



SUKRITAVAANI

July 2025

Dear Friends, Greetings

from Sukriti!

This month at **Sukriti**, your support has quietly worked miracles.

Whether it was helping a mother earn through saree pre-pleating or a child establishing the first ever eye contact with his mother after therapy — these everyday victories are made possible by your generosity.

Every time you choose to give, you become part of someone's turning point.

We've included a few moments from the past month that moved us deeply — we hope they move you too.

From all of us at Sukriti: **Thank you for believing. Thank you for being.**

With warmth and gratitude, With

best regards

Sowmya Simhan



Empowering Mothers Through Skill-Building

At Sukriti, we understand that disability management and financial stability are deeply interconnected. Families navigating disability often face increased expenses — and for many of the mothers who bring their children to our centre, caregiving is a full-time responsibility.

These mothers are the primary, and often the only, caregivers. Under such circumstances, taking up a regular job or even a fixed-schedule part-time role becomes nearly impossible. Recognising this, we have been actively exploring ways to support them in earning small but meaningful incomes, on their own time and terms.

One such opportunity emerged through the growing demand for saree pre-pleating. We recently organised a hands-on workshop on this skill, facilitated by one of our generous supporters, Mrs. Saro Shreeja, a professional beautician. The mothers who participated were enthusiastic and deeply engaged. Each received a certificate of participation and a specially designed saree bag as a token of encouragement.

One participant, Kalaimani, shared something that touched us all. She said she always wondered how celebrities managed to drape their sarees so perfectly — and it was only during this workshop that she discovered the saree pre-pleating profession. Inspired, she took on her first order from a tailoring client within a week and earned ₹200.

What she did next moved us profoundly — instead of spending the money on her two children, she chose to donate the entire amount back to Sukriti, wanting to give back to the place that empowered her.

Gestures like these remind us that when people are empowered, they often find their own ways to give back — in time, in spirit, or in action.

Part 2: Choosing the Right Wheelchair Brand and Model

Navigating the Wheelchair Market: Insights from the Field

At Sukriti Foundation, we are frequently asked: "How do I choose the right wheelchair?"

In our last issue, we covered the wheelchair selection process from the view point of a rehabilitation profession. However the challenge of selecting the right brand or model remains a confusing journey for many – even for experienced users.

To shed light on this, we spoke to **Mr. Siddharth Bhandari of Sidd Health Zon**, a seasoned mobility equipment dealer, who shared valuable insights on current trends and practical decision-making in the Indian wheelchair market.

Brand vs. Suitability: What Really Matters?

In today's market, the emphasis is gradually shifting away from brand loyalty to functional fit. With the influx of multiple manufacturers offering diverse wheelchair models, each with varying features, it's important to focus on the user's condition and specific needs rather than a brand label.

“No single brand or a single model can be declared the best. We have to evaluate the patient's condition first—whether they need a headrest, elevating leg rest, or a lightweight frame. Then match that need with what's available across brands.”

Standard vs. Customised Wheelchairs

Most brands offer standard wheelchairs with adjustable features. Fully customised wheelchairs—designed from the ground up based on individual user needs—are still relatively rare in India. While companies do offer some level of size-based customisation, truly customised solutions are limited and often face challenges in responsiveness and scalability.

“True customisation requires detailed user input and design flexibility, which only a few manufacturers in India currently provide. Availability and right understanding of the user needs are ongoing hurdles.”

Popular Brands in the Indian Market

A wide variety of brands are available today, both domestic and imported:

- Indian/Imported Brands: Uphealthy, Wecare, Cosmocare, Ostrich, Neomotion, Vermarion, Karma to name a few
- Other regional manufacturers from Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Punjab are also emerging.

Powered Wheelchairs and Emerging Solutions

There's growing interest in battery operated wheelchairs, especially compact, foldable ones suitable for travel. These models, weighing around 15 kg, are increasingly popular due to their ease of use and portability. We have to see how long the battery will last per charge.

“These powered wheelchairs even come with remote control, making them very user-friendly. However, they're best for short durations. For extended use, seating comfort becomes crucial.”

Innovations in Mobility: Beach Wheelchairs

Beach wheelchairs are also coming into the market which allows users to access sand and water independently.

“The idea is to introduce products that enhance quality of life, even in leisure spaces like beaches.”

Barriers to Access: Policy & Pricing

Customs duties, GST, and a lack of subsidies make many of these aids unaffordable for the average family.

“Before GST, mobility aids had zero tax. Today, they are taxed at 5%, and import duties push prices further. In contrast, many other countries subsidise such essentials.”

As we continue to work toward greater inclusion and accessibility, we hope to engage policymakers on reducing costs and increasing access to high-quality mobility aids.

Wheelchair Servicing and Spare Parts

In India, wheelchairs available in the market are mostly imported as kits from overseas—primarily from China—with local branding added by the importers. These kits are often sold as complete units, and unfortunately, spare parts are not typically supplied separately by the original manufacturers.

As a result, even for premium wheelchair models, sourcing individual replacement parts can be challenging. While basic servicing support is available in some cities, comprehensive after-sales service—including reliable access to spares—remains limited.

Final Word: Matching Needs with Knowledge

The key takeaway is clear: a well-informed choice matters more than a brand name. By staying updated with available products and understanding user needs deeply, we can ensure better mobility and dignity for persons with disabilities.

We thank our expert advisor for sharing these insights and look forward to bringing more such information to our community.



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