



E-BUZZ ON “ACCESS TO INDEPENDENCE”

Information around the world for persons with vision loss

August 2017 (15th edition)

Greetings from Institute for Vision Rehabilitation!

It's our pleasure to bring forth yet another edition of E-Buzz to you!

This edition brings you updates and happenings ranging from assistive technology to government policies, from education to leisure and recreation from the world around us.

Hope you find this useful. Please do share it with your contacts who you think would benefit from it.

- **Audio described movies by Saksham are now available in Daisy audio format on Sugamya Pustakalaya**

Saksham is introducing yet another feature to improve availability and accessibility of its services. To increase its ease of use, the audio described films produced by them are now available from Sugamya Pustakalaya as Daisy audio books. At present, 10 popular Indian movies are present on the website. Just type in the film name along with the key word 'audio movie' in the search box and brace yourself to enjoy it.

Source: <https://library.daisyindia.org/NALP/welcomeLink.action>

- **Dots for families... easy Braille lessons for sighted persons**

Many family members, general education teachers or paraprofessionals want an overview to learn enough Unified English Braille (UEB) to understand what a child with vision loss is reading and writing. The "Dots for Families" Braille lessons give those who are sighted the opportunity to learn some of the UEB code so they can share in the joy of reading and writing with children with vision loss. These lessons allow one to get a beginning knowledge of UEB by reviewing key points for each of the 15 lessons and then completing short reading and writing exercises

Source: <http://www.pathstoliteracy.org/blog/dots-families-braille-lessons>

- **Rights body demands GST rollback on aids for persons with disabilities**

The National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled termed the government's claim that 5% GST rate on aids and assistive devices is

concessional as “incorrect and misleading”. “Pre-GST, barring cars for physically handicapped, all the disability aids and appliances did not attract any levy,” it said. It also added as a sector where the “end consumer should not be additionally burdened”, the tax rates of these products must be restored to the earlier exempt status without forgoing benefits of tax already paid across the value chain.” It also demanded that aids and appliances for persons with disabilities should be given full input tax credit even if they pay zero GST. It stressed that these items are essential for persons with disabilities, without which their “mobility, education, employment and exercise of their rights and duties is curtailed”.

Source: http://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ians/rights-body-demands-gst-rollback-on-disability-aids-117071001355_1.html

- **Guidebook on making schools accessible to students with disabilities**

UNICEF India has developed a book called “guidebook on making schools accessible to children with disabilities” with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Samarthyam, as part of the Prime Minister’s Accessible India Campaign. The guidebook details the physical/infrastructural barriers children with disabilities may face in schools and provides practical solutions for making the physical environment of a school safe and accessible for them. A checklist is included which can be used as a tool to assess the accessibility of schools and to identify areas that need improvement. Clear standards and specifications are provided with photos and

illustrations which can be used with civil works personnel towards making changes or during construction.

Source: <http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2017/07/06/guidebook-on-making-schools-accessible-to-children-with-disabilities/>

- **Miss Ability Telangana... a beauty contest for women with disabilities**

30 year old Vasundhara Koppula is conducting a fashion pageant for women with disabilities with the title of Miss Ability Telangana. For Vasundhara, who uses a wheel-chair to get around, the contest is a big deal as it is her attempt to celebrate the talent in women with disabilities in the state. Weave Media, her three-year old event management company conducts special events for persons with disabilities. She has so far organized five events till now, but this is the first event of its kind and she is excited about conducting it across the state. The pageant will take place on December 3rd in Hyderabad after auditions across all the districts. About 25 contestants will be finalized for the pageant, following which they will hold a grooming session for a week to prepare them for the competition.

Source: <http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/2017/jun/13/time-to-discover-the-differently-abled-beauties-1616310--1.html>

- **Persons with disabilities in Telangana to get universal ID cards**

The process of issuing Universal Disability Identity Cards (UDID) was taken up in 15 states including Telangana in July this year. There are

about 10.55 lakh persons with disabilities in Telangana, of which 7 lakh were given disability certificates. All certificates issued by the state government will be linked to UDID. “As the disability certificates issued by state governments were not valid across departments and in other states, the Central Government has started the process to issue UDID certificates that will be accepted throughout the country and in all departments,” Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Kamlesh Kumar Pandey said.

Source: <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/290717/telangana-disabled-to-get-universal-id-cards.html>

- **Convert your mobile into bifocal (electronic) glasses, magnifier and a lot more...**

Here's 'SuperVision' app (free for Android and iOS) that can help persons with partial vision loss to read and view objects viz; reading books, blackboards or even sign boards on roads etc. With this application, users can easily control the zoom, the contrast and colour mode of the image. SuperVision can also be used in dark environments by activating the flash on your smart phone. For a demo video, please visit,

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=797X_UbVjb8

- **NCERT issues guidelines to test school kids with special needs**

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is going to emphasize education of children with special needs. The

NCERT has released a 128-page document in three languages- English, Hindi and Urdu for teachers, instructing them how to test students and what to expect out of them. In the document, giving additional time, suitable mode for successful completion of tests and modification in the curriculum to avoid specific difficulties faced by students with special needs are mentioned as general instructions.

Source: <http://digitallearning.eletsonline.com/2017/06/ncert-issues-guidelines-to-test-school-kids-with-special-needs/>

- **Accenture develops artificial intelligence for persons with vision loss**

The solution, called Drishti, was developed as a part of Accenture's Tech4Good, which aims to apply technology to improve the way the world lives and works by solving complex social challenges for persons with vision loss. Drishti which means "Vision" in Sanskrit, provides smart phone-based assistance using AI technology such as image recognition, natural language processing and natural language generation capabilities to describe the environment of a person with vision loss. Initially developed and tested with 10 professionals with vision loss through a collaboration with 'National Association for the Blind' in India, the solution provides narration to the user on the number of people in a room, their ages, genders and even emotions based on facial expressions. It can also be used to identify and narrate texts from books and documents including currency notes and identify obstructions like glass doors to improve safety of the user.

Source: <https://newsroom.accenture.com/news/accenture-develops-artificial-intelligence-powered-solution-to-help-improve-how-visually-impaired-people-live-and-work.htm#search>

Disclaimer: The information shared in this newsletter is a collection of updates and happenings from various sources.

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