

HERITAGE MATTERS

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Professor Dr. Amareswar Galla, an Indo Australian, has been a leading advocate for all forms of inclusion as the UNESCO expert on culture in sustainable development.



DISABILITIES?

RHETORIC AND REALITY OF INCLUSIVITY

National celebratory days are plenty. Most of them remind us of leaders who sacrificed their lives for our freedom. Festivals in a culturally and linguistically diverse secular India are sites for celebrating and safeguarding our Jeevana Varasathvam or intangible heritage. Commercialization and western influences have made inroads into our everyday life, especially with Mother's Day, Father's Day and even Valentine's Day. It was not all that long ago that in Amaravathi Heritage Town a marriage was supported by the whole community through voluntary contributions and collective

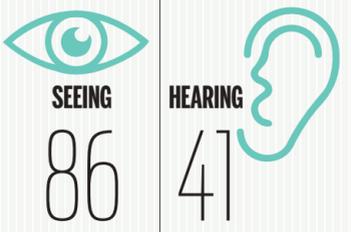
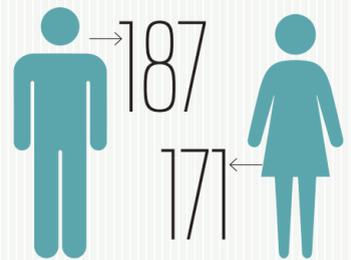
blessings. Now, the expenses by the host families sometime run into crores. However, there are some days such as World Environment Day and World Disability Day that have not attracted much attention from the public or the cultural sector. Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum established the Xuan Zang Centre for Creativity and Cultural Education. It was inaugurated by MLA Dr Kommalapati Sridhar on November 14, 2016 as the Children's Day celebration and as an integral part of the National Intangible Heritage Festival, in partnership with the National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi. Appropriate fur-

niture for children who are challenged in different ways and with special needs was arranged at the Centre with Danish and Australian expertise and implemented by Golla Umamaheshwar. Nannapaneni Rajakumari, Chairperson, AP Women's Commission, attended the program as a chief guest. Harsha Vardhan, internationally acclaimed Telugu sculptor, and local civil society leaders were present. A series of activities have been conducted since then integrating the museum and educational experiences for children with all abilities. Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum celebrated International Day of Disabled Persons on

December 3, 2017 and in December 2018 to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of people with special needs. More than 60 students with special needs from Amaravathi mandal, their parents, caretakers and teachers attended the programs. The Mandal Education Officer and Mandal Revenue Officer and other competent authorities have shown strong leadership and empathy at the events. The guiding hand was Dr N Nagamani, Inclusive Education Coordinator, Guntur district. These children also performed subsequently during the cultural program on the International

Heritage Day, April 18, 2018. Artist Sandhya Rangula from Ongole conducted interactive workshops on basic drawing for the pupils. Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum aspires to establish museum and heritage education to best possible standards taking into consideration the types of disability as per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. It aspires to develop the Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum as a model project at the mandal level with the possibility of a multiplier effect across AP and perhaps beyond. In order to do this, a profile study was made from the Andhra Pradesh Disability Census 2011.

Data was disaggregated from the AP census to understand the Amaravathi mandal level planning needs.



Age Group	Total	Male	Female	Seeing	Hearing	Speaking	Movement	Mentally Retarded	Mentally ill	Other disability	Multiple Disability
0-4	78,258	41,969	36,289	12,619	14,155	2,653	8,253	3,784	564	29,600	6,630
5-9	133,968	73,491	60,477	17,970	19,574	19,523	16,371	12,434	1,688	28,677	17,731
10-19	339,404	184,217	155,187	46,107	49,222	42,526	53,433	35,675	6,701	65,866	39,874
20-29	370,116	199,349	170,767	43,866	50,057	41,235	98,071	28,637	8,624	69,096	30,530
30-39	319,177	178,432	140,745	41,959	46,348	37,395	81,914	20,650	8,888	61,454	20,569
40-49	276,850	160,253	116,597	44,355	40,813	30,521	73,084	14,156	7,276	51,058	15,587
50-59	230,937	125,887	105,050	47,305	33,678	19,755	67,476	7,823	4,296	38,096	12,508
60-69	274,586	140,236	134,350	75,031	40,672	15,471	79,894	5,337	3,247	35,467	19,467
70-79	152,803	78,520	74,283	46,268	24,226	6,158	41,528	1,892	1,152	15,503	16,076
80-89	51,751	23,176	28,575	15,339	8,976	1,608	12,769	557	323	4,448	7,731

In order to scope the State level multiplier effect, the next step was to conduct initial planning in partnership with Dr Nagamani. A total of 114 Inclusive Education Resource Teachers from DRC, Guntur, met on September 6, 2018. Sreevani, Amaravathi Mandal Inclusive Education Resource Teacher, presented a proposal to scope artists with special needs at the mandal level as part of the preparation for a Visual Arts Residency program.

Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum with the support from the AP Creativity and Culture Commission, conducted three Visual Arts Residency programs in the past: 1st Visual Arts Residency with the theme 'Cultural Landscapes and Heritage Values' from May 15 to 17, 2016; 2nd Visual Arts Residency with the theme 'Amaravathi to Amaravati' from March 4 to 8, 2017; and the 3rd Visual Arts Residency with the theme 'Telugu Ammayi' from March 6 to 8, 2018. The three residencies were focussed on gender mainstreaming. They were conducted, in partnership with the Amaravathi Mahila Samithi and the Group of Daughters-in-Law working with the Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum.

The 2nd residency provided a cultural exchange with daughters-in-law from the 13 districts of AP. The three residencies resulted in 42 paintings that are in



A world that we see or cannot see!

the collection of Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum. Building on this experience, it is proposed that in continuation of the Visual Arts Residency program by the Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum, in partnership with the AP Creativity and Culture Commission,

a four-day Visual Arts Residency (4th) program be exclusively organised for artists with special needs. It is proposed to conduct it in partnership with the Inclusive Education coordinators from all the districts of AP.

It will be a high-profile creative showcase recognizing and appreciating the artists under the types of disability as per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum understands that creativity and cultural engagement through spaces like Xuan Zang Centre for Creativity and Cultural Education could result in a range of outcomes.

One of the important challenges is to strengthen the user's individual ability and self-esteem to participate in what is increasingly becoming a competitive environment in all walks of life. Therapeutic, mobility, mental health and wellbeing are some of the several anticipated outcomes.

In order to achieve these outcomes, everyone must learn to walk the talk and act beyond political correctness so as to engage in making the Andhra people committed to inclusivity.

NEXT WEEK Heritage Matters will focus on the World Heritage City of Vienna

21 TYPES OF DISABILITIES

Covered under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act - 2016



Images: Amaravathi Heritage Centre and Museum



Mothers - Anchors for Life



Hope - Journey Ahead