

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

(PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE)

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PRESS RELEASE

Hon'ble the Chief Justice of India, Dr. Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, released a landmark report prepared by Supreme Court Committee in Accessibility in the presence of Hon'ble Justice S. Ravindra Bhat Chairperson of the Supreme Court committee on Accessibility, marking a monumental step towards making the Supreme Court of India a bastion of inclusivity and accessibility.

Constituted in December last year, by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India and Chaired by Justice S. Ravindra Bhat the committee was formed with an overarching objective: to identify and address barriers to make Supreme Court accessible to persons with disabilities. The Supreme Court's Committee on Accessibility conducted a thorough evaluation of the Supreme Court's accessibility both physical and functional for persons with disabilities, employing a multifaceted methodology that included a physical audit of the court's infrastructure, operational evaluations, and extensive stakeholder consultations. Various stakeholders, including disability rights experts, provided invaluable insights through questionnaires and direct inputs, contributing to a rich, holistic understanding of the court's current accessibility status and areas requiring improvement. The committee also focused on understanding and addressing the unique challenges encountered by women, particularly during pregnancy, and senior citizens, recognizing that a significant number of advocates are senior citizens. The Committee on Accessibility also briefly focused on the unique needs outlined in the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017, regarding special court procedures for individuals who are HIV-positive/protected.

The Committee's study has unveiled a series of considerations that merit attention to enhance the Supreme Court's accessibility framework. In exploring the functional realms, the study unveiled certain areas that necessitate refinements to foster a more inclusive environment.

The Committee on Accessibility has made recommendations to enhance the inclusivity and navigability of the Supreme Court. The Committee has also proposed incorporating disability-friendly infrastructure and office environment, including fire safety concerns. The Committee has suggested implementing an equal opportunity policy and installing modern technologies such as kiosks and QR navigation systems, in addition to improved safety and evacuation procedures and infrastructural developments.

The Committee members consisted of Dr. Sanjay Jain, Professor at the National Law School of India University in Bengaluru; Mr. Nilesh Singit, an independent accessibility expert nominated by the Centre for Disability Studies, NALSAR University of Law; Mr. V. Sridhar Reddy, nominated by the Supreme Court Bar Association; Ms. Shakti Mishra, an employee of the Supreme Court of India; and Mr Sunil Chauhan, Additional Registrar, Supreme Court of India as the Member Secretary of the committee. The committee was assisted by members of two Sub-Committees, particularly, Mr Rahul Bajaj, and Mr. Hargurvarinder.S Jaggi, Registrar Supreme Court of India. Beyond the insights of the sub- committees, inputs were received from Ms. Priya Hingorani, Senior Advocate, Dr. Shweta Hingorani, Advocate, and Dr. Smriti Singh, Associate Professor at Maitreyi College, University of Delhi. The committee also benefited from the inputs of Ms. R. Arulmozhiselvi, a Member of Human Resources at the E-Committee.


