

**Press Information Bureau
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Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**

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Antarchakshu – The Eye Within

According to Census 2001, there were 2.19 crore Persons with Disabilities in India who constitute 2.13 per cent of the total population. This includes persons with visual, hearing, speech, locomotor and mental disabilities. The Visually impaired constitute about 49% of the disabled population, with a population of 1.06 crores. This figure is likely to rise with the release of fresh data on disability from Census 2011, in which the enumeration had been carried out disability wise.

The Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, Shri Mukul Wasnik will inaugurate a unique event "Antarchakshu – The Eye Within" at Jawahar Lal Nehru University Convention Centre on 4th October, 2012 at 12.00 noon.

'Antarchakshu' is a mass scale disability sensitization and awareness generating event. The event involves simulation of various disability conditions, more specifically blindness and low vision. The participants are made to do a series of tasks and activities whilst they are in different disability roles. The simulation process is followed by an exhibition on assistive tools, technologies and aids used by persons with disabilities. The last section of the process is a sharing and debriefing zone where participants who have just experienced the world of the disabled are engaged with persons with disabilities. This gives them a chance to share their impressions and raise key issues with the disability experts. This provides the participants a platform which allows them to understand how they can incorporate the learning of their experience in their daily life and develop insights to overcome odds through innovation and determination. It also helps to demystify the myths and prejudices that exist regarding disabilities. It's an experience that promises widening of our intellectual, emotional and spiritual horizons.

The Antarchakshu will be opened to public on 4th, 5th and 6th October from 10.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. at the new Convention Centre of JNU. It is a highly engaging event developed by the Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC), St. Xavier's College, Mumbai. At Delhi, the event is being jointly hosted by the Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged, Mumbai, Equal Opportunity Office of the Jawahar Lal Nehru University, New Delhi, National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun, Saksham Trust, New Delhi and Sightsavers.

The event comprise Mobility Zone where participants will simulate the experience of negotiating the environment using white cane and sighted guide techniques. Simulation Zone II is about

experiencing activities linked to finance, education and employment. In Simulation Zone III, the participants will experience leisure activities including an experience of eating in dark. The Zone IV will expose them to modern techniques and technologies that enable the disabled overcome barriers to work, education and financial management. The event ends with an interactive session between participants and Antarchakshu volunteers called Demystifying Zone.

Once the participants have gone through the entire process, each participant in their own way will be able to contribute towards creating inclusive environments. This Event is expected to extend the collective learning in breaking myths and prejudices about disability.
