

From potential to performance: How structured support is transforming sporting talent in Lanjigarh

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IN the quiet, undulating landscape of Kalahandi district in Odisha, ambition often takes root in unlikely places. For Bhushan Majhi, it began on a modest school playground and found direction years later under structured coaching in Lanjigarh.

Bhushan Majhi's journey illustrates how targeted grassroots interventions can begin to bridge that gap. A beneficiary of the Vedanta Grassroots Sports Initiative, the young sprinter from Lanjigarh represented Odisha and had won a bronze medal in the 100 metres (open men category) at the recently held Khelo India Tribal Games Athletics Meet 2025, hosted at Bira Munda Stadium, Raipur.

Bhushan hails from a humble yet hard-working household in Bhatigoda, Lanjigarh.

He is one of three siblings, raised by parents deeply rooted in community service; his father is a school teacher, while his mother works as a Community Resource Person and is an active member of a local Self-Help Group (SHG).

Initially, his family met his athletic ambitions with hesitation, unsure if sport offered a viable future. However, as Bhushan's discipline began to yield results, their scepticism turned into pride. "My village is proud that someone from here has made a name," Bhushan says.

Bhushan's journey did not begin on professional tracks, but with a keen observation by his school PT teacher, Dashmanta Majhi, when he won in Class 3. Dashmanta noticed his speed during routine activities and was the first to recognise sport as a real possibility for the young boy. For years, Dashmanta



was more than a teacher, he was a mentor who personally accompanied Bhushan to competitions. In the absence of structured

training, Bhushan relied on sheer grit, cycling nearly seven kilometres daily to practice and playing football to build stamina and endurance.

In July 2025, Bhushan's raw potential found professional structure when he joined the Vedanta Grassroots Sports Initiative. It was here that he met athletics coach Sanjay Munda.

Bhushan's journey is also a reflection of the impact of the Vedanta Grassroots Sports Initiative, a programme designed to bridge the gap between rural talent and national platforms. By providing professional coaching, structured training, and access to equipment in remote regions, the initiative is helping reshape the sporting landscape of Kalahandi.

Reflecting on the programme's vision, Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya, CEO

Vedanta Alumina Business, said, "At Vedanta, we believe that talent is universal, but opportunity is not. Bhushan's journey from the trails of Bhatigoda to a national podium is a testament to the transformative power of providing the right platform to rural youth. Our grassroots sports initiative is dedicated to ensuring that no spark of talent goes unnoticed due to a lack of resources. We are immensely proud of Bhushan and remain committed to nurturing more such champions who will represent India on the world stage."

The Vedanta Grassroots Sports Initiative currently supports over 150 budding athletes across the region. The programme has already demonstrated strong competitive outcomes, with 89 medals secured at the state level during the 2024-25 season.