



World Autism Awareness Day

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April 2 is celebrated all over the the world as **World Autism Awareness Day** and April, the month for Autism awareness.

The theme of this year's Autism Awareness Day is **'Assistive Technologies, Active Participation'**.

Autism

- Autism can be defined as a **complex neurobehavioural condition which causes problems with language and communication skills**. It also causes a person to have repetitive and rigid behaviour.
- It is a complex brain development disability which makes itself **visible during the first 3 years of a person's life**.
- It is **not mental retardation** as people with autism may show excellent skills in spheres like art,music, writing etc.
- It is characterised by a range of symptoms and is thus **also known as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**.
- People with ASD show following **symptoms**
 - Failing to, or being slow to respond to someone calling their name,
 - **Echolalia (repeating the same phrase over and over),**
 - Repetitive movements, such as flapping hands, rocking back and forth, or flicking fingers,
 - limited interest in interacting with other people,
 - over- or under-sensitivity to sensory stimuli, such as sounds, smells, colours and lights,
 - Getting upset by slight changes in a routine etc.
- The causes of ASD are not known. Researchers suggest that both genes and environment play important roles.
- There is no cure for it but **therapeutic and behavioural guidance can considerably improve quality of life**.

- **In 2008, the United Nations General Assembly** unanimously declared **2nd April** as **World Autism Awareness Day**.
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), Sustainable Development Goals and Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 of India deal with rights of people with **disabilities including autism**.