

NUJS INTERNATIONAL CONCLAVE ON DISABILITY LAW AND RIGHTS



“Not every Disability is visible”





ABOUT THE CONCLAVE

The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences (WBNUJS) is proud to host the **1st NUJS International Disability Rights Conclave** on 24th August, 2025 a landmark event aimed at fostering dialogue, collaboration, and critical engagement with the legal and social dimensions of disability rights in India.

Bringing together leading academics, policymakers, activists, legal practitioners, and students, the Conclave seeks to spotlight the challenges faced by persons with disabilities (PwDs) while celebrating ongoing efforts toward equality, accessibility, and legal empowerment. This inaugural edition focuses on the theme: **"Towards Inclusive Justice: Reimagining Law, Accessibility, and Advocacy."** Through keynote addresses, panel discussions, and interactive sessions, the Conclave will explore pressing issues including:

- Implementation and gaps in the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016**
- Intersectionality and the lived experiences of disabled individuals
- Access to education, employment, and justice systems

Disability-inclusive legal education and reforms

By creating a space for critical conversation and collaborative action, the 1st NUJS Disability Rights Conclave affirms the university's commitment to inclusive legal discourse and the broader goal of building a just, accessible, and empathetic society.



ABOUT WBNUJS

The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences (NUJS), established in 1999, is renowned for its academic excellence and commitment to inclusivity, making it one of India's top law schools. The university offers a range of undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs and has built a strong reputation not only for its rigorous legal education but also for its efforts to create an accessible environment for all students, including those with disabilities. In addition to its academic achievements, NUJS is committed to fostering an inclusive and competitive legal environment. It has hosted Para-Invicta, a dedicated sports festival for specially-abled students, alongside Invicta, its flagship law sports festival, promoting equal opportunities. Beyond this, NUJS has organized a wide range of Moot Court and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) competitions, such as the NUJS-HSF Moot Court Competition and the NUJS ADR Mediation Competition.



These initiatives provide young lawyers with a dynamic platform to engage with complex legal issues, refine their advocacy and negotiation skills, and compete against top law schools, helping shape the next generation of legal professionals. NUJS's mission extends beyond academics, aiming to promote a sense of responsibility among its students and researchers to serve society. The university's inclusive ethos is reflected in initiatives like Para Invicta, which aligns with the values of advocacy, legal service, and societal development. Through these efforts, NUJS strives to create an environment where students of all abilities can thrive, not only in the field of law but also in all areas of life. The university's inclusive approach and its commitment to supporting specially-abled students make NUJS a beacon of accessibility and social responsibility in legal education.

THEMES FOR THE CONCLAVE

1. *Evolving jurisprudence of accessibility in India (Moving away from social model to-CRPD new model)*

Key Themes of the Discussion:

1. Shift from Social to Rights-Based Model

- Exploring the conceptual differences between the older social/medical models and the CRPD's social justice model of disability.
- Analysis of the RPWD Act, 2016 and its emphasis on accessibility across physical, digital, and informational domains.

2. Judicial Interpretation and Case Law

- Examining landmark cases such as *Rajive Raturi v. Union of India* and *Vikash Kumar v. UPSC* where Indian courts have recognized accessibility as a fundamental right under Articles 14, 19, and 21 of the Constitution.
- Discussion on how courts have moved from “reasonable accommodation” as an administrative courtesy to an enforceable legal obligation.

3. Gaps and Limitations

- Despite progressive jurisprudence, real-world implementation remains poor.
- Lack of universal design principles in public infrastructure and insufficient digital accessibility.

4. CRPD's Influence and the Road Ahead

- How CRPD principles like universal design, community participation, and supported decision-making can inform Indian legal reforms.
- The need for stronger institutional monitoring, decentralized accessibility audits, and cross-sector training.

2. Beyond Compliance: Reimagining India's Disability Rights Framework in Light of International Legal Standards

This topic aims to examine the comparative inclusivity of international disability rights instruments—particularly the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**—against the Indian legal model, notably the **Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 (RPWD Act)**.

The focus would be on:

- **Substantive Rights:** How the international regime emphasizes autonomy, dignity, and intersectionality more robustly.
- **Structural Inclusion:** Comparing mechanisms of enforcement, reasonable accommodation, and community participation.
- **Gaps in the Indian Model:** Identifying limitations in implementation, lack of accountability, and insufficient focus on psychosocial and invisible disabilities.
- **Reform Pathways:** Offering recommendations to align Indian law more closely with the spirit and letter of international norms.

Key Comparative Areas to Explore:

- **Definition and Recognition of Disability:** UNCRPD adopts a social model; Indian law often still leans toward a medical model.
- **Reasonable Accommodation:** Mandated clearly in UNCRPD; implementation in India is weak and often misunderstood.

How the Indian Model Can Be Improved?

- Strengthen enforcement bodies and ensure independence (e.g., Chief Commissioner and State Commissioners).
- Expand definitions to include evolving understandings of disability.
- Integrate intersectional and community-based approaches.
- Establish concrete guidelines for reasonable accommodation across sectors.
- Promote legal capacity and supported decision-making frameworks, moving away from guardianship models.

SPEAKERS FOR THE CONCLAVE

We are proud to have experts and guests such as:

1. Eminent Barrister and Senior Advocate from Bangladesh, ***Sara Hossain***, who is the Chair of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Iran appointed by the UN Human Rights Council. She is also Honorary Executive Director of BLAST, and is the recipient of the International Woman of Courage Award, 2016
2. ***Soma Roy Chowdhury*** is a legal and governance expert with 20+ years of experience in development work in Bangladesh, specializing in legal aid, human rights, gender justice, and public interest litigation. She was the National Program Coordinator for a major UK-funded (£12 million) legal services program, and has consulted for numerous international organizations such as USAID, UNODC, ILO, and the EU. She has taught law, including pioneering mediation simulations at the WBNUJS, Kolkata.
3. ***Someshwar Sati*** is a Disability Rights author and Associate Professor of English at Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi
4. Advocate ***Rahul Bajaj***, co-founder of Mission Accessibility, an NGO for advancing the rights of individuals with disabilities
5. Advocate ***Amar Jain***, co-founder of Mission Accessibility, an NGO for advancing the rights of individuals with disabilities
6. Advocate ***Anchal Bhatheja***, first visually-impaired woman advocate to appear before the Supreme Court
7. ***Sumit Agarwal*** is recognized as an Icon of the Election Commission of India, a distinguished Member of Committee at NITI Aayog, SDG Ambassador for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) and DEI Advisor to Fortune 500 Companies. A leading authority and accomplished advocate on disability law and rights, he is widely respected for shaping discourse and legislation to improve opportunities and inclusion for the disabled community across India and beyond.
8. ***Prof. Arushi Singh*** is an Assistant Professor of Legal Practice at Jindal Global Law School, Sonipat.
9. ***Prof. Abhishek Rana*** is an Assistant Professor of Legal Practice at Jindal Global Law School, Sonipat.

FORMAT

There will be two panel discussions along with discussions and alternative academic discourse.

A panel will consist of 5-6 members, who are either practising advocates or experts academicians of the field. Each panellist will be given a time of 15 minutes to speak on their preferred topic. Each panel will be moderated by a distinguished moderator.

BANK DETAILS

Account Name: Kinjal Das
Bank Name: Bandhan Bank
Branch: Ballygunge
A/C No: 50220033592779
IFSC No: BDBL0001699
UPI Number-7595965675

CONCLAVE REGISTRATION DETAILS

Date of Event: 24th August 2025

Fill the form to register for the Conclave:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfeHO1H7RMS_2zheSZqEQ8cdPoWw7bFb4_Al113F4JWgVVp9A/viewform?usp=dialog

A certificate of Participation will be provided to all the participants attending the conclave.

Participation amount for the Conclave: 249/- (Online Registration is also allowed)

If lunch is opted by the participants, an additional amount of 159/- needs to be made.



CONTACT US

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