

Bikalanga Bandhu Samillani
Conference of disabled people and their friends
Gondia Block, Dhenkanal District, Orissa, 23 February 2005

Report by NYSASDRI

On 23rd February 2005, NYSASDRI organized a Bikalanga Bandhu Samillani at Kashipur, Gondia Block, Dhenkanal.

The Samillani was primarily aimed at confidence building for disabled people and bridging the gap between the service providers (government officials) and the people with disabilities, so that both can have direct communication on different issues. Key participants on the dais were Mrs Kunilata Dehury, Chair Person, Panchayat Samiti, Gondia Block; Mrs Urmila Deuri, Child Development Project Officer, Govt. Of Orissa; Mr Gopal Chandra Naik, OAS, Block Development Officer, Gondia; Mr Bibhuti Bhusan Dash, .Manager, Dhenkanal Gramya Bank; Prof. Evemarie Knust-Potter, Dortmund University of Applied Sciences, Germany; Prof. Philip Potter, Klaus Novy Institute, Germany and Prof. Joe Whittaker, Bolton University, UK and Sarangadhar Samal, Director of NYSASDRI. Other officials from the Gondia Block, staffs of NYSASDRI and local journalists also participated in this programme, besides 103 disabled people from different villages in Gondia block. All the participants with disabilities attended the meeting through their own arrangement and were escorted by their family members.

Participants of the Samillani shared their experience and problems very openly with Government officials. It was their first experience of getting such an opportunity. Primarily, the disabled people expressed the social, psychological and economical problems they are facing on daily basis. Lack of support from the government machinery was also highlighted in the Samillani.

The people sitting on the dais clarified all queries by the participants. The Director of NYSASDRI, Sarangadhar Samal, argued for a better utilization of different Government Schemes, House Building Loan, Business Loan, Education Loan and different facilities available in Block and district level for education, Business and small-scale enterprises. The Block officials assured their support and assistance to the people with disabilities in that area through different welfare schemes by the government. They also suggested the disabled people and their family members to take the privilege of Government schemes provided at Panchayat, Block and District level. The Bank Manager also informed about some of the financial assistance schemes and requested the participants to avail of them.

At the end, the disabled people participated in different cultural activities. The programme was part of the project *Circles of Support for People with disabilities and autism in India and Europe*, implemented by Dortmund University of Applied Sciences, Utkal University, Bolton University, Klaus Novy Institute and NYSASDRI. The project is funded by the European Union within the EU-India Economic Cross Cultural Programme.