

## Centre for Studies related to Differently Abled (CSD)

Conducted an Awareness Program

on

### GLOBAL ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS DAY

Venue: HPNLU, Hall I, Academic Block

In a mark to celebrate Global Accessibility Awareness Day, Centre for Studies related to Differently Abled (CSD) organized an event at the university. The event comprises of movie screening and various activities to sensitize people on the campus about disability and accessibility issues. The day is celebrated on third Thursday of month of May. In 2023 the theme behind is to create awareness among all stakeholders about digital access/inclusion for people with different disabilities. Professor (Dr.) Nishtha Jaswal, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of HPNLU, always emphasizes on equality, inclusivity within the meaning of rule of Law and she enthusiastically allowed conducting awareness program through screening of movie. The main objective behind screening documentary was to sensitize the people about an accessible environment for people with disabilities in India and of the region. The event also marked the contribution towards '**Accessible India Campaign**' of government of India, which aim at making Sugamya Bharat. The title of the screened documentary was '**Making India Accessible**'.

The documentary screening took place in the Hall-1, Academic Block, which was packed with audience comprising of the faculty members, students and other staff members of the university. The worthy Registrar, HPNLU was the guest for the event. The event includes documentary screening, open dialogue and various activities to sensitize the individuals about the problems faced by people with disabilities. The main idea promoted was to create awareness about barrier free, inclusive society for people with disabilities.

The Introductory speech was delivered by Ms. Shreiya Katoch from fourth year, followed by Dr. Sachin Sharma, Director of the Centre for Studies related to

Differently Abled (CSD). Dr. Sachin highlighted the reason behind celebrating the day and stated the need for accessible environment and their nexus with the rights provided in the legislatures. The central theme of his discourse was that disability is not related to body but rather with the attitude. The term 'accessible' is wider and must include psychological, physical and mental needs of the individual. The individuals are disabled not because of wheelchair but because of the environment that is still non-accessible in nature. The Registrar, SS. Jaswal in his remarks also highlighted the need of accessible environment while emphasizing at objectives of Sugamya Bahrat Abhiyan. He highlighted the inclusive environment is the basic requirement for enjoying freedom.

Instances from the documentary with their significance are illustrated in the following paragraphs. The documentary opened with the instance showcasing the amount of accessibility in the capital of the country, Delhi. Visit of Stephen Hawking to India was followed by a writ petition to the Supreme Court of India resulting in notices to Archaeological Survey of India and other government bodies. The campaign by the government of India, that time has been extremely disappointing on surface level. The initiatives like reserved parking for people with disabled people have failed because of the non-application by the enforcement agencies. The public spaces like restaurants and bars either lack facilities like lifts and ramps or even when available are non-utilitarian due to factors like acute angles of ramps. The approach of the government has been non-inclusive as the differently abled people have not been included in the formulation and application of the campaign.

The audience got acquainted with the difficulties faced by differently abled individuals during performing the mundane activities of their lives. Even the most accessible transport in the country that is metro in Delhi is out of the reach of differently abled individuals according to a survey conducted by various NGOs. The documentary also highlighted that how from individual efforts one can overcome such barriers, for instance startups like Kickstarter have successfully introduced innovative models, cabs that are accessible for all. The NGOs also illustrated that the campaign by government has been largely unsuccessfully as the government failed to take recommendations and suggestions from the beneficiaries of the campaign. Initiatives, 'Sugam Pustkalaya', inclusivity in schools, and rural awareness give a ray of hope of the future and making it accessible.

An immersive dialogue followed the documentary where faculty member(s) highlighted the need for a square that is making the environment affordable and available in terms of cost instead of only accessible. Four volunteers were blindfolded and given the task to identify different objects. The activity was aimed at sensitizing the people. Finally, the endnote marked the need to understand the needs of the individuals and need for events of similar nature. The Centre's team including faculty Co-coordinator, Dr. Esha, Co-coordinator, Dr. Bharat and member, Dr. Rohit along with student- members of the Centre were the part of the organizing team.

