



ANTARCHAKSHU™ - THE EYE WITHIN

CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE WORLD

ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE, MUMBAI

SEPTEMBER 15-16, 2015

11am to 7pm





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

Breaking Barriers, Achieving Access

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

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Antarchakshu™ – The Eye Within 2015

The Theme: Creating An Accessible World

1416 participants, including—to name a few—academics, designers, students, software programmers, hoteliers and an honourable judge from the Bombay High Court drawn from all over Mumbai, went through an eye-opening experience with their eyes shut at “Antarchakshu – The Eye Within” on September 15th and 16th, 2015. The workshop – a sensitisation and awareness process – was organised by the Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC) at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai.

XRCVC is a support and advocacy centre aiming to work towards the holistic development of visually challenged people.

The theme for Antarchakshu™ 2015 was “Creating An accessible World”.

“The central idea of this event was to create awareness about the lives of the visually challenged, which is why Antarchakshu™ 2015 primarily focussed on the theme of **Creating an Accessible World**. Providing accessibility should not be seen as the responsibility of just one sector. Universal design should be a universal obligation. Through the Antarchakshu™ experience, our aim was to demystify accessibility and make sure that its basic principles are easily understood and made practical to one and all,” said Dr Sam Taraporevala, director, XRCVC.

The participants at this unique event were blindfolded and engaged in basic activities like using a touchscreen mobile phone, walking along a tactile path, using an ATM, unravelling a maze with their fingers, and playing Ludo and cards, the way the blind do. They even managed to find their way to a bus and board it with their blindfolds on!



The Registration zone



Learning the use of a white cane

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They then had the opportunity to go through a detailed exhibition area. They were exposed to the various emerging technologies like Beacons (a low-end Bluetooth device that is used as a system for location indoor tagging) which can be harnessed to create an accessible world, and some exhibits showcased by a team from Assistech, IIT Delhi. The accessible ATMs from NCR highlighted the value of effective accessibility and voice guidance. Also on display was a touch-screen interface-driven ATM from NCR with total voice guidance, which is in the advanced stages of development.



Using a tactile puzzle

Antarchakshu™ focussed on the following six principles of accessibility:

1. Universal Design: Usable By all
2. Accepting Differences & Sensory Substitution: Different ways of reaching the same goal
3. Multi-Sensory Approach: Enriches Experiences
4. No Clutter, Clutter confuses: Clean and non-cluttered layouts aid everyone
5. No half-baked cookie: Accessibility present from beginning to end and not only in parts
6. Nothing for us without us: User inputs and feedback taken during development



Reading an accessible menu

Speaking about Antarchakshu™, Mr R. Ramanan, Managing Director & CEO, CMC Limited, said, "This workshop by the Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged is an extraordinary eye opener for every one of us who see and yet don't see how creatively the visually challenged deal with the world we all live in, and find as much rich meaning if not more, in every walk of life that we are all uniquely privileged to experience. It is an absolute must to experience by every one of us, for it will give us unique insights into what the visually challenged can achieve on equal terms with everyone else, and how each of us can play a significant role in accelerating the possibilities and limits of what they can further achieve in this marvellous world of ours."



Playing Ludo blindfolded

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Navroze Dastur, MD, NCR Corporation, said, "NCR is committed to delivering truly world class, customer-centric banking solutions and has worked to continually enhance the excellent transaction products. It is an honour to be a part of an event that bestows importance on the rights of the visually impaired and focuses on their convenience and accessibility. NCR's Accessible ATMs and the newly launched Kalpana software looks at contributing immensely towards Antarchakshu™'s intention of making banking accessible to all consumers, especially the visually challenged individuals."



Using a Tablet

Dr. Vinod Gopal, Director, Professional Education, Johnson & Johnson Medical, India, Head – Corporate Social Responsibility said " At Johnson & Johnson, the focus is not just on business, but on extending a helping hand to the underprivileged and underserved. Our philanthropic work enables our community based partners and dedicated employees to touch the lives of millions of people each year, bringing them better, healthier lives. Throughout its history, Johnson & Johnson has paid close attention to its Corporate Social Responsibility and has been vigorously implementing a number of initiatives. One such initiative is supporting the Xavier's Resource Center for the Visually Challenged, right from its inception. This state of the art support center works towards the holistic development of visually challenged persons.



Using a tactile floor path



Boarding a bus

Additionally, Johnson & Johnson has been supporting its "Antarchakshu – The Eye Within" initiative. This annual awareness event is primarily focused on Financial Inclusion, with an aim of training and sensitizing the banking industry towards totally blind and people with low vision as bank customers. Over the years, a number of our employees have participated in this event, and have come away truly impressed and totally appreciative of the efforts of XRCVC. We are indeed proud and honored to be partnering with the Xavier's Resource Center for the Visually Challenged, and wish it complete success in its endeavors."



Learning the principles of accessibility

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Another participant Mr Amol Tope, who is a corporate trainer and social entrepreneur, said, "The sighted necessarily need to experience Antarchakshu™ at least once in their life time. For me Antarchakshu™ was an experiential activity full of challenges, fun, learning and above all an experience that helped me empathise with my visually impaired friends. Prior to Antarchakshu™, my communication with blind persons was hesitant or uncomfortable—instances like how to physically guide a blind person to cross the road, or draw on his palm to explain a shape, etc. After my Antarchakshu™ experience, I felt like a renewed person while relating with them. All my mind blocks of "how" to interact with these friends dissolved and my motivation to serve them increased phenomenally."



Using a tactile floor plan

Antarchakshu™ — The Eye Within was powered by Johnson & Johnson Ltd. and supported by Godrej, SBI Mutual Fund, SBI, Tata Sons Ltd., Sightsavers, Tata Capital, Tech Mahindra Foundation, and Dhun Pestonji Parakh Discretionary Trust.



An accessible ATM

All participants were given a Braille tutor as a memento.

The success of the event hinged on the intricate networking and coordination of over 200 staff and volunteers.

Here is what some of the participants had to say:

Ms Rucha Vakhariya, IDC, IIT Bombay: This was a very interesting experience. We have always heard about how blind people navigate / use things but experiencing them gives you a whole new perspective. It is extremely important to make things more accessible for everyone to use.

Ms Aishwarya Sanas, Lawyer: It was a lesson to remember for the rest of my life—an eye-opener. I started the activities as a game but later realised that it's the reality and story of every visually challenged person.



How the blind study science

Mr Dipanshu Dhuliya, Participant: We do not need to sympathise but treat everyone at par by making things more accessible—that's what I take back from this event.

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Ms Riya Sawant, Volunteer: I could see how moved the participants were after they removed their blindfolds. They thanked us profusely and appreciated the thought behind Antarchakshu™. We even received suggestions that Antarchakshu™ should be held at educational institutions and workplaces since awareness needs to be spread far and wide. As people looked back at the path they walked on and the bus they boarded, they would ask us, "Did we manage to do THIS blindfolded? It seems impossible." Many participants said that they understood only after the Antarchakshu™ experience the difficulties faced by people with blindness and low vision. All of us volunteers felt an immense satisfaction that we were part of an event that changed people's perspectives and made them better informed and aware than before.



The smart cane developed by IIT

Media links to Antarchakshu™ — The Eye Within

1. The Hindu: Mumbai college offers the white cane of technology
<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/mumbai-college-offers-the-white-cane-of-technology/article7668856.ece>
2. Mid-day: New sight, new ideas
<http://www.mid-day.com/articles/mumbai-diary-thursday-theme/16541166>
3. indiacsr.org: NCR displays accessible ATMs at Antarchakshu
<http://www.indiacsr.in/en/ncr-corporation-displays-accessible-atms-at-antarchakshu-the-eye-within/>
4. Parsi Times: An Insight Into The Unexplored

For further information, please feel free to contact:

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Participants interact with blind volunteers



A participant signs the visitors' book

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