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2/05/25 11:41



MAHARASHTRA STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

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22691395/22691358
22665866 (Direct)

105 High Court, PWD Building,
Fort, Mumbai -32.

M.S. AZMI
MEMBER SECRETARY

No. MSLSA/2025/ 1364
Date: 29th April, 2025.

E.I.N.: 235
Date: 29/04/2025

To,

The Principal District & Sessions Judge/Chairperson,
District Legal Services Authority,
District - All.

Supdt.
strict Legal Services
Authority, Jalgaon

Subject: Compliance with Resolutions discussed in National Annual
Stakeholders Consultation on Protecting the Rights of
Children Living with Disability.

Reference: Hon'ble Registrar (Inspection-I), High Court, Appellate Side,
Bombay letter No.A(Spl.)/JJC/68/2025 dated 25.04.2025.

Respected Sir/Madam,

With reference to the above subject, please find enclosed herewith the
copy of the handbook on Disabilities and the statement titled "Invisible No
More". Your goodself is requested to direct the concerned to take necessary
steps for their widespread dissemination by circulating the same.

Regards.

Yours faithfully,

29-04-25.

Member Secretary

Copy forwarded to:-
The Secretary,
DLSA - All.

Secretary, D.L.S.A to comply.

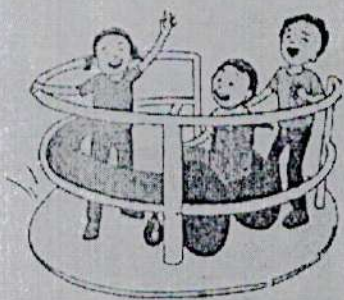
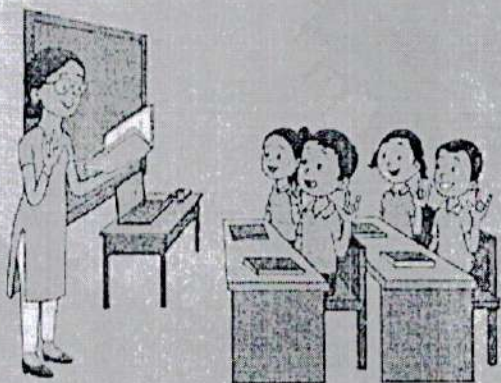
Chairman, D.L.S.A.
Jalgaon.

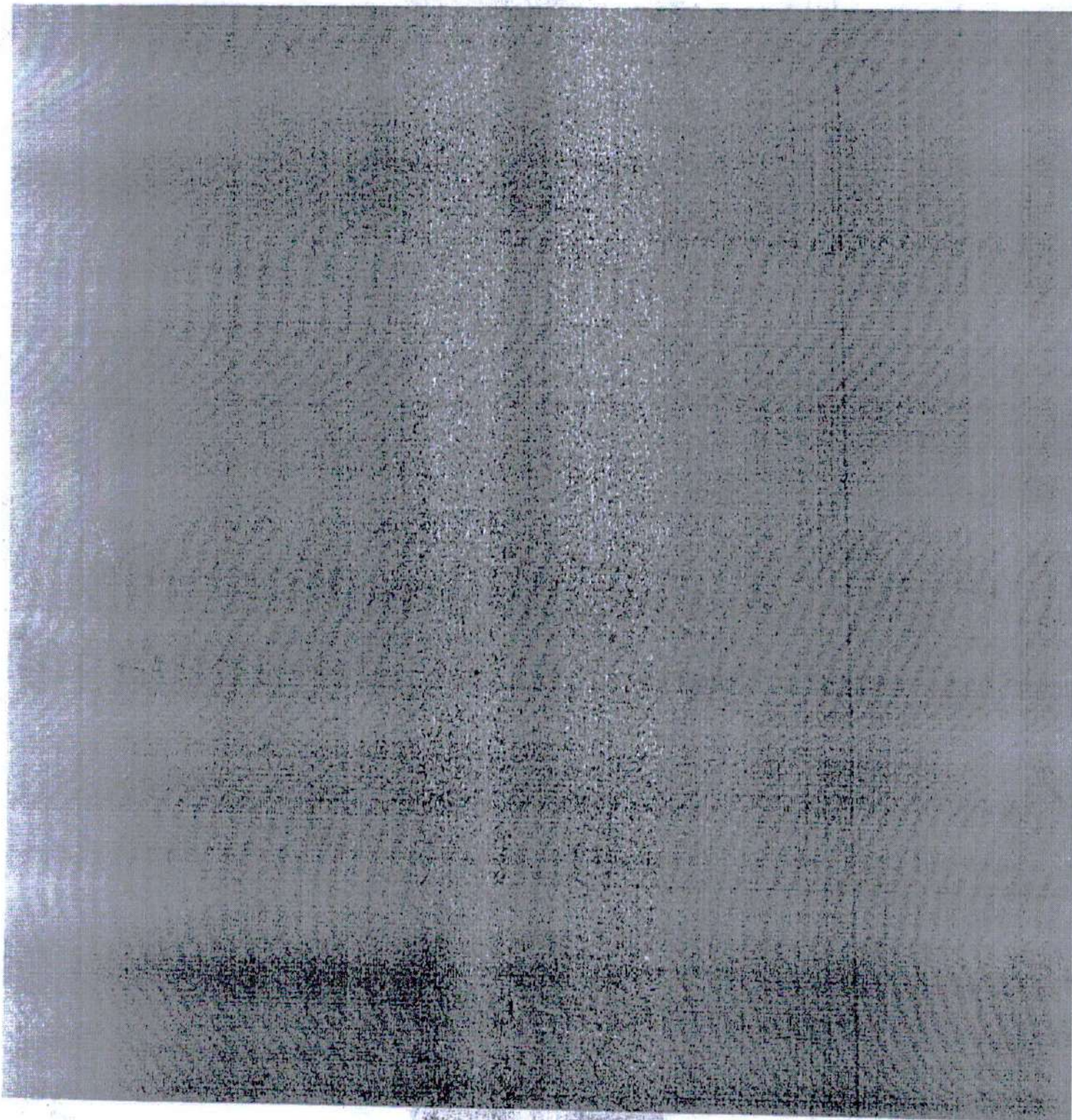
With reference to the
subject cited above, I am
under directions to inform
to the all respected Chairmen
TLC, Dist Salgaon and
all respected ~~Members~~
of Advocate Bar Association
Dist Salgaon take
note of abovesaid Hand
Book & be circulated
it among the public
at large. concerned
to place it on notice
Board of the Hon'ble
Court of Advocate Bar
Association. office
Supt. shall place it
on District Court
web site in order
to widespread dissemination.

[Signature]
10/10/25

Invisible No More

A Statement for Inclusion by Children with Disabilities







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Data on Children with Disabilities in India

India is estimated to have one of the **largest populations of Persons with Disabilities globally.**

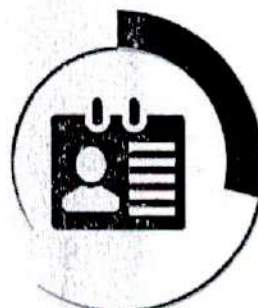


In India
1.7%
of children
have
disabilities

However globally, it is estimated that **1 out of 10** children have disabilities.¹



17% of Persons
with Disabilities
are in the age
group of
10-19 years.²



Among Persons with
Disabilities, **28.8%**
reported that they
had a **certificate**
of disability.³

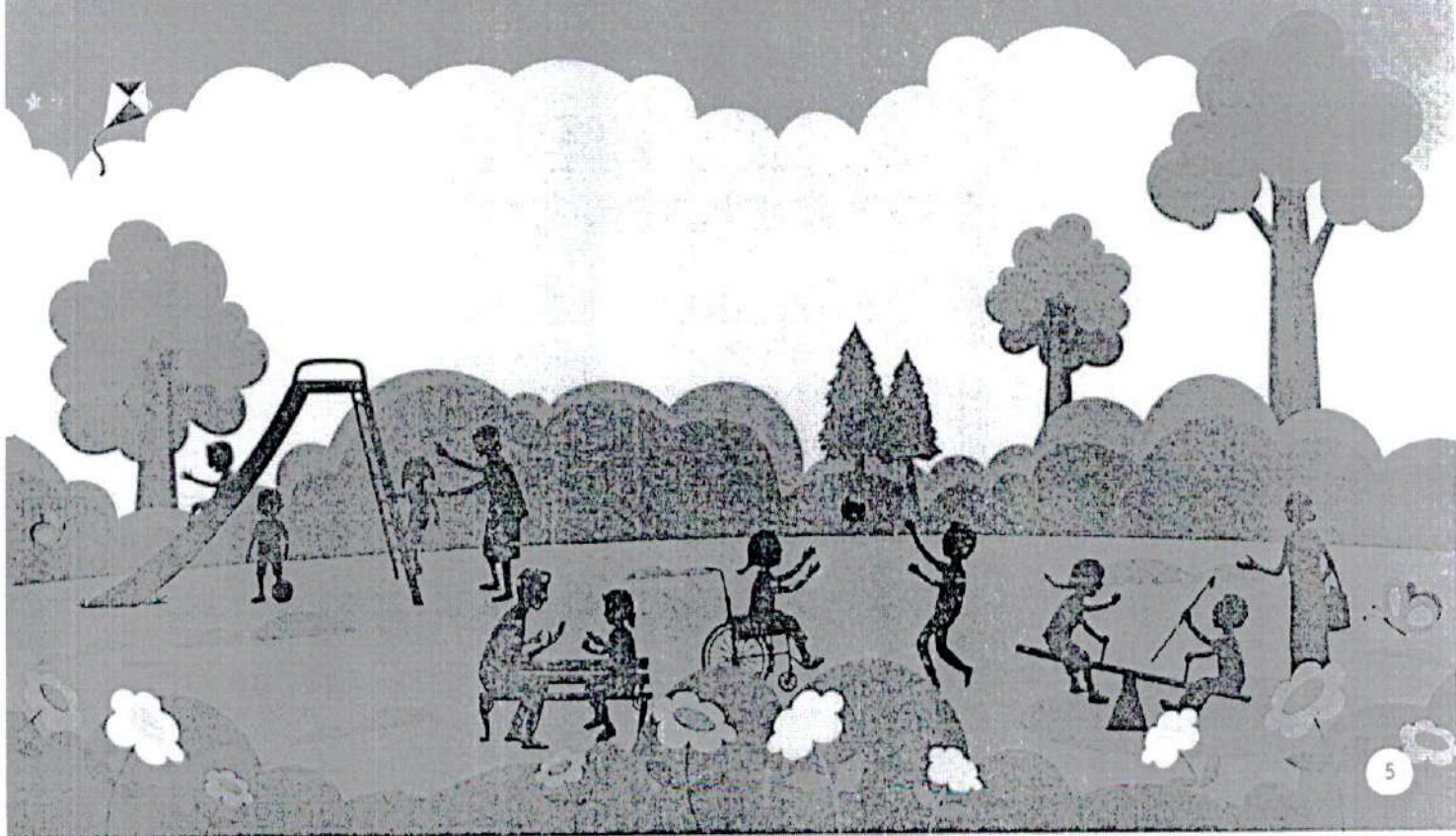
¹ Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India. Report on Post Enumeration Survey: Census of India 2011, 2011.

^{2,3} Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, National Statistical Office, 2019, NSS report no. 683: Persons with Disabilities in India NSS 76th round (July – December 2018).

Introduction

Children with disabilities are first and foremost children. However, these children face multiple compounding challenges in realising their rights.

The challenges emanate from the intersection of an impairment with a barrier, which can be physical or attitudinal. Removing access barriers and associated stigmas significantly improves the chances of leading meaningful lives in a more inclusive society. It is imperative for Children with Disabilities to have access to inclusive services across protection, education, health, sanitation; to have access to public spaces, to assistive technology; to grow in a family environment, and to have families supported to overcome challenges; to be included in all decisions that matter to them, and to have voice and agency; and ultimately, to live in communities and societies that embrace them as part of human diversity.



Usage of aid/ help from government vs. other organizations⁴



The percentage of Persons with Disabilities who received aid/help from the Government was 21.8%



and another 1.8% received aid/help from organizations other than the Government.

Data on vocational, technical training of Persons with Disabilities⁵



3.1% of 15-59 year old Persons with Disabilities received vocational/technical and formal training.

Usage of public transportation or public buildings by Persons with Disabilities over the last 365 days (at the time of conducting the survey)⁶



67.1% of Persons with Disabilities who used public transport during the last 365 days preceding the date of the survey, faced difficulties in accessing/using it.



63.9% of Persons with Disabilities who accessed public buildings during the last 365 days preceding the date of the survey faced difficulties in accessing/using them.

Status of education of Children with Disabilities in India⁷



Among Persons with Disabilities of age 7 years and above, 52.2% were literate.



Among Persons with Disabilities aged 15 years and above, 19.3% had the highest educational level as secondary and above.



62.9% and 4.1% of Persons with Disabilities of age 3 to 35 years, were ever enrolled in ordinary school and special school, respectively.



^{4,5,6,7} Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, National Statistical Office, 2019, NSS report no. 583: Persons with Disabilities in India NSS 76th round (July – December 2018).

Why this Statement Matters

Invisible No More: A Statement for Inclusion, by Children with Disabilities intends to pave a more inclusive path for collective action to address barriers faced by children with disabilities and inclusion in all aspects of society, across education, recreation, livelihood opportunities, community living and protection.

This document captures the voices of children with disabilities through extensive engagements in a bid for children to advocate for their own rights, needs, and aspirations. To hear from children with disabilities and understand their realities, perspectives and appeals is probably the most important contributor for citizens and policy-makers to build more inclusive societies with intent. It aims to amplify the voices of children, their experiences, challenges and aspirations to foster better collaboration among stakeholders – families, government functionaries, judiciary, educators, social workers, health professionals, and child rights advocates – to create comprehensive solutions.

It aims to raise awareness on the barriers faced by children with disabilities and hopes to lay the foundation for future conversations to meaningfully address them.

Parties shall ensure that Children with Disabilities have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, their views being given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, on an equal basis with other children, and to be provided with disability and age-appropriate assistance to realize that right.⁸

Article 7 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

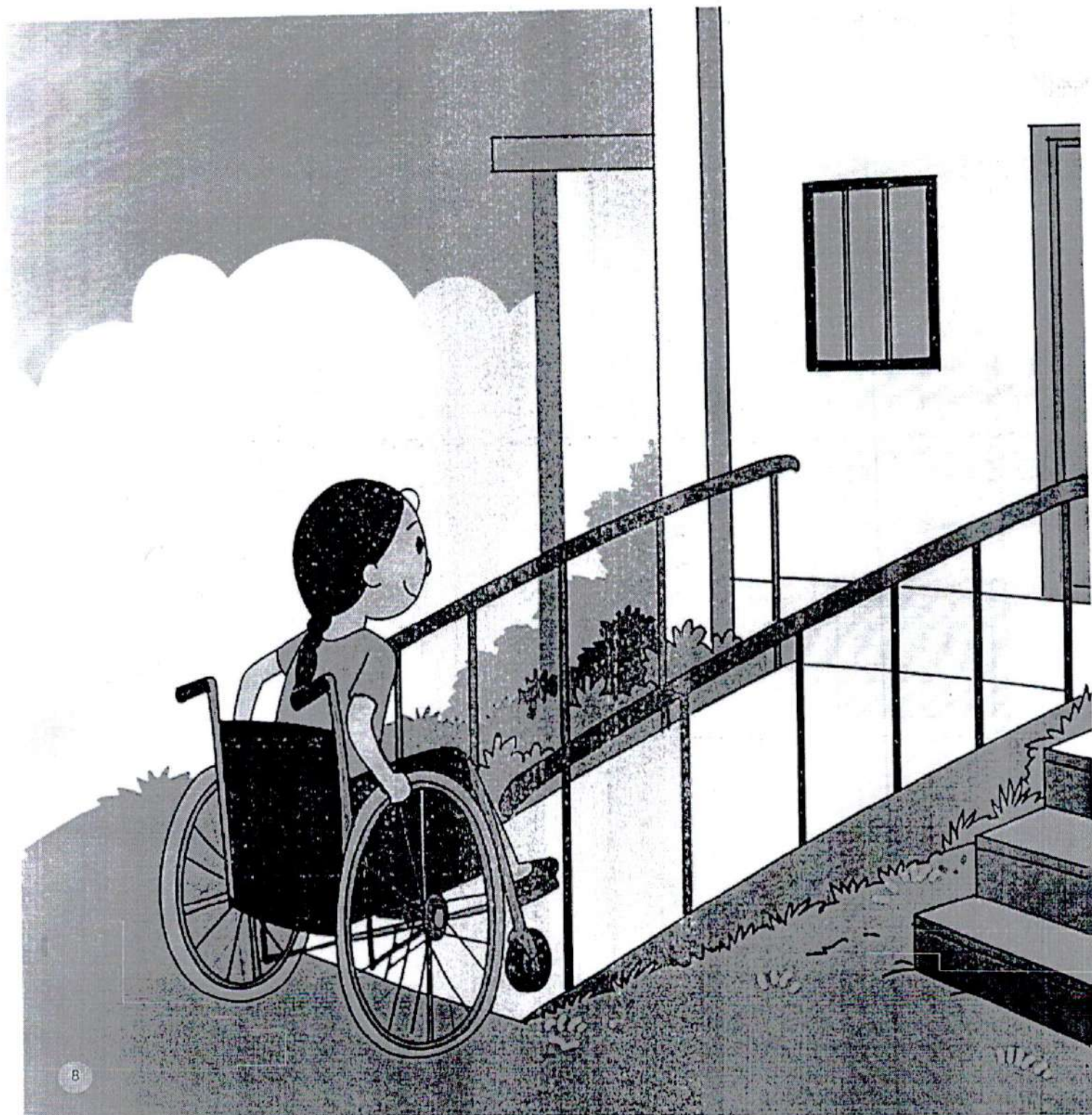
States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.⁹

Article 23 (1) of Convention on the Rights of the Child.

⁸ United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Article 7 – Children with Disabilities*, 2006.

⁹ United Nations, *Convention on the Rights of the Child: Article 23 (1)*, 1989.





A black and white line drawing of a young boy with short hair, wearing a long-sleeved shirt and trousers, walking down a set of three steps. To his left is a doorway and a vertical post. The background is a simple sketch of a building facade with windows.

Children's Appeals for a Better Future



We regularly use tools for our learning such as grammar checkers and screen-readers and have had positive experiences with them.

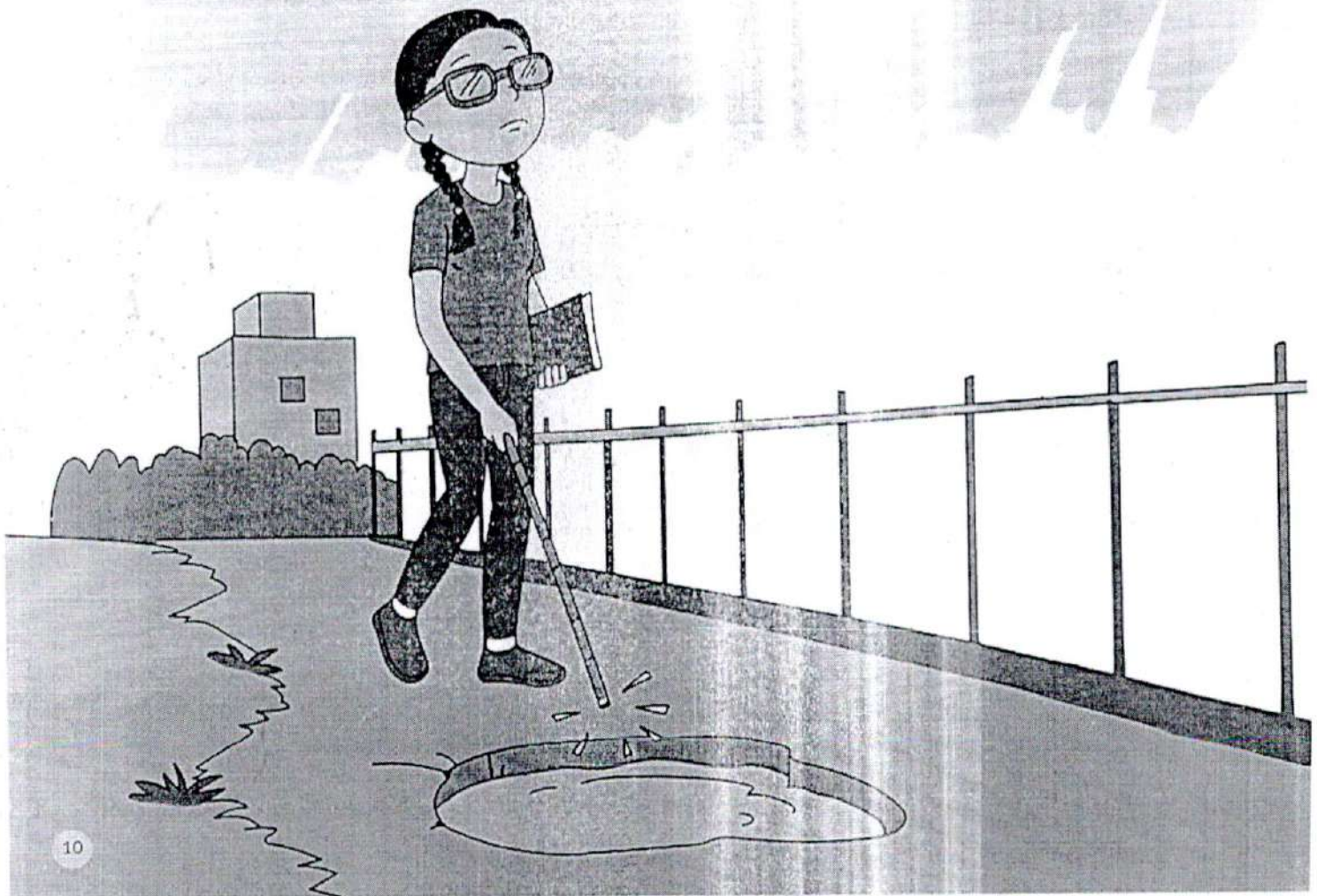
Children with visual disabilities

The lift in my gated community is too small. I find it difficult to open and close the grill multiple times daily.

17 year old child with intellectual disability

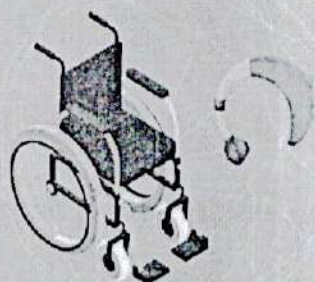
I like going to parties because I like dancing but I have trouble going to the washroom.

14 year old child with multiple disabilities, wheelchair user



**We want to participate,
travel, and take part
in community life
without barriers and
biases**

Inclusive access



- We want to use and access roads, shopping malls, banks, places of worship, parks, government offices, police stations, and toilets, and feel safe in public places.
- We want to travel independently using accessible and affordable public transport systems like buses, metros, and trains and also through the use of adapted private vehicles.
- We want to use all devices and platforms by making the best use of technology.
- We want good quality assistive devices at an affordable rate that are easy to use and maintain.



Sometimes I have to use a scribe for exams, but I don't like it because they often don't catch the words exactly, which causes me to lose marks.

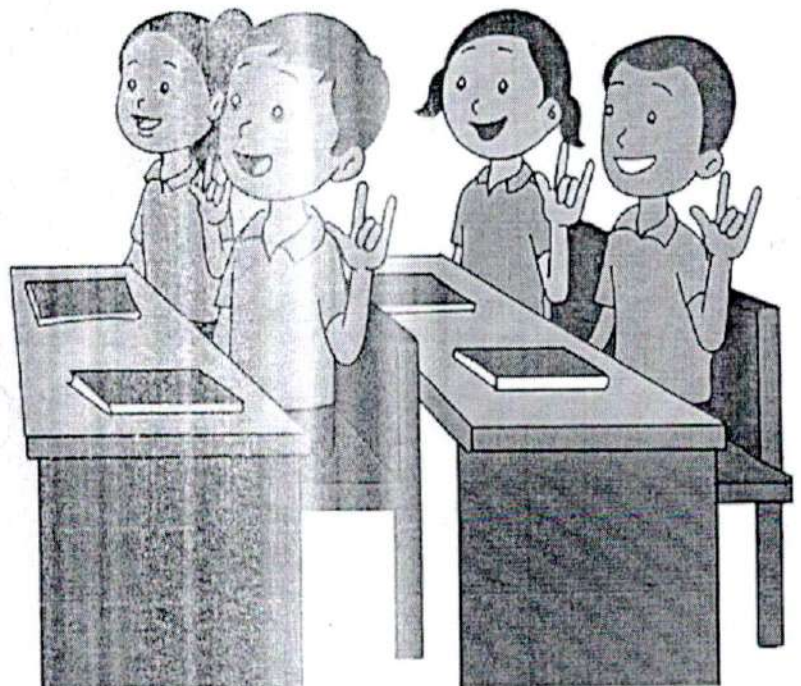
15 year old child with visual disability

Teachers should learn sign language; we even try to teach them but they don't want to learn.

15 year old child with hearing disability

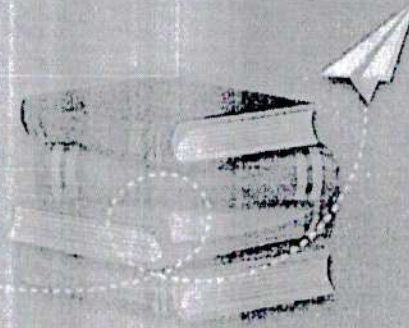
I like one of my teachers because sometimes she uses pictures on a screen during lessons.

12 year old child with an intellectual disability



**We want to study,
learn, and grow**

Inclusive education



- We want teachers and classmates who understand and respond to our needs so that we learn and do our best in schools.
- We want accessible schools and hostels so that we can participate in all activities with ease.
- We want the use of assistive devices, technologies, and support to be allowed during examinations so we can have a fair chance to demonstrate our learning.
- We want easy and simple processes for school admissions.



At home, when my parents talk to relatives, I wonder what they are speaking. Even when I ask, they don't make an effort to communicate to me. I feel left out.

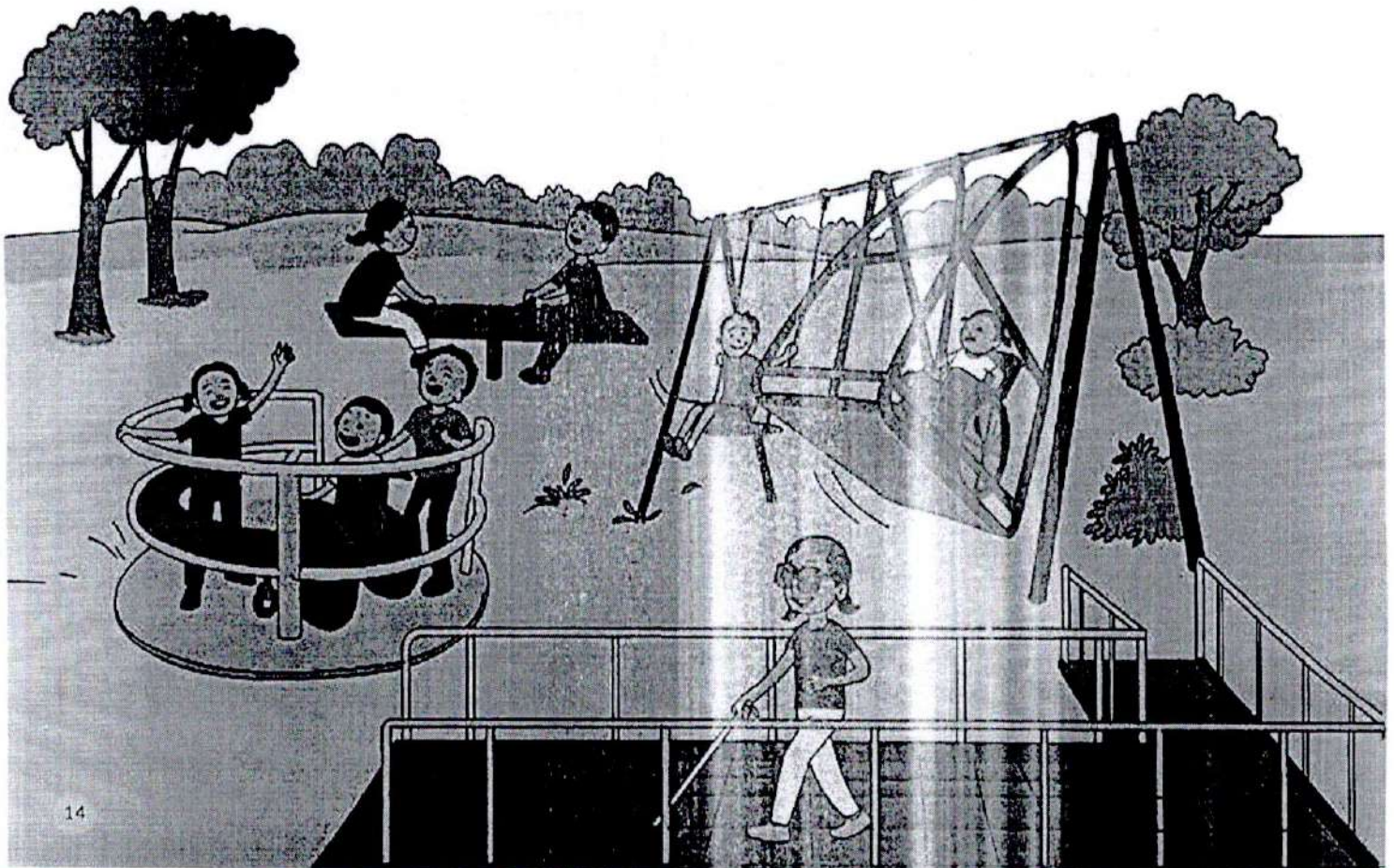
17 year old child with hearing disability

My father comes every day in the fourth period to take me to the washroom. Generally, games are for two periods, but I can only play during the fourth period because that's when my father takes me to the ground.

12 year old child with locomotor disability

I can play games at school with other children but at home, I am not able to because I cannot go to the park and other children don't play with me.

14 year old child with intellectual disability, wheelchair user



We want to feel safe, play, and form friendships without fear of exclusion

Inclusive protection, participation and breaking stigma

- We want to use facilities such as parks and sports centres to join our peers in group activities and games without barriers of access and stigma.
- We want opportunities to participate in extracurricular and recreational activities such as learning and playing musical instruments, dancing, art, and computer classes.
- We want our teachers, friends and family to stand up for us and support us when someone tries bullying us.



- We want safe spaces everywhere and a society where we feel equal to our peers.
- We want adults and children to be more sensitive towards us so that we can form camaraderie with them.
- We want to be part of family conversations and decisions like our peers.
- We want to be fully included in all social events, like weddings and birthday parties, rather than being excluded due to misplaced sympathy or biased assumptions about our abilities.



Most of the time my parents and guardians communicate my well-being needs to the doctors.

13 year old child with visual disability

Sometimes, doctors/medical staff make us go from one place to another for different tasks. This makes life difficult for us.

15 year old child with visual disability

When I was at the hospital, there was no separate queue for Persons with Disabilities, and I experienced unkind behaviour from some officials.

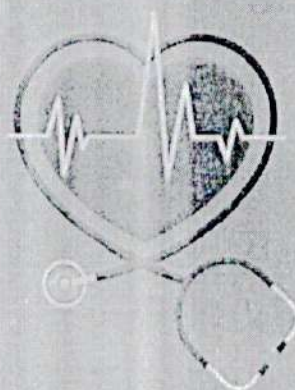
17 year old child with locomotor disabilities



We want to be
healthy and strong

Inclusive healthcare

- We need dedicated waiting areas at hospitals that are designed to accommodate our specific needs. Standing in long lines and moving from place to place can be difficult for us and having a designated waiting area would make healthcare more accessible and less overwhelming for us.



- Medical staff and helpers have to be sensitised about our needs and the barriers we face so that they are equipped to meaningfully support us.

- Doctors and nurses have to be patient with us and allow us to communicate our concerns and needs directly.
- Hospitals need to keep assistive devices and support us with requisite assistive services to be more accessible to all of us.



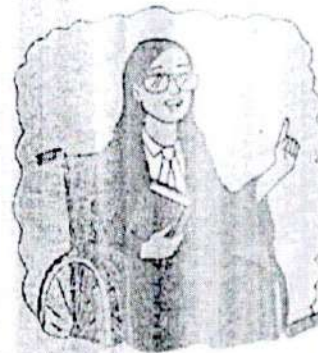
Our main barrier to accessing opportunities is communication. If every sector such as hospitals, police, schools, courts, etc. has interpreters, our ability to reach our aspirations in life will increase manifold.

17 year old child with a hearing disability



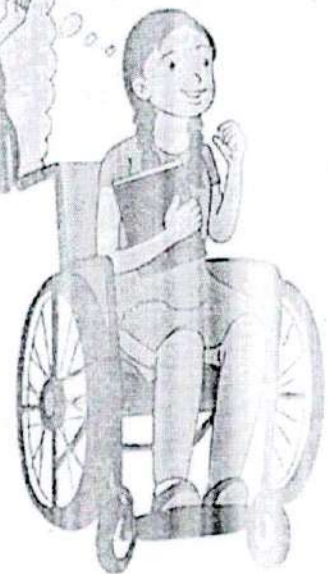
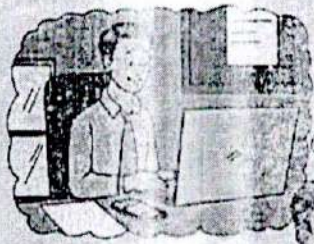
I learn computer skills at this special facility and occasionally teach my parents as well if they need help.

14 year old child with visual disability



It would help us greatly in realising our aspirations if getting a disability certificate for high-functioning autism was made easier.

17 year old child with autism



We aspire to turn our dreams into reality

Inclusive ambitions

- We need more efficient and user-friendly systems for disability certification, ensuring that Children with Disabilities can easily obtain the necessary Documentation.
- All of us have aspirations – some of us want to be musicians, others want to be artists, civil servants, business persons, police officers, designers, bankers, teachers or even contribute to the by becoming special educators. We should get the right support and resources to achieve our career aspirations.



- There should be certain schemes and programmes on career counselling, skilling and employment designated for us to meet our full potential.
- We need to know our rights and be aware of various reservation schemes for the higher education and employment of Persons with Disabilities.

An Appeal from All to All

It is essential to create and implement policies that ensure equal access to protection, education, healthcare, and opportunities for participation in all aspects of life. By prioritizing inclusivity and accessibility, policymakers turn dreams and aspirations into reality and foster a society where every child, regardless of ability, can thrive.

This is an appeal for **Children with Disabilities** to be able to be children. An appeal to work together to build a future where all children, including those differently abled, are empowered to reach their full potential through:



Developing support systems in family and community

This involves engaging families, communities, and local organizations to build supportive networks. It requires recognizing parental stress and the need for family counselling. Sessions with caregivers of children with disabilities promote inclusivity and help break traditional biases, creating

safer spaces for children. When children do not have, or cannot be taken care of by their families, proactive efforts are made so they grow away from institutions, in a family environment. Children with disabilities, too, have the right to a family environment.



Ensuring barrier-free environment and access to assistive devices

Addressing access barriers through assistive services, technologies, and accessible infrastructure and communication/information remains crucial. Enforcing national and subnational policies, with a focus

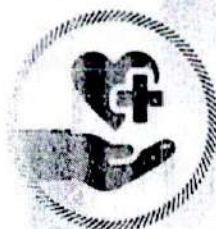
on streamlining the disability certification process through shorter timelines, simplified procedures, and standardized diagnoses, will encourage greater participation in all areas of life.



Promoting inclusive education and skills development

This includes making mainstream schools accessible, providing specialized teacher training, and ensuring assistive technologies and infrastructure for students with disabilities. Building peer support networks and offering teacher and parental counselling can help

improve retention rates in schools for Children with Disabilities. Tailored life skills, vocational training, career counselling, and internships based on the child's abilities and aspirations can pave the way to employment, economic independence and self reliance.



Ensuring healthcare and early diagnosis

Strengthening the implementation of comprehensive needs assessments and early diagnosis programmes, already integrated into existing schemes and public health services, is crucial. These efforts must ensure access to essential therapies, assistive devices, and healthcare services through improved infrastructure and trained healthcare providers.

Developing comprehensive individual care plans that account for each child's specific needs, coupled with increased community awareness, will promote early identification and timely intervention, ensuring that children with disabilities receive the support they require.



Protecting and creating a safe environment

Reinforcing legal frameworks and developing comprehensive policies are crucial, alongside collaboration between government and non-government agencies. A skilled workforce – including social workers, judicial officers, educators, and

healthcare providers – will help address specific protection needs, support vulnerable families, as well ensure equitable access to justice for children. Inclusive, participatory community and school programmes promote respect for diversity.



Enabling meaningful participation

Children with disabilities should be consulted in all matters that affect them. Organisation of Persons with Disabilities are an essential conduit and resource to provide opportunities for

meaningful engagement with these children. Persons with disabilities are the experts on their needs and aspirations, and thus the best partners in advancing the inclusion agenda.



Making the invisible visible and tearing down stigma and discrimination

Accurate data is essential to design inclusive policies, allocate resources, and ensure their access to education, healthcare, and protection, among others. More broadly, generating evidence will help create effective programmes that

promote children's well-being and empowerment. Balanced language, positive media representation, awareness campaigns, and role models can help break social barriers of stigma and bias.

Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to the children with disabilities, their families, caregivers, and advocates who have courageously shared their experiences, insights, and aspirations to shape this statement. Your voices are the foundation of this document, and your resilience continues to inspire the push for a more inclusive and equitable world. We specifically thank the individuals and organizations mentioned below for their invaluable contribution, participation and insights.

Expert contributors

Praveen Kumar, Radhika Alkazi, Nipun Malhotra, Ruma Roka, Puneet Singhal, Syamala Gidugu, Merry Baruah

In association with

- Silver Linings - Visual Disabilities
- National Association for the Blind - Visual Disabilities
- Action for Autism - Intellectual Disabilities
- Action for Ability Development and Inclusion - Locomotive Disabilities
- FAME India - Intellectual Disabilities
- Special Olympics - Intellectual Disabilities
- Noida Deaf Society - Hearing Disabilities
- Amar Jyoti - Intellectual and Locomotive Disabilities

We also acknowledge the tireless efforts of educators, healthcare providers, judicial officers, social workers, and policymakers for their tireless commitment to creating environments where all children can thrive. Your dedication to embracing diversity, standing up against discrimination and advancing the rights and well-being of children is crucial to achieving the goals set out in this statement.

In partnership with



Participant Profile

The focus group discussions (FGDs) included 40 children (23 girls and 17 boys) of age group 12–17 years

Typology

Multiple Disabilities	13
Intellectual Disability	13
Autism	3
Visual Disability	14
Hearing Disability	4
Locomotive Disability	3

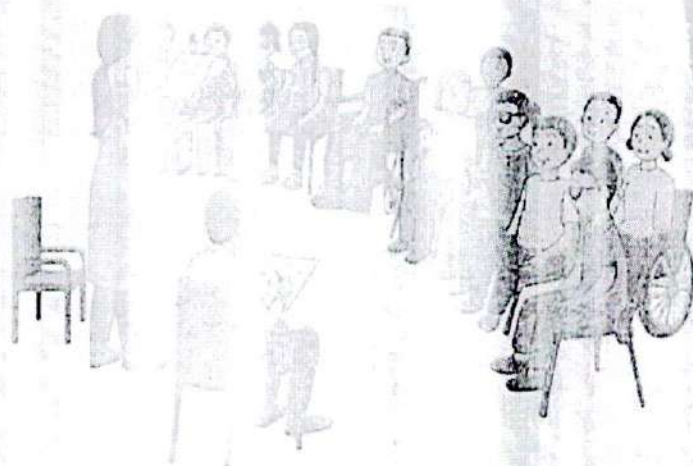
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Haryana

22
Delhi-NCR

8
Uttar Pradesh

1
Assam

7
Karnataka



How this Statement was Shaped

Gathered Expertise

Consultation with experts from the disability rights community and secondary research



Developed an Engagement Tool

Questions focusing on everyday experiences, aspirations, and accessibility and customised these for different disability types



Reached out to Organizations

On-Boarded 8 expert organizations



Drafted the FGD Design

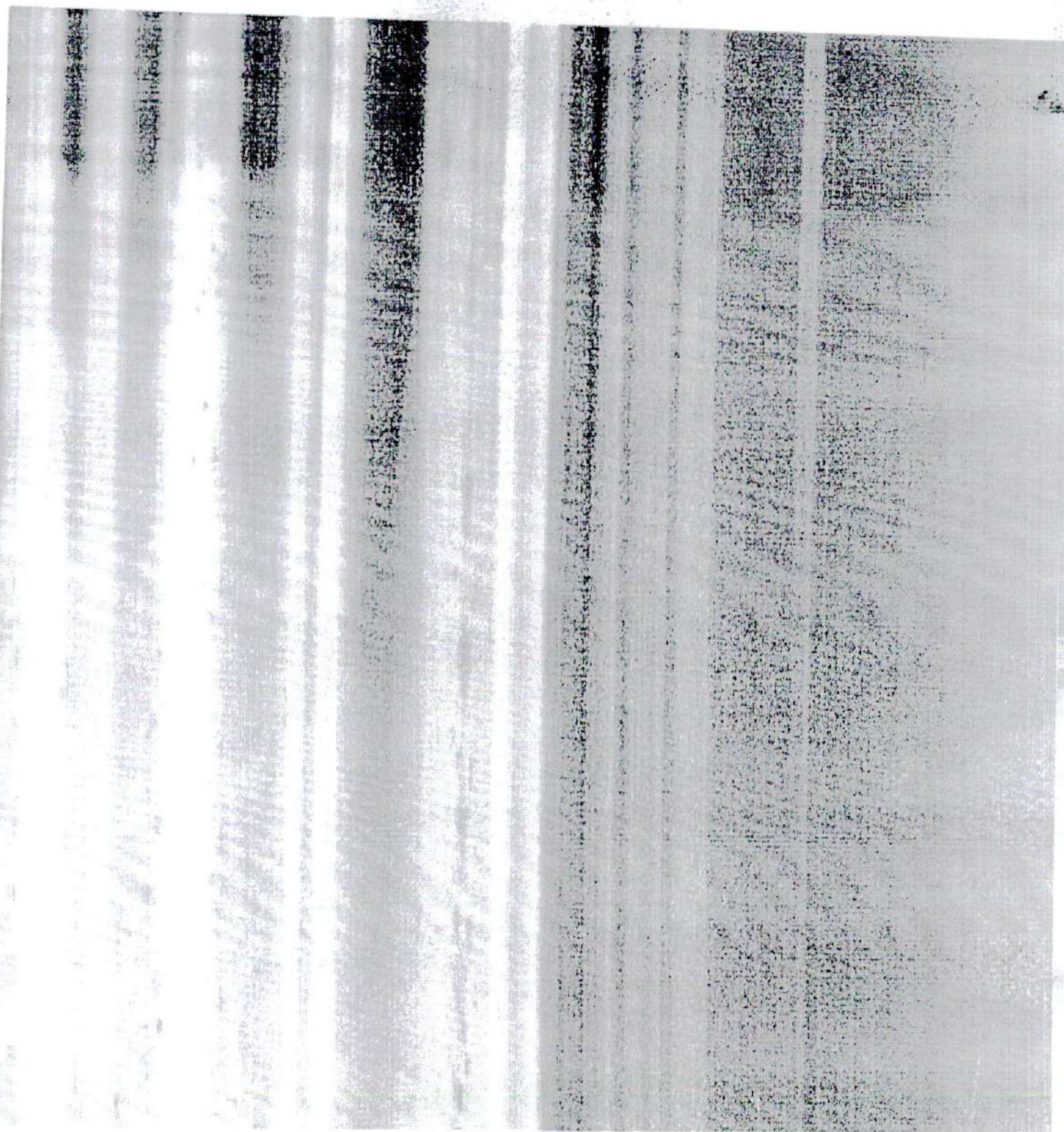
Using UNICEF documents on accessibility and engaging children in decision-making

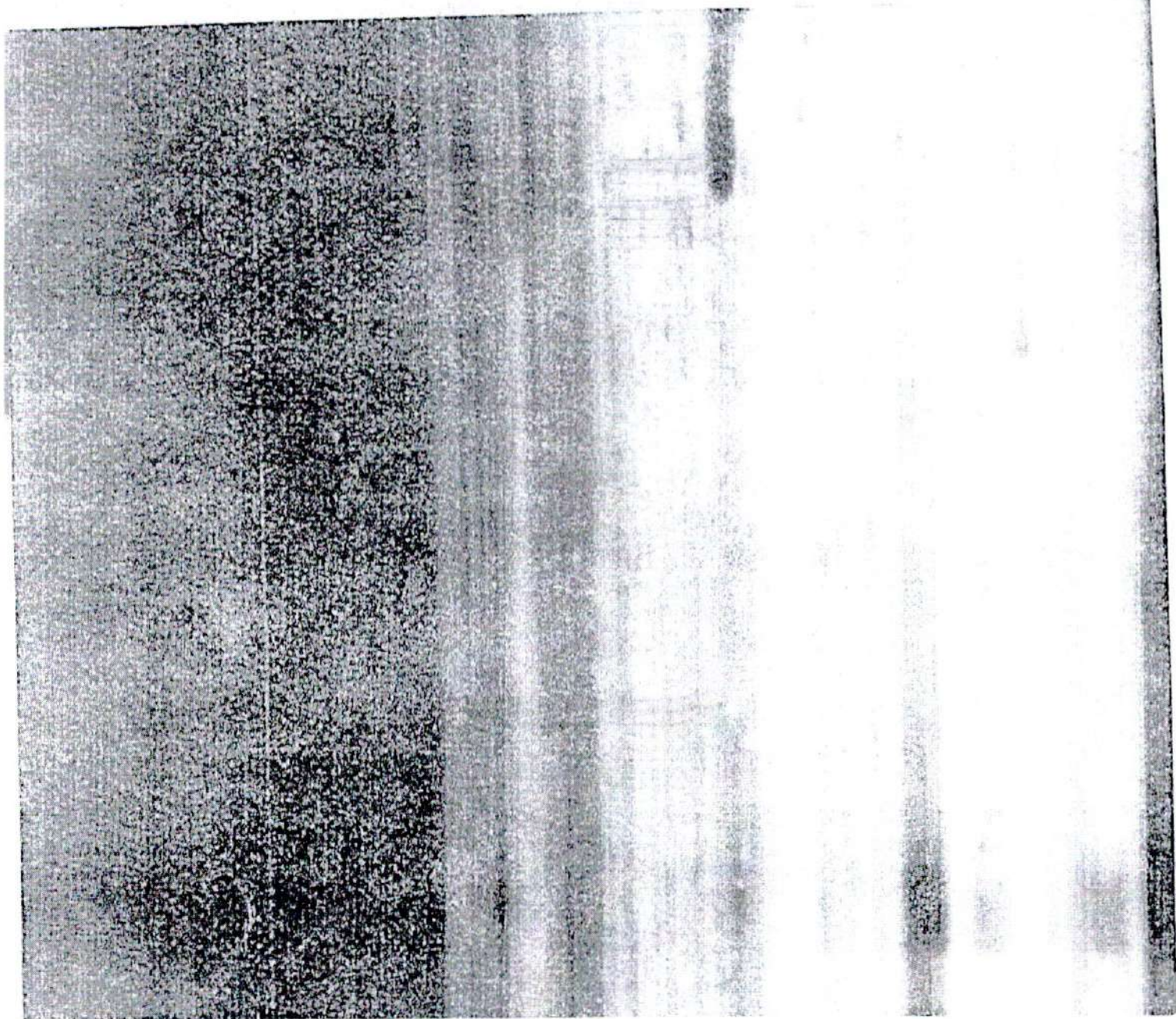


Facilitated FGDs

Six groups with a total of 40 children; online and in-person

The timeline for developing this statement was June 2024 to September 2024.





This statement has been developed with support from