

Extraordinary journeys: Specially abled students turn adversity into triumphs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ranchi: For many students, reaching a premier management institution marks the culmination of years of dedication. But for a remarkable group of learners at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ranchi, the real story begins long before the classroom and was shaped by extraordinary journeys of courage, endurance, and resilience.

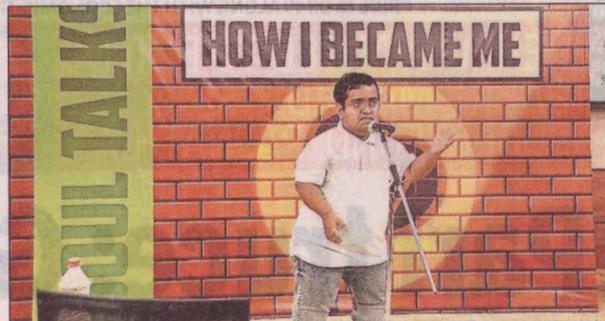
Opening up about their journeys, these specially abled students of the MBA first year (2025-27 batch) at the IIM-R, who make up about 10% of the total student group, said they had to clear several obstacles while shaping their path.

Aadesh Godke, who grew up with limited mobility and often found himself physically restricted and emotionally isolated, said, "What began as a childhood marked by difficulty gradually evolved into a powerful commitment to persevere. Confined at times due to health challenges, I turned to Hindustani classical music as a refuge, eventually mastering it to the level of Visharad."

Abhishek Iyengar, whose height of three feet never limited the height of his aspirations, was diagnosed with a severe bone-growth disorder even before birth. Now, Abhishek defied expectations at every step, including training in karate, studying in mainstream schools, and excelling academically. Iyengar said, "My dream in finance helped me, and I learnt that limitations exist only in the mind."

For Javed Khan, adversity arrived early. A train accident when he was 10 resulted in the loss of his right arm and leg. Khan said, "With the support of a prosthetic Jaipur Foot, I not only relearned to walk but embraced life with renewed fearlessness, pursuing sports, adventure activities, education and corporate work."

Vinayak Rajshekhar, from Odisha, faced progressive hearing and speech loss during his college years. With the help of high-fre-



A specially abled person talks at an event in Ranchi on Tuesday

Only 384 educators for 47k disabled students

Sonal Hembrom | TNN

Ranchi: The condition of education for specially abled children in the state remains deeply concerning with serious gaps in inclusive infrastructure, manpower and policy implementation. Despite multiple schemes under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and directives issued to the districts, the ground reality paints a bleak picture for such children across the state.

Official data said the state has 47,920 registered disabled students, but only 384 special educators have been appointed under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. Under the national norms, the state requires at least 4,800 trained special teachers, leaving a staggering shortfall of over 4,400 educators.

Activists said infrastructure in schools is another major barrier. A large number of govt schools still lack inclusive toilets, proper ramps, tactile paths, and barrier-free classrooms, making school accessibility difficult for many children with disabilities.

Disability rights activist

ency hearing aids and his family's unwavering support, he adapted to new challenges and strengthened his resolve.

Born with leg deformities and later diagnosed with spinal and neurological complications, Narasimhan

and founder of the Jharkhand Viklang Manch, Arun Kumar Singh, said, "It is impossible to provide quality education to over 47,000 children with just 384 special teachers. The govt must urgently prepare a concrete plan and appoint adequate educators. Schools must be made disability-friendly, and teachers need proper training. Denying education in childhood harms both the child and society. The limitations often result in reduced attendance and early dropout, especially after Class 5, as upper-primary schools are often located far from villages."

A total of 2,212 children suffer from blindness, with Ranchi reporting the highest at 232, while Simdega has the lowest at 14. There are a total of 4,892 children with hearing impairment, including 369 in Ranchi. Children with specific learning disabilities are 3,164, with Ranchi alone accounting for 522 of them. Intellectual disability is the most prevalent, affecting 4,055 kids, with major concentrations in Ranchi at 249 and East Singhbhum at 247.

Jayaram also found himself in an extremely precarious situation, but found his expression through creativity. He studied commerce, developed a love for filmmaking, and directed Telugu short films, all while navigating physical challenges.

100% PwDs in Noamundi linked to govt schemes

B Sridhar | TNN

Jamshedpur: The Noamundi block of West Singhbhum district has become the state's first administrative block where every eligible person with disability (PwD) has been identified, certified, and linked to rightful govt entitlements. At the heart of this shift is SABAL, the Tata Steel Foundation's flagship disability inclusion initiative.

What started in 2017 as a programme aimed at reimagining disability from a rights-based lens has now evolved into a model of systemic change.

SABAL's ICS (Identification-Certification-Saturation) model emerged as a groundbreaking response and, an-

The collaborative approach ensured that PwDs were no longer passive recipients but active participants in their inclusion journey

chored in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, the model set a bold, non-negotiable goal — complete saturation.

The strategy began by strengthening the very foundation of rural service delivery, and a total of 135 anganwadi workers were trained to identify all 21 disability types.

Besides, the SABAL digital app was deployed to capture accurate, real-time disability profiles. The panchayats, govt departments and local influencers became co-owners in the process. This collaborative approach ensured that PwDs were no longer passive recipients but active participants in their inclusion journey. Within months, Noamundi recorded 100% identification and certification. As a result, 292 PwDs have already been connected to sustainable livelihood opportunities, ranging from skilling, enterprise support, and employment linkages.