



Volume 19 | Issue 42 | October to December 2024

SAMHITA

A SAMARTHANAM PUBLICATION



14 Samarthanam's
18th Annual Walkathon

09
Musical Extravaganza featuring
Kunal Ganjawala

12 Ricky Kej, 3X Grammy winner
had high praise for Samarthanam's
impactful initiatives



ಸಮರ್ಥನಂ ಅಂಗವಿಕಲರ ಸಂಸ್ಥೆ
Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled®

www.samarthanam.org

Samarthanam is now a
CRISIL rated organization
and certified as "Strong delivery capability
and High financial proficiency" organization



EDUCATION



SKILLING



ENVIRONMENT



SPORTS



ARTS & CULTURE



HEALTH & NUTRITION



REHABILITATION

SAMARTHANAM AT A GLANCE

Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled was established in 1997 by Founder Managing Trustee Dr. Mahantesh G Kivadasannavar and his childhood friend Late Nagesh SP. The founders, being visually impaired and having witnessed various challenges, together conceptualized Samarthanam as an organization catering to people with disabilities, including the visually impaired and underserved. They believed education to be the basic right of every individual, irrespective of status or disability. Consequently, they initiated the development of various programmes at primary, secondary, and higher education levels, as well as other initiatives solely dedicated to the visually impaired and underserved.

As the organisation's objectives and drive started gaining support, Samarthanam's areas of service also expanded. It established Livelihood Resource Centres, Rehabilitation Centres, Social Enterprises, and a Sports Association for the visually impaired. Nearly three decades later, Samarthanam has expanded and fortified itself as an umbrella organisation, offering services to hundreds of people with disabilities, the underserved, and women in distress.

SAMARTHANAM ENVISIONS TO TOUCH AT LEAST A MILLION LIVES BY 2030

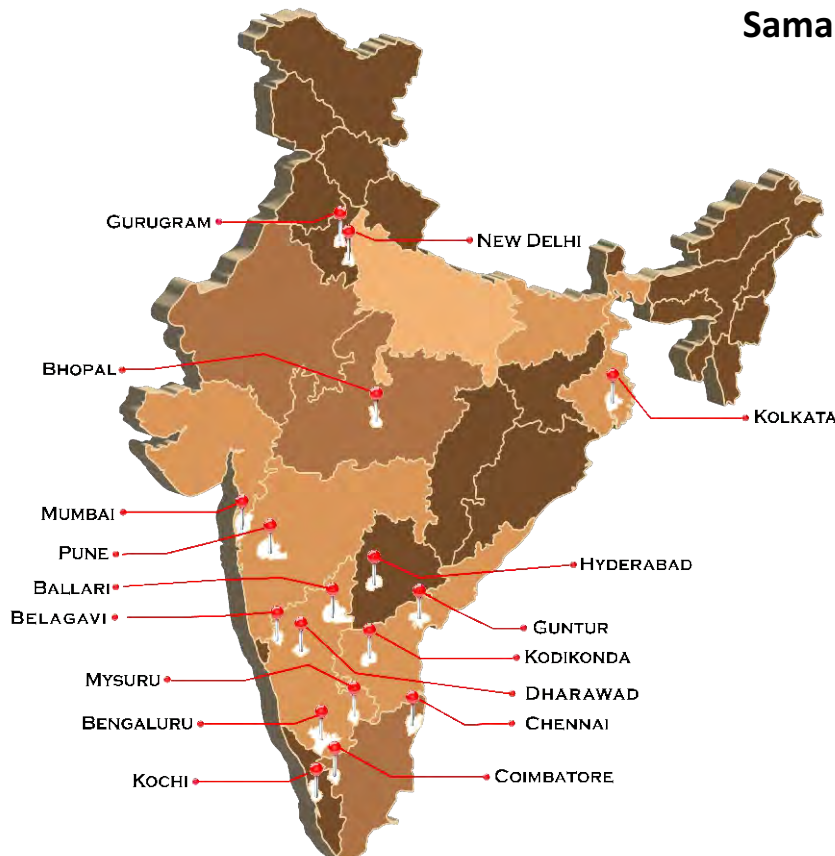
Vision

An inclusive society free from discrimination where persons with disabilities become contributing members, living with dignity and respect.

Mission

To empower visually impaired, disabled and underprivileged people through developmental initiatives focusing on educational, social, economic, cultural & technological aspects.

Samarthanam's Presence





FROM THE FOUNDER

Dr Mahantesh G Kivadasannavar

Founder Managing Trustee, Samarthanam Trust
President, Cricket Association for the Blind in India

As we close the quarter from October to December, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the impactful strides Samarthanam continues to make in transforming lives. Together, we have achieved milestones that underscore our commitment to inclusion, empowerment, and sustainability.

This quarter witnessed remarkable participation of over 10,000 individuals, including students, corporates, and communities, during Samarthanam's 18th Annual Walkathon -The OpenText Bengaluru Walkathon 2025 . This event showcased solidarity and amplified awareness of our mission. A significant highlight was the inauguration of the Samarthanam Art Centre, a vibrant space fostering creativity and self-expression among persons with disabilities. Expanding our reach further, we proudly established new centres in Gurugram and Coimbatore, bringing hope and opportunities to more communities.

We made meaningful progress in education, sustainability, healthcare, and inclusive sports, empowering countless individuals and transforming lives. These accomplishments stand as a testament to the unwavering dedication of our partners, volunteers, and supporters, whose commitment continues to inspire our vision of an inclusive world.

As we bid farewell to a remarkable year, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has been part of this journey.

Wishing you a Happy New Year and a joyous Sankranti.

Together, let us continue building a brighter, more equitable future.

Warm regards,

Dr. Mahantesh G. Kivadasannavar





SAMARTHANAM SCHOOLS

PRIMARY SCHOOL

This quarter was marked by impactful initiatives and events. Weekly quiz competitions reinforced learning, while students engaged in Braille training at RP First Source office. Health initiatives included the distribution of health kits through Computershare's "A WASH Initiative," a dental camp organized by Oxford Dental College benefiting 200 students, and deworming medication provided to students. Volunteers from BNP Paribas, SanDisk, and New Horizon College hosted games and donated supplies, while ALAPION Company contributed essential furniture. In sports, Yamuna clinched third place in the district discus throw competition, and 15 students participated in the Mitra Run 3.0. Regular yoga sessions supported both physical and mental well-being. Cultural celebrations like Gandhi Jayanti and Kannada Rajyotsava took place, and Zomato Feeding India supported Children's Day celebrations by distributing stationery, enriching the event & supporting students' educational needs. Students also participated in the 18th Walkathon, attended Tandav- Festival of Inclusion's 10th anniversary, and enjoyed a trip to Fun World.



District level sports meet

HIGH SCHOOL

Academic Initiatives

Assessments for 8th-10th standards and co-scholastic activities were conducted. Reading assistance and language concessions for SSLC differently-abled students were approved by the DDPI Office. Teachers attended workshops in Mathematics and English to enhance their subject expertise. FA-3 results for 10th-standard students were reviewed, and performance strategies were discussed during a parent-teacher meeting.

Student Development

Students participated in a Fire Safety Awareness session at the Karnataka Fire Safety Station, Hulimavu, learning safety measures and fire prevention techniques. Through the Science & Eco Club, they engaged in activities such as displaying science models, creating science-themed rangoli, and performing a skit promoting environmental cleanliness. Students also participated in Kannada Rajyotsava and Children's Day programs, and competed in the "Draw Your Dream 2024" contest at Wonderla Parks and Resorts. An enriching educational tour took students to Tamil Nadu and Kerala, visiting Kanyakumari, Kovalam Beach, and Anantha Padmanabha Swamy Temple.

Sports Achievements

Deepika (9th) secured 1st place, and Venkatesh (10th) secured 2nd place in javelin throw at the Taluk level. Students also participated in athletics at the district-level event held at Jnana Bharathi University, Bangalore.

Skill Development

High school hostel students and teachers participated in "Generation Tech" by J.P. Morgan Chase at Prestige Tech Park, Bangalore.

Administrative Updates

Nominal roll registration for 29 students was completed, with group-based mentoring and special classes implemented as part of SSLC preparation. UDISE Plus modules were updated, and APPAR ID creation was initiated to support digital integration.

SPEECH & HEARING IMPAIRED SCHOOL (SHI)

Weekly speech therapy sessions focused on daily usage words. Formative Assessment was conducted. Teachers' and Parent-Teacher meetings were held to discuss academic progress, attendance, hygiene, and resource care, with responsibilities assigned for upcoming events. Health initiatives included regular doctor visits, audiometry sessions for hearing aids, and a dental camp benefiting 35 students. Indoor and outdoor sports activities were conducted, with regular mass PT, exercise, and yoga sessions. Sports meets were organized for Children's Day and World Disability Day, with prizes awarded. Gandhi Jayanti and Karnataka Rajyotsava celebrations, a musical program, and Children's Day events with awards and cultural performances took place. Ration kits and MHM kits were distributed. Students participated in World Disabled Day events, enjoyed a trip to Fun World, and took part in the 18th Walkathon. Art and craft sessions continued to encourage creativity.



Conducted audiometry for students



Distribution of Ration and MHM kits

INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED SCHOOLS (ID)

MYSURU

- Gandhi Jayanti, Ayudha Puja, Kannada Rajyotsava, Children's Day, and National Constitution Day were celebrated with great enthusiasm at the school.
- The Kiddathon Run Program was organized for all ID school and HEP students, with participants receiving gifts.
- On World Disability Day, ID and higher education students showcased their talents in various competitions, and a musical program was presented by the higher education students.
- In the Bandhavva Sports Competition 2024, the school emerged as the Champion in the Lower Ability Male category and Runner-up in the Lower Ability Female category.
- Students participated in the Cultural & Sports Program by Rotary Mysore Midtown, which helped enhance their talents, teamwork, and sportsmanship.
- The school's students enthusiastically participated in the Cultural Event organized by Sakshama, showcasing their talents and interacting with peers from other institutions.



Children's Day Celebration



Sports meet

BELAGAVI

- Mahatma Gandhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Maharshi Valmiki, and Kanaka Dasa Jayantis were celebrated with great enthusiasm.
- An evaluation camp for gifted children was conducted in Belgaum by Associate Director Mr. Prasad S.K.B. and Deputy Director Administration.
- Medical, ENT, and eye check-up camps were organized by SBIF and Netra Darshan Hospital.
- The World Day of Persons with Disabilities was commemorated with a candlelight vigil and a sports competition.
- Students from Jain College, Maulana Abdul Kalam B.S.W./M.S.W. College, and BIERT officials from Belgaum City Zone visited the centre.
- A training program on inclusive education and teaching materials was organized under the SBIF Project.
- Shri Shashikant Churumuri and other dignitaries were hosted at the school, where they engaged with staff and students.



Eye checkup camp

BENGALURU

- **Educational Program:** Students engaged in yoga, educational activities, and co-curricular programs like drawing and park visits post-Dasara vacation. The District Disabled Welfare Officer also conducted an educational inspection.
- **Capacity Building:** A meeting was held at the primary school, where teachers discussed upcoming events like Gandhi Jayanti and Children's Day. Teachers received guidance on attendance, proposal submissions, and department inspections.
- **Sports Program:** Three students and a staff member participated in the Special Olympics Bharat National Volleyball selection camp in Chikkodi, Karnataka.
- **Health Program:** Health check-ups were conducted twice weekly. ID student Nithya D received a wheelchair, which helps her learn to propel herself. A dental check-up camp was also held.
- **Volunteering Program:** Volunteers from Vedanta Bharathi and JLL engaged with students, teaching chanting and interacting with educational activities. Corporate visitors from Adobe and V Solutions also participated in student interactions.
- **Cultural and Other Programs:**
 - ✦ Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri Jayanti was Celebrated with a procession and cleanliness drive
 - ✦ ID students and staff took part in three significant events: Walkathon 2024, the World Disability Day programme at Kanteerava Stadium, and the "Tandav – Festival of Inclusion.
 - ✦ 58 students and staff enjoyed a one-day outing to a resort near Magadi Road.
- **Vocational Unit:** Students learned functional numeracy, diya painting, door décor crafting, and participated in making phenyl. They received pre-orders for 200 diyas and packed them with hand-made paper bags. Volunteers from JD College of Design also conducted art and craft sessions with the students.
- **Guest Visits and Events:** Guests from JLL visited the Vocational Training Unit (VTU), where students displayed their products. VTU also participated in exhibitions at HSBC, Citi Bank, Cisco, and other venues, showcasing their crafts.

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Higher Education Support:

College admissions and tuition fees were facilitated for 1,687 disabled and underprivileged students across 11 states during this quarter.

Empowering Student Leaders:

Dr. Mahantesh G.K. served as Chief Guest at V.V.N. Degree College's Students' Council Inauguration. 96 students were recognized as college representatives, with scholarships provided to over 70 students who actively volunteer with Samarthanam annually.

Strategic Partnerships in Action:

Mr. Kaushalendra Pratap Singh (Standard Chartered Bank) and Miss Namratha (Deloitte) visited Samarthanam's Bhopal facility to discuss the Higher Education Project and engage with beneficiaries.

Accessible Technology for Education:

15 computers with screen-reading software were provided to Government First Grade College, Hampinagar, and 5 to KCD College, Dharwad, empowering 75 students with disabilities to complete assignments independently.

Green Initiatives:

NATWEST GROUP volunteers along with 35 Samarthanam students created 1,000 seed balls and planted 35 saplings at HSR office.

Competitive Coaching:

Third batch of coaching classes began in Belagavi with 30 students, and 40 students completed the program in Dharwad.

Sporting & Cultural Achievements:

25 students from Mysore participated in disability-focused sports and cultural events, winning 16 prizes across various categories.

30 students in Ballari excelled in sports and musical performances during International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

Skill Development:

TIAA GBS employees conducted Job Interview Skills training for 60 students in Pune and Mumbai.

Fostering Inclusion:

Competitions held at Government First Grade College, Mysore promoted inclusion, with multiple events.

Annual Walkathon:

Over 1,000 students from 10 colleges participated in the 18th Walkathon at Kittur Rani Chennamma Stadium, Bangalore.

Assistive Technology:

Smart glasses distributed to 50 visually impaired higher education programme students.

MINI SCIENCE LABS / INNOVATION AND TINKER LABS/ DIGITIZATION OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS



Mini Science Labs & Tinker Labs:

73 Mini Science Labs were installed, benefiting 2000+ students.

9 Tinker Labs were set up across Bangalore, with teacher training conducted.

66 teacher training sessions were completed

34 monitoring visits were carried out.



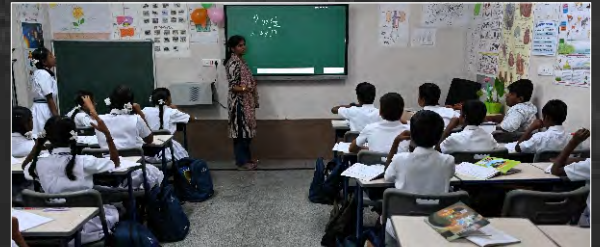
Mini science lab



Smart Boards:

36 Smart Boards were installed across 20+ schools.

26 teacher training sessions were completed, with more planned.



Smart board



Solar Classrooms:

40 schools were monitored, and solar-powered classrooms were inaugurated.



Solar Classrooms:

Ongoing Impact: 58 schools were monitored, with need-based training continuing.

WASH

- RO water filters were installed in 17 locations.
- Toilet block renovations were completed in all 25 schools.
- Health sessions were conducted, benefiting 12,612 students and training over 1,000 teachers.
- MHM kits and IEC materials were distributed to 5,500 adolescent girls.
- Monitoring visits were completed in 4 locations (Jalgaon, Nandurbar, Virudhunagar, and Ramanathapuram).



Installation of RO water filter



Toilet Block Renovation

HAPPY SCHOOL PROJECT

The Happy School Project provided quality education to children with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) and slow learners in an integrated setting across six government schools in Chennai, fostering a holistic learning environment. Regular services were provided by para teachers and special educators, and the physiotherapist appointment was completed. Volunteering activities were carried out in 4 schools, and a baseline study for children and caregivers' livelihood support was finished. Staff capacity building and procurement of TLMs (Teaching Learning Materials) for all 6 schools were finalized. Caregiver meetings, along with teacher capacity building, were completed in 5 schools.





CRICKET ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND IN INDIA

IndusInd Bank Nagesh Trophy: A Milestone for Blind Cricket

The IndusInd Bank Nagesh Trophy, a Men's National T20 Cricket Tournament for the Blind 2024-25, witnessed remarkable milestones. A media release on November 9, 2024, announced the tournament and the 17-member squad for the 4th T20 World Cup. Group matches across India showcased exceptional talent: Group A in Bangalore, Group B in Kota, Group C in Bhubaneswar, Group D in Hyderabad, Group E in Ludhiana, and Group F in Kharagpur. Each venue hosted multiple matches, with eliminator rounds scheduled for January 2025.



IndusInd Bank Nagesh Trophy

Empowering Cricketers Through Coaching Camps

With support from Hyundai Motor India Foundation (HMIF), residential coaching camps for men and women cricketers were held in Vellore, Tamil Nadu, from December 2024. A total of 50 beneficiaries were equipped with assistive tools like Sony recorders to aid their education and career. Hyundai's commitment was further highlighted through a newspaper feature in The Hindu across Tamil Nadu and promotional broadcasts on Superhits Red FM 93.5.



HMIF Residential Coaching Camp

Promoting Blind Cricket in India with PWC

Samarthanam and the Cricket Association for the Blind in Telangana mobilized 50 visually impaired women for cricket coaching and higher education. Two residential camps in Hyderabad provided foundational and advanced skills training. Virtual sessions on digital, financial, and life skills continue to enhance the participants' capabilities. Over 60 volunteers participated in cricket for the blind.

Holistic Development with NTT DATA

In collaboration with NTT DATA, Samarthanam initiated blind cricket coaching camps for 100 visually impaired girls across Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The first camp in Bangalore commenced on October 14, 2024, with Indian cricketer Ms. Rajeshwari Gayakwad as the guest of honour. Camps in Chennai and Dharwad further expanded outreach, fostering skill development and holistic growth.



NTT DATA Coaching Camp

Support for Women Cricketers by Alethea Communication Technologies

Alethea Communication Technologies Private Limited financially supports six women cricketers from Karnataka, contributing INR 3,500 monthly for a year towards fitness and training for blind cricket.



SUNADHA

Sunadha, the performing arts wing of Samarthanam, showcased its artistic excellence across various cultural, corporate, and commemorative platforms during the quarter. Highlights include:

Performances at Cultural Events:

Presented captivating performances at Maharani College, Shringeri Shankara Mutt, and Vasuvi Temple. Combined music and dance performances for Durga Puja organized by SEBBA Bengali Association. Delivered classical music and dance at Kannada Rajyotsava celebrations and the Akhila Bharata Kannada Sahitya Sammelana in Mandya.

Corporate and Institutional Engagements:

Showcased talent at Kennametal's IKON Awards, Atos Corporate in Whitefield, and Zomato's Bangalore office. Performed for Dell Technologies' HR Support Summit and GSK's year-end event. Collaborated with Pernod Ricard India Pvt. Ltd. and Iron Mountain for annual celebrations.

Collaborations with Artists and Institutions:

Collaborated with renowned artists like Sri Nilimesh Chakraborty and Sri Satish Kolli in a live classical performance. Partnered with Dr. Gangubai Hangal University for a classical music and dance showcase in Mysore.

Commemorative and Tribute Performances:

Paid tribute to the memory of Dr. Madhukar Shetty IPS at the Samarthanam Art Centre. Delivered a heartfelt memorial performance in honour of Sushant, a young cancer warrior, during an event organized by Lions International.

Grand Inaugurations and Celebrations:

Participated in the inauguration of the Art Centre and Kannada Rajyotsava cultural program featuring Kunal Ganjawala. Participated in the International Day of Persons with Disabilities at Kanteerava Indoor Stadium. Delivered musical performances during Samarthanam's Walkathon and Children's Day celebrations.



Cultural program featuring Kunal Ganjawala

VOLUNTEERING

Impact Highlights:

- Volunteers played a key role in improving digital and financial literacy for underserved communities, providing them with essential skills for better opportunities.
- Tree planting and seed ball initiatives were carried out to promote a greener environment and raise awareness about sustainability.
- Volunteers supported children with disabilities through various activities, helping make learning more accessible and inclusive.
- Meaningful volunteer activities fostered stronger relationships between businesses and local communities, promoting collaboration and social impact.



44 volunteer activities



6,448 volunteers



43,010 hours

Notable Activities:

- 700 volunteers from Google participated in a session aimed at improving digital skills in underserved communities, empowering them with tools for a brighter future.
- Initiatives like "Braille It Up" by Janes, STEM programs by BNP Paribas, and interactive stall setups by HSBC and Caterpillar helped make learning engaging and fun for all.
- Volunteers from BNP Paribas, EY, and Pfizer came together to paint walls and plant trees at government schools, helping create better, more welcoming spaces for children as part of community development.
- Volunteers visited colleges such as GIBS and JD College of Designing, and facilitated cultural performances with Christ Academy students, promoting creativity and educational exchange.
- Volunteers joined hands for special activities like "Cook a Meal" with Herman Miller and blind cricket matches organized by Unisys, creating opportunities for diverse people to connect.
- A huge mobilization of 4,000 volunteers as part of Deloitte's Impact Day took place at schools and learning centres, making a lasting difference in the lives of students.
- PWC organized online sign language sessions to promote inclusivity, while Dayanand College, JLL, Oracle, and Vena Energy also hosted activities aimed at empowering people with disabilities.
- Alorica distributed groceries to those in need, while Q2 and Pfizer contributed through various environmental initiatives, supporting sustainability efforts.

Suvidya- The Digital Library



- Engaged 19,000 volunteers, dispatching 5,000 PDF books from the Digital Library as part of Deloitte Impact Day Activity
- Facilitated audiobook recording activities with Keysight, Syndigo, and PWC as part of Corporate Engagement Activity.
- Conducted "Savira Dwani Samarpane" sessions – an awareness drive to record in Kannada for faculty at Vijaya College, National College Basavanagudi and Jayanagar, and NMKRV College for Women.
- Mobile library services to various public locations across the city were resumed.
- Meetings were held with Dr. Homiyar Mobedji, Accessibility Expert at Benetech, to enhance the Digital Library's functionality as part of technological upgrades

PARISARA

Continuing Parisara's efforts to promote waste reduction and segregation, this quarter witnessed enhanced community engagement through awareness campaigns and sustainable waste management initiatives.

Awareness campaigns reached 28,103 households across 29 blocks in five BBMP wards, benefiting one lakh+ community members. Activities included 1,086 commercial visits, clearing eight black spots, and sensitizing 315 students on waste segregation, reducing carbon emissions, and improving recycling rates.

Additionally, 3,011 students from five BBMP wards were educated on waste management and biodiversity. Eighteen students were appointed as Green Ambassadors, tasked with maintaining campus cleanliness and promoting sustainability, receiving certificates to acknowledge their leadership.

To further environmental conservation, Parisara facilitated the plantation of 4,100 saplings, including Moringa, Lemon, Guava, and Milia Dubia, at Samarthanam Doddaballapur, contributing to enhanced biodiversity, combating climate change, and fostering sustainable ecosystems.



Awareness campaigns on waste segregation

VIDYAPRASAD

During the October-December 2024 quarter, Vidya Prasad continued its regular mid-day meal operations, supplying eggs, bananas, and chikki (peanut brittle) to schools six days a week. Ayudha Pooja was celebrated at the kitchen centre. The meal cost was increased from December 1st. Additionally, the team attended the Karnataka State Mid-Day Meal Federation meeting in Bangalore, and 10,000 meals were successfully provided for the Walkathon program.

HEALTH

The Health Department of Samarthanam has made significant strides in empowering individuals with disabilities through various initiatives in this quarter. Over 185 beneficiaries were supported with assistive devices across projects such as the Intel Project in Delhi and the Medreich and ANZ Projects in Bengaluru. Additionally, surgical support was provided to one individual, enhancing their quality of life. An assessment camp held in Hoskote further extended the department's outreach, benefiting 40 individuals with assistive devices tailored to their specific needs.

HUMAN RESOURCE

- Diwali was celebrated with employees through engagement activities, and gifts and sweets were distributed.
- Group health insurance for staff was renewed to ensure health security.
- Recruitment for the Gurugram BPO and other projects was actively carried out, with detailed orientation and induction processes conducted for new hires.
- Medical services were coordinated during the walkathon event.
- The total workforce, including on-roll employees and consultants, stands at approximately 700, with 26% comprising individuals with disabilities this quarter.



Students from the intellectually disabled (ID) schools of Samarthanam Bengaluru and Mysuru showcased their exceptional talents at the Yuva Sambhrama, a pre-event for the Mysuru Dasara Cultural Program 2024. Their inspiring performances highlighted their incredible abilities and limitless potential, leaving the audience in awe.



Samarthanam has expanded its reach by establishing a new centre in Gurugram! This milestone strengthens our commitment to creating opportunities, fostering inclusion, and empowering the lives of persons with disabilities. Together, we move closer to building an inclusive society.



Samarthanam proudly celebrated Kannada Rajyotsava with great enthusiasm across its centres, including schools and skilling hubs state-wide. The vibrant festivities reflected Samarthanam's deep pride in Karnataka's rich culture and heritage.



Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled proudly inaugurated the Samarthanam Art Centre in HSR Layout, Bengaluru—a fully accessible, state-of-the-art space designed to celebrate and showcase the artistic talents of individuals with disabilities.



Ricky Kej, the three-time Grammy Award winner, was deeply impressed by Samarthanam's impactful initiatives, especially the Vocational Training Unit (VTU) and the exceptional artistry of Sunadha, its performing arts division. Mesmerized by the musical brilliance of Sunadha's band, he pledged to mentor, support, and explore exciting opportunities for future collaborations!



Akhilesh, a student from the ID School, proudly clinched the Best Athlete Award at the World Disability Day Sports Meet held at Kanteerava Stadium.



The Karnataka Blind Sports Association, in collaboration with Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled and under the auspices of the Indian Blind Sports Association, organized the State-Level Athletics Meet for the Blind 2024 in Tumkur



Shri Bhagwant Khuba, former Union Minister of State for Chemicals & Fertilizers and New and Renewable Energy, paid a prestigious visit to Samarthanam, acknowledging its impactful initiatives and unwavering commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities.



Samarthanam's Kochi centre organized an impactful workshop at Aster Medcity, dedicated to empowering individuals with physical challenges. The session offered valuable insights on setting SMART goals, understanding disability rights, and exploring career opportunities, helping participants unlock their full potential



On the solemn occasion of the 6th death anniversary of the esteemed Dr. Madhukar Shetty, IPS, Samarthanam Trust honoured his extraordinary legacy with a heartfelt event, "Pushpa Namana," held at the Samarthanam Art Centre. This tribute celebrated his lasting impact and the values he stood for.



The Karnataka Blind Sports Association Team, under the Samarthanam Banner showcased remarkable talent at the 23rd National Athletics Championship for the Blind, held in Nadiad, Gujarat 2024. The team won a total of 15 medals: 4 Gold, 9 Silver & 2 Bronze.

SAMARTHANAM'S 18th ANNUAL WALKATHON

THE OPENTEXT BENGALURU WALKATHON 2024 A WALK TO SUPPORT HEALTH FOR ALL



Samarthanam's Walkathon

Annually, Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled organizes the impactful Walkathon, dedicated to commemorating World Disability Day under a specific theme. This large-scale event serves as a national engagement, fostering broad awareness and unity around a collective cause. The Walkathon stands as a robust platform, not only raising awareness but also mobilizing collective action towards our shared aspirations.



OpenText Bengaluru Walkathon 2024

This year's theme, "**Health for All**," spotlighted the critical importance of accessible healthcare and inclusivity for individuals with disabilities. It emphasized the fundamental need for fair health services, advocating vehemently for equal opportunities and support in healthcare access. Through this thematic focus, Samarthanam Trust underscored healthcare's pivotal role in enhancing the quality of life for people with disabilities. The aim is to strive for a future where everyone, irrespective of ability, has equal access to essential health resources and services, thereby fostering a more equitable society



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“Through the Bengaluru Walkathon, we stride towards a brighter future—one where every step taken is a testament to our unified commitment for inclusivity and health equity. This event is not just a walk; it's a collective journey towards a world where 'Health for All' is not just a slogan but a lived reality.”



Dr. Mahantesh G Kivadasannavar
Founder Managing Trustee, Samarthanam

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SKILLING – LIVELIHOOD RESOURCE CENTRES

BENGALURU

The Livelihood Resource Programme this quarter enriched beneficiaries with hands-on exposure to workplace etiquette through impactful industrial visits to Keysight, HP, Amazon, and Croma. The annual Walkathon highlighted the importance of health and well-being, while celebrations like World Disability Day, Kannada Rajyotsava, and Children's Day fostered diversity and inclusion, creating a supportive environment for all participants.



Industrial visits to understanding workplace etiquettes

BELGAUM

Beneficiaries of Belagavi center participated in an exposure visit to GCMMF [Amul - The Taste of India] in Goa, gaining hands-on experience from industrial experts in the production sector, inspiring them to pursue opportunities in similar environments. World Disability Day was celebrated with beneficiaries and faculty, emphasizing diversity, inclusion, and awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities. A placement drive in Bagalkot further supported beneficiaries in securing meaningful employment.



Placement Drive at Bagalkot

BALLARI

This quarter, beneficiaries gained valuable insights into health and well-being through an awareness program at the Health Care Centre in Kampli, complemented by health check-ups and blood donation camps. They also participated in the World Disability Day program organized by DDWO, enhancing their awareness of rights and opportunities. Events such as Kannada Rajyotsava and Gandhi Jayanti celebrations enriched their understanding of culture and community bonding.



Awareness Program on Health Care

HYDERABAD

Hyderabad LRC organized a Braille activity at First Source Premises. Industrial visits to Novartis and Croma were arranged, where beneficiaries were exposed to different workplace environments, motivating them to aim for placements at such reputed firms after completing their training and acquiring the necessary skills. The LRC team attended Sankalp Divas at Public Garden, which contributed to team building and morale. Children's Day was celebrated in collaboration with the WISSEN team, adding to the quarter's vibrant activities.



Braille Activity at First Source

DHARWAD



Chess Tournament organized on World Disability day

Beneficiaries at the Dharwad LRC participated in a Chess Tournament organized at the centre on World Disability Day, which provided a platform for them to brainstorm, showcase their competitiveness, and motivate them to succeed in a skillful environment. Exposure visits were arranged to Reliance Trends, offering the beneficiaries a deeper understanding of the retail industry. A Placement Drive was also organized at the centre, helping beneficiaries explore suitable employment opportunities across multiple sectors. Other events included the celebration of Kannada Rajyotsava and Ayudha Pooja at the centre, which helped the candidates connect with and appreciate the values of our traditions.

KODIKONDA

The Kodikonda LRC staff and trainees visited several sites, including Kadiri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple, Myrada Kadiri Project, Himasree Vegetable Nursery in Gorantla, Madani Defence Academy Gorantla, and Vinayaka Granites Floorings & Tiles Making Factories as part of exposure and industrial visits. The study tour provided valuable knowledge and insights into the workplace environment. World Disability Day was celebrated with Deputy MRO Mr. Jagannath as the chief guest, who motivated the beneficiaries to pursue their careers. Gandhi Jayanti was also celebrated, with candidates sharing their reflections on India's freedom struggle and the significance of truth and non-violence, which are the foundational principles of our great leader.



Gandhi Jayanti celebration

KOCHI



visit to Kerala Museum

Kochi LRC organized a Sensitization Workshop at Aster Medcity on the occasion of International Day for Persons with Disabilities. The program was appreciated by the Aster team, as it helped them gain a detailed understanding of overcoming various barriers and setting SMART goals. Beneficiaries also had the opportunity to visit Kerala Museum as part of an exposure visit, which provided valuable insights into ancient history, core values, and the traditions practiced in Kerala. Additionally, a Sign Language workshop was organized at Nirmala Arts & Science College, Mulanthuruthy, to help faculty and students build awareness on the topic, emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion.

CHENNAI

Chennai Centre celebrated cultural programs and special events, such as World Disability Day and Christmas, with active participation from the beneficiaries. Exposure visits to First Source and Marina Mall provided valuable learning experiences. Workshops on self-motivation, interview skills, mock interviews, and resume building were conducted for the beneficiaries. Additionally, a placement drive for differently-abled candidates led to successful placements.



World Disability day celebration



Health Camp for Beneficiary

Several impactful events were organized at the Bhopal Centre, beginning with Children's Day celebrations and a motivational session by DDRC, among others. Staff from Kartju Hospital conducted a health check-up camp in observance of World AIDS Day. Disability Day featured Dr. Jyoti Rajoria, Deputy Collector, as the guest of honour, who delivered an inspiring talk on her personal journey. The event also included visits to a science centre and DB Mall, providing valuable learning experiences for the participants. Additionally, a motivational session focused on career development, and workshops on employee engagement and professional growth were conducted. The series culminated with an interview session, assessing candidates' skills and suitability for their respective roles.

MYSORE

The Mysuru centre hosted several memorable events throughout the quarter, promoting community and learning. An industrial visit to the Amazon Warehouse was a highlight, offering students valuable insights and inspiration for their future careers. The Disability Day celebration followed, emphasizing the importance of respecting specially-abled individuals and motivating beneficiaries. Additionally, the LRC marked Children's Day with a special ceremony honouring Jawaharlal Nehru.



Children's Day Celebration

KOLKATA

Samarthanam Students at TATA Marthon

Kolkata LRC served as the CWD (Champions with Disabilities) facilitator for the TATA Steel World 25K Marathon, where beneficiaries participated with great enthusiasm. To support their development, the centre partnered with corporates to organize workshops on key topics such as interview skills, art classes, personality development, spoken English, & more. These workshops aimed to equip beneficiaries with essential skills to succeed in interviews and communicate effectively with their peers. The quarter also featured several events and festive celebrations, starting with Deepavali, followed by Children's Day and Disability Day. Exposure visit to Reliance Smart Bazar Retail provided beneficiaries with valuable insights. Placement drives conducted throughout the quarter resulted in successful participation & selections for the beneficiaries.

GUNTUR

At the Guntur LRC, exposure visits were arranged to the AP GENCO Power Plant and Nagarjuna Sagar, providing the beneficiaries with valuable knowledge and insights. A guest lecture on Human Life Ethics was delivered by Mrs. V. Sai Lakshmi, Faculty at Kits Engineering College, where beneficiaries shared their valuable insights and feedback. The session proved highly beneficial in helping them build their core values.



GENCO Power Plant visit

MUMBAI

Mock Interview - Workshop

Mumbai LRC began the quarter with celebrations for Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti and Deepavali, setting a positive tone for the months ahead. A range of events followed, including an exposure visit to Vindhya Info-Media Pvt Ltd, which inspired and motivated the beneficiaries. Several informational seminars were conducted on key topics such as interview preparation, time management, financial literacy, personality development, smart decision-making, resume preparation, communication skills, digital marketing, and AI tools like Canva, providing essential knowledge for their future careers. Mobility sessions, including yoga, were also arranged to support overall well-being. World Disability Day was commemorated, and multiple placement drives led to successful interviews and placements for the beneficiaries.



UDID Camp

Beneficiaries of Delhi LRC attended the UDID (Unique Disability Identity) camp, organized to assist them in acquiring their UDID cards. World Disability Day was celebrated with the participation of volunteers from various corporates. An exposure visit to Saarathee CRM followed, where beneficiaries learned about autonomy, their rights, and more. Seminars on topics such as body language, business etiquette, soft skills, and digital literacy were organized. Additionally, sessions on legal awareness were arranged to inform beneficiaries about their rights and disability laws. Assistive devices were distributed to the beneficiaries. A conference meeting was held with Astha NGO to explore collaboration opportunities for placement drives and inclusive activities for the beneficiaries.

PUNE

Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled – Pune was honoured with the Outstanding Contribution Award in the NGO category at the Rock Star Event organized by Big Basket on 30th November 2024. The centre marked the quarter with vibrant celebrations of Children's Day, Disability Day, and Christmas, where beneficiaries actively participated, adding joy to the festivities.

Additionally, corporates conducted several impactful workshops for the beneficiaries, covering topics such as one-minute presentations, interview handling skills, career building strategies, and more, empowering them with essential life and professional skills.



Pune Centre received -Big Basket Award

OVERSEAS

The adoption of Pushpa, a girl child at Samarthanam, was facilitated by the Overseas Team for a couple from France, ensuring seamless communication and paperwork.

Abigail and Andrew from the USA visited Samarthanam in October 2024. Abigail received training in blind cricket, while Andrew volunteered for outreach programs. Both are now actively collaborating to establish blind cricket teams in the USA.

The overseas team coordinated the participation of Deputy Consul Luke from the Australian High Commission and Samantha Jackson from the US Consulate in Samarthanam's 18th Walkathon. The dignitaries also toured Samarthanam's facilities and explored its initiatives in sports, arts, education, and health.

Scholars and faculty from Stanford University engaged in discussions with Dr. Mahantesh, addressing accessibility challenges for disabled individuals in digital platforms and exploring global solutions.

Volunteers, including Alain De Colo from France, actively participated in Samarthanam's initiatives with support from the overseas team.

US woman seeks to widen boundaries of blind cricket

Pearl Dsouza @timesofindia.com

Bengaluru: Visually challenged **Abey Finklea**, a 27-year-old from Wisconsin, US, never imagined she would discover her passion in distant India. After training for blind cricket — which she had no idea about till last year — in namma Bengaluru, Abey is now planning to make the game popular among visually challenged women back home.

Abey's tryst with cricket began at National Federation of the Blind convention in Florida in July 2024. It was there that she encountered Samarthanam Trust, an Indian organisation promoting blind cricket and headquartered in Bengaluru. "I had never even heard of cricket till then," she said.

"But after meeting Mahantesh (founder of the trust), I got a chance to play and it was exhilarating."

Mahantesh was in the US promoting the sport with an all-male team, going from university to university. Impressed by Abey's enthusiasm, he invited her to Bengaluru to train and eventually start a team back home.

The excitement of playing a team sport, something she never thought possible, was life-changing. "Growing up in small-town Wisconsin, I had no access to blind sports. Playing cricket has been empowering. It's more than just a game — it's about community and support, having each other's back when you're low," she said.

A degenerative condition left Abey blind in one eye and with blurred vision in the other, but it hasn't stopped her from embracing challenges. Arriving in Bengaluru on Oct 11 with her brother, Abey joined a training camp with 26 other girls in her team. "Everyone here has been very welcoming. I don't speak the local language, but they've been teaching me and I've been learning a lot," she shared. Her training runs until Nov 7, after which she plans to return to the US and "create a community of blind women who will play cricket to feel empowered and supported, have camaraderie, no matter their abilities".

Before arriving in India, Abey was fascinated by Asia but didn't know what to expect here. "My interactions with Indians were super positive, so I was really excited to come here. I'm learning a lot, not just about the game but about the culture too."

Trouble on the streets
Abey does admit that navigating the streets of India has been a challenge compared to her life in Wisconsin. "The streets here are very different; there aren't always clear places to walk, and cars are everywhere. Back home, the sidewalks are typically easy to navigate, but here it's a bit challenging for a blind person. But we have had help here," she said.

Back in the US, Abey plans to continue pursuing a bachelor's degree in elementary education, driven by her passion for teaching. "I always wanted to be a teacher and work with young children," she said. She taught primary school students at the age of 17 and also taught children with autism how to ride horses when she was 14.

SHE'S A SWEEPER!
Abey Finklea, 21, is blind in one eye & has blurred vision in the other, but this hasn't stopped her from embracing challenges.



Visit of Scholars and faculty from Stanford University



AUDIO BOOK LAUNCH of "Reimagining Health - Inspiring Stories of Innovators" written by Prof. Anurag Prabhakar Mairal, Stanford University
Audio conversion by Samarthanam Digital Library



“ A GOOD EDUCATION IS A FOUNDATION
FOR A BETTER FUTURE.”

COMMUNITY INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Under the Community Development Program, the Doddaballapur day care centre provided education on alphabets, numbers, shapes, and other concepts, complemented by activities like drawing, dancing, and physiotherapy sessions. Students from the preparatory education centre participated in the World Disability Day sports competition, winning three prizes in various events. Computer training sessions were conducted for 1,305 students across four schools, focusing on MS Office skills, typing, and school-related tasks. Computer tests saw 905 participants, with commendable performance from many students.



Income generation beneficiaries collectively earned ₹18,700. Therapy home visits reached 24 children across 16 villages, providing follow-up and guidance.

The mobile physiotherapy van treated 179 beneficiaries in Doddaballapura Taluk. National Means-cum-Merit Scholarship coaching supported 465 students, with a test showcasing notable scores among participants. 4 children were referred for lower limb surgery assessments at Birds Hospital, with three approved. Children's Day was celebrated with enthusiastic participation from preparatory centre students.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ACCELERATOR(ATA)

Samarthanam's ATA Labs engaged in a number of impactful initiatives this quarter, including the distribution of 50 AI-powered Smart On spectacles to visually impaired students at JP Nagar, in collaboration with Informatica. ATA also participated in the Karpagam ATA Expo in Coimbatore, showcasing assistive technology solutions such as sign language-enabled content and digital accessibility tools. Additionally, ATA Labs supported Samarthanam's capacity-building efforts at Chitrakoot University, delivering phase 1 of deaf accessible content in Computer Science, enhancing the learning experience for students and faculty.

At ISTEM Confluence 2024, held in Bengaluru, ATA Labs contributed to discussions on inclusive hiring and innovation, engaging with industry leaders and professionals with disabilities. ATA also participated in the Empower 2024 Workshop in Trivandrum, where they discussed assistive technologies and invisible disabilities.

The ISTEM Include app, developed by ISTEM, was introduced to JP Nagar's HEP students for training on STEM accessibility for visually impaired students.

STORIES OF CHANGE

VIJAYASHANTI'S INSPIRING JOURNEY

Born in Raichur District, Karnataka, Miss Vijayashanti's arrival brought both joy and uncertainty to her family, who grappled with the challenges of raising a child with a physical impairment. Despite these hurdles, Vijayashanti exhibited remarkable resilience and determination, carving a path of her own against all odds.

She successfully completed her Bachelor's degree in Arts from Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ballari, fuelled by a passion for learning and a dream to achieve more. However, financial hardships threatened to halt her aspirations for higher education. That is when Samarthanam Trust stepped in, providing a higher education scholarship that became the turning point in her life.

With Samarthanam's support, Vijayashanti enrolled in a Bachelor's programme in Education at Royal College, Ballari. Embracing every opportunity, she became an active participant in cultural activities, earning accolades in college competitions. Her journey showcases the transformative power of education and unwavering support, turning challenges into stepping stones toward success.

Vijayashanti's story is a testament to the impact of empowerment and inclusion. She expresses heartfelt gratitude to Samarthanam Trust for enabling her to dream bigger and achieve more. Her resilience and achievements inspire others to believe in their potential, regardless of the obstacles they face.



“
Samarthanam will help in overcoming challenges and make them (PwD) independent

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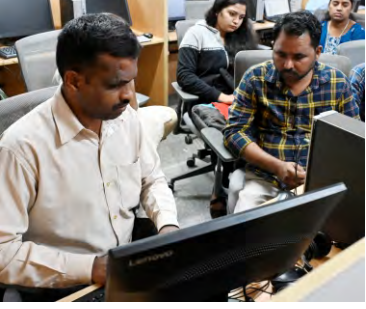
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