

# International conference for Divyangjans held in Pune

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 08 JAN 2026 6:50PM by PIB Mumbai

Mumbai : 8 January 2026

An International conference on the topic of 'Inclusive Education from the Perspective of Disability and Research' was held on wednesday (Jan 7), at Fergusson College in Pune, jointly by the National Convention of Educators of the Deaf (NCED) Maharashtra Chapter and the Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of Speech and Hearing Disabilities (AYJNISHD), Mumbai.



Shri. Tukaram Mundhe, Secretary of the Maharashtra Department of Disability Welfare, was present as the chief guest at the inauguration of this conference.

In this session, Shri Tukaram Mundhe emphasized the intellectual depth and strategic foresight. He articulated the critical centrality of early identification and early intervention, characterizing them as indispensable cornerstones for facilitating optimal developmental trajectories and life outcomes for persons with disabilities. Stressing the primacy of rigorous, empirical, and evidence-driven research, he

advocated for research-informed policy articulation and praxis as catalytic instruments in the evolution and sustenance of inclusive education ecosystems. Shri Mundhe expounded upon the pivotal, catalytic, and transformative role of teachers, portraying them as the principal change agents responsible for translating inclusive policies and legislative intent into authentic, context-responsive classroom realities. He emphasized the urgent necessity for systemic collaboration, institutional convergence, and robust inter-sectoral coordination, underpinned by clearly delineated accountability frameworks, outcome-oriented mechanisms, and transparent, responsive governance structures. Further, Shri Mundhe highlighted the overarching imperatives of universal accessibility, equity, and social justice, with explicit reference to the effective operationalization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016, constitutional guarantees, and allied statutory mandates. The address also highlighted the integral role of parents as proactive stakeholders and co-constructors within the educational and rehabilitation continuum. In addition, Shri Mundhe emphasized the strategic deployment of technology-enabled interventions, the systematic formulation and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures, and sustained, participatory engagement of all stakeholders to ensure coherence, quality assurance, and accountability in service delivery systems.

During the inaugural session, Dr. Suman Kumar, Director, AYJNISHD (D), Mumbai, deliberated on the initiatives of the Government of India in the domain of disability and inclusive education, with particular emphasis on the evolving and multifaceted role of teachers in implementing these initiatives at the grassroots level. Dr. Avinash Wachasunder addressed the gathering on contemporary perspectives and emerging challenges within the inclusive education landscape. The inaugural session was further dignified by the presence of esteemed dignitaries including Dr. Meera Suresh, Mrs. Shubhada Burde, Dr. Gayatri Ahuja, and Mrs. Shilpi Narang. On this occasion, souvenir of the conference was released, symbolizing the collective academic vision and commitment of the organizing institutions towards advancing inclusive education through research and praxis.

The inaugural address set an intellectually, policy-relevant, and ethically grounded tone for the conference, reaffirming a shared resolve to advance inclusive education through rights-based, research-informed, and collaboratively governed paradigms aimed at the holistic empowerment and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The event recorded the participation of approximately 350 delegates, encompassing distinguished academicians, researchers, policymakers, rehabilitation professionals, educators, and students representing a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary domains.

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