



Accessibility Audit CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

PROUDLY PRESENTED TO:

*College of Social Work
(Empowered Autonomous),
Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai*

has successfully completed the
Accessibility Audit for the A. Y. 2025-26
as per the UGC
Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for
Higher Education Institutes and Universities (July 2022),
ON 24 MARCH, 2026

External Audit Expert

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College of Social Work, (Empowered Autonomous), Nirmala Niketan

Accessibility Audit Report 2025-26





COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK, NIRMALA NIKETAN
(EMPOWERED AUTONOMOUS)

(AFFILIATED TO UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI)

38, New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400020

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT REPORT

(2025-26)

INTRODUCTION

What is an Accessibility Audit?

An accessibility audit is a method of assessing or reviewing how accessible your organization's environment, building, or service is for people with disability. An access audit for higher education institution is a process towards identification of strengths and limitations of its physical environment, digital resources and services to ensure that they are inclusive and accessible to all individuals, including persons with disabilities. Access audit also attempts to provide suggestions which can prove to be instrumental in equipping various stakeholders with necessary knowledge and skills to foster inclusive learning environment for all. An access audit is one of the first of many steps that can help to improve accessibility of the built environment.

Access Audit in Indian Context

In recent years, India has experienced major shift in its legal and policy frameworks towards mainstreaming Persons with Disability (PwDs). These transformations are reflective of growing recognition of their right to full participation and equal opportunities across various domains of life. A key development in this regard is the enactment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPwD Act) in the year 2016 replacing Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995 which marks a paradigm shift in India's approach to disability rights. The newly enacted legislation expanded the definition of 'disability' to include a wider range of impairments and several provisions were introduced to ensure equal access of PwDs to education, employment, healthcare and other essential services.

With education being a significant cornerstone of inclusivity, RPwD Act 2016 provides roadmap for ensuring equal access and non-discrimination of PwDs in educational institutions both within the schools and also at higher education levels. Section 32 of RPwD Act requires all higher education institutions receiving aid from the government to reserve not less than 5% seats for persons with benchmark disabilities and to give an upper age relaxation of five years for admission.

College of Social Work (Empowered Autonomous), Nirmala Niketan

In line with its vision and mission, college has always been striving to address the issues of most disadvantaged sections of society through all its programs namely teaching- learning, field practicum, research endeavours, and field action projects. Social work education and training imparted to students instills among them values and ethos of human rights practice and protection of rights of the most marginalized and disadvantaged sections of society.

College's ethos and core values of respect and dignity, equity, access, social justice and inclusivity involve creating an enabling environment where learners with diverse backgrounds and ability, feel valued, and can thrive.

Since its genesis, College has always been always upholding the values and principles of affirmative action especially towards students with differential abilities and capabilities. These core values of inclusive education and accessibility are demonstrably reflected in all its policies and practices, including admission policies, student support services and community engagement.

Accessibility Provisions in Admission Policy

Reservation of seats for candidates with benchmark disabilities:

As per UGC regulations and in alignment with the norms of University of Mumbai and Government of Maharashtra regulations, college has always been implementing 3% reservation policy for persons with disabilities in BSW and MSW admissions.

Availability of accessible infrastructure and reasonable accommodation:

Candidates with disability appearing for entrance exam for admission in the College are given extended time to write the entrance test (Typically 20 minutes per hour of examination (as per disability norms). Applicants with visual impairment and those with learning disability are assigned scribes/readers during the admission entrance exam. Candidate may bring their own scribe (subject to approval), or use a college-appointed scribe. Scribe qualification level should be lower than that of the exam.

For candidates with mobility challenges (locomotor disability or chronic medical conditions affecting speed) entrance exam (written test, interview and group discussion) is arranged in the classroom on the ground floor and there is a lift that can be accessed by them. Arrangement is made for a quite or separate room (for instance in the Ph.D. room in library) for students who need them during the entrance tests (and also after admission, for exams.)

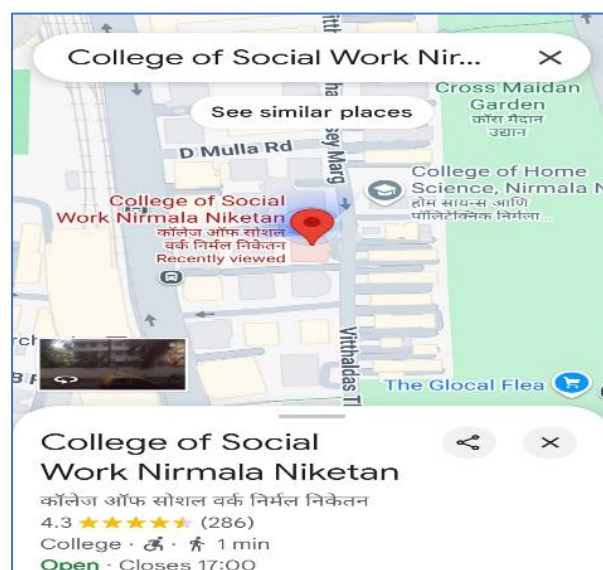
Extra preparation time is given to a candidate with disability, if needed, before responding in an interview and group discussion. In case of an applicant with hearing impairment, additional interview can be taken instead of group discussion. Request for online interview is considered on a case by case basis in case of a medical condition or crisis.

Equal Opportunity Cell of the College, along with the MSW Admission Committee, conducts an online 'pre-admission information session' for the candidates with disabilities and those belonging to reserved category on the admission process.

Physical infrastructure

Online Location Accessibility:

College of Social Work (Empowered Autonomous) Nirmala Niketan is located at the prime location of the city. The location can be tracked online on google maps and the accuracy is very good even for a person trying to reach the institute for the first time.



Entrance and Reception Area:

There is limited but enough space to bring a vehicle (taxi / car / small tempo) inside the College gate. There are steps in front of the College building, but there is a hand railing. There is also a portable ramp. The entrance is wide and clearly identifiable, however the tactile indications need to be put in for the main entrance and corridor. The reception area is free of obstacles. There is an elevator at the ground floor, clearly visible.



Corridors:

The corridors of the college are wide enough to accommodate wheelchair users. There is sufficient space for wheelchairs to pass through the doors along the corridor's length. The pathway is generally free of obstructions. Notably, the corridors lack tactile guide strips, which should be added to enhance navigation for visually impaired individuals. Additionally, there are no thresholds along the corridors that would obstruct access to classrooms.



Washrooms/Toilets:

The institution provides adequately equipped and gender-segregated toilet facilities for staff and students on the first, second, and third floors. In addition, a separate, barrier-free and accessible toilet is available for persons with disabilities.

The entrance to the toilet is accessible, with doors wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs. Inside, there is a grab-bar installed for support, and the overall space is sufficient for manoeuvring. However, additional space is needed for wheelchair users to turn within the washroom. The flush mechanism is easy to operate, and the toilet paper dispenser, along with other essential fixtures, are positioned at accessible heights. The floor is slip-resistant, providing added safety. The door handle height is also easily operable. However, door mats are needed to improve the accessibility and hygiene of the toilet area.



Regular hygiene and sanitation protocols are implemented by designated support staff to ensure optimal standards of cleanliness, safety, and usability across all sanitation facilities.

Classrooms:

The classrooms are generally free from obstacles, although some of the spaces in certain rooms are relatively narrow. The furniture, including tables and chairs, provides sufficient legroom and is appropriately sized in terms of height. The classroom lighting is adequate, ensuring good visibility for all students. Additionally, the furniture color contrasts well with the floor, making it easier to distinguish and navigate the room.



Library:

The library is partially automated using iSLIM, a cloud-based, modular library management system. This software streamlines core processes including Acquisition, Cataloguing, Circulation, and Serials, allowing the library staff to focus on high-value student support.

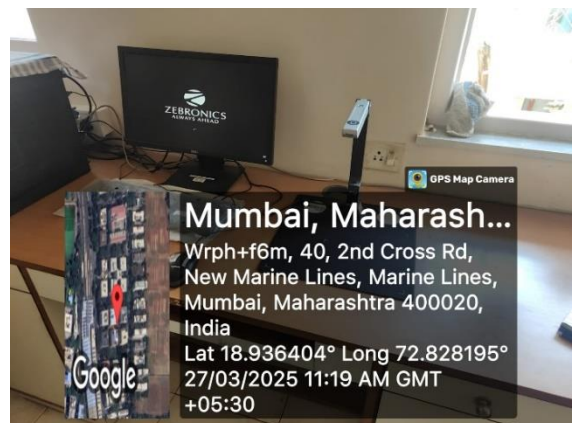


The software currently archives over 26,000 books and more than 50,000 other documents. The database is integrated with NList by INFLIBNET, providing access to a wide range of academic resources. iSLIM's interface and functionality help streamline library operations, making resources more accessible to users, including those with disabilities. There is a dedicated mobile app for remote catalogue searches.

KIBO scanner -

In order to ensure that the books available in print is accessible to the students with visual disability, KIBO scanner is made available in the library. Following are the functions that a KIBO scanner can perform;

- Reads Printed Text Aloud – Scans books, newspapers, and other printed materials and reads them out loud.
- Supports Multiple Languages – Can read and speak in different languages.
- Converts Text to Braille – Connects to a braille display so users can read in braille.
- Saves and Transfers Files – Allows users to save scanned text as audio or digital files.



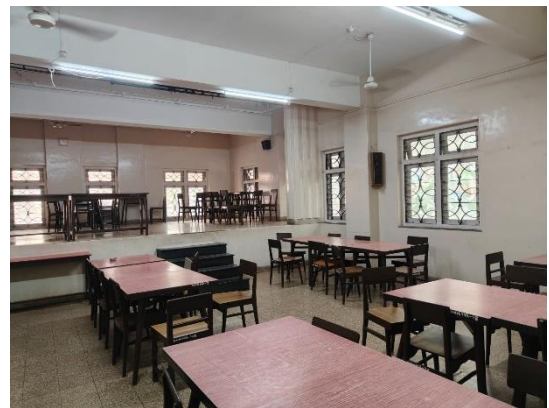
- Reads Currency Notes – Helps identify different currency notes.
- Works Without Internet – Can function without needing an internet connection.
- Simple and Easy to Use – Has a few buttons and voice instructions for easy operation.



The library is clear of obstacles, making it easy to move around. The tables and chairs are the right height and provide enough space for legs. There are no loose chairs, but the seating is accessible for wheelchair users. The library has good lighting, and the furniture stands out against the floor colour, making it easier to see and move around.

Canteen:

The canteen is mostly accessible for people with disabilities. There is enough space under the tables for leg clearance. However, there is no system for people with speech impairments to place an order, and no menu card in Braille for those with visual impairments. The tables have straight legs, and the floor in the eating area is slip-resistant. Signage for the wash area is needed for better guidance.



Computer Lab and ICT Services

Computer Lab has special key board for 3 units (computers) for students with visual impairment. It has JAWS (Job Access with Speech) and NVDA (Nonvisual Desktop Access) which converts the computer into a talking computer. It reads out all the matter that is on the computer's screen through the computer's speakers/ headphones, thus enabling a visually

challenged person to use the computer independently and work on all MS Windows applications. The key features of NVDA are;

- Works with popular apps like web browsers (Firefox, Chrome), email, chat, music players, and office programs (Word, Excel).
- Can read text out loud in more than 55 languages, with extra voice options available.
- Tells you about text styles, font size, and spelling mistakes if possible.
- Reads out text under the mouse and can make a sound to show where the mouse is.
- Supports special braille devices, allowing users to type in braille.
- Can run from a USB drive without needing to be installed on the computer.
- Has an easy-to-use voice-guided installer.
- Available in more than 50 languages.
- Works on all modern versions of Windows, both 32-bit and 64-bit.
- Can run even before logging into Windows or on secure screens.
- Supports Windows features like Magnifier, Sticky Keys, and Voice Typing.
- Can announce buttons and text when using touch screens with gestures.
- Offers low-cost phone support and training materials.
- Can read PDFs and images that normally can't be read.
- Has a friendly and helpful user community.
- Includes an Add-on Store with extra features, like remote help and AI image descriptions.
- Has a secure mode for companies needing to control access to certain features.



Teaching and Learning Process

Courses on Disability:

Courses related to Disability are offered as major, minor and skill enhancement courses in the Bachelor of Social Work and the Master of Social Work.

In Semester IV of BSW programme, students may also choose between AEC 202 and AEC 203 for the Ability Enhancement Course of two credits. The course *AEC 203 is Indian Sign Language*. The objective of the course is to introduce the learner to the concept of Indian Sign Language (ISL) and its characteristics; to provide the learner an understanding about the history and development of Indian Sign Language (ISL) and introduce them to deaf culture and deaf communities; to facilitate the learner to gain knowledge about the detailed structure and components of ISL; to build capacity of the learner to engage in various forms of interactions with persons having speech and hearing impairment in different settings through the use of communicative ISL and to guide learner to appreciate the relevance and scope of learning Indian sign language in the field of social work for inclusivity for persons with speech and hearing impairment.

The learning outcomes of the course are ability to discuss the concept of Indian Sign Language (ISL) and its application in the community as part of Social Work practice; ability to comprehend the history, development of Indian Sign Language (ISL), deaf culture and deaf communities and learning ISL for ensuring inclusivity of Deaf persons; ability to demonstrate various forms of interactions in different settings using ISL and ability to comprehend the relevance and scope of learning Indian Sign Language in the field of social work.

The Units offered include –

- Introduction to the Indian Sign Language (ISL) [Concept, Characteristics and Common Misunderstandings about Sign Language, History of ISL, Deaf Culture and linguistic identity, Towards an inclusive society for persons with hearing and speech impairment, Relevance and scope of learning ISL for Social Work Professionals] and
- Structures and Components of ISL and Interactive ISL for Social Work Professionals [Definition and design features of language and Indian Sign Language, Manual and Non-Manual Components of ISL, English alphabet, numbers, days of week, months, Word-

Level Structures: Words and sentences, introducing self and knowing about others Seeking basic information, Engaging in basic interactions in different field settings]

In Semester V of the BSW programme, students are offered *Disability and Community-Based Rehabilitation [VSC 301]* for two credits. The objectives of the course are to understand the concept of disability, types of disabilities, causes and prevention of disability; to learn to analyse the impact of disability, disability legislations and government schemes and to define the concept of community-based rehabilitation and its application in the field of disability.

The course learning outcomes include the student's ability to comprehend the concept of disability, its types, causes and prevention; analyse challenges faced by persons with disabilities and their families; discuss key disability legislations and government schemes; and apply the concept and strategy of community-based rehabilitation to prepare an intervention plan in the field of disability.

The units include –

- Introduction to Disability and Community-Based Rehabilitation [Disability Perspectives such as Medical, Social, ICF, Rights-Based and Definition, Types of Disabilities, Concept of Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) & its role in early identification & intervention of disability]
- Policy & Institutional Framework of CBR [Disability Legislation in India including The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 and Policy Framework Creating Enabling Environments (Disability Schemes, Mobilization of Local Resources, Disability Sensitization at Community Level); Inclusive Development with CBR, CBR Approaches / Strategies and Stakeholders and Challenges and Opportunities for CBR in India].

As a Minor course, students are offered *Mental Health [302]* in Semester VI of BSW programme for 4 credits. The objectives of the course are to provide an orientation to concepts and social determinants of mental health; to gain basic understanding of mental health disorders and treatment approaches for referrals; to gain an overview of mental health policies and legislations; and to design a mental health intervention project for self and community from a person-centred, strengths-based and recovery model.

The learner outcomes include the ability of the student to recognize the complexity of mental health as a continuum and how mental health issues can affect everyone; discuss complexity of mental health history, concepts, and the range of potential risks as an outcome of social determinants; analyse the diagnosis and prognosis of various mental health disorders to respond effectively to individuals and families in crisis and reduce stigma; and apply legal frameworks and intervention models with emphasis on person centred/strengths based and recovery-oriented model in the promotion of mental health across various settings.

The units of the course are –

- Introduction to Concept of Mental Health [History of mental health: demonological to reformation, Social determinants of mental health and impact, Epidemiology, Magnitude of mental health globally and in India, Human Rights Violations due to mental health challenges]
- Mental Disorders: An Overview [Neuro-developmental Disorders; Schizophrenia; Mood disorders; anxiety disorders; Trauma and Stress-Related Disorders; Somatic Symptoms and Related Disorders; Feeding and Eating Disorders; Dissociative Disorders; Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders Personality Disorders; and Psychiatric Evaluation and Mental Status Examination]
- Policies and Programmes and Approaches [Person-centered / strengths-based and recovery-oriented] to mental health promotion and interventions; National initiatives for the promotion of mental health such as policies, laws and Mental Health Programs that includes the National Mental Health Program, District Mental Health Program, Community Mental Health Program and School Mental Health Program]
- Social Work Practice across mental health settings [Schools, De-Addiction Centres, Hospitals, Child Guidance Clinics, Half Way Homes, Prison Settings, and Palliative Care].

In MSW, Semester II *Mental Health Practice [DSE 404]* is offered as an elective for four credits. The objectives of the course are to understand the history, concepts and social determinants of mental health; to develop an overview of various mental health disorders their causes, diagnostic criteria and treatment approaches, and to understand national and international policies and approaches to mental health as a framework for interventions.

The learning outcomes includes the student's ability to analyse mental health challenges from a rights-based perspective; appreciate the history, concepts and social determinants of mental health as a framework for intervention; and undertake intake assessment, community programmes, facilitate mental health service patient and referrals based on the knowledge of mental health disorders and community mental health programmes and demonstrate self-awareness, compassion and competence in the application of knowledge, skills and techniques for promoting recovery and reintegration of the person with mental illness.

The course units include -

- Mental Health: history, concept, social determinants, multidimensional impact of mental health concerns [History of mental health: demonological to reformation, Social determinants of mental health, Mental health models and classification systems, Multidimensional impact: magnitude; human right violations; social, economic and holistic health aspects and ICF's model of disability]
- Mental Disorders: concept, types, causes and treatment approaches [Neuro-developmental Disorders; Schizophrenia; Mood disorders; Anxiety Disorders; Trauma and Stress-Related Disorders; Somatic Symptoms and Related Disorders; Feeding and Eating Disorders; Dissociative Disorders; Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders and Personality Disorders; Psychiatric Evaluation and mental status examination]
- International and National Mental Health policies and programmes on Mental Health such as International and national initiatives for promotion of mental health such as policies, programmes, law and types of Mental Health Services
- Social Work Practice across mental health settings [Community Mental Health: concept, relevance, types; Role of social worker mental health settings as well as in multidisciplinary teams; Mental Health in various settings: Schools, De- Addiction Centers, Hospitals, Child Guidance Clinics, Half- Way Homes, Prison Setting, Palliative Care].

In Semester IV, students are offered a paper on *Disability Studies and Practice DSE 504* for four credits. The objectives of the course are to gain understanding concept and perspectives related to disability; to understand and analyse the range of issues in the lives of persons with disability and their families within their systemic and structural contexts; to examine and review international conventions, national legislations and government schemes and

programmes for persons with disabilities to learn social work interventions with persons with disability and their family at different levels including advocacy.

Through the course the learners are expected to comprehend the disability perspectives, types, causes, early intervention and prevention of disabilities; analyse the impact of disability on the life domains of persons with disabilities and their families; examine international convention on the rights of persons with disability (UNCRPD), national disability legislations, and government schemes and programmes for persons with a disability and link them to social work practice in the field of disability and develop intervention and rehabilitation plans for persons with disability and their families, including advocacy and implement them in field.

The units of the course include –

- Understanding Disability [Definition of disability, Disability Perspectives & Models, Different Types of Disability, Causes, Early Identification & Prevention]
- Impact of Disability across Life Domains [Issues Faced by Persons with Disabilities in All Domains of Life – health, education, employment, family life, social & political participation, Vulnerable groups within the disability community]
- International Conventions, National Laws, Policies and Programmes for Persons with Disability, United Nations Convention on The Rights of Person with Disability 2006, The Rehabilitation Council of India Act 1991, National Trust Act 2000, The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, The Mental Healthcare Act, 2017, Government policies and programmes for persons with disability]
- Social Work Interventions in the Field of Disability [Work with Individuals with Disabilities and Families, Work with Groups on disability issues, Community Based Rehabilitation and Disability Advocacy]

Besides these courses which are focused on disability issues and disability social work practice, some of the other courses, in BSW, MSW and MA in Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (MA-SIE) programmes, like *Basic Counselling* in semester IV of BSW (SEC 201), *Integrated Social Work Practice* in semester V of BSW (Major 302), *Child Rights* in semester VI of BSW (ME 302), *Family Centred Practice* in semester I of MSW (DSE 403), *Health and Social Work* in semester I of MSW (DSE 401), *Community Organization* in semester II of MSW (CC405)

and *Social Problems* (CC 421) in semester I of MA-SIE also include reference to disability and mental health issues in their content.

Sessions are organized as a part of the disability courses as well as outside them for the students to sensitize them about disability issues and challenges faced by people with disabilities and their families in Indian Society.

Accessibility Provisions in the Examination Policy:

As per the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016, students with physical and visual disabilities get extra time for writing examination papers. This extra time is 20 minutes per hour, i.e. for a 3-hour paper, extra time is 1 hour. These candidates can also ask for a writer if required in giving an application one month before the exam.

Candidates with Specific learning disability (Dyslexia/Dysgraphia & Dyscalculia) get compensatory time for writing the examination paper [Maximum is 1 hour for a 3-hour paper]. (Amendment IQAC meeting 11th October 2023). Candidates seeking the above provisions need to apply in a prescribed format in advance to the Principal of the College with appropriate supporting documents for getting approval and necessary permission.

The Examination Policy of the College specifies that the scribe (writer), Amanuensis/Reader/Reader-cum-Writer can be made available to the person with disability by the College. The Question Paper may be read out, but not explained in any way to the candidate(s). Such support is provided free of cost to the candidate. The scribe/writer should be from the same stream of subjects but a lower class and must not be related to the candidate. The need for the scribe may be judged on a case-by-case basis concerning the function affected.

In addition to the adaptation of the Mumbai University guidelines for students with special needs/with a disability during examinations, students with visual disabilities will be exempted from answering the question based on statistics in the paper. Instead of a question based on statistics, the Research Paper will include all questions from the theory covered in the research course.

Accessibility Provisions Fieldwork Policy:

The College has a accessibility provisions for fieldwork for students with disability creating equity for students with chronic health conditions, mental health dimension, neurodiversity and disability in fieldwork.

The students are placed in a group in a fieldwork placement agency which not only helps peer-learning but also develops an informal support system for the students. The placement of students with disability in fieldwork agencies takes place after a dialogue with the agency about the accommodations that might be required along with the plan for fieldwork tasks. The faculty supervisor, along with the agency, ensures safe environment for the students and the students can approach the faculty supervisor for any kind of issues related to accessibility or inclusivity at the agency.

If such an issue arises after the commencement of fieldwork, the faculty supervisor organizes a meeting with the field contact along with the student for mutually acceptable resolution. In case such a resolution could not be met, the faculty supervisor approaches the fieldwork committee to discuss the alternative plans for the fieldwork of the student with disability.

Sustained Commitment to Building an Inclusive Society: A Four-Year Retrospective

The College of Social Work (Empowered Autonomous), Nirmala Niketan, has a longstanding tradition of engagement with social causes through field action projects, crisis interventions, and capacity-building workshops. These initiatives are designed to reach a broad constituency of social work students and practitioners, fostering awareness, critical dialogue, and informed engagement with contemporary social issues. Presented below is a concise overview of disability-related programmes, events, and research initiatives undertaken by the institution over the past four years.

Disability Awareness Sessions for the Alumni and Students of the College in the Past 4 Years:

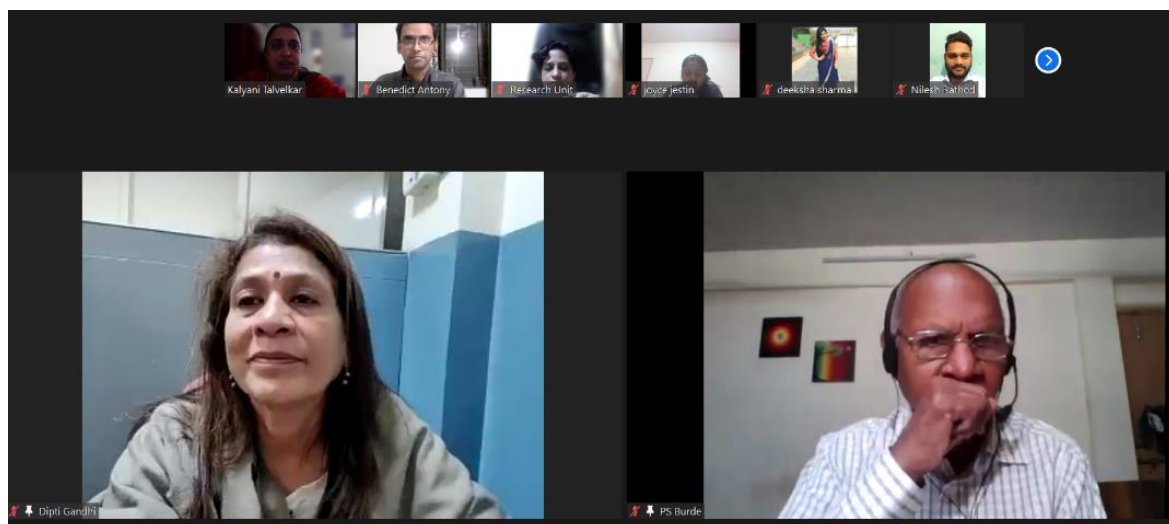
Workshop on 'Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Lived Realities: Experiences of Persons with Disabilities in Indian Society'

An online workshop was organized on 'Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Lived Realities: Experiences of Persons with Disabilities in Indian Society' on 15th January, 2022 for the social work students as well as practitioners. It was originally planned in December, 2021 in hybrid

(online as well as offline) mode; however due to the resurgence in the cases of COVID and ill health of one of the resource persons, was postponed to January, 2022 and was made online. The objectives of the workshop were to sensitize the students about disability issues and challenges faced people with disabilities and their families in Indian society as well as to initiate a discussion about the interventions needed to make Indian society an inclusive one, in the true sense of the term.

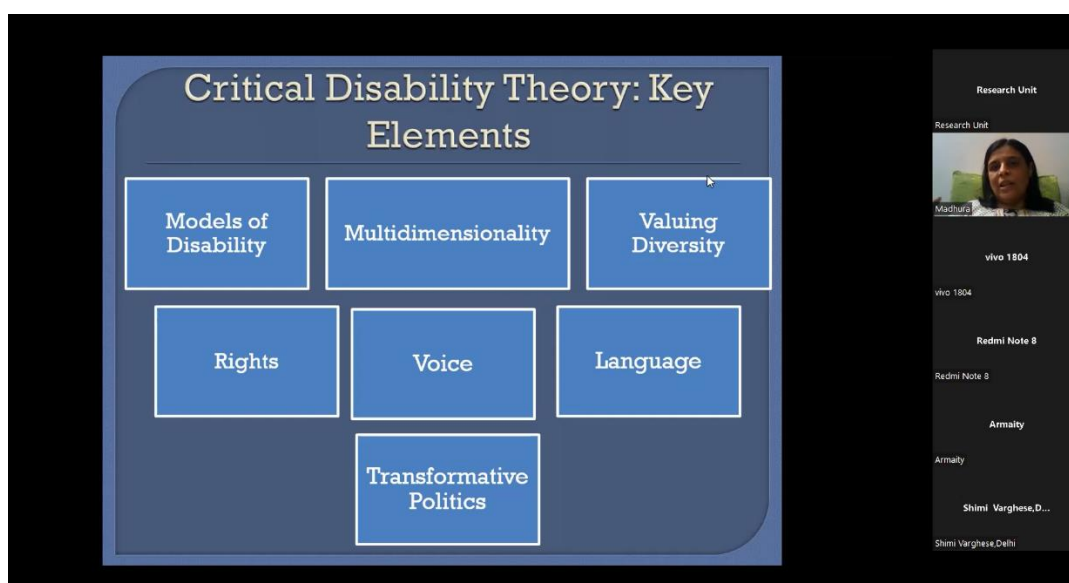
There were three resource persons - 1.Mr. P. S. Burde, the then Vice President PARIVAAR, National Confederation of Parents' Organizations for PwIDDs and EC Member, PARIVAAR SAHYADRI, the Apex Council of Parents of Persons with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Maharashtra and Goa); 2. Ms. Poonam Pardeshi, an alumni of College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan and then Programme Officer in the Programme Development and Support Unit at Aide et Action International; and 3. Ms. Dipti Gandhi, the Founder CEO of Muskan Foundation, a foundation that works for children with multiple disabilities.

Fifty eight people registered for the workshop. Though majority of the participants were from Maharashtra, there were a few participants who were from other States of India such as Kerala, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh and Manipur. Within Maharashtra, participants hailed from districts such as Mumbai, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Satara, Nagpur, Jalgaon, Yavatmal and Ahmednagar



Refresher Course and Workshops on Disability:

A refresher course in an online workshop format was organized with the alumni of the College on September 24, 2022, to provide insights into the contemporary disability perspectives and experiences of the persons with disability to initiate a discussion on the implications for these two on social work practice. The resource persons for the programme were Dr. Madhura Nagchaudhuri, Assistant Professor, Centre for Disability Studies and Action, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences; Ms. Poonam Pardeshi, Programme Officer, Programme Development and Support Unit, Aide et Action International and Ms. Mangala Ambekar, Administrative Staff Member, Canara Bank.



Disability Research in the Past 4 Years:

Research by Research & Development Cell

Since 1993, the Research & Development Cell of the College has been conducting a number of social work research studies. The Research & Development Cell conducts independent research as well as commissioned research studies for Local, State and National Government and National-International Agencies. The Research & Development Cell focuses on systematic, fact-based and action-oriented research that creates user-friendly social work-related knowledge for social work education and practice, social policy and advocacy. It aims to find effective field practice methodologies and person-centred interventions to better the quality of life of the people.

Following are the research studies that were undertaken by Research & Development Cell on the topic related to disability prevalence, challenges and interventions since 2021:

Sr. No.	Name of Study	Commissioning Agency	Year
1.	Prevalence of Disabilities among Children & Adults and Their Health Needs in Tribal Padas in Kolad, Roha, Maharashtra.	Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)	2024
2.	A Need Assessment Study with Persons with Disability in Koth & Vattaman, Dholka Taluka, Gujarat	Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)	2022
3.	Impact Evaluation –MUSKAN Foundation for people with multiple disabilities	MUSKAN Foundation for people with multiple disabilities	2021

Faculty Research

Some of the research studies conducted by faculty members in 2024-25 were on the issues related to disability (psycho-social disabilities). There are given in the table below:

Sr. No.	Name of Study	Commissioning Agency	Year
1.	Prevalence and Impact of Mobile Addiction among Youth in Tribal Padas in Roha Taluka, Raigad, Maharashtra	Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)	2024
2.	Study on the Mental Wellbeing of Older Persons Living in Parent Child Co Residence, Mumbai	Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)	2024

Sustained Commitment to Building an Inclusive Society: Programs and Activities in the year 2025-26

Disability Interventions in Field Action Projects:

The College has a history of innovation in intervention in problem situations. Field Action Projects (FAPs), which are initiated by Faculty Members with students' participation have played a major role in establishing the College as a leadership training institute. One of the Field Action Projects, 'Ankur', worked closely with the special schools run Brihan Mumbai Corporation. Spandan and Pravas, the current FAPs of the College have interwoven disability social work interventions among their programmes at the community level.

‘Sahyogi’ program of Spandan provides rehabilitation services for persons with disability. They conduct various training programs in collaboration with other organizations for persons with disabilities. Spandan also conducts disability awareness as well as early identification programmes in tribal padas in Talasari district, Maharashtra. It also provides support to the persons with disabilities to access government schemes and assists them to get necessary documentation like disability certificate. Tribal community members with disability are also assisted in starting their entrepreneurial units.

Research Studies on Disability Prevalence and Challenges faced by Persons with Disability Conducted during the Academic Year 2025-26

Students’ Research

As a part of the academic requirements, under NEP 2020, all students in the MSW programme are expected to complete a research project. In the year 2025-26, three students have taken research topics related to disability. The details are given in the table below:

Sr. No.	Name of Study	Name of the Student
1.	Parenting a Child with Autism: Parent Engagement, Parenting Practices and Experiences	Fr. Joseph Poshapir
2.	Parents’ Experiences of Public Spaces with Children Who Have Multiple Disabilities: Barriers and Support Systems in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region	Ms. Shelly Arya
3	Perspective and Experience of Visually Impaired Persons on Accessible Technology in Education and Sports Sector in Mumbai	Ms. Shreya Tandel

Disability related programs in the academic year 2025-26

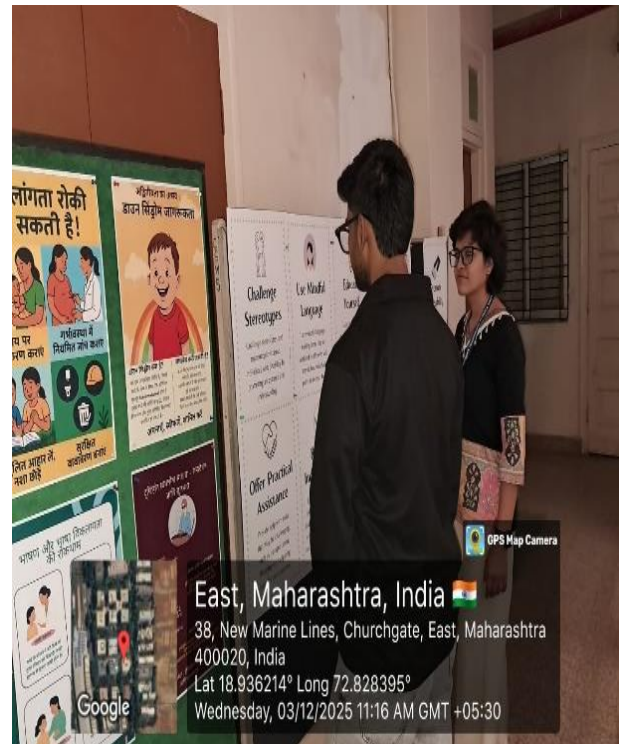
Sr. No.	Program / Event	Participants
1.	Documentary Screening - ‘What’s Disability to Me? Series by World Health Organization (Faustina’s Story, Mia’s Story, Rachel’s Story)	All students of BSW III, Sem V (as a part of the subject ‘Disability & CBR’), Students of MSW II, Sem IV who have taken elective ‘Disability Studies & Practice’.
2.	Documentary Screening – ‘Closer’ by Ms. Meghna Gulzar (Autism Spectrum Disorder)	All students of BSW III, Sem V (as a part of the subject ‘Disability & CBR’), Students of MSW II, Sem IV who have taken elective ‘Disability Studies & Practice’.

3	Documentary Screening – ‘Walhe’s Untouched Leprosy Patients’, a documentary in Marathi by India Unheard	All students of BSW III, Sem V (as a part of the subject ‘Disability & CBR’)
4	Documentary Screening – ‘CBR for Inclusive Development – A Key Role for CBR Facilitators’, a documentary by <i>Enablement</i> in Nepal	All students of BSW III, Sem V (as a part of the subject ‘Disability & CBR’), Students of MSW II, Sem IV who have taken elective ‘Disability Studies & Practice’.
5	Documentary Screening – ‘CBR by Vikash’, a short documentary by NGO Vikash	All students of BSW III, Sem V (as a part of the subject ‘Disability & CBR’)
6	Documentary Screening – ‘Exorcism in India’, a documentary by National Geographic	All students of BSW III, Sem VI (as a part of the subject ‘Mental Health’)
7	Documentary Screening – ‘Locked Up & Forgotten: India’s Mental Health Crisis’, a documentary by Vice News	All students of BSW III, Sem VI (as a part of the subject ‘Mental Health’)
8	Documentary Screening – ‘Manasee: Of Sound Mind, a film by Pavitra Chalam, based on the CBR project run by St. John’s Medical College & Hospital, John’s Hopkins Hospital in collaboration with Rotary Club of Columbia and Rotary Bangalore Midtown.	All students of BSW III, Sem VI (as a part of the subject ‘Mental Health’) and Students of MSW II, Sem IV who have taken elective ‘Disability Studies & Practice’.
9	Film Screening – ‘Dear Zindagi’	All students of BSW III, Sem VI (as a part of the subject ‘Mental Health’)
10	Documentary Screening – ‘Patrick Speaks’ and ‘Update – Patrick Speaks, 10 Weeks On’, a documentary by Unreported World	Students of MSW II, Sem IV who have taken elective ‘Disability Studies & Practice’.
11	Documentary Screening – ‘Refugees with Disability’, a documentary by Channel 4: Unreported World	Students of MSW II, Sem IV who have taken elective ‘Disability Studies & Practice’.
12	Documentary Screening – ‘India’s Blind Daters’ a documentary by Channel 4: Unreported World	Students of MSW II, Sem IV who have taken elective ‘Disability Studies & Practice’.
13	Commemoration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 rd December, 2025 with Disability Posters Exhibition	All students and faculty (teaching as well as non-teaching) of the College. (The detailed report is given below.)

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was commemorated on December 3, 2025 through a poster exhibition by the Bachelor of Social Work, Semester VI class [course: Disability and Community Based Rehabilitation] on the Theme 2025: Fostering disability inclusive societies for advancing social progress. The day is about promoting the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities at every level of society and development, and to raise awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in all aspects of political, social, economic and cultural life.





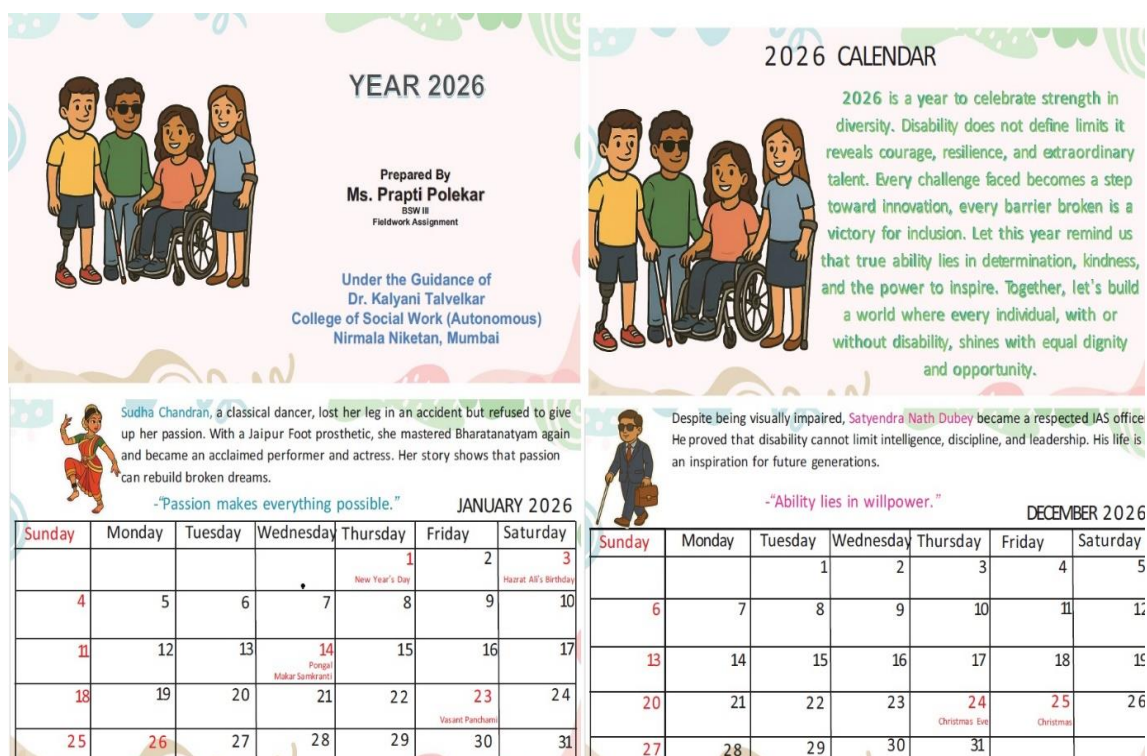
Fieldwork in Disability Organizations

Field learning lies at the heart of social work education offered at the College of Social Work. Through Fieldwork, the student social workers are immersed in an extraordinary range of human and social problems critical reflection of socio-economic and political realities. Social work students develop skills and appreciate the lived reality of coping with complex problems in the context of developing specific services and delivery systems. Students are placed in organizations working in the field of disability such as NASEOH, Gharkul Foundation, Muskan Foundation and Montfort Foundation. As a part of fieldwork these students are engaged in direct and indirect interventions with children and persons with disability working on diverse issues such as education, health, family counselling, early identification of disabilities, awareness about disability legislations and schemes and vocational training. Students have also done physical structure access audits of public places like railway stations and shopping malls.

Fieldwork as a signature pedagogy of social work education gives an opportunity not only to link classroom theory to practice but also to experiment with ideas for meaningful intervention at micro, mezzo and macro levels. One of the major barriers to an inclusive society is the societal attitude towards disability and a lack of disability awareness. There are many ways in

which social workers and social work students can create disability awareness and disability sensitization.

Disability Awareness Calendar - One strategy that was conceptualized and implemented by a student of BSW III in her fieldwork placement at NASEOH was to prepare a calendar with information on inspiring Indian personalities with disabilities that would not only convey the message that disability is neither a tragedy nor a limitation, but would also inspire people with or without disabilities to dream and pursue it with determination.



Counselling Support:

The College has created spaces for confidential counselling where students can talk with complete physical, visual and auditory privacy. Counselling services are made available on the Second Floor of the College for staff and students through a Counsellor appointed to provide psychosocial support and guidance.

Conclusion

The accessibility audit done by the internal accessibility audit committee of the College of Social Work (Empowered Autonomous), Nirmala Niketan highlights both the progress made and the areas requiring further attention in creating an inclusive and barrier-free environment.

While the institution has taken commendable steps toward improving physical infrastructure, sanitation facilities, and support systems, certain gaps remain in ensuring full accessibility across all domains, including mobility, communication, and students' participation in curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. A phased and participatory approach involving administrators, faculty, students, and support staff will be taken to implement the recommendations by the Accessibility Audit expert. Fostering an inclusive campus is not merely a matter of compliance but a reflection of the institution's dedication to upholding the dignity, rights, and full participation of all individuals.



College of Social Work, (Empowered
Autonomous), Nirmala Niketan

Accessibility Audit Report

2025-26

**External Auditor's Feedback &
Suggestions**





College of Social Work, (Empowered Autonomous), Nirmala Niketan Accessibility Audit Report, 2025-26

Accessibility audit of the College of Social Work (Empowered Autonomous), Nirmala Niketan was conducted on Tuesday, 24th March, 2026. Dr. Kalpana Chavan, Associate Professor, St. Xavier's Institute of Education (Autonomous) was the external auditor. Dr. Lidwin Dias, Principal and Dr. Anita Machado, IQAC Convener welcomed Dr. Chavan and introduced her to the internal accessibility audit team – Dr. Kalyani T., Dr. Renu S., Ms. Vinnarasi, Ms. Nirmiti and Mr. Albin.

Dr. Chavan went through evidences displayed and asked related questions. A presentation was given on the salient features related to the accessibility facilities in different aspects of the College. The aspects covered included vision, mission and values of the College that embrace inclusion and accessibility, affirmative provisions in policies, physical infrastructure, teaching learning processes and assessments. Along with the accessible facilities in the College, certain limitations to accessibility were also mentioned in the presentation. It highlighted the commitment of the College towards building an inclusive society as reflected in its field action projects, research, fieldwork, workshops, and students' activities.

After the presentation, Dr. Kalpana Chavan asked various questions looking at the details of the accessibility provisions and inclusive practices of the college. She appreciated the meaningful and sensitive efforts made by the college for leveraging inclusion and inclusive practices in college. She also made certain suggestions for enhancing accessibility in the college as well as visibility of these practices.

The suggestions given by Dr. Kalpana Chavan were as follows:

- Dedicated domain on the College website on inclusion and accessibility needs to be created.
- Website should also have accessibility features like screen reader. The website should be designed and developed in accordance with established principles of digital accessibility, ensuring that it is usable by individuals with diverse abilities, including those with visual impairments. In this regard, the integration of compatibility with screen readers is essential. Beyond screen reader compatibility, accessibility features may also include keyboard navigability, sufficient color contrast, scalable text, and captioning for multimedia content.
- Increase visibility of outcomes of inclusion and diversity with recorded testimonials, record of awards won and accomplishments of the students with disabilities.
 - Ms. Poonam Pardeshi - Nazneen Abdulla Yenepoya Special Jury award and the Roshni Impact Award 2025 for her two decades of work in building inclusive environments.
 - Ms. Shreya Tandel – Creative Head, Riwayat; Participation in Aavishkar 2025-26, the Maharashtra State Inter-University Research Convention.
- The college may consider constituting a dedicated Accessibility Cell as an institutional mechanism to promote inclusivity and ensure equitable access to academic and administrative services for all students, particularly those with disabilities. Such a Cell would function as a nodal body responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring accessibility-related policies and practices within the institution. The Equal Opportunity Cell can collaborate with the Accessibility Cell for these measures. Accessibility Policy of the College will also need to be developed. Accessibility Cell would play a key role, along with Equal Opportunity Cell, in facilitating reasonable accommodations, such as assistive technologies, accessible learning materials, and examination-related support, in alignment with statutory provisions like the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- Learner profile can be prepared at the time of admissions for proactive planning of needed accommodations and facilitating participation by all students in various activities. BSW, MSW and MA-SIE Admission Committees can work towards developing a simple accessible google form for this. This can be given after the admission process is completed.

- Faculty Development Programs can be taken with the broad goals of updated knowledge about disability issues at the global, national and local levels as well as accessibility. Some of the topics suggested were:
 - Accessible PowerPoint Presentations
 - AI for Accessibility
 - Principles of Universal Design for Learning
- Disability sensitization or awareness programs can be organized for students during orientation week. Some of the topics suggested were –
 - Disability Awareness / Disability Sensitization
 - Disability as a Dimension of Diversity and Inclusion
 - Disability-Sensitive Language and Interaction
- Intra-collegiate or Inter-collegiate competitions promoting inclusion and accessibility. Following ideas were suggested –
 - Best Slogan Competition
 - Best Poster for Disability Awareness
 - Best Accessibility Logo

These can be organized by Accessibility Cell in collaboration with the Students Council

- The inclusive teaching strategies (such as differentiated instruction) used by faculty members need to be documented. Information was shared on the current documentation methods such as lesson plans, assessment plans, College policies with accessibility provisions, use of varied teaching methods and report of Equal Opportunity Cell. In addition, Dr. Chavan suggested the following –
 - Translated resources
 - Audio/video recording of the lectures
 - Report of the Accessibility Cell
- It was also suggested by the external auditor that the Accessibility Audit report of College of Social Work (Empowered Autonomous), Nirmala Niketan can also include certain information that was shared during the presentation but was not included in the report – information on specific disability related documentaries screened for the students during the academic year and scholarships as well as sponsorships given to students with disabilities as well as students from socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

The accessibility audit highlighted both - the strengths and the areas requiring focused improvement by the College of Social Work (Empowered Autonomous) Nirmala Niketan. The auditors' recommendations provide a clear, actionable pathway toward enhancing inclusivity, and compliance with accessibility standards. By prioritizing accessibility as an ongoing process rather than a one-time effort, the College can ensure equitable participation and a more inclusive environment for all stakeholders.

