

Dr. Abha Khetarpal

Director | PSEA Focal Point
Samarthyam (Centre for Universal Accessibility)

Co-founder
Asia-Pacific Network for Accessibility (APNA)

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Professional Summary

National and international award-winning disability rights advocate, psychotherapist, and policy consultant with over 13 years of experience in disability inclusion, **sugamyta** (accessibility) consulting, and gender rights. As the **Director at Samarthyam (Centre for Universal Accessibility)** and the designated **PSEA Focal Point**, I lead institutional efforts to strengthen disability-inclusive safeguarding frameworks and survivor-centric protocols to protect marginalized groups from exploitation and abuse. I have an extensive track record in authoring manuals and toolkits focused on the intersection of disability, gender-based violence (GBV), and **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**. I am master trainer on PSEA and have been imparting the training to CSOs, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), etc.

Academic Credentials

- **Doctorate in Social Work & Human Rights (h.c.)**
- **Masters in Counselling and Psychotherapy** – Global Open University, Nagaland
- **Masters in Economics** – Punjab University, Chandigarh
- **Masters in English** – Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu
- **Bachelor of Arts** – Delhi University
- **Diploma in Computer Software and Application**

Consultancy & Professional Experience

Director & PSEA Focal Point | Samarthyam Centre for Universal Accessibility (Current)

- Oversee operations for a leading Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) dedicated to universal accessibility and rights-based advocacy.
- Serve as the **PSEA Focal Point**, identifying civil society partners and strengthening disability-inclusive approaches within the **UN India PSEA Network**.
- Lead **sugamyta** (accessibility) audits for landmark government buildings, public infrastructure, and healthcare facilities.

Co-Founder | Asia-Pacific Network for Accessibility (Current)

The Asia-Pacific Network for Accessibility is dedicated to advancing accessibility across the Asian and Pacific region. The Network is led by women and composed of a cross-disability group of individuals, supported by allies, who share the vision of **the Jakarta Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2023-2032 (Jakarta**

Declaration) and a commitment to promote its implementation collectively.

Consultant | Women's Fund Asia (2019–2023)

- Developed a comprehensive **Manual on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women with Disabilities**.
- Created a **Self-Advocacy Toolkit** for girls and women with disabilities (2021-22).
- Authored IEC materials on **self-care for women with leprosy**, involving lived experience research and literature reviews (2022-23).

Consultant | World Health Organization (WHO) (2016)

- Designed a specialized questionnaire to assess the accessibility of healthcare facilities for persons with disabilities in the **South-East Asian Region**.

Consultant | National Association of Blind (NAB) & UNFPA (2020)

- Developed content for **Life Skills Education** tailored for adolescents in special schools of Odisha.

Project Co-ordinator | Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT) (2017–2019)

- Led the development of a **Toolkit on Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)** for educators and youth with disabilities.

Expert Committee Memberships & Advisory Roles

- **Member, Sexual Harassment Committee:** Department of Disability Affairs, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India (since 2019).
- **Member, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS):** Active Assisted Living, LITD 35.
- **Group Facilitator (Accessibility Rules):** Developed **Non-Negotiable Accessibility Rules for Products & Services for persons with disabilities for Govt. of India** following the Supreme Court of India's mandate.
- **Member, Equality and Diversity Committee:** Enabling Unit, UCMS (University of Delhi) & GTB Hospital.

Key Publications (SRHR & Safeguarding)

- **Manual on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights of Women with Disabilities** (ISBN 978-93-5457-102-2).
- **Make Yourself A Priority:** A Self-Care Guide for Women with Leprosy (ISBN 978-93-5915-744-3).
- **Going With The Flow:** Guide for women with disabilities on Menstrual Management & Hygiene (ISBN 978-93-5235-571-6).
- **Keeping You Abreast:** A guide for women with disabilities on breast cancer awareness (English ISBN 978-93-5104-788-9).
- **Speak Up, Speak Out, Speak Loud:** A Guide on Self-Advocacy (ISBN 978-93-5701-505-9).

Major Awards & Honors

- **Henry Viscardi Achievement Award (2019):** International honor for excellence in disability advocacy.
- **National Award (2016):** Bestowed by the **President of India** in the Role Model category.
- **FemiList100 (2021):** Recognized as one of the 100 women from the Global South for contributions to development and advocacy.
- **100 Women Achievers Award (2016):** Awarded by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.