



# **Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC)**

**St. Xavier's College, Mumbai**

---

## **Annual Report (June 2023-May 2024)**





# XRCVC

**(Xavier's Resource Centre for the  
Visually Challenged)**

**St. Xavier's College, Mumbai**

**Inclusivity at 20 - Breaking Barriers... Achieving Access**

**Annual Report  
(June 2023-May 2024)**





## XRCVC's Annual Report (June 2023-May 2024)

### XRCVC's 20th Year Highlights

- ✓ 64 training sessions
- ✓ 60 assistive technology workshops
- ✓ 65 disability sensitisation sessions
- ✓ 8000+ lives touched — and hopefully transformed — during the year 2023-24

The Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC) turned 20 in September 2023. And there was plenty to celebrate.

Siddhi Dalvi, a visually impaired student who we have been mentoring since 2017 when she was in Class IV, scored a staggering 94.2 per cent in her Class 10 Board Exams this year. She made history in Maharashtra by becoming the first visually impaired student to appear for the 10th-grade board exams in Marathi medium using a laptop instead of a scribe. Her remarkable journey is a testament to dedication, resilience, and the transformative impact of collaborative support. Siddhi is a student of Saraswati Mandir School Kalyan West. She also secured three gold medals at the 23rd National Para Swimming Championships 2024 in March.



**STAR PERFORMERS: (Left to Right) Siddhi Dalvi, Kaushiki Patel and Roshni Patra**

"The computer training given to me as part of the Level 4 course by XRCVC encouraged me to take my laptop to school and study using the same," she said. "Eventually, I thought of giving my 10<sup>th</sup> exams using a laptop. This helped me immensely. I would attribute at least 20% of my success to the fact that I appeared my exams using a laptop."

Her mother Pratiksha Dalvi added, "In Std V, Siddhi joined XRCVC for training. This was apart from her school. We travelled to CST from Kalyan for this. It was very fruitful as her learning capacity and understanding improved significantly. She received essential coaching and guidance, which played a crucial role in enhancing her skills."

Kaushiki Patel, another student with visual impairment who has been a part of our school-level skill development programs for students studying in mainstream schools, scored a phenomenal 97.4% in her ICSE board exams.



Kaushiki has been attending our training programmes since the age of 6 years which helped her independently and successfully pursue her schooling from Prime Academy ICSE School, a mainstream school. She was also supported by the XRCVC in getting her books in accessible formats and other teaching-learning aids such as tactile diagrams etc.

“XRCVC has been really helpful to me throughout my academic journey,” says Kaushiki who continues to attend life-skills training programmes such as Orientation and Mobility offered by the XRCVC to be able to travel and commute to college independently.

Roshni Patra, another visually impaired student who was mentored by XRCVC, secured admission with a full scholarship to the prestigious Ashoka University, Sonapat, Haryana, and aims to become a psychologist. “It was only due to XRCVC that I am able to use computers,” said Roshni. “They provided me with all the relevant tactile diagrams and trained my family members to create them.”

## Advocacy

XRCVC operates diligently to enhance the quality of life for individuals with disabilities, addressing both micro and macro aspects of their well-being. We maintain close collaborations with government entities, corporations, researchers, and educational institutions to drive empowerment and awareness initiatives on a broader scale. These efforts primarily focus on facilitating accessible education, financial inclusion, print accessibility, and promoting independent living.

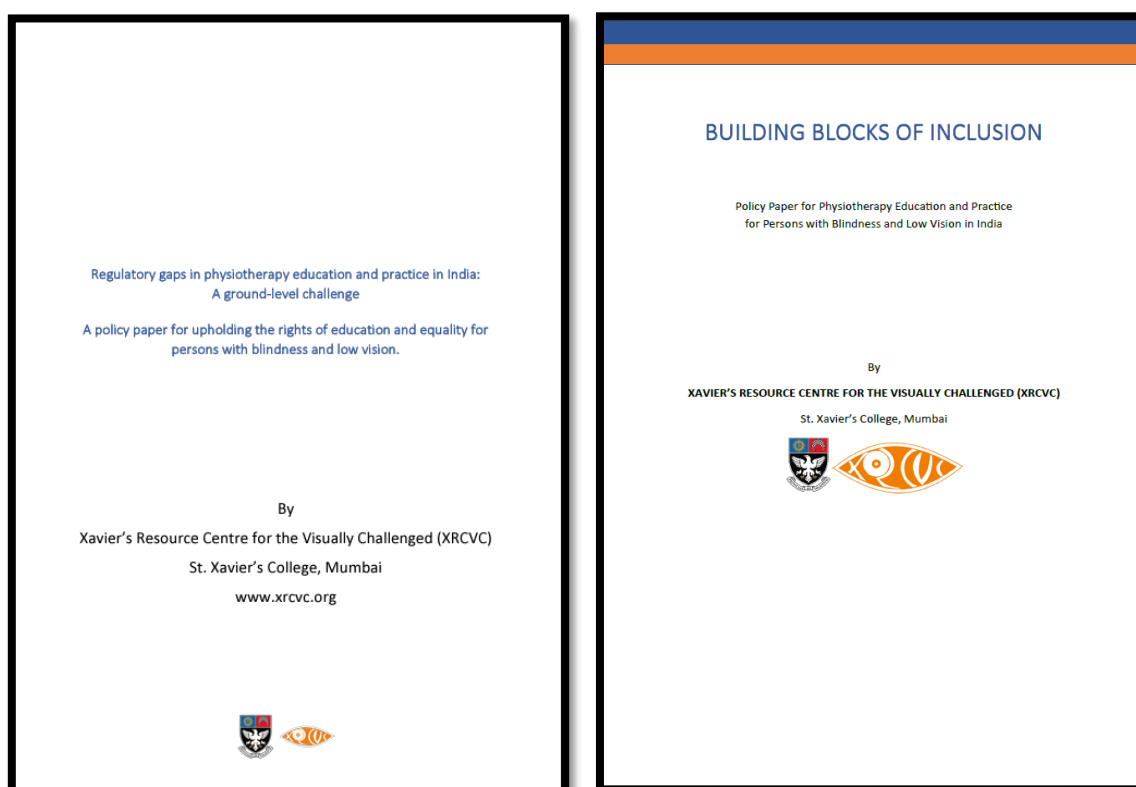
Take the case of Zill Suresh Jain, who approached us in October 2022. She was being disqualified on grounds of her low vision from appearing for the Counselling round for admission to the Bachelor of Physiotherapy (BPT) course. We advised her to petition to the Bombay High Court with XRCVC acting as a support service due to our earlier work in the case of Kritika Purohit. Owing to the petition, the Bombay High Court issued an interim order allowing Zill to sit for the counselling round and she was given provisional admission into the first year BPT course while the case was being heard in the court.



**Zill Jain, who won a favourable judgement in the Bombay high Court with the help of XRCVC**



During this process XRCVC published two policy papers — ‘Regulatory Gaps in Physiotherapy Education and Practice in India: A Ground-level Challenge’ and ‘Building Blocks of Inclusion: Policy Paper for Physiotherapy Education and Practice for Persons with Blindness and Low Vision in India’. These papers were designed to provide various policy makers inputs on how to create accessibility and inclusivity for persons with blindness and low vision in mainstream physiotherapy education and practice. The outcome of the efforts put in by the XRCVC team for over seven months was that Zill succeeded in her petition and the Honourable Bench gave a detailed and sensitive order in her favour. “When my admission got denied, I lost all hopes as I never had a plan B,” Zill recalled. “XRCVC’s constant support, guidance and selfless determination is why I, and many more people like me, are able to achieve our goals. I am short of words to express my gratitude. They have been a beacon of light.”



**Our policy papers — ‘Regulatory Gaps in Physiotherapy Education and Practice in India: A Ground-level Challenge’ and ‘Building Blocks of Inclusion – Policy Paper for Physiotherapy Education and Practice for Persons with Blindness and Low Vision in India’**

Initially established as a centre dedicated to individuals with visual impairments, XRCVC has evolved into a non-profit organisation that operates as an integral part of St. Xavier’s College (Autonomous). We have expanded our services to encompass students with autism, learning disabilities, hearing/speech impairments, and orthopaedic disabilities.

In the academic year 2023-24, our advocacy endeavours covered a wide swathe of stakeholders and beneficiaries. Appended below are some of the initiatives listed month-wise:

- On 4 July, we held a discussion with Project Mumbai on how to make Mumbai more accessible.
- On 13 July, a meeting was organised with Railway officials for accessibility of the Yatri app.



- On 25 August, we participated in a meeting for health Insurance for PWDs organised by NCPEDP in Mumbai
- On 12 December, XRCVC was invited to a panel discussion on World Human Rights Day organised by ADAPT on the theme of 'Disability and Human Rights'.
- In April, XRCVC drafted a proposed amendment to submit to the DEPWD on a notice dated 18th March, 2024 issued by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities inviting comments on the Draft of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Amendment) Rules, 2024 on Sector wise Standards/Guidelines for Accessibility standards and guidelines for Banking Sector by Department of Financial Service.
- On 10 May, XRCVC participated in a consultation on Implications of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act (2023) For Persons with Disabilities. The centre was part of a stakeholder consultation for a study on digital consent and data protection of persons with disabilities in the era of big data. This was a part of a study being conducted as a collaborative effort between Saksham Disability and Pacta to put forth thoughts and recommendations from experts and stakeholders to inform the rule-making process of the DPDP Rules to be released by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

## Award



**XRCVC receives the Sarojini Trilok Nath National Award by NAB Delhi**

XRCVC received the NAB Delhi Sarojini Trilok Nath Award during the year under the Best Institution category.





## Purple Fest



**An Antarchakshu® workshop (above) and an Inclusive Classroom simulation session (below) at Purple Fest, Goa in January 2024**

For the second consecutive year, XRCVC participated in Purple Fest, a festival of inclusion held on an expansive scale in Goa in January 2024. At Purple Fest, we conducted 12 disability sensitisation workshops, 10 inclusive classroom simulation sessions, and 2 STEM inclusion workshops. Additionally, we collaborated with the SBI Foundation to showcase a distinctive assortment of assistive technology aids and devices, encompassing both economical options and cutting-edge, sophisticated solutions. These remarkable technologies cater to individuals of diverse age groups and disabilities.



## Sports



**Action from the Echoes of Victory Cricket Match in February 2024**

On 8 February, XRCVC and the Student Inclusion Cell of St Xavier's College organised an exhibition cricket match for students with disabilities, specifically for those with visual impairment, titled, 'Echoes of Victory: Embracing Diversity on Field'.

## Membership base

During the academic year 2023-24, the membership base of XRCVC increased to 1058 individuals. However, our commitment to making a positive impact extends well beyond our membership community. Through our advocacy efforts, we strive to reach and positively influence the lives of thousands of individuals across the nation.

To fulfil our mission, we offer an extensive array of direct support and training services to individuals with disabilities, caregivers, educators, and institutions. Our direct support encompasses a wide range of services, including scanning, demonstrations, and training on the usage of assistive devices. We also provide career guidance, basic computer training, assistance with software



applications, training on mobile phone usage, instruction on smart cane utilisation, Braille printing services, coordination with publishers to procure accessible book copies, as well as liaising with educational institutions, banks, and other financial entities. By offering such comprehensive support and training, we aim to empower individuals with disabilities and equip them with the tools and knowledge necessary to thrive in various aspects of their lives. Our commitment extends to fostering accessibility and inclusivity in multiple spheres, ensuring that individuals with disabilities can lead fulfilling and independent lives. Personal and career guidance services were provided to members and their families across various disabilities during the year 2023-24, assisting in identifying individual needs, interests, aptitudes, and addressing concerns.

## Volunteer support



(Left): A volunteer assisting a session with young students with blindness. (Right): An intern creating tactile diagrams.

Despite the rapid advancements in technology, it is important to acknowledge that human assistance continues to play a crucial role in supporting individuals with disabilities. At XRCVC, we recognise this necessity and offer volunteer services to cater to various needs. Our volunteer services encompass a wide range of roles, including:

**Reading assistance:** Volunteers provide support by reading aloud for individuals with visual impairments or other print disabilities.

**Class buddies:** Volunteers assist in taking notes during classroom lectures, ensuring that students with disabilities have access to comprehensive and accurate class materials.

**Subject teaching:** Volunteers offer subject-specific instruction and guidance to individuals who require additional support in their academic pursuits.

**Material conversion:** Our volunteers play a vital role in converting study materials into accessible formats, making them easier to read and comprehend for students with disabilities. This involves tasks such as scanning, typing, editing, recording, and embossing.



**Scribes and prompters:** Volunteers are available to serve as scribes or prompters during examinations, providing necessary assistance to individuals who require support in completing written or oral assessments.

**Other assistance:** XRCVC caters to specific individual requirements on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that any additional needs are addressed effectively.

Based on the unique needs and requirements of our members, we provide volunteers for both short-term and long-term assignments. During the year, we were fortunate to have the support of 82 dedicated volunteers. By engaging volunteers, we aim to foster a supportive and inclusive environment that empowers individuals with disabilities to achieve their full potential. These volunteers play an instrumental role in bridging the gap and ensuring equal opportunities for all.

## Assistive Technologies

The XRCVC houses an exhaustive list of assistive technologies (AT) that can be explored by persons with disabilities — as also employers, government bodies, and any other group that would like to know more about AT. Anyone is welcome to drop in, with prior appointment, to explore the full range of assistive technologies and their use. During the year 2023-24, the Lions Club of Byculla donated a Perkins Brailier and Orbit Refreshable Braille Display 20 cell and 40 cell Refreshable Braille Display to the centre.



An image of members from the Lions Club of Byculla unveiling the new Perkins Brailier among other devices



## Focused work areas

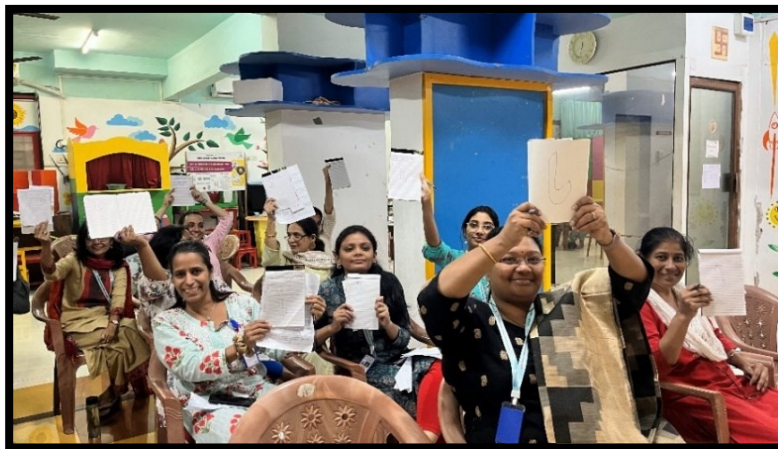
During the year, the XRCVC's activities were channelised through three main focus areas:

- Education & Learning (KG to PG)
- Accessibility Solutions and Inclusive Services
- Awareness

Appended below is a summary of the activities in 2023-24 under each head.

### A. Education & Learning (KG to PG)

- On June 24, the XRCVC trained 29 professors from higher educational institutes from all over Maharashtra in replicating inclusive education models as seen at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai as part of a five-day residential training program in collaboration with MSFDA, Pune titled 'Faculty Development Program on Inclusive Education in Higher Educational Institutes'.
- On 10 July, the XRCVC team delivered a talk on the New Education Policy (NEP) to participants of a Faculty Development Programme organised by Guru Angad Singh centre.
- On 31 July, a need analysis session was conducted for special educators from Victoria Memorial School for the Blind to begin a training in STEM skills. Janvi Thakkar, a teacher who attended the session said, "As a special educator teaching mathematics to secondary students, I was amazed to learn that mathematics could be taught and practised digitally... The notes provided were clear and concise, enabling visually challenged students to learn independently." Shlok, a student, shared, "I found learning maths on the computer to be a fascinating experience. Although it was new to me, I was determined to succeed and put in a lot of effort to master the exam topics. I practised tirelessly and showed my work to my maths teacher. Unlike using the Taylor frame, I could write out each step of the problem just like a regular student, which made me feel confident and in control of my work."



(Left) Inclusive STEM Education for Students with VI in progress at Chakshumathi Eyes Free Science Camp. (Right) The Faculty Development Programme at Dr. BMN College, Mumbai.



- On 24 August, a hands-on STEM experience zone was created by XRCVC for students with blindness as part of the Chakshumati's 10th Eyes Free Inclusive Science Camp organised by Samagra Shiksha at Rural Development Trust Inclusive School, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh. Naresh Kumar, a participant and a blind commerce graduate pursuing an MBA felt, "If I would have had this kind of opportunity while I was in school, I would have definitely chosen science in my higher education. When we were studying, we were taught science and mathematics concepts theoretically with almost no practical experience. The two-day sessions gave me full confidence at least to guide, encourage and motivate my juniors to explore the possibilities in science and mathematics."
- In August 2023, Mr. Ketan Kothari of XRCVC attended a conclave at the Ashoka University on the topic of Inclusive Higher Education, along with experts from various sectors and government authorities.
- On 2 September, XRCVC conducted a seminar on ICT for Persons with Disabilities for Dilkhush Teachers' Training Centre's CRE (Continuing Rehabilitation Education). A total of 110 RCI professionals participated in this seminar, which aimed to support in-service special educators understand assistive technology for students with visual impairments.
- On 15 September, XRCVC conducted an online workshop on "Disability Inclusion in Higher Educational Institutions" – a Rehabilitation Council of India-approved Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) organised in collaboration with MGM's Institute's University Department of Prosthetics and Orthotics.
- In October 2023, the XRCVC conducted a 5-day Faculty Development Program titled 'Disability and Inclusion', for 22 teachers from various colleges. This event was organised by Dr. BMN College of Home Science, Matunga, in collaboration with RUSA.
- On November 30, the centre hosted a group of 32 students along with 3 faculty members from Rosary College, Goa. They visited XRCVC to understand first-hand how the centre supports persons with disabilities, assistive technologies, and the various outreach activities.
- On 15 December, a group of 87 students along with 6 teachers from Prabhodhan Vidhyalaya a leading adivasi residential school in Ambatha, Nasik, visited the centre for the same purpose.
- In December, XRCVC conducted a 5-day Faculty Development Program titled 'Disability and Inclusion', for 17 teachers from various colleges. This event was organised by the Maharashtra State Faculty Development Academy (MSFDA) at Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad.
- On 15 January, a group of 22 students and 3 teachers from The Aditya Birla Integrated School, Fort, Mumbai visited XRCVC and St. Xavier's College. The visit aimed at sensitising these students about assistive technologies for persons with disabilities and a tour of college.
- On 24 January, a group of 15 students and 3 teachers from Carmel College, Goa visited XRCVC and St. Xavier's College Mumbai. The visit aimed at understanding XRCVC's work in various sectors, an overview of assistive technologies, inclusive education practices at St. Xavier's, and a tour of the college.
- On 29 January, an 'I for Inclusion' workshop was conducted for 20 teachers from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Sardar Patel Institute of Technology (SPIT), Andheri. It aimed to



sensitise the teachers about the potential of persons with blindness, the importance of inclusion, and an overview of assistive technologies.

- On 31 January, three officials from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) visited XRCVC to understand disability-inclusion practices at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai.
- On 7 February, a group of 7 teachers from Divya Vidyalaya, Jawhar, visited the centre to explore assistive technologies, XRCVC services, and possible collaboration for teacher training.
- On 23 February, nine Ph.D. scholars from CETE, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai visited XRCVC to see assistive technologies.
- On 5 March, a two-day 'I for Inclusion' training program on inclusive education was conducted for 52 B.Ed. teacher-trainees from Hansraj Jivandas College of Education, Khar.
- On 9 March, Michael E. Engh S. J. Chancellor, Loyola Marymount University, visited XRCVC with a colleague. They were oriented about the services offered by XRCVC, SXC inclusion, and the possibilities of collaborating with LMU to exchange ideas about inclusion.
- On 18 March, six dignitaries from the Divyang University Committee visited XRCVC and the college as part of their visit to disability support organisations. The visit aimed to have a dialogue on the importance of inclusion and how a separate university for persons with disabilities will impact exactly the opposite and create exclusion; the discussion focused on the inclusive education model at college.
- From April 10 - 14, XRCVC conducted a five-day Training Programme on Disabilities and Inclusion, for 40 teachers from Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil Mahavidyalaya, Pandharpur (Autonomous). The training focused on sensitising them about disabilities and inclusion at higher education institutes.
- On 16 April, a one-day 'I for Inclusion' training program on inclusive education was conducted for 40 teachers from Fr. Agnel's Multipurpose School, Vashi.
- On 29 April, the XRCVC team delivered a talk about the importance of studying STEM to students of Kamala Mehta Dadar School for the Blind.
- Through the year, 20 training sessions were also conducted under the Tech Roshni initiative, covering persons with varied disabilities.

During the year, XRCVC made significant strides in the field of mathematics and science education for students with disabilities, providing direct support services to students. We developed accessible electronic textbooks, Teaching-Learning Aids (TLAs), and conducted conceptual training for these students. Furthermore, XRCVC expanded its Teaching-Learning-Aids (TLA) resource library for mathematics and science education, starting from Std 1 onwards. We continued our work on producing Concept Teaching Manuals (CTMs) designed to assist teachers working with visually impaired students. These manuals offer practical guidance for special educators, parents, and classroom teachers, incorporating interactive teaching methods and the utilisation of Teaching-Learning Aids (TLAs) such as activities, real objects, 3D educational toys and models, and 2D tactile diagrams.

Throughout the year, our training programmes, content creation endeavours, and various other activities remained robust.



A notable initiative titled 'Training of Teachers in Inclusive Education' continued to be implemented in collaboration between St. Xavier's College (Empowered Autonomous Institute), Mumbai (XRCVC), and Maharashtra State Faculty Development Academy (MSFDA). This groundbreaking programme has made significant strides, fostering inclusive education by equipping college professors with the necessary knowledge and skills. Through these endeavours, we remain committed to advancing inclusive education, fostering collaboration with key stakeholders, and actively contributing to the betterment and protection of children within our society.

For timely updates and comprehensive information on our ongoing work, we encourage members and stakeholders to visit our official website ([www.xrcvc.org](http://www.xrcvc.org)), explore our inclusive education resource (<https://sites.google.com/xaviers.edu.in/xrcvc-inclusive-education/xrcvc>), and engage with us on our social media platforms. You can find us on Facebook as XRCVC—Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged, as well as on Twitter with our handle @XRCVC.

During the academic year 2023–2024, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai witnessed the enrolment of 124 students with disabilities across both the junior and senior college divisions. The college's Enabling Committee, under the leadership of the principal and comprising representatives from the staff and student body, diligently oversaw and facilitated inclusion and accessibility requirements for these students. To address student requests and cater to their needs, the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities, from the XRCVC, serves as the primary resource and manages the committee's activities. XRCVC provided St. Xavier's College, Mumbai with the necessary resources and support to facilitate the seamless functioning of the Enabling Committee throughout the year. Additionally, we provided support to the Student Inclusion Cell (SIC) of the college; a separate report of the SIC's activities is available.

Beyond our campus, XRCVC remains actively engaged in promoting inclusion and access nationwide through a diverse range of training programmes, advocacy initiatives, and awareness campaigns. Our commitment to supporting the needs of students extends beyond campus boundaries, and we strive to create an inclusive environment where every individual can thrive.

While the Right to Education has been established as a fundamental right in India, the realisation of this right for individuals with disabilities remains a significant challenge. In the past year, XRCVC has persistently worked towards promoting inclusive education practices and services at various educational levels, including schools, colleges, and higher education institutions.

Our ongoing efforts focused on students attending mainstream schools under our comprehensive educational program, the Inclusive Education Support Programme. As part of these services, XRCVC engaged with several schools, conducting class observations, discussing possibilities of formal collaborations or teacher-training workshops, and exploring avenues to make content more accessible. These activities also encompassed monitoring students' progress, adapting examination methods, and providing support to other students with disabilities within the school environment. Notable schools we interacted with in 2023-24 included Aarose International (Ulwe), Al-Mu'minah School (Musafirkhana, Crawford Market), Fr. Agnel Multipurpose School (Vashi), and Balvishva English Medium School (Dadawadi, Jalsaon). Efforts concerning the creation of accessible study materials and book content continued throughout the year, with the involvement of both staff members and dedicated volunteers. XRCVC sustained partnerships with organisations such as Inclusive Stem (I-Stem), Vision Empower, Inter University Alliance (IUA), and Andrews Vision Centre (Wilson College) to further our shared objectives.





## Scholarships



**Varun Manoj Kumar holding a plaque from the Lion's Club of East Bombay along with a few XRCVC team members**

The XRCVC recognises the high costs of higher education and assistive technologies and offers scholarships and IT Lending programmes for assistive technology to qualified students with disabilities. Varun Manoj Kumar, the topper among visually impaired graduates of St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, received the Lions Club of East Bombay Scholarship for the year 2022-23. Under XRCVC's AT lending scheme, assistive technology devices like personal computers, handheld video magnifiers, and talking big screen calculators were lent to members during the year.

Students with disabilities now seek out newer opportunities in higher education.

Newer prospects come with newer expenses for college courses. Computers and assistive technology have greatly aided students with disabilities.

It must be kept in mind here that what is frequently seen as a luxury for people without disabilities is a necessity for people with disabilities.

## Training

The XRCVC imparts training in Computers, the use of specific assistive devices, Braille, Orientation & Mobility, Activities of Daily Living, STEM on the computer, Assistive Technology (AT) for students with Specific Learning Disabilities and Hearing Impairment, Locomotor Disabilities, and through various programmes.

These are available for diverse learner groups — disabled persons, special educators, teacher trainers, web developers, content writers, corporate employees and other stakeholders.

On May 18, the XRCVC was invited by State Bank of India Foundation, Centre of Excellence (CoE) to create awareness on various digital accessibility issues among bankers. It conducted workshops on



creation of accessible documents for the staff of SBI and their partner banks and web accessibility for the SBI IT Team on the occasion of Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD).

Senior members of the SBI Foundation were in attendance. Additionally, a training workshop for conducted for NIVH students for Radio Jockey course as a part of GAAD.

Online training sessions during 2023-24 included customised workshops by various members of the XRCVC team.

In November, a specialised training was conducted at the invitation of the Election Commission of India for various staff such as Chief Election Officers, Deputy Chief Election Officers, IT Heads of State Election Commissions, Assistant Director, Officials of Election Commission of India, and more. It was a hands-on session on the Document and Social Media Accessibility for 90+ officials from different parts of India.

The feedback from the participants and state representatives was overwhelmingly positive. A State Representative from Punjab said, “This was a very informative and enlightening session. Moving forward, such training sessions should be held more often at different levels.”

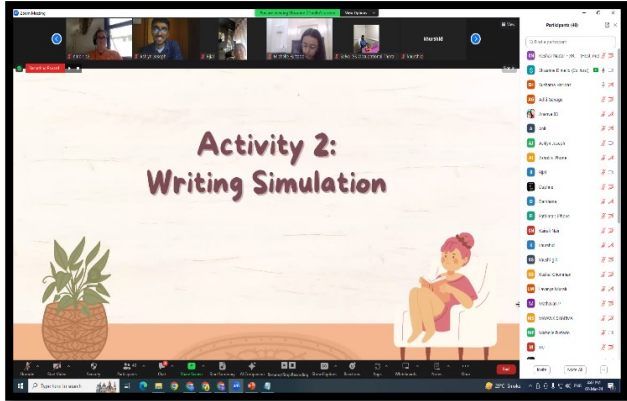
His counterpart from Telangana added, “I have gained a lot of knowledge from this session, and we can learn more how to design and how to prepare the documents accessibly.

Subsequently, the Jharkhand Election Commission of India invited XRCVC to conduct a similar training session for around 60 officials in December.

Through the year, the XRCVC’s training services reached out to a wide variety of participants, including some of our international members from the African continent (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Education and Learning (June 2023-May 2024)**

Activity	Training Sessions / Workshops	Participants
Computer Training and Assistive Technology awareness workshops for Persons with Disabilities	68	1272
Special Skills Trainings and other awareness workshops for Persons with Disabilities	6	147
Stakeholder Trainings (for teachers)	17	2207
Accessible Content Creation (Persons trained)	14	408
Guidance Support for Persons with Disabilities and Families	NA	201 (over 127 sessions)
Inclusive Education Support (For St. Xavier’s College Students)	NA	124 students with disabilities and 4 students with medical emergencies
Technology Lending Scheme	NA	9



Snapshots of XRCVC's initiatives, workshops and trainings in the year.

## B. Accessibility Solutions and Inclusion Services

Throughout the year, XRCVC undertook a series of initiatives aimed at fostering an accessible environment for individuals with disabilities across the nation. These evaluations focused on ensuring optimal usability and functionality for persons with disabilities. These initiatives exemplify XRCVC's unwavering commitment to championing accessibility and striving for inclusive environments that empower individuals with disabilities to overcome barriers and participate fully in society.

- Apps tested during the year included Tech Freedom Apps with Voicify TTS, HW Explore; Yatri; New zoom windows interface with NVDA; Gyanrathan; AI Tool (Google Bard, Microsoft Bing AI); Behrouz, NobaFlix with screen reader; Envision; Saral X; Kindle pc;



Reading and exploring iOS; iPad; Be My Eyes AI; Insta Reader; Otter Ai; Co Pilot; Google Translate; Microsoft Insight; Lighthouse; Axe; VYOM App; Microsoft Voice Access; Microsoft Foam; NVDA 2023.3; Hello UPI in BHIM App; MathKickerAI; Isabelle; Microsoft Natural Voice; Outlook New; Bookshare Reader; Microsoft Edge Immersive reader; Narrator; iPhone; Voice Over; On Windows 11; Marathi TTS of Hear2Read;

- Websites tested included UDID; Akasa Air; Post Office; Indian Bank; Union Bank; Bank of Baroda; Air India.
- Devices tested included an electric induction hot plate and an air-fryer.

Additionally, Mr. Ketan Kothari represented XRCVC as a jury member for evaluating assistive technology start-ups organised by TCS Digital Square in August 2023.

Details about the work conducted this year in the areas of technology, accessibility, testing and research are available in Table 2.

**Table 2: Technology and Accessibility (June 2023-May 2024)**

Activity	Details	Participants
Assistive technology and Mainstream Technologies / Websites / Mobile Apps worked with for building accessibility	4	NA
Assistive technology Awareness workshops for General Audience	19	1582 (including non- PWDs who have been a part of the PWD trainings.)

## Print Access

The accessibility of printed works for people with visual impairments depends on their availability in accessible formats and the legal framework's acceptance of material conversion to accessible formats. The XRCVC has been putting in great effort to battle these obstacles. During the academic year 2023-24, the XRCVC facilitated creation of the following Accessible Content and Tactile Diagrams:

- Number of E-pub books created in-house: 7 books totalling to 3290 pages
- Number of books/pages created via Bookshare: 2 books totalling to 2227 pages
- Number of Class Notes converted to an accessible format: 1304 pages/slides (including 874 technical/ math pages/slides)
- Only OCR provided: 3421 (Maths and non-Maths) pages
- Easy to Read Content: For 4 books and an additional 40 pages
- Number of Tactile Diagrams: 150 diagrams

## Financial Access

The ability to independently manage, operate, and carry out financial transactions is crucial for achieving a sense of autonomy and self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, blind and low vision individuals have historically faced obstacles due to the lack of effective guidelines and underutilisation of



technology in financial instruments, resulting in limited financial access. The XRCVC has been dedicated to changing this reality by working towards ensuring financial inclusivity for people with visual impairments.

The Talking ATM India website maintained by XRCVC completed a decade during the year.

Additionally, we have maintained a strong partnership with the State Bank of India's Centre of Excellence (CoE), actively contributing to its various projects and programs. The CoE for Persons with Disabilities is a prominent initiative of the SBI Foundation, designed to serve as a centralised support centre for individuals with disabilities. Its primary objective is to empower persons with disabilities through skill enhancement, enabling them to make significant and measurable improvements in their cognitive, physical, social, and vocational functioning. Through our collaboration with the CoE, we aim to foster the development of individuals and facilitate their enjoyment of a more productive and fulfilling life.

## C. Awareness

### Awareness through Antarchakshu®

Raising awareness about the lives and abilities of visually impaired individuals, as well as those with other disabilities, is crucial in a world that often operates under norms created by and for people without disabilities. Recognising the significance of this aspect, the XRCVC has developed a flagship awareness programme titled 'Antarchakshu® - The Eye Within.'

This programme offers an immersive journey that allows sighted individuals to gain profound insights into the experiences and challenges faced by people with visual impairments. In the year 2018-19, we introduced an enhanced version of the programme known as Antarchakshu® 2.0. It was designed as a series of tailored and need-based sensitisation and awareness workshops, delivered in a marathon format to engage a larger number of participants at their respective locations.



**An Antarchakshu® workshop for the TTEs and RPF officers of the Central Railway – Mumbai Division**



During the year, Antarchakshu® 2.0 reached out to a diverse range of stakeholders, including college students, corporate professionals, working individuals, and the general public. By implementing Antarchakshu® 2.0, we aimed to create a deeper understanding and empathy among the participants towards the challenges faced by visually impaired individuals. These workshops provided a platform for meaningful interactions, fostering a greater appreciation for their skills, resilience, and unique perspectives. Through the year we conducted 58 awareness and sensitisation workshops, reaching out to 1882 participants.

## Awareness through Diversity Discourse



**A Diversity Discourse Class for budding journalists**

Diversity Discourse, a special course that XRCVC had created for the Xavier Institute of Communication (XIC) in 2018–19, continued its successful run for the fifth consecutive year. The goal was to raise participants' awareness of the various communities that society disregards both implicitly and overtly and to present a case for why it is imperative to include these communities in the mainstream of public discourse. The content was imparted mainly through 6 modules to 301 students. This course was also offered to students of St Xavier's College as part of the Honours Programme. Awareness events were conducted for a variety of target groups across the year (see Table 3).

**Table 3: Awareness and Sensitisation (June 2023-May 2024)**

Activity	Workshops	Participants
Antarchakshu® 2.0 Sessions	58	1882
Diversity Discourse Course	6	301



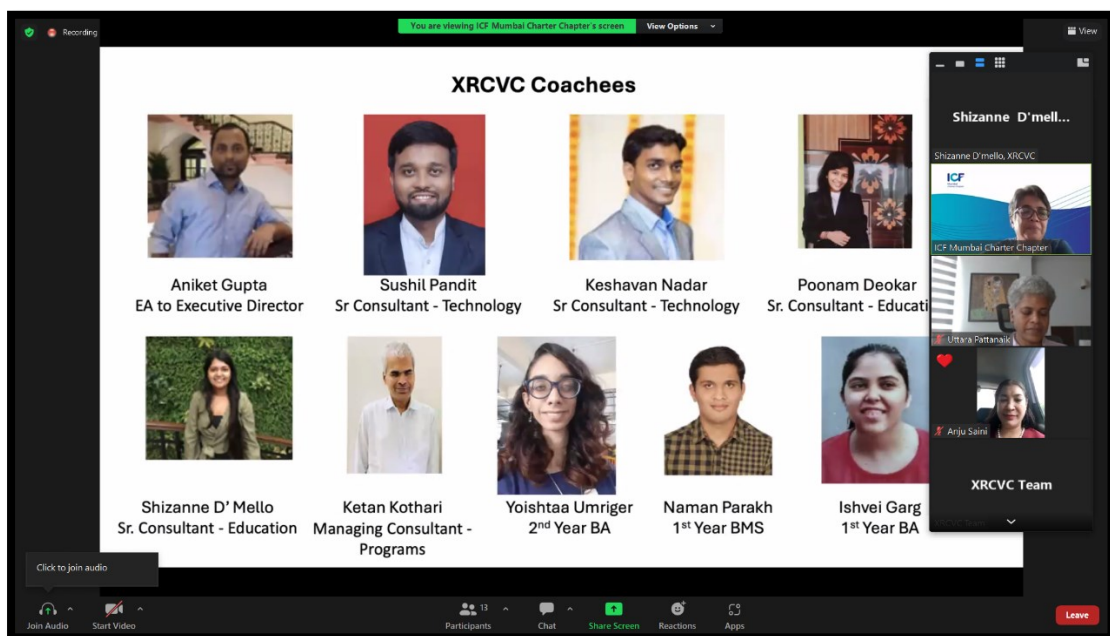
## Networking

During the year, XRCVC held confabulations with:

- Alex Kerr of Kumo Study, an app for students with ADHD to stay focussed.
- Sudip Verma of Vgain Consultants to gauge idea of ATs and potential collaboration avenues
- Akashdeep Bansal Founder & CEO of SaralX
- Namrata Gandhi, collector of a district in Chhattisgarh to explore educational assistance in Chhattisgarh for PWDs
- Govind Iyer of SVP India
- PACTA – a Bangalore-based boutique law firm working for social sector
- Ek Kadam Aur Foundation for inputs on launch of their Arunoday schools in Maharashtra
- The Dean of XIC to explore setting up inclusion services at XIC
- Bipin Bhalerao from Zepto Café w.r.t. hiring 50+ employees with hearing and speech impairments for its Mumbai Cloud Kitchen.

## ICF Coaching

XRCVC participated in the International Coaching Federation (ICF) Foundation's Ignite Initiative which offered pro-bono professional coaching by ICF-certified coaches to the staff of XRCVC and students with disabilities in St. Xavier's College. International Coaching Federation is the leading global organisation and accreditation body for coaches and coaching. The aim of the Ignite project was to accelerate and amplify social changes through coaching, which was conducted from September 2023 to February 2024.



Screenshot of a ICF Coaching Zoom meeting showing Coachees presented on the shared screen

The framework for Ignite is social development organisations that works with United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The work of XRCVC addresses UN's Sustainable Developmental Goals of Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities, Goal 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth) and Goal 4 (Quality Education, specifically for persons with disabilities).

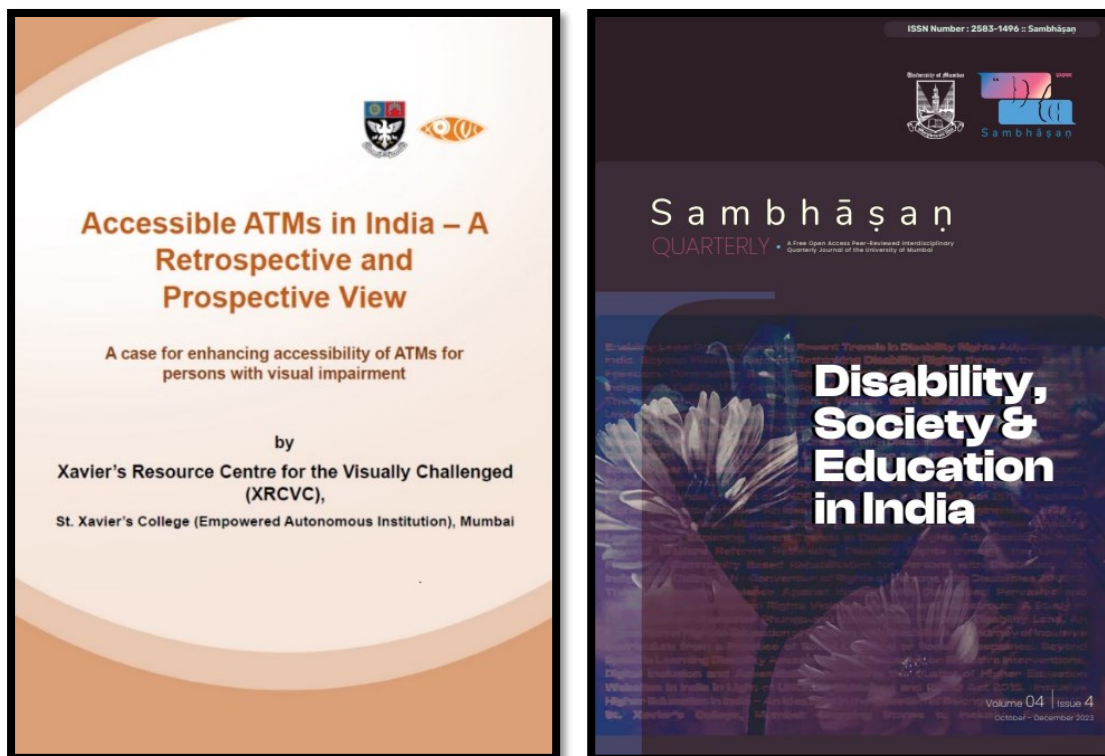


As XRCVC celebrated its 20th year, this initiative gave concrete shape to its commitment to the continuous development of our staff and students. We are positive that the outcomes of this project will have a far-reaching impact on being better allies and advocates in creating a more inclusive society.

## Publications

In the academic year, the XRCVC published an article and two policy papers to support its awareness and advocacy work as listed below:

- XRCVC was invited to write a commentary titled 'XRCVC, St. Xavier's College, Mumbai: Stepping Stones to Inclusive Education' for the Disabilities Studies Special Issue of 'Sambhasan', the peer-reviewed journal of University of Mumbai which was released in March.
- On 7 March, XRCVC released a policy paper 'Accessible ATMs in India – A Retrospective and Prospective View: A case for enhancing accessibility of ATMs for persons with visual impairment' to advocate for increasing accessibility of ATM services in India.
- In June 2023 XRCVC released a policy paper "Building Blocks of Inclusion: Policy Paper for Physiotherapy Education and Practice for Persons with Blindness and Low Vision in India" for inclusion of persons with blindness and low vision in mainstream physiotherapy education and practice.



Publications cover page (left to right) of Accessible ATMs in India – A Retrospective and Prospective View and Sambhasan





## Acknowledgements

During the year 2023-24 we have organised and conducted 64 training sessions, 60 assistive technology workshops, 65 disability sensitisation sessions, along with other interventions reaching out to 8000+ beneficiaries. This was made possible thanks to our dedicated team members who oftentimes went beyond the call of duty to deliver on our commitments. Congratulations and a big thank you to them all. This achievement would also not have been possible without the support we have received from diverse stakeholders, whose role we gratefully acknowledge.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the funders, partners, and sponsors who have played a pivotal role in shaping the XRCVC into what it is today.

We would like to offer special thanks to the Dhun Pestonji Parakh Discretionary Trust (DPP), Mr. Vikram Utamsingh, Mr. Sudhir Shenoy, Tata Investment Corporation Ltd, PSA BDP UGL Global Logistics India Pvt Ltd. We also express our profound appreciation to the N M Wadia Charities, Lila K Jagtiani Foundation, Paragon Property Enterprises Pvt Ltd, Lions Club of Byculla, Mr. Farokh N Subedar, Mr. Himmatraj G Jain, Salsette Developers Private Limited (Viviana Mall), Mr. Ankush Jain, Ms. Rashna T Doongaji, Sir JJ Foundation, Mendonsa Foundation, Mr. Mohit Sodani, Mr. Vibhas Sen, Ms. Clara Lobo, Lions Club of East Bombay, Ms. Vahbiz Pestonjamas, Ms. Persis Pestonjamas for their invaluable support.

Thanks also go out to our sponsors of Antarchakshu 2.0, Season 6 — Godrej Industries Ltd, SBI Mutual Fund, Tata Sons Ltd and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL).

We extend our special thanks to the Jesuit Management of St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, our rector Dr. (Fr.) Keith D'Souza, S.J., the Principal, Dr. Rajendra Shinde, Dr. (Fr.) Conrad Pessa S.J. and his team at the Treasurer's Office for their constant support and guidance, thanks also to the teams at the General Office, SIP department and the Student Inclusion Cell (SIC).

A thank you also to the team of Salsette Developers Private Limited (Viviana Mall) for all the support extended to the XRCVC – Viviana Extension Centre for its initiatives

Thank you one and all for being there for us and being instrumental in upholding the XRCVC's reputation as a centre of excellence throughout the nation.



Images of visitors at the XRCVC in the Academic Year 2023 - 2024





# X R C V C

## Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged

**Inclusivity at 20 - Breaking Barriers.... Achieving Access**

St. Xavier's College, 5 Mahapalika Marg, Mumbai 400001

**Telephone:** +91 22 22623298 / +91 22 35223298

XRCVC-Viviana Extension, Viviana Mall, Eastern Express Highway, Thane 400601

**Telephone:** +91 22 61701177 / +91 22 61701178

**Email:** [info@xrcvc.org](mailto:info@xrcvc.org) | **Web:** [www.xrcvc.org](http://www.xrcvc.org)

**Follow us on:** [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [X](#) | [YouTube](#) | [LinkedIn](#)



**Brochure QR Code**