



XRCVC

Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged

St. Xavier's College, Mumbai

Annual Report
June 2024 – May 2025



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Breaking Barriers.... Achieving Access

Annual Report June 2024 – May 2025

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XRCVC Annual Report June 2024 – May 2025

Highlights of June 2024 – May 2025

Impact in Numbers

6500+ lives touched

- **1475** persons with disabilities reached through various training and awareness programmes
- **38** trainings conducted for persons with disabilities
- **38** awareness programmes conducted for persons with disabilities
- **5054** other stakeholders reached through trainings and awareness programmes
- **86** awareness and sensitisation programmes conducted for non-disabled persons
- **22** training programmes conducted for stakeholders

Awards and Recognitions

The academic year 2024-2025 was an immensely rewarding year for the XRCVC with the highlight of the year being receiving the high honour of the **National Award 2024 – Divyang Sashaktikaran Hetu Karyarat Sarvashresth Sansthan (Inclusive Education)** by the Government of India. This award is a recognition of two decades of XRCVC's pathbreaking work for creating access to mainstream education and scaling inclusive education for persons with disabilities in the country through the 360-degree model of inclusive education, Assistive Technology and awareness and policy reforms. The XRCVC received the award from the Honourable President of India on the 3rd of December, 2024 which is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.



Hon'able President of India presenting the National Award 2024 to the XRCVC St. Xavier's College, Mumbai



Dr. Sam Taraporevala, founder and Executive Director, XRCVC said, “When we received the news that the XRCVC's work had been recognised by the Government of India in that it had been conferred the National Award, we felt deeply honoured and humbled. Honoured, because there is so much great work happening all around us, and to be selected was an extremely motivating moment for all of us. Humbled, because we realised that the honour meant not just a pat on the back but a belief that we had the potential to do more in terms of breaking barriers and achieving access” as he expressed his gratitude about the XRCVC receiving the National Award.



Team XRCVC with the National Award

The other awards and recognitions that were received during the year include:

- National Association for the Blind (NAB) – India conferred the prestigious **R.M. Alpaiwalla Memorial Award (Professional Category)** to **Mr. Ketan Kothari (Managing Consultant Programmes – XRCVC)** as a recognition of his impactful contribution towards the empowerment of persons with visual impairments in various roles and capacities in his professional career that spans over three decades. Mr. Kothari was overwhelmed on receiving this award and said, “The Alpaiwalla award has been an award that I have coveted for myself since a very long time. The news that I received the award took me back to my memories of childhood and initial days at my job. I wish my mentors at NAB India who guided me were alive today to see me receive it.”



Mr. Ketan Kothari receiving the R.M. Alpaiwalla Memorial Award by the NAB India from the Hon'able Governor of Maharashtra



- **Dr. Sam Taraporevala** was conferred the **Distinguished Alumni** recognition by the **St. Xavier's College, Mumbai** on the occasion of the Alumni Dinner organised by the college and the Alumni Association in December, 2024 for his contribution towards creating an inclusive society for persons with disabilities through the initiatives of the National Award-winning XRCVC, St. Xavier's College Mumbai.



Dr. Sam Taraporevala being felicitated as 'Distinguished Alumni' by the Rector Dr. (Fr.) Keith, SJ and Dr. Rajendra Shinde, Principal (retd) – St. Xavier's College, Mumbai

- The **Lions Club of Byculla** awarded the **Lifetime Achievement Award (2023-2024)** to **Dr. Sam Taraporevala** as a recognition of his significant contribution over the years towards creating access for persons with disabilities at macro and micro-levels in various spheres of society.
- **Dr. Sam Taraporevala** was also felicitated by the **Lion's Club International** on **World Teacher's Day** honouring his work towards mainstreaming of education of persons with disabilities from KG to PG.



Dr. Sam Taraporevala felicitated by the Lions Club International on World Teacher's Day



Other Highlights

- **MOU with National Institute of Empowerment for Persons with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD) for Promoting Inclusive Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education**

On 22nd July, 2024 the XRCVC signed an MOU with the NIEPVD under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), Government of India to facilitate accessible STEM education for persons with visual impairment. As a part of this MOU, the XRCVC will act as a subject matter expert and will collaborate with NIEPVD to promote accessible STEM education through the nation, scaling its work on STEM education for persons with visual impairment to a national level. This MOU was signed in the presence of the Hon'able Union Minister, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar and other dignitaries of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.

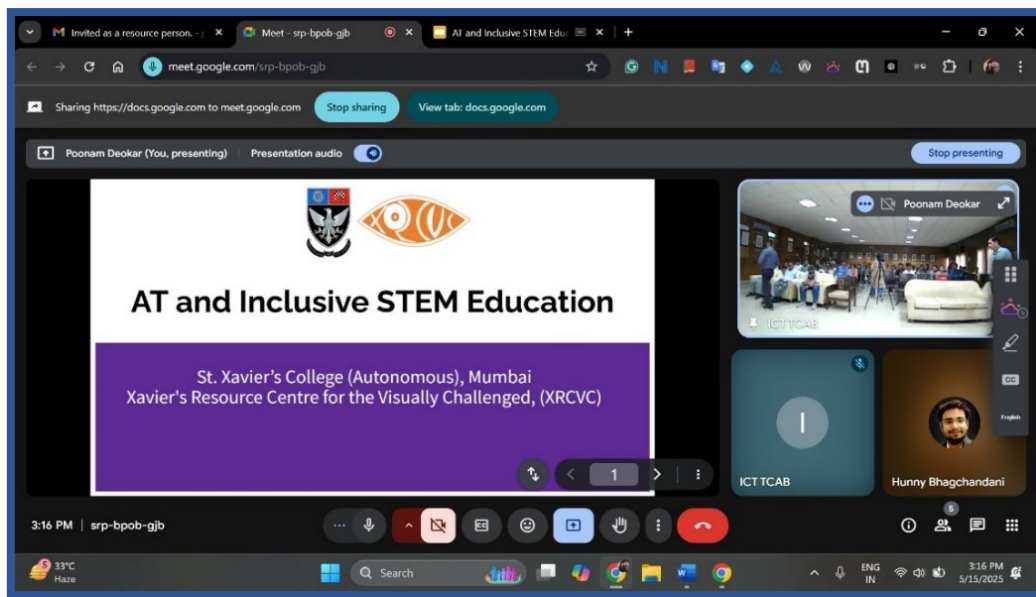
Under this MOU, the XRCVC provided continued support to the students with visual impairment of the NIEPVD.

Additionally, as a part of the MOU, on 31st January, 2025, the XRCVC hosted 3 special educators of the NIEPVD to orient them to inclusive STEM practices and assistive technologies for various disabilities. The Principal of Model School for Visually Handicapped, under the NIEPVD, Amit Kumar Sharma, who visited found "the session on accessibility tech for VI students and other disabled students was very informative and useful. The STEM session was equally meaningful for Maths & Science".

On 15th May, 2025 the XRCVC conducted a nation-wide online session on the occasion of Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD) on Assistive Technologies for inclusive STEM education that focused on raising awareness about Assistive Technologies and promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in STEM disciplines.



Visitors from the NIEPVD at the XRCVC Office



“AT and Inclusive STEM Education” awareness session by the XRCVC on Global Accessibility Awareness Day

- **XRCVC at the Seminar on Braille Conversion of Resource Material Organised by the Cell for National Centre for Literacy (CNCL)**

Mr. Ketan Kothari represented XRCVC at the two-day seminar organised by the CNCL regarding the conversion of National Council for Educational of Educational Research and Testing (NCERT) resource material in Braille and sign language held from 8th to 9th August, 2024 at New Delhi.

- **XRCVC at Meeting on Codification of Bharti Braille organised by the NIEPVD**

XRCVC was invited to participate in a meeting on the standardisation and harmonisation of the recently revised Bharati Braille Code organised by the NIEPVD at NAB Delhi on 5th December, 2024. Mr. Ketan Kothari represented XRCVC at this meeting.

- **Updation of the Equip Your World Compendium**

In the current academic year, the XRCVC commenced work on a revised edition of its compendium on Assistive Technology “Equip Your World” to include cutting-edge developments in Assistive Technology and extend its scope from those for persons with visual impairment to all disabilities.

- **National Consultation on Disability and Voluntary National Review by the Rising Flame and the United Nations**

On 1st March, 2025 Mr. Ketan Kothari represented XRCVC at a panel discussion on “Poverty, Education and Work” regarding access to education, National Education Policy, and digital access as a subject matter expert at the National Consultation on Disability and Voluntary National Review organised by the Rising Flame and the United Nations.

- **Access Setu: Pathways to an Inclusive Future Assistive Technology Awareness Exhibition**

The XRCVC organised an Assistive Technology Awareness Exhibition “Access Setu: Pathways to an Inclusive Future” on the occasion of “International Day of Persons with Disabilities” on 3rd



December, 2024 at the IF.BE in Ballard Estate. The exhibition was inaugurated by Mr. Sarosh Amaria, Managing Director of Tata Capital Limited. This walk-in exhibition had a footfall of over 300 persons from various walks of life such as policy makers, educators, special educators, corporate leadership and employees, caregivers, students, etc.

“I think this is the first time I've been exposed to this equipment, and the initiatives for the differently abled are truly appreciative steps towards their future. Thank you for the insightful tour. It's really appreciated.”

- Sapna Dodamani, Indian Express

“Despite being associated with the disability space learned several new things today. Thank you!”

- Moneisha Gandhi, Co-Founder Buddy Up Network



Snapshots from the Access Setu: Pathways to an Inclusive Future Assistive Technology Exhibition at the IF.BE Ballard Estate



- **XRCVC Chapter Published in Karna Vidya Foundation's book "State of the Visually Impaired in 75 Years of Independent India: Issues and Challenges"**

The XRCVC was invited to contribute a chapter to the book "State of the Visually Impaired in 75 Years of Independent India: Issues and Challenges" published by the Karna Vidya Foundation. This chapter titled "Towards Financial Inclusion of Persons with Visual Impairment: Addressing Ableism to Pave the Way for Barrier-Free Access to Banking and Other Financial Services" was co-authored by Dr. Sam Taraporevala, Ketan Kothari and Disha Kapadia – Chinchwadkar. It explores the ground reality of barriers to financial access faced by persons with visual impairment in India and highlights a way ahead towards ensuring sustainable barrier-free financial inclusion of persons with visual impairment.



Cover page of the book and the XRCVC chapter

- **Accessibility Audit of the Mumbai Metro Line 3**

XRCVC was invited by the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL) to conduct an audit of the Marol Naka Metro Station and BKC Metro Station (MML3) by commuters with disabilities. The XRCVC co-ordinated a group of 20 persons across various disabilities – sensory, cognitive and locomotor for the audit to provide robust feedback on overall accessibility to the MMRCL.



Accessibility Audit supported by the XRCVC of the Mumbai Metro Line 3



- **Antarchakshu® for the Honourable Chief Minister's Office, Government of Maharashtra**

XRCVC conducted its flagship Antarchakshu® 2.0 disability awareness and sensitisation workshop for the officers and staff of the Hon. Chief Minister's Office, Government of Maharashtra at the Mantralaya on 6th February, 2025. This workshop was designed to sensitise the participants about the lived experience of persons with disabilities to create avenues for inclusion in various spheres of society.



XRCVC's Antarchakshu® 2.0 Workshop for the staff of the Hon'able CM's Office, Govt. of Maharashtra

Hear from the participants about their experience of the session:

"My personal approach towards disabled persons improved a lot. Awareness in the society is a must."

- H.V. Argunde

"Activities were full of insights."

- Dr. Manish Milke, Under Secretary

Membership Base

The XRCVC's membership base grew to **1151** in the academic year 2024-2025.

In keeping with XRCVC's mission to accelerate inclusion for persons with disabilities by engaging with diverse stakeholders, the XRCVC provides its members, their family and caregivers, educators, employers, etc. comprehensive direct training and support services which include training for usage of computers, mobile phones and Assistive Technology, accessible content creation including Braille printing services, personal and career guidance support tailored to suit specific needs, support services to ensure access by engaging various stakeholders such as publishers, financial institutions, educational institutions as needed.

Our commitment to ensure independent and dignified living for persons with disabilities goes beyond our membership base through the legacy of our policy impact work to create change at micro and macro-levels in various spheres of society.



Volunteer Support

The support of our volunteer base is the basis of the XRCVC's impact. In the academic year 2024-2025, the XRCVC has been grateful to receive the support of **109** volunteers. Our volunteers bring the human touch to support our member's needs that is important even in this era of advanced technology. The XRCVC volunteer base provides the following support services to its members:

Reading assistance: Reading aloud support for persons with print disabilities.

Class buddies: Class buddies help take notes during classroom lectures, ensuring that students with disabilities have access to class materials.

Subject teaching: Volunteers offer subject – specific guidance and instruction to those who may require additional support for academics.

Material conversion: Volunteers support the conversion of study materials into accessible formats through scanning, typing, editing, recording and embossing to make them easier to read and comprehend for students with disabilities.

Scribes and prompters: Volunteers are also available as scribes or prompters during examinations, providing support in completing written or oral assessments to individuals who may need it.

Other assistance: XRCVC volunteers also provide for additional support requirements on a case-by-case basis.

The XRCVC provides volunteers on short-term and long-term assignment basis customised to the needs of the person requiring the support.



Assistive Technology

The XRCVC is a state-of-the-art Assistive Technology resource centre having over 250 Assistive Technologies in-house. Persons with disabilities as well as employers, government agencies and other interested groups are welcome to explore the technology and their use by prior appointment at the centre. In the academic year 2024-2025, the XRCVC added a range of cutting-edge to its portfolio – including Snow eye video magnifier, Ruby video magnifier, 10-inch with speech, Clover Note 12.5-inch Video Magnifier, Apple iPad pro Wi-Fi 256GB 13 inch, along with upgrades of licenses of various software such as Jaws home screen reader license, Supernova screen reader and magnifier, Duxbury braille translation, Microsoft Office 365 and Adobe Acrobat.



Collage of New Procured Assistive Technology such as Ruby 10 HD with Speech, iPad, Clover 12, Snow Eye, Orbit Reader 40



Focussed Areas of Impact

Inclusive Education (KG to PG)

XRCVC's award-winning work in the area of inclusive education adopts a 360-degree approach to enable inclusion for persons with disabilities in mainstream education from KG to PG. The initiatives and activities of the XRCVC towards inclusive education not only provide holistic individualised support to students with disabilities, but also engage with various stakeholders to create a systemic impact through capacity building, policy interventions, resource creation, knowledge generation, and replicable models to create equitable access to education.

An Overview in Numbers June 2024- May 2025

Activity	Training Sessions / Workshops	Participants
Computer Training and Assistive Technology awareness workshops for Persons with Disabilities	51	1024 (including 14 PWDs who were a part of awareness programmes for the general population)
Special Skills Trainings and other awareness workshops for Persons with Disabilities	25	140
Stakeholder Trainings (for teachers)	16	608
Accessible Content Creation (Persons trained)	6	169
Guidance Support for Persons with Disabilities, Families and Other Stakeholders	138	196
Inclusive Education Support (For St. Xavier's College Students)		140 (including 1 student with a medical emergency)
Technology Lending Scheme		8
Device Distribution	1	59



Training and Awareness Programs for PWDs for their inclusion in mainstream education



“I for Inclusion” training programme for Special Education teacher trainees of NIEPID, HACSE and SOPAN



Faculty Development Programmes on Inclusive Education for MSFDA



Glimpses of XRCVC’s STEM Education Offerings



Accessible Content Created in the year:

- Number of E-pub books created in-house: 7 (20 on-going)
- Number of books/pages in Braille: 8 books and a few other documents
- Number of Class Notes converted to an accessible format: 645 pages
- Only OCR provided: 3238 pages
- Easy to Read Content: 17 books amounting to 3200 pages
- Number of Tactile Diagrams: 185

Some Key Initiatives Towards Inclusive Education

Trainings for Persons with Disabilities

- In the month of June 2024, the XRCVC conducted a month-long intensive training programme for 6 Increasing Diversity by Increasing Access (IDIA) law scholars with visual impairment from across the country. This holistic training covered topics such computer, mobile phone and assistive technology training, orientation and mobility, activities of daily living, visual concept enrichment, graphs and advocacy among others to enable independence in their personal and professional lives.
- The XRCVC was invited by the Ashoka University on 12th June, 2024 to conduct an online session on Assistive Technology for reading and writing for its students with Neurodevelopmental Disabilities as a part of their College Readiness Programme organised by the Office of Learning Support at the Ashoka University. The participants found the session useful in which they learnt new strategies and skills which made Assistive Technology including the latest AI apps accessible to them.

“Overall, it was great to see how technology is advancing and how it can be used inclusively, the session was interesting with good practice ideas.”

- Medhavi Bose, Assistant Manager, OLS, Ashoka University

- The XRCVC conducted a 2-day training programme on using computers and mobile phones with screen readers in April 2025 for the Zonal Institute of Education & Training of the Kendriya Vidyalay Sangathan for their teachers with visual impairment.
- On 8th March, 2025, the XRCVC facilitated a Visual Concept Enrichment (VCE) session with Kartik Thevar, a Wildlife Conservation Dog Handler & Trainer for its young members to make conservation more accessible and inclusive, especially for the visually impaired. This session included the participants interacting with his dog making it a richer and relatable experience.
- Mr. Ketan Kothari was invited by the Snehankit Helpline to conduct a session on 24th April, 2025 on "Using Media for Self-Development" as a part of a personality development camp organised them for youth with visual impairment from across Maharashtra.



- XRCVC organised a one-of-a-kind “Summer Sense-ations” summer camp for young students with visual impairment. In May 2025, three sessions were conducted of this camp – “Crochet and Create” for building skills of crafting and fine motor skills, “Touch, Tackle, Taste!” to build independence, orientation, and motor skills through simple, hands-on recipes and “Touch & Tint: A Tactile Art Adventure” – a workshop introducing multiple art and craft activities.

Stakeholder Trainings

- The XRCVC organised a two-day “I for Inclusion” training programme in August 2024 for the teacher trainees from the renowned special education colleges – National Institute of Empowerment for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPID), Hashu Advani College of Special Education (HACSE) and Society of Parents of Children with Autistic Disorders (SOPAN). The training focused on understanding disabilities and Assistive Technology for persons with disabilities.
- Twenty young students of Grade 2 with 2 of their teachers of the Hill Springs International School visited the centre on 4th October, 2024 for an engaging awareness session on Braille and sign language.
- Mr. Ketan Kothari of the XRCVC conducted a session on "Mainstreaming of VI: Various Challenges and Solutions" at the Capacity Building Workshop organised by the National Association for the Blind (NAB), India for rehabilitation professionals on 1st Jan 2025
- The XRCVC conducted two 5-day Faculty Development Programmes in July, 2024 and September, 2024 as a part of its MOU with the Maharashtra State Faculty Development Academy (MSFDA) for educators in higher education institutes across Maharashtra.
- During the academic year, the XRCVC conducted 8 of its ‘I for Inclusion’ training for teacher trainees from renowned colleges such as the Bombay Teachers’ Training College, Colaba, St. Xavier’s Institute of Education, Hansraj Jivandas College of Education, Chembur Sarvankash Shikshanshashtra Mahavidyalaya and Gokhale Education Society's College of Education and Research

Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education

- On 7th June, 2024, the XRCVC conducted training on STEM accessibility for 44 educators and special educators from Vision Empower, Bangalore. The training aimed to equip participants with solutions for enhancing STEM accessibility for students with visual impairment.
- The XRCVC conducted its two-month training programme on “Reading and Writing STEM on Computer” for 6 students with visual impairment from July 2024 to equip them with key skills to independent study STEM subjects using a computer.
- XRCVC consulted the Help The Blind Foundation (HTBF) to help initiate and build STEM education for persons with blindness in Tamil Nadu in August 2024.



- XRCVC was invited by V-Shesh on 29th November, 2024, as a subject matter expert to conduct an orientation to inclusive STEM pedagogy for special educators and teachers from the Education Training Centre (ETC), Vashi and Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation Schools.
- Discussions began with the administrators and Director of Rural Development Trust, Anantpur on XRCVC consulting the setting up of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education laboratory at the RDT school in December 2024. Further to this, on 27th February 2025 Mr. Rafiq, Director - Field and Academic Institutions, DID - Rural Development Trust, Anantapur and Mr. Antonia, Coordinator Inclusive Education visited the centre to understand STEM-oriented Assistive technologies and explore avenues of collaborations.
- The XRCVC organised a training programme for the high school students of the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind on 21st and 22nd January 2025 on Accessible Laboratory Skills to help them develop essential skills for working in a laboratory setup. This programme also included a visit to the Geology, Zoology, Blatter herbarium, and Chemistry labs around the campus.
- The XRCVC consulted the National Centre for Assistive Health Technologies (NCAHT) a national centre for research, development, innovation, training, promotion and dissemination of Assistive Technologies setup by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), AIIMS Delhi and IIT Delhi on inclusive STEM education.
- During the year, the XRCVC also created 22 Teacher Information Kits for school-level inclusive STEM education as a part of its MOU with Vision Empower.



Accessible Products and Services

Accessibility was established as a fundamental right in November 2024 by a landmark judgment by the Supreme Court of India in the case of Rajive Raturi vs. Union of India establishing its key role in ensuring an equitable society for persons with disabilities. The XRCVC has always held accessibility in mainstream products and services as one of the pillars of its work and has contributed significantly through various initiatives towards ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities in various spheres of living.

Accessible Products and Services in Numbers

Activity	Details	Participants
Assistive technology and Mainstream Technologies / Websites / Mobile Apps worked with for building accessibility	5	NA
Assistive technology Awareness workshops for General Audience	12	1108 (includes 14 non-PWDs who were a part of awareness programs for PWDs)

Key Accessibility Initiatives

- Dr. Sam Taraporevala was invited by the Reserve Bank of India to be a mentor to startups working in the field of fintech for persons with visual impairment as a part of 'HaRBinger 2024 - Innovation for Transformation'. He mentored 3 teams over the period of November and December 2024 as an expert on fintech for persons with visual impairment to help them develop technology to create financial access for them.
- The XRCVC, represented by Dr. Sam Taraporevala and Mr. Ketan Kothari, was invited to be an Expert for reviewing the strategic plan and roadmap for the National Centre for Assistive Health Technology (NCAHT) established by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), AIIMS-Delhi and IIT-Delhi with partners like Saksham NGO, NISH-Trivandrum, and IIT, Madras as a centre for research, development, innovation, training, promotion and dissemination of Assistive Technologies.
- In the academic year, the XRCVC provided consultancy services to Akasa Air for the creation of accessible safety manuals, accessible in-flight menu and accessibility of their tickets and booking process to create an inclusive travel experience for their customers with disabilities.
- On 25th July, 2024, Mr. Ketan Kothari and Aniket Gupta of the XRCVC did an in-person review of the accessibility of the F.D. Alpaiwalla Museum to create an inclusive experience for its visitors.
- During the academic year, the XRCVC worked with the Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology Department of the St. Xavier's College, Mumbai to create inclusive experiences. It worked with the Head of Department Prof. Anita Rane in August 2024 to create accessible versions of games from ancient India in August 2024, and worked with Prof Jason Johns for



enhancing the accessibility of his exhibition “The Art of St. Francis Xavier: In the Archives & the Digital Age” held on 15th February, 2025

- Mr. Ketan Kothari represented XRCVC at the “Inclusive India Summit” organised by the Department of Empower of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on occasion of the Global Accessibility Awareness Day on 15th May, 2025. As a panellist on the panel themed “Inclusive Technologies and Innovations”, he brought out the critical need for building accessibility in mainstream products and services to enable independent living for persons with disabilities.



Young students with visual impairment exploring the inclusive Vividha exhibition on ancient games of the AIC department of the St. Xavier's College



Mr. Ketan Kothari at the Inclusive India Summit of the DEPWD, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment



Awareness and Sensitisation Programmes

XRCVC's awareness programmes aim to create access for persons with disabilities by breaking down attitudinal barriers to inclusion. Our Antarchakshu® workshops, Diversity Discourse course and other awareness initiatives are immersive experiences designed to help participants reflect on their personal beliefs about lives of persons with disabilities, dispel myths and orient them to various concepts of inclusion.

Impact in Numbers

Activity	Workshops	Participants
Antarchakshu® 2.0 Sessions	61	2463
Diversity Discourse Course	6	275
Other Awareness Initiatives	7	339



Antarchakshu® for the First Year Students of the St. Xavier's College, Mumbai



Participant undergoing simulation activity of dyslexic reading in an Antarchakshu® workshop



Antarchakshu® for the employees of the Henkel factory



Candid conversations during an Antarchakshu® workshop debriefing session

Key Awareness Programmes Conducted

- An Antarchakshu® disability sensitisation workshop for conducted for the young students and teachers of the Advaya Shaale in Bangalore on 19th July, 2024.
- In August 2024, a series of Antarchakshu® workshops were conducted for the first-year undergraduate students St Xavier's College (Empowered Autonomous Institute), Mumbai across various programmes.
- XRCVC also conducted Antarchakshu® workshops for corporates such as Henkel India and Merck at its various plants and offices across the country and for the SMFG India corporate office to support their diversity and inclusion initiatives for persons with disabilities.



- On 18th January 2025, an Antarchakshu® workshop was conducted for the team of the Khaki Tours to enable them to make their heritage walks an inclusive experience for persons with disabilities.
- An Antarchakshu® workshop was conducted for the final year students of the Bachelors in Sports Management course of International Institute of Sports Management.
- The XRCVC was invited to conduct a session on “Disability and the Labour Market in India” as a part of the Summer School organised by the St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai for the economics undergraduate students of the college.

Here are some experiences of the Antarchakshu® disability sensitisation sessions as shared by the participants:

“Profound session. introspective nature of activity. Truly fascinating”

- **Shagun Kedia, Whistling Woods Academy**

“...it was nice to learn how important it is to put yourself in someone else’s shoes and learn that a disability shouldn’t have to define you”

- **Inaya Castro, St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai**

“Stimulation environment created empathy.”

- **Ayushi Mangesh, Department of Special Education, SNDT University**

“Every citizen should undergo this workshop.”

- **Bharat Gothoskar, Khaki Tours**

“It was extremely informative and helped me learn so much about people with disability. Thank you for conducting this!”

- **Kush Gadia, BITS – Pilani, Hyderabad**

“Very good new experience”

- **Suneel Kumar Aggarwal, Henkel India**

“Good effective session, everyone should attend this once.”

- **Pritam Rane, Merck**



Policy Engagement Initiatives

The XRCVC undertook various policy engagement initiatives this year to leverage its expertise in creating policy impact to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities and create equitable access for them in various spheres of life.

- On 13th November 2024, Mr. Ketan Kothari was invited to be a part of consultation on the Status of Rights of Persons with Disabilities organised by the National Centre for the Promotion of Employment of Disabled Persons (NCPEDP) at Yashwantrao Chavan Centre.
- Mr. Ketan Kothari represented the XRCVC as an expert panellist on the panel themed "Bridging the Healthcare Equity Gap: New Strategies and Solutions" at the Patient First Summit & Awards on 13th December, 2024 organised by the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Council.



Mr. Ketan Kothari as an expert panellist at the Patient First Summit & Award of the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Council.

- Mr. Ketan Kothari was a panellist at the panel discussion on "Ensuring Equity: Organizational Strategies for Inclusive societies - Experiences with Children/ Persons with Disabilities Inclusion" at the Purple Jallos 2025 organised by the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation and UNICEF on 18th January, 2025
- In April 2025, the XRCVC drafted and sent out letters of representation for inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna (AB-PMJAY) to government leaders and policy makers including the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the National Health Authority and the Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities.



Collaborations and Networking



XRCVC at The Ability Network Conference

XRCVC strongly believes in the synergistic power of collective action in creating systemic impact and achieving its vision of a diverse and inclusive world where all, irrespective of disability, can thrive. In the academic year 2024-2025, the XRCVC actively collaborated with various organisations, thought-leaders, policy makers and government entities to create pathways to inclusion for persons with disabilities in society.

- On 12th June 2024, the XRCVC was invited to be a part of the 2nd Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) Conclave organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI). This Conclave was designed to bring together leaders and professionals from diverse sectors to discuss and explore strategies for fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and society.
- Mr. Ketan Kothari represented the XRCVC at the Accessibility Summit organised by the Association of People with Disabilities (APD) on 27th July 2024 and addressed the audience about the inclusion practices at the St. Xavier's College, Mumbai college and the role of XRCVC.
- In the academic year the XRCVC continued to be involved as a primary member of the Daisy Forum of India (DFI) – a consortium of Not-for-Profit organizations from India who are involved in production of books and reading materials in accessible formats for persons with print disabilities through contribution of accessible e-books to the Pustakalaya and actively participating in the various General Meetings for key decisions regarding the DFI.
- The XRCVC signed an MOU with the Shantilal Shanghvi Eye Institute for providing training to the staff of their low vision rehabilitation centre on Assistive Technology.



- On 30th January, 2025 the XRCVC was a part of the Ability Network Conference of the Tech Mahindra Foundation which aims to create an ecosystem for persons with disabilities by building a collaborative platform, bringing together various stakeholders like healthcare providers, educational institutions, and technology companies.

XRCVC Publications

"Towards Financial Inclusion of Persons with Visual Impairment: Addressing Ableism to Pave the Way for Barrier-Free Access to Banking and Other Financial Services" in Karna Vidya Foundation's book "State of the Visually Impaired in 75 Years of Independent India: Issues and Challenges"

This chapter co-authored by Dr. Sam Taraporevala, Mr. Ketan Kothari and Disha Kapadia-Chinchwadkar delves into the history of the current regulatory framework for financial access for persons with visual impairment, brings forth the various learnings from XRCVC's in-depth research on the current scenario of and prevalent barriers to financial inclusion for persons with visual impairment and makes recommendations for the path ahead to ensure barrier-free financial access to banking and other financial services for persons with visual impairment.

Additions to Our Team

We welcomed two new members to our team – Mr. Tejas Karanje as Access Technology Consultant and Ms. Shalini Dubey as Consultant – Inclusive Education. We would also like to convey our gratitude and best wishes to Mr. Sushil Pandit Lead Consultant – Assistive Technology (Testing and Training) who moved on from the XRCVC after a long stint of 12 years (2012 to 2024).

Media Coverage

- 'Sirens to alert us of raids? We won't be able to hear it': Highlighting the need to train persons with disabilities for emergency protocols - Sunday Mid Day - 11 May 2025 - [Link to the Article](#)

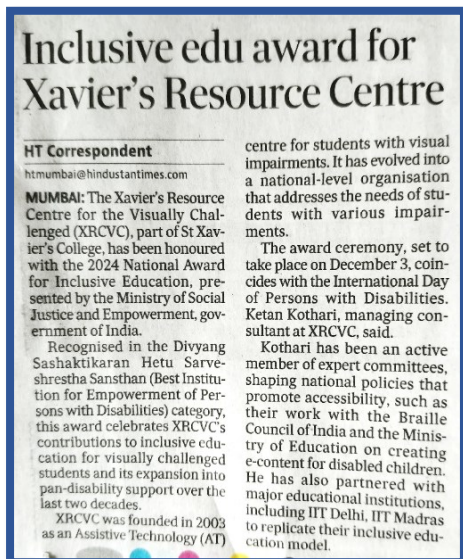




- Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged ya Sansthela Sarvashreshtha Sanstha Shrenit Puraskar - Good News Maharashtra DD Sahayadri – 22nd December, 2024. - [Link to Video](#)
- Exhibition showcases Assistive Tech for differently abled – Indian Express 3rd December, 2024



- Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged awarded for inclusive education – Hindustan Times - 11th November, 2024.

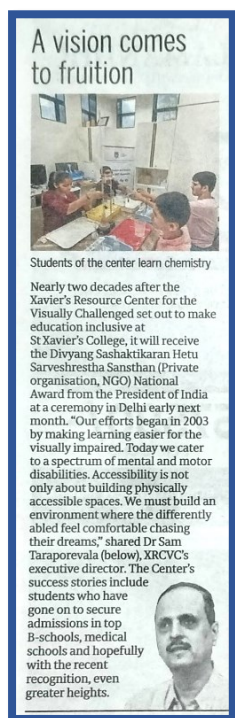


- St. Xavier's la Rashtriya Puraskar – Loksatta 12th November, 2024





- A Vision Comes to Fruition – Mid Day 12th November, 2024



- St. Xavier's centre wins the nat'l award – Times of India 12th November, 2024



- NIEPVD signs 2 MoUs for the welfare of Persons with Visual Impairment – Garhwal Post 25th July, 2024 - [Link to Article](#)



Acknowledgements

As we reflect on the immensely rewarding and impactful year gone by, we are filled with gratitude for the many individuals and organisations who stood by us in our mission to create a more inclusive world for persons with disabilities.

First and foremost, we thank our dedicated team—whose passion, perseverance, and unwavering commitment continue to help our work reach great heights. Their tireless efforts oftentimes over and beyond the call of duty make a tangible difference in the lives we are able to touch every day.

We sincerely thank the Jesuit management of the St. Xavier's College, Mumbai, our rector Dr. (Fr.) Keith D'Souza, S.J., Dr. (Fr.) Conrad Pessa S.J. and his team at the Treasurer's Office, the teams at the General Office, the Social Involvement Programme (SIP) department and the Student Inclusion Cell (SIC). Their whole-hearted support, guidance and belief in our work have made another successful academic year possible for us. A special thank you to the Principal Dr. Rajendra Shinde as he retires for his active involvement and encouragement to the work of the XRCVC – we wish you the very best for your new innings.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our funders, partners and donors whose belief in our vision and continued support have empowered us to expand our reach, deepen our impact, and sustain our initiatives throughout the year. We would like to offer special thanks to Tata Investment Corporation Limited, Tata Capital, Boehringer Ingelheim India Pvt. Ltd, Akry Organics, Dhun Pestonji Parakh Discretionary Trust, N.M Wadia Charities, Katgara Foundation, Salsette Developers Private Limited, Lila K Jagtiani Foundation, Mendonsa Foundation, Sir JJ Foundation, Lions Club of Byculla and Lions club of East Bombay, (late) Mr Homi Godha, Mr. Sudhir Shenoy, Mr. Vikram Utamsingh, Ms. Dolly B Mehta, Mr. Belson Coutinho. Mr. Mikhail Behl, Ms. Rashna Doongaji and Ms. Clara Lobo

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To our community of volunteers – we are grateful for the invaluable contribution of your time, energy and effort to our work that help us touch and transform lives.

A thank you also to our well-wishers on whom we rely for encouragement and solidarity to keep pushing boundaries and achieve our vision of an inclusive society for all.

We are honoured and grateful to have your support which is the foundation of XRCVC's nationwide reputation as a centre of excellence.



X R C V C

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Breaking Barriers.... Achieving Access

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