



PACTA
SOCIAL | IMPACT | LEGAL



Chitta
Initiative for Research by Pacta

LANDSCAPE OF FUNDING DISABILITY CONVENING



MUMBAI
MAY 13, 2026

**“At its core,
philanthropy must step in
where markets fall short and
public systems can’t adequately
respond, even when the path
forward is arduous.**

**The disability sector exemplifies
this. Despite the scale of
opportunity and its profound
impact on lives of both
individuals and families,
disability remains one of the
most under-served areas
within India’s development
landscape.”**

Archana Chandra

(CEO, Jai Vakeel Foundation) &

Amit Chandra

(Chairperson - Bain Capital India Advisors
& Co-Founder ATE Chandra Foundation)

INTRODUCTION



Pacta's report, The Landscape of Funding for Disability in India, is a first-of-its-kind study that maps the funding landscape for the disability sector in India, examining how resources currently flow, where gaps persist, and the structural factors shaping access to funding.

Drawing on insights from NPOs, funders, and intermediaries, the study identifies opportunities for more equitable and sustained support. Building on the findings of the study, Pacta convened a series of curated gatherings across Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi, each anchored in the study's insights and focused on advancing ideas for strengthening the sector.

The Mumbai convening, held on 6 May 2026, brought together over 45 participants from civil society, philanthropy, research, and ecosystem leadership. The convening began with an overview of the study, followed by a data walk-through of its findings, facilitated breakout discussions, and an open-floor session for cross-table synthesis and reflection.





EMERGENT THEMES

- 01** RETHINKING WHAT SUPPORT MEANS
- 02** MAKING THE DATA WORK: A SHARED SECTOR NARRATIVE
- 03** COLLECTIVE ACTION: FROM ISOLATED EFFORTS TO AN ALLIANCE

01. RETHINKING WHAT SUPPORT MEANS

The discussion on long-term investment and commitment focused on the role of trust, transparency, and flexible funding in strengthening funder-NPO relationships. Participants noted that honest communication from NPOs on challenges, capacity gaps, and support needs helps funders respond better. At the same time, funders also need to create the space for such conversations early on, so that limitations can be addressed without weakening trust.

Funding flexibility emerged as a key enabler. More unrestricted and long-term support was seen as important for helping NPOs adapt to funder expectations, reduce delays, invest in HR and internal capacity, and sustain work beyond short-term project cycles.

Participants also highlighted the value of co-designing programmes, pilots, and innovation with funders, especially where incubation support can help build stronger community-driven models over time.

The discussion also pointed to gaps in donor understanding and funding priorities. Areas such as learning disabilities, dyslexia, invisible disabilities, autism, and lower support needs often remain less visible within disability funding. Participants emphasised the need for NPOs and funders to better understand each other's realities, speak each other's language, and align expectations across timelines, reporting, M&E, and geographies. Overall, the group highlighted that **flexible funding, donor education, and sustained two-way communication are essential for building healthier and more long-term partnerships.**



02.

MAKING THE DATA WORK: A SHARED SECTOR NARRATIVE

The discussion on impact metrics focused on the need to move beyond conventional approaches used in non-disability sectors. **Participants emphasised that dignity, safety, access, and continued participation must be recognised as important impact indicators alongside learning outcomes, employment, or placements.** Donors may also need deeper sensitisation to understand that, in disability work, access itself can be a meaningful outcome.

The group reflected on the limitations of current data and reporting practices. Questions were raised on whether organisations are collecting too much data, whether all of it is useful, and whether funder expectations always reflect ground realities. **A key tension emerged around how impact should be defined when outcomes are not linear or immediately visible.** For instance, employment may not be the only valid measure of progress, and in some cases, there may be limited or no measurable change within standard reporting timelines.

The discussion also highlighted the need for stronger sectoral coordination around common language, benchmarks, and realistic metrics. Neither funders nor NPOs can resolve these questions alone. A neutral sectoral voice could help facilitate conversations on data, measurement, and accountability, while ensuring that indicators remain grounded in the lived realities and needs of persons with disabilities.

Overall, the group underlined that impact in disability inclusion must be contextual, beneficiary-centred, and flexible enough to capture outcomes beyond numbers alone.

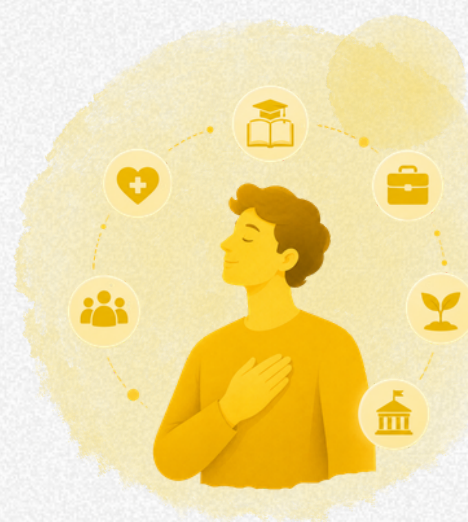


03.

COLLECTIVE ACTION: FROM ISOLATED EFFORTS TO AN ALLIANCE

The discussion on collaborative action focused on the need to connect ground-level experiences with policy engagement and wider sector action. A bottom-up policy advocacy layer was discussed as one way to surface barriers faced by persons with disabilities across banking, accessibility, welfare schemes, and other inclusion-related systems, and translate these into recommendations for government departments.

Accessibility emerged as an important area for shared work. Ideas included accessibility audits, auditable inclusion standards, templates, and possible certification or verification processes to assess whether systems, spaces, and services are meaningfully accessible. Technology, fundraising, and fund dispersal were also discussed, though these themes were not developed in detail in terms of how they would differ from existing efforts.



Participants also highlighted that meaningful partnerships go beyond funding. They can help open networks, create opportunities, and support collective action across organisations, funders, communities, and institutions. **Overall, the discussion pointed to the need to move away from treating disability as a standalone funding theme and instead embed disability inclusion across development, education, livelihoods, community initiatives, and broader national priorities such as Viksit Bharat, through a rights-based approach that places persons with disabilities at the centre.**

MEDIA COVERAGE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



Non-profits in disability sector receive low CSR funding, State allocation: Report

The Hindu • May 13, 2026



Disability sector gets only 1% CSR funds, says report

Deccan Herald • May 16, 2026



Study Finds Disability Sector Receives Only 1% of CSR Funding in India

The CSR Universe • May 20, 2026



Building a Stronger Disability Ecosystem: Nivedita Krishna on Funding Inclusion and Systemic Change

The CSR Universe • June 24, 2026



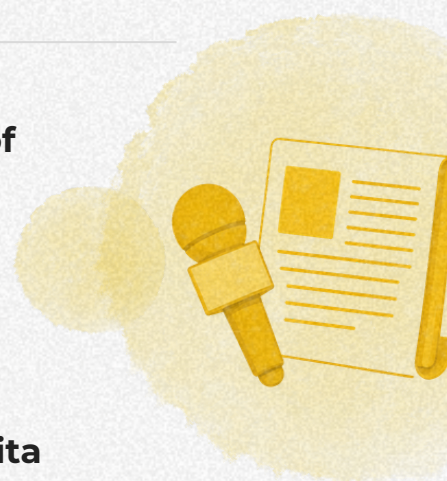
Why Disability Remains Overlooked by Funders

IDR • June 25, 2026



EP 2006 | Only 1% CSR Funding for Disability?

Radio Udaan



GALLERY





Pacta is a social sector exclusive law firm and policy think tank bridging gaps in law and policy implementation through rigorous research.



Chitta is Pacta's research initiative focused on driving evidence-based systems transformation and building consciousness through rigorous, data-driven research.

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