On Global Accessibility Awareness Day 2025, India Takes a Step Towards Ensuring Digital Accessibility

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A draft **curriculum to teach digital accessibility in undergraduate computer science and design courses** was unveiled at the **Inclusive India Summit**, held at the **India International Centre, New Delhi**, on the occasion of **Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) 2025**. The initiative aims to ensure accessibility becomes a core part of how future technologists and designers are trained in India.

The summit brought together academic leaders, accessibility professionals, and disability rights advocates from across the

country.

Dr. G.S. Chauhan, Joint Secretary, University Grants Commission (UGC) speaking at the national consultation on Digital Accessibility Inclusion

The Inclusive India [Summit was hosted on the occasion of Global] Accessibility Awareness Day by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), SBI Foundation (the CSR arm of the State Bank of India), and the National Association for the Blind. It was organised in collaboration with the Association of People with Disability (APD) and Mission Accessibility (Dhananjay Sanjogta Foundation), and [held at the India] International Centre, New Delhi, on May 15. The [event] was conducted in hybrid mode, with both online and in-person participation.

The proposed curriculum is a response to a longstanding gap: while digital services have expanded rapidly in India, most platforms remain difficult to navigate for persons with

disabilities. A 2023 audit by the Centre for Internet and Society found that **98% of leading Indian websites** do not meet global accessibility standards. Globally, the picture is no better; **WebAIM's 2023 analysis of the top 1 million homepages** found accessibility errors on **96.3% of them**. Experts at the summit agreed that the problem lies upstream, in how technologists and designers are trained.

C.P. Gurnani, **former CEO, Tech Mahindra**, and a speaker at the summit, said, *"India's digital economy can't afford to treat accessibility as an afterthought. Embedding it into how we educate our technologists is not just timely-it's essential. This curriculum is a step toward building digital solutions that are truly inclusive, by design."*

The curriculum, developed over several months by a national working group-including contributors from the International Institute of Information Technology, Bengaluru; Design Beku; Mission Accessibility; Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), India; the Xavier's Resource Center for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC); Artilabs; and BMS College of Engineering, Bengaluru-is designed to be modular, adaptable, and grounded in Indian contexts. It introduces students to accessibility principles, web standards like WCAG, assistive technologies, universal design, and disability rights law.

Amar Jain, **lawyer and Co-founder of Mission Accessibility**, who also led the Supreme Court petition, said, *"We have policy and precedent. What's missing is implementation capacity. This curriculum ensures that we're not just fixing what's broken-we're teaching how to build it right from the start."*

The national consultation on Digital Accessibility Inclusion was chaired by Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, DEPwD, and had participation from the University Grants Commission (UGC), the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA), Ministry of Education, IIT Delhi, IIIT Delhi & IIT Bombay.

It focused on how the curriculum was designed to equip students with both conceptual and practical skills to build accessible digital products. It covered disability rights, accessibility laws, and technical standards like WCAG 2.2, along with hands-on training using screen readers, audit tools like Axe and WAVE, and real-world user testing. The discussion saw a strong emphasis on designing in collaboration with persons with disabilities, particularly in the Indian context.

Participants also discussed the need to address accessibility in emerging technologies like AI/ML, AR/VR, and Internet of Things (IoT). They highlighted how the curriculum connects academic learning to career opportunities through certifications like the Certified Professional in Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC).

Inclusive hiring practices were also highlighted as essential, ensuring equal access to jobs by removing barriers in recruitment and workplace systems.

Prof. Amit Prakash of IIIT-Bangalore added, *"Our goal is to shift the culture of how digital technology design is taught and understood. Accessibility must become foundational, something that students see intrinsic value in, and internalise as an important design principle and not a post-implementation patchwork."*

The draft curriculum is now open for public consultation and will soon be submitted to [India's](#) key academic regulators.

The emphasis on accessibility by design closely aligns with the Yes to Access project by APD, which advocates for systemic change in how accessibility is [integrated into public infrastructure and digital services](#). A key innovation under this initiative is the Yes to Access app-India's first AI-powered tool for conducting accessibility audits-which was featured during the summit's panel discussion on 'Inclusive Mainstream Technologies'.

While the app enables real-time assessments of the built environment, the curriculum complements it by equipping the next generation of technologists and designers to embed accessibility into digital products from the ground up. Together, these efforts reflect a growing consensus that practical tools and foundational education must work hand in hand to make accessibility the norm, not an afterthought.

About APD
The Association of People with Disability (APD) is a 65-year-old non-profit organisation that empowers individuals with disabilities to lead independent, dignified, and productive lives.

Through its comprehensive Life Cycle Approach, APD supports persons with disabilities at every stage-from early intervention and inclusive education to healthcare access, livelihood support, and advocacy for accessible infrastructure and systems.

For more information, please visit www.apd-india.org.