

Our Community

The Association of People with Disability (APD)

ABLE TO LEARN, ABLE TO EARN

The first thing you sense when entering the gateway of The Association of People with Disability in Bangalore is peace and tranquility. You see people - people with a wide range of disabilities - working, going to classes, tending plots of landscape plantings and horticultural crops. It is tranquil, but it is also a hive of activity, learning, growing, working, and gaining confidence and strength in hundreds of ways.



At the center of the quiet buzz is always Mrs. N.S. Hema, an original founder trustee of this 40+ year-old organization. Her cloud of white hair above eyes sparkling with energy and enthusiasm is visible everywhere as she moves her wheelchair from place to place inspiring everyone, from residents to the 120-strong staff of teachers, trainers, administrators, physical therapists, and others. Hema's focus since 1959 has been not only to help other people with disability, but also to empower them with knowledge and skills to help themselves become self-sufficient.

More than 20,000 people have been assisted by this mature, dynamic organization to better their lives in this way through the broad array of services APD provides, from urban slum outreach and community health work, to the highly successful Shradhanjali Integrated School, industrial and IT training, and physio/ortho care.

One shining example of ADP's success is a program under Mrs. Hema's supervision that helps people with disabilities from impoverished farming villages learn either horticultural or agricultural skills that enable them to gain employment and sustain themselves. After a 10-month resident course of study, each person is given his or her own small plot of ground to work. Personal confidence grows along with the plants, flowers, spices, and vegetables. Sales in local markets support 80% of program costs. Through their own hard work, these people, who may have been shunned in their villages or hidden by families shamed by their disability, become able to earn their own way in the world.