



MOBILITY INDIA

National Conference on Assistive Technology for All 2030

August 2-3, 2019, Bengaluru, INDIA

Conference Report



National Conference on Assistive Technology for All 2030

Ritu Ghosh and Lakshmi Raman (Eds.)

Bengaluru, India, August 2-3, 2019

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“MANY PEOPLE, MANY VOICES”

536 Participants
from **27** States & **17** Countries

16 Keynote Speakers
from **27** Speakers

39 Poster presenters **24** Exhibitors

9 Panel members
from **2** Plenary Sessions



It is my desire to see every path, every shopping mall, every public place should be user friendly for the disabled

**Assistive Technology (AT)
user delegate**

I grasped the magnitude in terms of numbers needing assistive devices. I saw most devices need adjustment to individual users, that most new developments are at early stages.

**Rehabilitation professional
delegate**

The valuable take away is understanding the use of technology for persons with disabilities.

A Delegate

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National Conference on Assistive Technology for All-2030

1. Introduction

The first ever National Conference on Assistive Technology (AT) was conceived by Mobility India (MI) on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of its founding. The AT conference was aimed to bring together various stakeholders in public, private and voluntary sectors to help identify the best innovations/solutions available today to help scale-up and make AT available to all.

Globally, as per WHO, over 1 billion people (mostly older people and/or persons with disabilities (PWDs) are estimated to need assistive technology (AT) and assistive products such as wheelchairs, mobility aids, low vision aids and communication aids to maintain or improve their functioning and independence. However, today only one in ten people in need have access to assistive technology. This leaves most PWDs and their families excluded and increases their vulnerability to disease and further disability. World Health Organisation (WHO) is coordinating the Global Cooperation on Assistive Technology (GATE) initiative to address this huge and unmet need. In India, the legal framework for protection of human rights of PWDs is rendered mostly inaccessible because of low budget allocation, administrative inefficiency, stigma and the intersectionality of discrimination.

The expected outcomes of the conference included greater awareness of the need for AT, need for developing an AT eco-system, creating a network of AT stakeholders for multi-sectoral convergence within India and between India and the rest of the world.

2. Conference Objectives

The broad objective of the conference was to bring together all the relevant stakeholders to discuss, identify and agree on key steps to augment the AT sector and develop a national AT alliance ultimately to see how together we can change the quality of lives of people with various disabling conditions in multi domain situations. The specific objectives were to:

1. Create awareness on AT involving all key stakeholders, AT users in particular.
2. Connect AT with key development initiatives; especially Make in India and Skills India.
3. Connect Indian AT initiatives with the Global AT initiatives such as AT scale or WHO's GATE initiative.
4. Develop a taskforce to draft the National AT policy and Priority Assistive Products List.
5. Improving access to quality and affordable assistive technology to realize the goals of Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (CRPD) and Sustainable development goal (SDG).

3. Unique features of the AT Conference

The National AT Conference held from 2nd – 3rd August 2019 was the first conference of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole and the first Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) -initiated one. It drew in a range of stakeholders from the health, allied health services and rehabilitation sectors, International NGOs, professional and user associations, disability activists, AT users and academia. The AT Conference had 27 eminent speakers with expertise in AT from government and private sectors and from policy to grassroots levels.

4. Location and Venue

The conference was held at Bengaluru, a city well connected by air, rail and road. The venue for the conference was the state-of-the-art Convention Centre of the National Institute for Mental Health & Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS) which offers an auditorium that seats up to 850 persons, has advanced conferencing facilities, a well-appointed dining hall, ample parking facility, disabled-friendly access and amenities, and storage.

MI's accessible van was available on request from PWD delegates for transfers to and from their hotel or guest house at organizer's cost. One accessible van was stationed at the conference venue to meet any emergency needs of PWD and other delegates.

5. Summary of promotion activities

Preparations for the conference commenced as early as November 2018 with social media posts including through MI's network organizations like International Society for Prosthetics and Orthotics, International Society of Wheelchair Professionals and others. Email announcements were sent out to 5,000 professional colleges and networks of health, allied health services and rehabilitation sector personnel, user associations and disability activists and all 7 national institutes. The subject of disability, AT innovations and the conference event received wide media coverage in 18 print media publications in Kannada, Telugu and Tamil and 1 Urdu daily, besides 2 English national dailies.

6. Audience Metrics and Participation

A total of 536 delegates attended the 2 days of the conference. Delegates to the conference came from 17 different countries and 27 states of India. Represented at the conference were clinical and allied healthcare professionals, engineers, innovators, NGOs, INGOs, disability activists, AT users, caregivers and family members, AT manufacturers and dealers, universities, researchers, design engineers, innovators, Civil Society Organisation (CSOs), Disabled People's Organisation (DPOs), students of physiotherapy and disability studies, the national institutes, Indian Institute technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc), academic and certifying bodies. Delegates to the conference were between the ages of 20-70, 5% were PWDs and 30% were women including 11 women with disabilities. Over 2000 visitors to the exhibition included students from 4 physiotherapy colleges and city schools.

7. Collaborations and Sponsorship

Collaborators in the AT conference were the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), New Delhi and the National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD). The conference was accredited by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), which is the certifying body for professional course in India on rehabilitation studies. ICRC New Delhi, NIEPMD and REHAMO, an organization in the home healthcare products and services domain sponsored part of the conference costs.

8. Staffing and Preparations

A total of 6 committees with 38 persons were constituted to handle the preparations: an advisory committee, registration committee, technical program committee, communications & publication

committee, exhibition & promotion committee, registration & reception committee. Sign language interpretation offered throughout the conference proceedings was also projected on video for the audience. Temporary ramps were put in place to make entry to the stage accessible for PWDs and wheelchair users. Amenities at the conference venue were accessible.

9. Programs and Speakers, Exhibitors, Poster presentations

The conference featured 16 invited speakers, 11 other presenters for the awards, 9 panelists, 2 moderators (PWDs) for the plenary sessions and an exhibition area with 39 poster presentations and 24 exhibit stalls. Experts in the field chaired and co-chaired the various sessions. Two four-wheel vehicles modified for accessibility were on display. There were awards instituted for the best innovation, paper presentation, exhibit and poster. Click Link to access List of Chairs, Co-chairs and Moderators, List of Speakers and Topics, List of Panel Members, List of Poster Presentations and List of Exhibitors -

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16QfN5mV-TI6VMslFRfe6101RDwKq7kKC/view?usp=sharing>

10. Schedule of the Conference

The conference ran for the 2 days of August 2 and 3, 2019. It featured a total of 27 speakers and 2 plenary sessions. Click link to access Programme Schedule of the Conference.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1K0tBEliaciZUJ2g5SKecLtdZYOBRS1Eh/view?usp=sharing>

11. Conference Proceedings

The conference consisted of a series of presentations by 16 invited speakers. They spoke on topics under one of 7 themes:

- a) Need, demand and supply of AT
- b) AT service delivery systems, practices and outcomes
- c) Human resource development and AT
- d) Emerging and innovative assistive technologies with inter-disciplinary research
- e) User perspectives on AT
- f) AT in universal health coverage
- g) Universal Design and other general topics relating to AT

11.1 Day 1 of the Conference

The first day of the conference saw a total of 6 keynote sessions and 6 paper presentations and the inaugural ceremony, concluding with a panel discussion on user perspectives on AT. The inauguration commenced at 11.30 am. with an inspirational song “Heal the World” sung by students of Mobility India (MI). Dr. Charles Prabakar, President of MI welcomed the chief guest Dr. S. Sacchidananda, Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) and the guests of honour present. They included Smt. Lakshmi Nataraj, Corporator BBMP Ward 170, JP Nagar, Dr. Ashish Mukherjee, Director ISIC, New Delhi and Board member of MI, Mr. Basavaraju, State Commissioner for Disability, Karnataka, Dr. Himangshu Das, Director of NIEPMD, Dr. Patanjali Dev Nayar of WHO-SEARO, New Delhi, Mrs. Manimozhi Theodore, Director of DEBEL, Bengaluru, Dr. Surender Singh Oberoi, Commercial & Political Adviser to ICRC, New Delhi and Ms. Sowmya Reddy, MLA of Jayanagar constituency Bangalore.

Mr. Charles Prabakar, President of MI welcomed the guests. The honourable guests lit the traditional Indian lamp followed by the screening of a 20-minute documentary on MI's work of the past 25 years with PWDs. The guests made brief addresses including conveying their best wishes for the event.

Dr. Patanjali Dev Nayar very aptly reminded that the job of addressing concerns of PWDs was not just that of the government but everyone's. Ms. Sowmya Reddy and Ms. Lakshmi Natarajan commended MI for providing services to PWDs from 25 years and wished it all strength to continue the good work. Ms. Manimozhi Theodore informed that many of the technologies available to the common man today has been developed by the country's defence department. Mr. V. S. Basavaraju spoke about the need to build infrastructure, provide an eco-friendly environment to enable PWDs to have basic education, basic mobility aid and the right to live like anybody else.

Dr. Himangshu Das stressed the need for users, researchers and all those working on ATs to come together to share best practice and low-cost innovations. Dr. S.S. Oberoi shared some reminiscences of how AI and robotics can serve people in war-torn areas, and of ICRC's projects to share technology, knowledge and experience to benefit PWDs. Chief Guest, Dr. Sacchidananda wanted that students be sensitized, take up more cross-disciplinary courses to meet future needs of those with disabilities. Ms. Albina Shankar, Director of MI thanked the honourable guests and also Mr. Chapal, the MI founder who could not be present, but was there with them all in spirit. Dr. Sacchidananda released a Souvenir on the occasion of MI's 25th anniversary. Along with Ms. Sowmya Reddy, Dr. Sacchidananda inaugurated the conference as also the stall exhibition at the conference venue.

11.1.1 Speaker presentations Day 1

Dr. Patanjali Dev Nayar of WHO-SEARO delivered the keynote address. He spoke of how AT can impact peoples' lives, delivering benefits beyond health to socio-economic benefits, and changing the external environment in favour of the disabled person. Improving access to AT involves equality, equity and innovation – AT solutions within the Indian context, trained personnel and funds to meet the needs. He also emphasized that besides demanding quality products and services, citizens also need to contribute with research, help people, be conscious of being part of India.

Dr. Gaurav Gupta, National Professional Officer (Injury & Disability Prevention) of WHO-INDIA, spoke of how PWDs have same healthcare needs as others, but are often denied healthcare. Lifestyle diseases and traffic accidents compound the problem. Universal Health Coverage (UHC) was needed. He appreciated the significant role played by NGOs in providing such common platforms towards sharing and suggesting views. The government is developing a national disability action plan which also includes establishing a National Centre for Innovation in AT.

Dr. Himangshu Das, Director of NIEPMD, Chennai, pointed out to the gathering how perspectives have changed from charity to a rights-based approach in disability work, as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 shows. The government is also now beginning to work towards convergence of health, education and social justice ministries, and collaboration with NGOs and private industry.

Dr. Catherine Holloway, co-founder and current Academic Director of Global Disability Innovation Hub (GDIH), and also Associate Professor at University College, UK reminded the gathering that working in partnership with others in innovation can address the problems of

PWDs. GDIH was able to sponsor the 2012 Paralympic Games, Enable Makeathon and other initiatives in this manner. GDIH works to support innovation, data & evidence, the accessible built environment, and towards overcoming stigma through Paralympic sport and promoting innovation hubs.

Mr. Dilip Patro, himself a quadriplegic and founder of NGO, The Ability People, shared his own life experience of becoming disabled, and of his efforts to develop low-cost bladder and bowel management tools that can help improve the quality of health of survivors of spinal cord injury, in particular women. Ms. Sampurna Guha shared the results of her research survey on utilization of AT devices by special educators and caregivers of children with intellectual disabilities (ID).

Ms. Saija Lukkarinen of ICRC spoke on humanitarian emergency response and AT from the ICRC perspective. ICRC sees that the challenge is to design assistive devices for humanitarian response which are of optimized function but also highly affordable, and also to increase awareness among people about assistive devices.

Mr. Kishore Rao himself a senior citizen spoke about the increase in older population in India and their need for multiple ATs. Social interaction – especially in old age – along with AT can add to the life of elders in society. Mr. Amitabh Kishore Dwivedi, a seasoned occupational therapist and academic discussed the barriers to the use of ATs by PWDs in India and made recommendations on the eco-system, infrastructure and access, funding and ATs to address these barriers. Mr. Arvind Suresh Ambalapuzha, a tech innovator in AT, highlighted the development work being done by his start-up Flexmotiv Technologies to improve the design of axillary crutches to mitigate or solve associated problems.

Young researcher Ms. Priya Mishra shared her findings of a survey done in Lucknow on the use of AT in higher education, which showed that the visually impaired are the largest cohort of users of AT for both academic and personal purposes. A researcher from the Netherlands volunteering at the Bangalore Baptist Hospital in Bengaluru talked about a survey that Baptist hospital has conducted among rural manual wheelchair (WC) users on services and devices. The survey feedback showed that satisfaction (and usability) of WCs is strongly dependent on support services, including WC skills training.

Day 1 concluded with a panel discussion on user perspectives on AT. Panelists included Ms. Rupmani Chhetri of Inkludo Consulting & Advisory, Bengaluru, herself a hearing-impaired professional from Nepal who was of the opinion that awareness and technology needs to be supplemented with interpreter services and high-speed Internet services to enable hearing impaired persons like herself access AT.

Dr. Deepti Shanbhag, a doctor and caregiver for a teenage son on the autism spectrum shared her challenges caring for a grown disabled son, mainly the lack of child-friendly assistive devices (AD) which can help for e.g. in WC transfers, attitudinal, emotional, and environmental barriers, and lack of AT communication devices for those on the autism spectrum. Dr. M. K. Sridhar, a

academic and professional PWD urged for support for indigenous knowledge and intelligence which have led to development of low-cost user friendly assistive devices, and sharing of formal and informal knowledge, innovations and best practice through a portal.

Ms. Kuhu Das, moderator, concluded the panel discussion by remarking that while much progress has been made in developing ADs, research to develop ATs, to modernize devices, and user-friendly and cost-effective devices is a critical area.

11.2 Day 2 of the Conference

Ms. Ritu Ghosh, Academics Director of MI welcomed the gathering at 9.30 am, and said that the day's presentations would be on various ATs and how to strategize to benefit people through AT. There were 10 keynote sessions and 5 paper presentations concluding with a panel discussion on the way forward and recommendations from the conference.

11.2.1 Speaker Presentations Day 2

Dr. Deepak Sharan shared information on the gaze-based technologies being developed by his organization RECOUP to make life easier for those with speech or locomotor challenges such as those with cerebral palsy or SCI or who are on the autism spectrum. These new technologies can enable them to use a head-mounted device and use their head movements to operate such devices so they can play games, watch videos, find locations on the map, search the Net and uses AI. Dr. Shirshendu Mukherjee of BIRAC and the BMGF focused on the support he has enabled to get AT innovations validated through establishing incubation centres, setting up a system of mentors and consultants and bringing devices such as the SmartCane and the DotBook to the market. These include the SmartCane and the DotBook. Mrs. Smita Jayavant, Director of PDUIPH stressed the need to establish universal design (UD) and a barrier-free environment and family/carer support for PWDs.

Dr. R.K. Srivastava, Senior Advisor-Innovation & Public Health of the Wadhvani Initiative for Sustainable Healthcare (WISH) argued for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and said that AT in health was achievable only through partnership of government with private actors and other agencies. Dr. Dibakar Sen of IISc, Bengaluru gave an overview of some of IISc's explorations on one prosthetic device – the robotic hand, which creates natural motion by predicting movement, and is easy for the user to learn to use. Ms. Anusha Saipriya and her fellow research student Ms. Madhumita spoke on trials they are doing on an independent walker which allows upper position balance for children with diplegic cerebral palsy. Mr. Anil Kumar of Ottobock-India a manufacturer of quality prosthetic solutions, presented their work on a device fitted around the knee, used in upper motor neuron disease which affects arm and leg movements and causes foot drop.

Mr. Soikat Ghosh Moulic of MI and Mr. Girish Murthy, an entrepreneur manufacturing 3-D printers made a presentation on enabling AT in developing assistive devices through use of digital transformation in 3D printing. which has high applicability to service needs in remote areas and conflict-affected areas with poor real-time access. Dr. Kanagaraj of IIT Guwahati shared information on some of the ADs and biomedical devices such as inputs for cochlear implant, multi-axes ankle joint and orthotic knee brace, amputee walking simulator, a device for testing total hip arthroplasty and others they have been developing.

Mr. Ashok Mondal, faculty of Universal Design at the NID, Bengaluru spoke of how NID has developed a console to operate various domestic utilities in their homes to save mobility and response time for elderly or physically challenged. Dr. Ravi of BeTIC, IIT Mumbai highlighted the need for affordable quality AT devices in the country.

The need to improve value-based care and service delivery through ICT and health worker training to ensure quality of life for elderly people was stressed by Mr. Tarit Kumar Datta. Mr. Trivikram Annamalai of Atlassian, Bengaluru, made a presentation on a sitting-and-standing device for children with CP which he has designed with MI. The adjustability of the device reduces both cost and effort for frequent replacement in the early growing years of the child. Click link to access to speaker presentations of Day 1 & 2.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jY10KEFEwQdDENclSD70Ka0NZCXUrPfa/view?usp=sharing>

The proceedings of the 2 days were concluded with a panel discussion on the way forward moderated by Mr. Ankit Jindal of Friends for Inclusion. Panelists included Dr. Sara Varughese, Director of CBM-India, Dr. Gift Norman, Deputy Director of Baptist Hospital, Dr. Sujatha Srinivasan of IIT-Chennai, Ms. Smita Jayavant of PDUIPH, Dr. Gaurav Gupta of WHO and Dr. KVS Rao, Director - Dept. of Empowerment of PWDs, MSJ&E, Govt. of India. Ms. Smita was all for concentrating on low-cost affordable, scientifically developed and extensively tested field products to benefit the large majority, with hi-tech options kept to a minimum. Dr. Sara Varughese was all for increasing community awareness, for scaling up affordable quality devices and strengthening human resources, especially with newer technology coming in. (Refer Annex-4 for List of Panel Members)

Dr. Sujatha Srinivasan, speaking from a technologist's point of view, pushed for convergence of efforts of academia and industry with NGOs, government organizations and users to benefit the maximum number of potential users. She also mooted central testing facilities & regional hubs to support start-ups with prototyping in the costly R&D stage and flexibility in funding.

Dr. Gift Norman of Baptist Hospital endorsed Dr. Sujatha's recommendations for dialogue and convergence, to move from stigma to pride, to continue dialogue and work towards a more efficient delivery system. Ms. Sathyavathi, a service user from the audience pleaded for a more accessible transport system. Ms. Smita Jayavant stressed inter-sectoral cooperation and collaboration among ministries for enforcing laws relating to PWDs. Mr. K.V.S. Rao and Mr. Ankit Jindal, the moderator both talked of the need for a National Accessibility and AT Policy which would lay down standards.

The valedictory function of the conference in the evening of 3rd August 2019 found Dr. Ashish Mukherjee appreciating the conference for the opportunity provided to stakeholders to interact on a common platform that could be taken up to wider levels. The chief guest for the valedictory, Mr. K.V. S. Rao, Director-DEPD under the MSJ&E, distributed awards to the winners in 4 categories – Best Paper Presentation, Best Poster Presentation, Best Innovator and the Best Stall Exhibitor, based on selection by a panel of 10 expert judges. Click link to access List of Panel of Judges for the AT Conference Awards.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qFc-odIFo0eaP5T0SgK4BnBeVL5LjpTs/view?usp=sharing>

The awards given were:

Sl. No.	Name of Award	Awardee	Award for
1.	Best Innovation	Mr. Karthik Venkat Sridaran, AISH, Mysore	A Low cost AAC device using "blow-slurp" technology
2.	Best Paper Presentation	Mr. Soikat Ghosh Moulic & Mr. Girish Murthy	Enabling fabrication of prosthetic and orthotic devices with additive manufacturing via digital transformation
3.	Best Exhibitor	Mr. Anil Kumar	Best Exhibit - Ottobock HealthCare - India
4.	Best Poster Presentation	Mr. Jenish J. (BPO student, MI)	Use of SMART materials in Assistive Technology

Mr. Rao concluded the conference with appreciation for MI for their work in the disability sector, and said that he was happy his department, NIEPMD and RCI were associated with MI. He regretted the lack of a National Assistive Technology Policy that can take care of innovation, collaboration, commercialization, and so on. Yet, he averred that the new National Policy on Disability 2016 now covers 21 disabilities (as against 7 earlier) and a continuum from pre-natal to health, education, employment, social security, sports culture, skill development and many other aspects. In a departure from the previous law, it prescribes punishments for offences and violation of the law. The states and the Centre need to immediately survey PWDs to ensure their inclusion in education and employment. He envisioned the 2 ministries of Health and Social Justice working together in future to address concerns of PWDs.

Feedback was collected from the delegates by the close of the conference. Mr. Soikat Ghosh Moulic of MI, Organizing Secretary for the conference, thanked the delegates and guests and all those within MI and outside who contributed to make it a successful event. The program ended with a moving video recital of the Indian national anthem by speech-disabled children at 6.30 pm.

12. Key Points Discussed

The key points discussed through the 2 days of the conference were multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional. The pertinent and prioritized ones have been grouped under the following heads: government/policy level, products & provision, linkages & convergence, innovation & invention and processes. These related to government/policy level, products & provision, linkages & convergence, innovation & invention and processes. Most of the points related to linkages & convergence, innovation & invention and processes, with some recommendations for policy level measures.

13. Key Recommendations emerging from the Conference

The national conference on AT was held in the light of the lack of an enabling eco-system in India to provide the interlinked tools of Policy, Personnel, Products, Provision, People, Place and Pace as per the GATE framework of the WHO. MI is deeply concerned with the growing need for AT in India and the access gap for the needy. The conference succeeded in bringing together a network of stakeholders to identify the best innovations/solutions currently available to help scale and succeed AT. Overall, it was agreed that convergence of stakeholder efforts, and developing an enabling eco-system through innovation, new technologies and provision of low-cost and quality products to PWDs were priority.

As a disabled activist and AT user present remarked, in start-up India, there is inadequate encouragement for entrepreneurs with disability. There is not a single disabled person on the boards of start-ups that are developing ATs. There is as of now, no special economic zone for ATs, and no tax incentives for entrepreneurs or health insurance coverage of ATs and follow-up therapy for users.

Although AT products are there, the eco-system needs to be enabled to promote innovation, and to train and provide services. The standards for the built environment in the National Building Code need to be followed up with other standards to make products accessible and inclusive. It is also time India began looking at developing an export market for world-class products. The key recommendations that emerged from the conference have been pulled together from the suggestions of the various stakeholders and are given below:

- 1) Dedicated fund for AT in the Health Ministry.
- 2) Universal Health Coverage for PWDs and elders which includes AT and therapy.
- 3) Special online groups/portals to allow PWDs the choice of service providers of simple and affordable innovations/devices.
- 4) Strengthen research and development, service delivery and follow-up mechanisms with service users including awareness.
- 5) Inclusive design of the built environment to be mandated for all government / public / commercial buildings and spaces.
- 6) Developing Priority Assistive Product List of India
- 7) Convergence of government with NGOs, research institutions, business & industry and global funders to take innovative, low-cost AT solutions from ideation to prototyping, testing, manufacture, distribution and selling.
- 8) Government to enable 4G Internet connections across the country to enable inclusion of PWDs and their better access to information and AT.
- 9) Introduce cross-disciplinary courses in academia and professional training colleges, and programmes for multi-skilling of professionals and personnel.
- 10) Greater awareness and sensitization for PWDs, families and other stakeholders, including through inclusion and diversity education for government, public, private and social sectors.
- 11) Enact a National Accessibility & AT policy complementing the RPWD Act 2016.

14. Reflection on organizing the Conference

The first national conference on Assistive Technology went off remarkably well, given the scale of the event. The 536 delegates from over 27 states and 17 countries and speakers brought in perspectives on AT from policy to user levels. Service users were involved in the conference from planning and organizing to presenting and moderating sessions. One participant with spinal cord injury (SCI) faced a problem about inadequate access to accessible toilet facilities. The issue was taken up immediately by Mr. K.V. Rao of the MSJ&E attending the conference, and was attended to immediately. Re-checking on accessibility of amenities - even in an accessible venue - before such a large event, is another learning for future events.

Feedback on the conference from delegates and invitees included the following remarks:

- ✓ New experience with AT. Came to know more about different mobility devices for the disabled.
- ✓ It was a wonderful, powerful, conversation that came to empower the disabled with AT.

- ✓ Grasped the magnitude in terms of numbers needing assistive devices. Saw most devices need adjustment to individual users. Saw most new developments are at early stages.
- ✓ We came to know that significance of assistive devices, adaptation of technologies about and accessible technologies.

Suggestions made for MI to consider while organising future such events were:

- ✓ More participation of lawmakers at state & central levels. More stalls for senior citizens.
- ✓ Should be more CRE (continuing rehabilitation education) on AT related to deaf, blind etc. and on research methodology.
- ✓ Region wise convention to take the step to change policy for the welfare of the disabled.
- ✓ Kindly open short courses for allied health professionals to learn about multidisciplinary approach for all.
- ✓ Maintain timings for presentations. Give a little more time for questions. This (AT) is an area needing quick delivery to meet a great need.

For the full Report on proceedings of the conference, including speaker's abstracts and paper reports please go to

<http://mobility-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/National-Conference-on-Assistive-Technology-for-All-2030-Proceedings.pdf>

Glimpses from the Conference



(L-R) Dr. Himangshu Das-Director NIEPMD, Dr. Surinder Singh Oberoi-ICRC, Delhi. Dr. Ashish Mukherjee-Organising Chairperson, Ms. Soumya Reddy-MLA Jayanagar Constituency, Dr. S. Sacchidanand-Vice Chancellor-RGUHS, Karnakata, Shri. Charles Prabakar-President MI, Shri V. S. Basavaraju - Commissioner for Disabilities, Mrs. Albina Shankar-Executive Director MI, Dr. Patanjali Dev Nayar-WHO SEARO and Mrs. Laxmi Nataraj- Corporator-JP Nagar representative during the Inaugural Ceremony of National Conference on Assistive Technology for All 2030.

To access the conference photographs, please go to:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16z6lv2N0b3lcrOpWBx_RkOxsW8MIzX2G?usp=sharing



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