



IITH Successfully Concludes AIDL–2026: A Symposium on Accessible and Inclusive Digital Libraries

Highlights:

- **AIDL–2026 at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad concludes with a national call to strengthen accessibility frameworks in higher education libraries.**
- **Experts from academia, technology, policy, and publishing sectors deliberate on building inclusive digital knowledge ecosystems.**
- **Over 60 research contributions, keynote talks, and assistive technology demonstrations showcased emerging accessibility solutions.**
- **Key recommendations include WCAG-compliant platforms, AI-enabled assistive technologies, and structured accessibility governance in institutions.**

Hyderabad, March 10, 2026: The two-day Symposium on Accessible and Inclusive Digital Library (AIDL)–2026, organised by the Knowledge Resource Centre (KRC) – Library at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad, concluded on March 7, 2026, with a strong national consensus on strengthening accessibility frameworks within higher education institutions across India.

The symposium brought together resource persons, academicians, librarians, accessibility practitioners, policymakers, technology developers, publishers, and researchers from across the country to deliberate on advancing inclusive digital knowledge ecosystems. AIDL–2026 served as a focused national platform for structured dialogue, evidence-based discussions, and the exchange of best practices in the domain of accessibility and inclusive library services.

Inaugural Session: The symposium commenced on March 6, 2026, with the Lighting of the Lamp, followed by the formal inauguration ceremony.

Prof. B. S. Murty, Director of IIT Hyderabad, delivered a video message highlighting the importance of **accessibility and inclusivity in knowledge systems at AIDL 2026**, reflecting the commitment of researchers and practitioners toward inclusive digital library initiatives. He also highlighted the importance of advancing accessibility and inclusivity within knowledge systems, particularly in libraries that serve as gateways to information for diverse communities. He noted that the presentation of around 50 research papers at the Accessible and Inclusive Digital Library (AIDL)–2026 Symposium reflects the growing commitment of researchers and practitioners toward developing technologies and practices that enhance access to information for individuals with various physical challenges. Emphasising the value of collaboration, he expressed confidence that the symposium would foster meaningful interactions and partnerships among participants, ultimately contributing to innovative solutions that promote a more inclusive and accessible knowledge ecosystem.

In his address, Guest of Honour Dr. Dipendra Manocha, Director, Developing Countries Program, DAISY Consortium, discussed the technological challenges faced by differently-abled individuals. He referred to the concept of “export quality” in India, explaining how advanced technologies often reach India after a delay, creating additional challenges for differently-abled users who depend on assistive technologies. He emphasized the importance of inclusiveness, particularly from the early stages of school education.

Prof Saket Asthana, Symposium Chair, in his welcome address, emphasized the importance of inclusive libraries in ensuring that knowledge reaches individuals with disabilities, underscoring libraries' continued role in society.

Dr. Bhojaraju Gunjal, Chief Library Officer and Convener, stated that AIDL–2026 seeks to move beyond discussions toward developing practical institutional strategies that ensure measurable progress in inclusive digital transformation. He emphasised the need for structured governance, technology integration, and sustained collaboration among stakeholders.

Prof. Ashok Kumar Pandey, Dean (Academic) and Patron of the Symposium, addressed the gathering and spoke about the institute, its courses, facilities, and achievements, including its NIRF ranking. Briefed about the significance of this event and highlighted its importance for the development. He also congratulated the library team on taking up this initiative to organise this event, considering the special sector of Accessibility and inclusive library services that can help the academic and research activities in the higher education domain

The AIDL–2026 Souvenir (Book of Abstracts) was formally released, and the exhibition showcasing assistive technologies and inclusive infrastructure solutions was inaugurated by the dignitaries.

Academic Deliberations and Technical Sessions: The symposium featured six thematic sessions across two days, comprising keynote lectures, panel discussions, research paper presentations, and product demonstrations Program Schedule - AIDL 2026

Assistive Tools and Technologies: The keynote address by Dr. Dipendra Manocha (DAISY Consortium) focused on AI-enabled accessibility frameworks, multimodal technologies, and scalable assistive solutions in academic libraries. Research papers in this session examined AI-powered assistive systems, personalization of library services for Divyangjan users, smart library ecosystems, and integration of speech and computer vision technologies for enhanced access.

Panel Discussion: An expert panel engaged in a structured discussion on institutional responsibility, ethical considerations in the use of AI, collaborative governance models, and accountability mechanisms for inclusive implementation within higher education institutions.

Designing Inclusive Library Spaces and Services: Keynote speakers Ms. Parul Kumtha (Universal Design Architect) and Ms. T.V. Aishwarya (Grailmaker Innovations) emphasized the application of universal design principles in both physical and digital library environments. Presentations addressed accessibility audits, inclusive infrastructure planning, culturally responsive digital interfaces, support systems for visually impaired and deaf users, and psychosocial dimensions of inclusive library services.

Community Engagement and Collaboration: This session highlighted collaborative models between academic libraries, public libraries, and community organizations. Case studies presented inclusive outreach initiatives, rural accessibility programs, digital learning interventions, and structured partnerships supporting diverse learner communities.

Accessible Media and Digital Platforms: Technical discussions examined WCAG implementation, AI-enabled institutional repositories, voice-activated applications for visually impaired users, sign language translation systems, and accessible publishing frameworks.

Policy, Legal Compliance, and Institutional Governance: The final thematic session addressed governance mechanisms under the RPwD Act, regulatory alignment challenges, copyright

implications for equitable access, and outcome-oriented inclusion governance models for academic libraries.

More than sixty research contributions were presented, reflecting diverse institutional experiences and emerging research trends in accessibility. Product demonstrations by academic publishers and technology providers further strengthened the practice-oriented dimension of the symposium
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Exhibition, Networking, and Cultural Engagement: The assistive technology exhibition provided participants with hands-on exposure to adaptive furniture solutions, accessibility software, digital publishing tools, and AI-enabled platforms. The cultural program, guided library tour, and networking sessions facilitated professional exchange and institutional collaboration among participants.

Valedictory Session and Key Outcomes: The valedictory session summarized the deliberations and highlighted key recommendations emerging from the symposium, including: Developing collections that serve the divyangjans and resources that are compliant with accessibility standards, by coordinating with publishers and other relevant vendors that meet the requirements for inclusive access.

Adoption of WCAG-compliant web standards: Integration of AI-enabled assistive technologies within library systems. Establishment of structured accessibility governance mechanisms in higher education institutions. Capacity-building initiatives for library and academic professionals for making an inclusive digital library across educational institutions.

The symposium concluded with a collective reaffirmation that accessibility must be embedded within institutional policy, infrastructure planning, and service delivery frameworks rather than treated as a standalone compliance requirement.

Way Forward: AIDL–2026 marks an important step toward building a structured national discourse on accessible and inclusive digital libraries. Based on the positive engagement and scholarly contributions, the organizing committee expressed its intent to continue AIDL as a recurring platform dedicated to strengthening inclusive knowledge infrastructure in India.

For further information:

<https://library.iith.ac.in/events/aidl2026/> Email: aidl2026.iith@gmail.com

About IIT Hyderabad:

IITH, established in 2008, has reached a respectable position in academics, research, technology development, and Start-ups in a short span of 17 years. In the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF-2025), IITH is ranked 7th among Engineering institutes (crossing a first-generation IIT this year), and is ranked 6th in Innovation, while it has maintained its rank within the top 10 Engineering Institutes ever since NIRF was launched. IITH is ranked 664th and 270th in the QS World and Asian University Rankings 2026, respectively (among the top 10% of global institutions in citations per faculty). IITH secured 46 positions by 31 faculties in the Global Top 2% Scientists World list 2025 released by Stanford University (SU) in collaboration with Elsevier across two categories. IITH has been striving for excellence with a motto of "Inventing & Innovating in Technology for Humanity (IITH)".

With 340+ full-time Faculty, 350+ non-teaching Staff and 5,760+ Students (PG+PhD students accounting for about 60%), IITH has a strong research focus with 5390+ R&D Projects worth of Rs. 1730 Cr (Rs. 335+ Cr funding in 2024-25, i.e. Rs. 1+ Cr per Faculty, one of the largest per capita

funding among IITs), 13,200+ Publications, 2,55,000+ Citations, 158 h-index, 710+ Patents (250 Patents in 2025, i.e., 0.75 patents per faculty in 2025, making it possibly the best Indian institute in terms patents filed per faculty in a year), and about 340+ Start-ups (that have generated 1100+ jobs with a revenue of Rs. 1500+ Cr).

KRC at IITH: The Knowledge Resource Centre (KRC) is a fully automated library equipped with Koha-based integrated library systems, RFID-enabled services, and extensive print and digital collections. The KRC recently relocated to its new state-of-the-art facility and continues to support Teaching-Learning and Research (TLR) activities with advanced digital infrastructure and inclusive service initiatives.

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