

SAMBHAV 2024 - REPORT

The 19th edition of SAMBHAV, organized by the Association for Learning Performing Arts & Normative Action (A.L.P.A.N.A.), a Delhi-based NGO, was a powerful showcase of the unyielding spirit and creativity of Divyang artists. The event took place at the India International Centre, New Delhi, from November 30 to December 1, 2024, and featured Divyang artists from countries like Australia, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Iran, along with participants from Indian states including Gujarat, Nagaland, Nagpur, Delhi, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Ahmedabad, Jammu, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Punjab.

The event received support from the highest offices in India. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi praised SAMBHAV as a movement fostering understanding and inclusion, and reaffirmed the government's commitment to empowering Divyangjan through initiatives like the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan and the inclusion of Indian Sign Language in the National Education Policy 2020. President Smt. Droupadi Murmu recognised the ongoing efforts of A.L.P.A.N.A. to celebrate and empower Divyang artists, highlighting the role of arts and culture in promoting inclusion.

The inaugural ceremony on November 30, 2024, set a dignified tone for the two-day event. The Chief Guest, Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal, IAS, Secretary of DEPwD, was joined by Distinguished Guests such as Prof. Virendra Kumar Paul, Director of SPA, Gol; Mr. Ranjan Khanna, IRS, Pr ADG, CBIC, Ministry of Finance, Gol; and Mr. Ajeet Sahu, IAS, Joint Secretary (International Cooperation), Ministry of Agriculture, Gol.

The event began with a lamp-lighting ceremony by Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal, symbolising the start of SAMBHAV 2024, followed by a welcome song by A.L.P.A.N.A. students. A vibrant parade of participating groups, each carrying their national flags, added to the excitement. The Distinguished Guests delivered inspiring speeches emphasising the importance of creativity and empowerment for Divyangjan. Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal's keynote address resonated deeply, inspiring reflection and celebration.

The day continued with the opening of an Art and Craft Exhibition, showcasing the incredible artwork of Divyangjan through paintings and handcrafted products. A dance therapy workshop, led by the Mother Charitable Foundation from Sri Lanka, added a therapeutic touch to the event. A workshop on Handicrafts Making and Paintings, with Mr. Sandip Ghosh, Publisher at Outlook Group as the Chief Guest, provided a platform for further creativity.

The evening featured a cultural performance, with groups from Australia, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Delhi, Gujarat, Nagaland, Nagpur, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Ahmedabad. Distinguished Guests, including Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, IAS, and Mrs. Anju Ranjan, IFS, joined the celebrations, which concluded with a vote of thanks from Mr. Ashwani Kumar.

The second day began with a Yoga Therapy Workshop led by Dr. Anant Gopal from S-VYASA University, Bengaluru, focusing on the therapeutic benefits of yoga, mindfulness, and

practical techniques. A seminar chaired by Mr. Ashok Shukla, IRAS, explored wellness and inclusion, with a paper presented by Prof. Dr. Rabindra Acharya. An international seminar on “Empowerment of Artists with Disabilities,” chaired by Mr. Santosh Kumar, ICAS, featured resource persons from Australia, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Ahmedabad, offering global insights on fostering creativity and inclusion. Later, a music therapy workshop by Ms. Suzanne Louise Whiteman from Australia added a melodic touch to the day.

The Chief Guest, Hon. Justice (Retd.) Arun Mishra, along with other Distinguished Guests like Shri Navneet Kumar Sehgal and Ambassador Ms. Suchitra Durai, enjoyed breathtaking performances from groups representing Iran, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Nepal, Delhi, Gujarat, Jammu, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Punjab. The release of the event's souvenir was a proud moment for everyone involved.

The event wrapped up with speeches reflecting on the success of SAMBHAV 2024 in creating a more inclusive society. Hon. Justice Arun Mishra delivered a heartfelt address, and Guru Alpana Nayak offered a moving vote of thanks. The event ended with a group photograph, symbolizing the spirit of unity and inclusion. SAMBHAV 2024 was a powerful reminder of how art can break barriers and redefine possibilities.

A.L.P.A.N.A. has been dedicated to empowering and integrating Divyangjan (Persons with Disabilities) since 2004. Since 2006, A.L.P.A.N.A. has been organizing SAMBHAV annually as an international platform to showcase the talents of Divyangjan through inclusive arts. Over the years, SAMBHAV has become a milestone in India's commitment to uplifting Divyangjan. The word “SAMBHAV,” meaning “possible” in Sanskrit, reflects the event's mission: to demonstrate that courage and talent are unaffected by disabilities, and that inclusion is not just a goal, but a way of life.
