

Feedback/ Comments from Government of Puducherry on consultation paper on “Making ICT Accessible for Persons with Disabilities”

With reference to the TRAI consultation paper, it is commendable that initiative has been taken to identify the difficulties faced by various PwD's and how best the challenges faced by them can be addressed. Some of the feedback/ best features presented in the paper which can be adopted with some changes to the Indian System of ICT are:

1. Few provisions such as those in effect in USA can be adopted: For e.g. In United States of America, The legal framework in US lays down several provisions to ensure accessibility of telecom services for PwDs which mandates that telecom equipment manufacturers and service providers must make their products and services accessible to PwDs, if such access is readily achievable. If access is not readily achievable, the manufacturers and service providers must make their devices and services compatible with peripheral devices and specialized customer premises equipment that are commonly used by people with disabilities, if such compatibility is readily achievable
2. Few provisions in the European Union which can be adopted or given priority amending it to the Indian environment such as:
 - a. Billing in accessible formats: QR codes which can be identified by Blind using Braille
 - b. Information about accessible services
 - c. Identification of emergency number similar to 100, for PwD's in distress
 - d. Regional language speech recognition in the ICT systems
 - e. Special or concessional tariff for PwD users using specific controls for ICT such as recognition, speech clarity, touch identification etc
 - f. Bills and contracts in alternative formats
 - g. Asking the operators (as done in France) to provide accessible handsets, bills in Braille or large print for the visually impaired as well as special text and multimedia message packages for the deaf.
3. As the paper is very comprehensive and in-depth on the various options available to use ICT for the benefit of PwD's, it is submitted that the Government of Puducherry will adopt

the recommendations of Government of India with respect to the implementation and usage of ICT for PwD's.

4. As a snapshot, please find enclosed the Current Status of PwD's in UT of Puducherry which will be helpful while working on "Making ICT Accessible for Persons with Disabilities".

Annexure: Current Status of PwD's in UT of Puducherry (Source: Social Welfare Dept)

- a. Under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, New delhi, the websites of Government Departments are being converted into accessible by PwD as per GIGW and WCAG 2.0. In the first phase, 23 departments websites are being converted and ready to host for public access.
- b. The Differently Abled Persons Section of the Social Welfare Department, Puducherry is the sole steward to implement welfare scheme to the Differently Abled Persons for all the four regions of the Union Territory of Puducherry. This division is entrusted with the task of implementing many Welfare schemes aiming to uplift their Social status and also for ensuring equal opportunities to them for the elevation of their position in the society like the normal persons.
- c. 20952 Differently Abled Persons are benefited under various welfare schemes implemented by the Social Welfare Department, Puducherry from time to time. Every month financial assistance is given to the Differently Abled Perons i.e., (Locomotor disability, Blindness, Hearing Impairment, Mental retardation and Mental Illness) in the first week of the month through the Anganwadi centres as follows:-
 - Rs.1,500/- for 40-65% disability
 - Rs.2,000/- for 66-85% disability
 - Rs.3,000/- for 86-100% disability
 - Rs.2,200/- for above 60 years of age
 - Rs.3,300/- for above 80 years of age
- d. Per month Rs.4.27 crores and years Rs.51.24 crores spent for the Scheme for all the four regions of the U.T. of Puducherry.

- e. The Prosthetic appliances such as Wheel Chair, Tricycle, elbow crutches and hearing aid were issued. Under the scheme “Distribution of free rice to the differently abled persons” 15 kg/per month is supplied to the differently abled persons.
- f. In order to detect disability at the early stage awareness camp to pregnant mothers, lactating mothers, Anganwadi Workers and Adolescent girls are organized every year.