



# **‘STANDARDS TO INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY IN INDIA’**

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# What is ACCESS TO INFORMATION Accessibility? TECHNOLOGY REGARDLESS OF ABILITY OR DISABILITY

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## ▶ What does it mean

- Accessibility means enabling IT hardware, software and services to be used by people with physical limitations.
- Users affected by such limitations include people with disabilities, or the loss of hearing, eyesight or motor control due to aging.

## ▶ Motivation

- Almost 500 million people worldwide have some type of disability.
- According to the American Foundation for the Blind, approximately 1.5 million American computer users are blind or visually impaired.
- About 5.5% of the Web-surfing population is color blind, based on the proportion of the general public that is color blind.
- Approximately 420 million people worldwide are age 65 or older, and this number is expected to increase dramatically over the next two decades.



# ACCESSIBILITY IN INDIA – MOTIVATION

- **Physical disability**
  - About 60 million people with disability
  - 42.5% of the disabled population comprises women
  - 75% of persons with disabilities live in rural areas
- **Educational/Economic disability**
  - About 70% of India's population lives in villages
  - A large percentage of them are poor
  - Literacy is mainly limited to write their names, make signatures, read large hoardings
- **Low internet penetration**
  - Computer penetration is close to zero
  - People in remote areas not very comfortable in using computers




# ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS

- ◆ Inaccessible and unaffordable technologies
- ◆ Inaccessible web sites
- ◆ Unsupportive laws
- ◆ Lack of awareness
- ◆ Lack of accountability on the internet
- ◆ Interoperability
- ◆ Policy and Legislation
- ◆ Financial Resources not utilised



# UNCRPD

- ◆ Recognises that accessibility to information and services is vital for persons with disabilities to enjoy a complete inclusive and participatory life in society
  - ◆ Recognises accessibility on the internet as a fundamental element for persons with disabilities to exercise their rights
  - ◆ Art 9 requires all information technologies to be accessible to persons with disabilities
  - ◆ Various countries have recognised the need for accessibility, even before the coming into force of the UNCRPD and formulated laws and policies to give effect to this.
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# STANDARDS?

## Web standards

W3C, and the Web Standards Project (WaSP) along with other standards bodies, have established technologies for creating and interpreting web-based content. These technologies, which we call “web standards,” are carefully designed to deliver the greatest benefits to the greatest number of web users while ensuring the long-term viability of any document published on the Web.

## Policy Standards

- Appropriate legislation to honor the international agreements
- State level commitments
- Empowerment of bodies for corrective measures

## Resources Standards

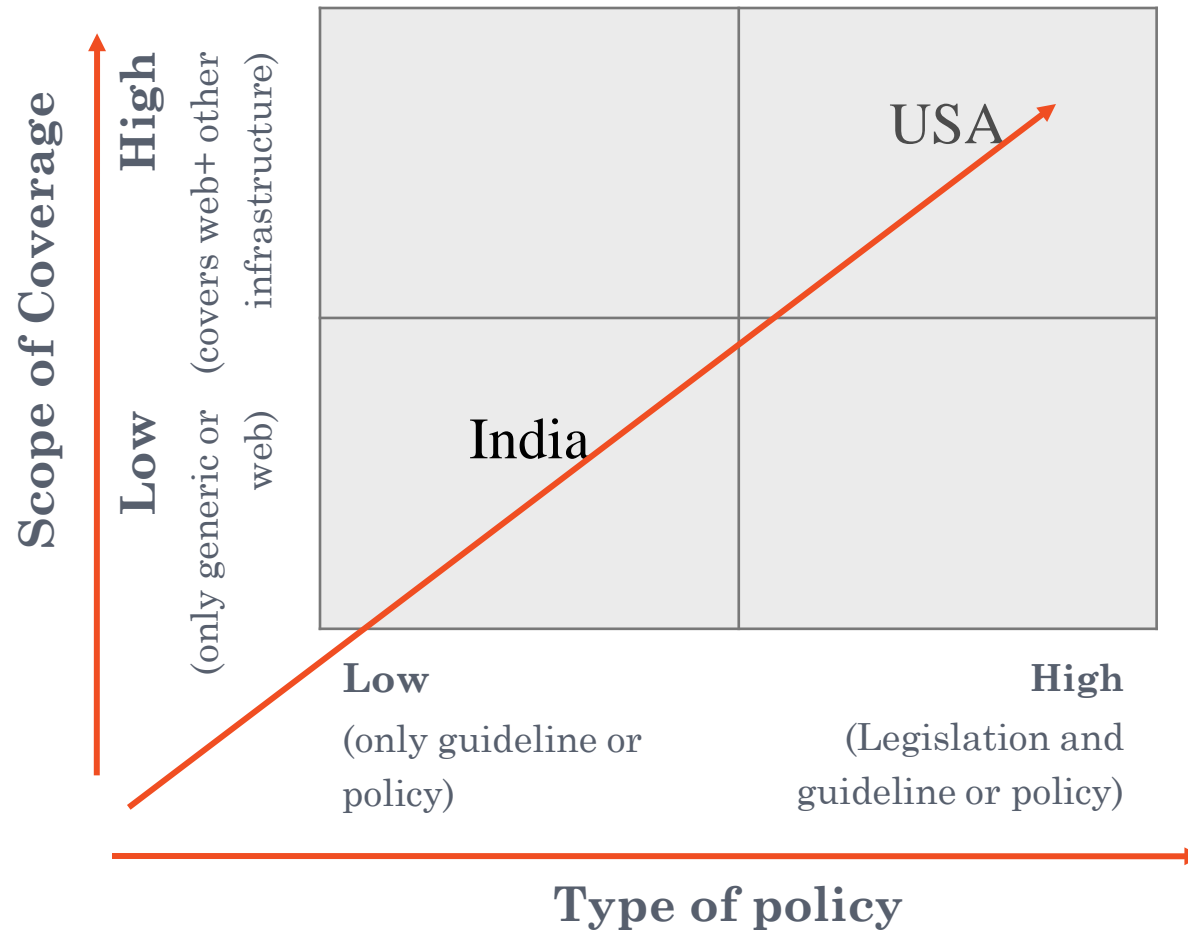
- Financial support to drive initiatives
- Long term strategy to cover the complex issues
- Financial flexibility/ empowerment with accountability
- Outcome based allocation



# ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES : INDIA


- Generic legislation – Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act 1995
  - No accessibility specific legislation or policy yet
  - Policy is work in progress government working with NGOs and disability rights groups to frame policy
- Signatory to both UNCRPD (2006) and Biwako Millennium framework towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for PWDs in Asia and the Pacific (2002)
- In absence of domestic law on accessibility, international conventions and norms are read into domestic law where they do not contradict enacted domestic law

# ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES: SUMMARY



- Chart depicting the position with respect to the types of accessibility policies (legislation vs. policy) and scope of coverage (whether only generic or web or covering other aspects of accessibility as well).

# POINTERS FOR A GOOD POLICY

- ◆ Futuristic
  - ◆ Interoperable with other policies
  - ◆ Leave room for modification
  - ◆ Unambiguous and clear in its mandate
  - ◆ Determine accountability
  - ◆ Ensure a smooth and effective mechanism for implementation and evaluation
  - ◆ Involve both the public and private sector
  - ◆ Have a definite time frame for implementation
  - ◆ Involve persons with disabilities in every stage of the policy formulation and implementation process
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Thank You !

