

The eye within

Antarchakshu 2014 at St Xavier's College, Churchgate, presented possibilities on inclusive education for the visually impaired

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Antarchakshu 2014 at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai



Image of class 5 blind student demo-ing science experiment

Antarchakshu, which literally means the 'inner eye', is an annual sensitisation and awareness event organised by the Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC) at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. The event has been creating waves of awareness for the past nine years. Its 2014 edition, held on September 12 and 13 at the college hall from 11am–7pm, saw teachers, professors and parents of visually challenged students attending the workshop on the subject of inclusive education, where participants were given an insight into the life of a visually challenged person by way of simulating blindness.

Samantha, mother of Nisha, a 9-year-old visually challenged girl, said, "Being a mother to a visually challenged child isn't easy, though I get to know and learn more

through her. It is amazing to note that being blind can open up other faculties and I see that happening with my child every day. Coming to XRCVC has introduced so many possibilities to my child and has taken her entire learning experience to a whole new level."

Director of XRCVC, Sam Taraporewala, adds, "The XRCVC focuses on promoting inclusion in a multi-dimensional manner. We have, for long, realised the need to engage with educators to bring the latest in technology and pedagogy to the students. Antarchakshu was conceptualised and run as a first step towards this end. As a follow-up, we will continue interacting with the hundreds of teachers and dozens of schools to jointly help promote inclusive education for the blind and low-vision students in the true sense of the word."

XRCVC has been instrumental in making education inclusive for persons with disability, helping educational institutions and universities to set up uniform guidelines for writers for students and working with NCERT to make tactile maps. The centre has published a report titled 'Numbers and Reactions' on how Science and Maths can be made accessible to visually-impaired students. Antarchakshu is actively supported by the Education Department of the Maharashtra government and has attracted participants from various segments of the education sector including teachers, principals, administrators and policy makers.