students of Disha participated in a Road Show to generate awareness about the right to vote. About 40 students took out a rally carrying slogans about the need to vote and they recited the slogans. They also encouraged young people with disabilities to exercise the democratic duty by casting their votes.

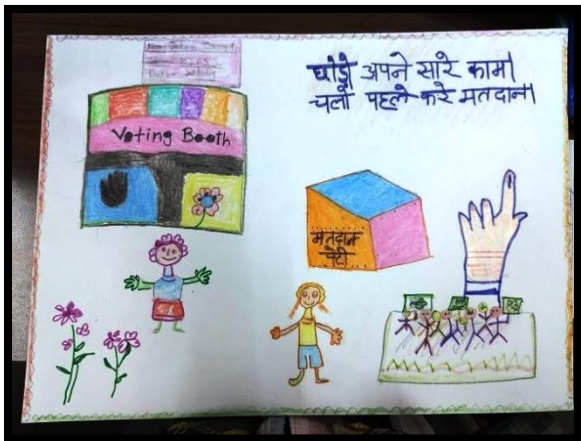


2. **Drawing Event:** The Chief Guest Mr. Alok Ranjan sensitized the participants about the right to vote, and about accessible elections. He told the students that all eligible persons with disabilities should exercise their votes and that the government supported them by providing accessible voting booths having ramps and voting machines placed at suitable height for persons using wheelchairs and other walking aids.



The children put their thoughts on paper. A total of 12 students participated in the event. Some children composed slogans about 'need to vote', and some drew people casting their votes on the EVMs. Children clearly expressed that it is our duty to vote, some gave the message that voting for leaders gives power to the youth. One child emphasized the need to think carefully and decide before voting for the right leader. Another child pointed out that voting is very important and we should leave our daily work and prioritize voting over all other work.

Previous paintings made by Disha children were gifted to the Chief guests.



3. **Demonstration on voting using EVMs:** A voting booth was created near the entrance to the school. Electronic voting machines were placed in the booth and a mock drill was conducted. Children of voting age (about 20 students) practiced using the machines to cast a vote. The students were enthusiastic about participating in the coming elections.



4. **Essay Writing Competition:** An essay competition was organized on the theme 'accessible elections'. A total of 10 students of D.Ed. SE (MR) and B.Ed. SE (MR) participated in the event. The participants were sensitized about the initiatives for accessible elections including accessible booths having ramps, new EVMs that beep when vote is properly cast, etc. They were also informed that the officers in charge of booths have been sensitized to needs of disabled persons and it is their duty to help such persons. The participants felt that with this information will help to boost confidence of people with disabilities to exercise their right to vote, and they will also take up this topic while teaching special children.



II. Poetry Competition: A poetry competition titled '**Expressions – Abhivyakti**' was organized at Disha. The purpose of the event was to enable mainstream children to express their views about disability on the theme 'Empowering Persons with Disabilities and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality'.

The judges for the event were Ms. Preksha Chopra, Ms. Perna Sahni, News Editor City Bhaskar, and Dr. Lalit Kishore, Head Research Unit, Disha. A total of 25 students from primary classes up to Class VII from 8 schools participated and recited poetry in English as well as Hindi, 2 contestants recited their own compositions.



The participants attempted to express the feelings of disabled persons – their search for equality and identity. Ms. Shreya Jain said “I’m not deaf, I just cannot hear. I’m still a person like you. I’m not just a girl with a walking stick, I’m a girl and I have a name”. Another contestant recited “sahayta nahi barabar ka darja chahte hain”. Ms. Nishka Singh made an appeal on behalf of special children “kuch kar sakte ho to itna karo, mat rukawat bano hamari”. The event highlighted the fact that mainstream children empathize with special children and understand their need to be acknowledged for their abilities and be treated with respect and equality.

The winners in the juniors section were Pari Sanghi & Nishkarsh Bhardwaj (1st), Navya Periwal (2nd), Simra Fatima (3rd). In the seniors group Purvi Bhansali came first followed by Aadrika Gajawat (2nd) and Nishka Singh (3rd).

III Art Workshop: This workshop was about bringing together the mainstream school students and the students with special needs to together express their ideas through paintings. The guests of this event included Dr. Amita Raj Goyal, Asst. Prof., Rajasthan University, Dr. Krishna Mahawar Asst. Prof, Rajasthan University, Dr. Hemlata Kumawat (Retd.) Asst. Prof. and Dr. Ranjan Pande, HOD Arts Department, Bundi College, Ms. Maisha, Mr. Yunus Khimani, Mr. BHrahma and Mr. Suneel Gildial.



A total of 47 students from 7 schools participated in the event along with 5 students of Maharani College, 5 students of Arts College, and 10 students from Rajasthan University.

The participants were asked to paint plants, trees and birds. The event saw good cooperation and interaction between special children and other artists. Some of the Disha children gave their ideas for paintings, others took part in the painting along with their team mates. Some students of arts colleges also taught the students of Disha some new techniques of painting using cotton and leaves, and they trained the children in the use of paints of various types.



Paintings made by teams including Disha students Tejaswani, Parth and Ujjwal were selected as the best paintings and three students made to the runners up list. These paintings were exhibited in the venue of the Grand Finale.

IV Grand Finale: Disha welcomed Chief Guest of the function Mr. Bijoy Ranjan, CGM, State Bank of India, Jaipur. Mr. Ranja, Ms. P.N. Kavoori and Rainu Singh inaugurated the program by lighting the lamp. Students of Disha welcomed the Chief Guest by presenting a potted plant. The ED Disha, Ms. Rainu Singh gave a brief welcome to the organization and its beginning under the leadership of Ms. Kavoori and gave a warm welcome to all the parents, teachers and Principals who partnered in the campaign leading to the Grand Finale. She lauded the partners for the wide reaching signature campaign that created awareness in about 8 schools with a support of 25,000 signatures. She recounted the events such as the Musical Evening, Art Workshop, Poetry Competition organized as part of the Disability week celebrations. She thanked the singers Dr. Geeta Brar and Dr. Anil Sharma for their contribution towards raising a fund of about Rs.6.5 lakhs. She also acknowledged the support of 'Burger Farm' and 'Arts Promotions'.



Ms. Kavoori thanked the parents for entrusting their children to the school. She stressed that 3rd December is actually 'Ability Day' and invited the guests to gauge the ability of the special children through this program. She thanked the CGM SBI for the continued support of Disha's endeavours through the past years. She presented a memento to the chief guest.



The Chief Guest presented appreciation certificates to the Principals of the schools that helped to make the signature campaign a resounding success. Other partners of Disha, the winners of the Poetry Competition 'Abhivyakti', and students of Disha who won accolades in sports events – were all felicitated with appreciation certificates.

Initiating the cultural programme, students of Jaishree Periwal School presented a contemporary rendition of the Ganesh Vandana. Students from Disha presented a dance on various sufi songs.



Winners of the poetry competition gave their presentation of the prize winning poetry recitals. Students of Rukmani Birla School did a comic take on Shahanshah Alauddin Khujli that was much appreciated by the young audience. Students of The Palace School expressed the anguish of a girl child labeled 'mentally challenged and a curse for the family' at birth. Elegant dances were presented on Rajasthani folk songs including ghoomar, kesariya baalam, and gorbhand.



The dignitaries together received the bus of the signature campaign. Ms. Saroj Kanwar extended a vote of thanks to various persons and institutions that supported the program.

