

# A WORKSHOP ON SENSITIZATION AND AWARENESS ON DISABILITY FOR STAKEHOLDERS



## Program details and Schedule

- Organized by:** Department of Social work, Pondicherry University  
Satya Speical School, Pondicherry
- Supported by:** Awareness Generation Publicity Scheme  
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Govt. of India
- Venue:** Cultural Cum Conventional Hall, Pondicherry University, Pondicherry
- Date and time:** 25th July 2019 Thursday, 9 am to 4.30 pm

Time	Topic	Resource person
9 am to 9.30 am	Registration	
9.30 am to 11 am	Inauguration	
	Welcome Address	Ms. Chitra Shah, Director of Satya Special School
	Lighting the Lamp	
	Chief guest address	Honble. Mr. Kandasamy, Minister of Social Welfare, Government of Puducherry
	<b>Presidential Address</b>	Prof. S. Balakrishnan-Director, Studies, Educational Innovations & Rural Reconstruction, Pondicherry University.
	Vote of thanks	Dr. Nalini Ranganathan, Pondicherry University
<i>11 am to 11.15 am</i>	<i>Tea and Snacks</i>	
11.15 am to 12.00 pm	RPwD Act	Mr.A.M.Govind Rehabilitation Officer NIEPMD
12.00 pm to 12.45 pm	Disability Awareness	Ms. Chitra Shah, Director of Satya Special School
<i>12.45 p.m to 1.45 p.m</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	
1.45 p.m to 2.30 p.m	Social Work and Disability	Dr. Elamurugu, consultant (psychiatric social work)
2.30 pm to 3.15 pm	Accessibility	Dr. Victor John Cordeiro, Samartham Trust, Bangalore
	Self-advocacy	Dr. Sumitra Prasad, Dorai Foundation
3.15 pm to 4.30 pm	Life Span Approach from a sibling perspective	Ms. Saujanya – Special Sibling & An Expressive Art Therapist, Dorai Foundation

## Summary:

In partnership with the School of Social Science and International Studies, Dept. of Social Work, Pondicherry University, we organized a one day workshop on 25th July 2019 -Sensitization and Awareness on Disability for Stakeholders in a Cultural Cum Convention Center, Pondicherry University. The purpose of the workshop was to spread awareness and sensitize stakeholders especially students training to be Teacher and Nursing students. Around 270 participants attended the workshop. Mr. A. M. Govindraj, Rehabilitation Officer, NIEPMD, spoke on one of the keys focused earlier of the workshop was understanding the impact of RPWD Act, its implementation in the context of disability. It was honored to hear our director, Ms. Chitra Shah, Satya Special School Disability awareness in the categories of childhood disability, Skill training for disability, and impact on Special Olympics, Accessible Election, and other such on the disabled population. We are grateful for these people Dr. Elamurugu Manickam, consultant (Psychiatric social work), Dr. Victor John Cordeiro, Samartham Trust, Bangalore, Dr. Sumithra Prasad, Dorai Foundation, Ms. Saujanya-Sibling of the person with a disability. To have conducted special sensitizing the audience on social work and Disability, Psychosocial issues, Intervention, Disability Profile, Self-Advocacy, and Life Span Approach from a sibling perspective. Dr. Nalini Ranganathan, Pondicherry University concluded the session with a vote of thanks. The key takeaway for our participants was understanding the Rights of persons with disability and advocacy law for PwDs. They were inspired Hearing the Satya journey, and understood the depth of gap between the societal treatment of PwDs and their rights.

## Report of the sessions:

The workshop was a platform for various speakers to speak on different aspects of and obstacles leading to *sensitization and disability awareness for stakeholders*. The program was sponsored by Awareness Generation Publicity Scheme and Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Government of India.

**Ms. Chitra Shah**, Director of Satya Special School, in her welcome address she welcomed the Team of Mother Theresa Nursing Students, Pope John Paul college teacher training students, Immaculate college of teacher training students, Master of Social Work, Pondicherry University and NGO guests to the workshop. She went on to express how it was a great opportunity to have come together to share and understand the importance of *sensitization and disability awareness for stakeholders* and future teachers and medical practice staff who will one day see disability in the course of their work. She hoped all the participants taking part in the workshop will learn to contribute more meaningfully towards an inclusive society. She also appreciated the effort taken in by the team and staff at Pondicherry university to help in coordination of the workshop and their active contribution in working towards the welfare of the disabled community.



The chief guest **Prof. S. Balakrishnan** appreciated and valued Satya Special School's outstanding services to the special need children. He was pleased to participate in such an event of campaigning for *Disability Awareness*. He *thanked everyone on the dais and stated the importance of disability inclusion in education, and how novel methods of education were an important step in this direction.*



In her vote of thanks, **Dr. Nalini Ranganathan**, Faculty member, Department of Social Work, Pondicherry University, thanked all the distinguished speakers, special invitees and all the participants for their valuable presence that made the workshop a meaningful and stood as one platform to raise their advocacy for the betterment of the people with disabilities in and around Puducherry state. She specially thanked the University for its support and the members of the Department of Social work in making ensuring the event was a success. She promised to extend her support to Satya Special School towards making *disability awareness a reality*, and thanked all present.

## RPWD Act – Mr. A. M Govind



**Mr. A. M. Govind**, Rehabilitation Officer, NIEPMD spoke about RPWD Act and implementation of RPWD Act via NCSC (VRCH ) of Ministry of Labour, VTCs of NGOs (DDRC), DDRS, NHFDC, NGOs, Ministry of HRD, Rural/urban livelihood Mission, RCI, NT, National Institutes of DEPwD, Other Ministries of State Governments. RPWD Act 2016, Skill Development and employment, Fund Allocation, Establishment, Capacity Building of NGOs, DPOs, Partnership/Facilitator, economic Empowerment Initiatives, In-service Sensitization Program, Health & Family Welfare, Women & Child Welfare, Reports of RPWD Act 2016.

He started by explaining that the act aims to fulfill the country's obligation to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [UNCRPD] to which India is a signatory. The Act came into force from Dec 2016.

He explained how compassion towards people with disabilities is the way towards inclusion, rather than marginalize them. He said we have to help them get into the mainstream sections of our society. He explained how they are no less than any of us and all they require is little encouragement and love from us. He also expressed that many changes are still required to support such individuals by making all public and government establishments, educational institutions, etc., disabilities-friendly. He highlighted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 replaces the erstwhile Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995. The definition of 'person with disability' under the Disabilities Act, 2016 is an inclusive definition as opposed to the definition provided under the Disabilities Act, 1995 and includes 21 types of disabilities as 'specified disabilities'. The Disabilities Act, 1995 covered only 7 types of disabilities.

1. The majority of the obligations under the Disability Law are cast upon the appropriate government or local authorities.
2. Additional benefits such as the right to free education (between the age group of 6 and 18 years), reservation in education, government jobs, allocation of land, poverty alleviation schemes etc. have been provided for persons with benchmark disabilities.
3. Reservation in vacancies in government establishments has been increased from 3% to 4% for certain persons or classes of persons having disability.
4. For ensuring a speedy trial, special courts are to be constituted in each district to handle cases concerning violation of rights of persons with disabilities.

## Disability Awareness – Ms. Chitra Shah



**Ms. Chitra Shah**, Director of Satya Special School, spoke on disability with a practical real world view. She said there are more than one billion people with physical and mental disabilities in the world who overcome challenges every day. One of the biggest challenges is encountering other people, and interact with them. As a society, we are all different and must recognize the importance of acceptance.

An individual's disability can play a major role in his/her life: whether it's positive or negative. But overcoming the challenges and developing confidence is admirable on their part and vital from a social standpoint. . As a society, it is our duty to allow people with disabilities to experience a life they deserve. We are all different but very much alike at the same time.

The importance of disability awareness has been given prominence over the recent decades, making it easier for people with disabilities and the society to develop empathy for one another. Disability awareness helps in bringing down the stereotypical mindset of the society, hence providing vast opportunities for everyone to get involved in creating a positive, inclusive society for all.

1. 2.21 % of the population - 26 million – India 30,000 in Puducherry
2. 15 % of the World Population has atleast one disability
3. Only 8.5% - complete graduation
4. 57% are illiterate
5. By 2022 10 million differently-abled will be unemployed
6. 5 – 7 % loss in GDP

Furthermore, disability awareness implies educating the society regarding disability and how each person as an as an individual can bring about the necessary changes. Learning acceptance is fundamental of focus of disability awareness which and can take place anywhere such as at home, school, workplace, health institutes.

However, people are often discrimination towards people with disabilities which can lead to the undesirable outcomes for communities as a whole. Therefore, for a better future, we must try to minimize the discriminating culture and promote disability awareness through platforms for each and every individual, so that the foundations of empathy originates and helps in breaking social barriers.

Finally, disability awareness starts from home where the positive attitudes, values and customs are reinforced on a regular basis. Home is dear to everyone, a place of comfort and understanding towards every aspect of life. Teaching children about disability will help in breaking social barriers and allow a better, and more wholesome approach to inclusion of people with disabilities. The most essential factors when teaching children about the importance of accepting disability as part of the diversity and with empathy.

## Social Work and Disability – Dr. Elamurugu, Consultant (Psychiatric Social work)



**Mr. Elamurugu**, Consultant (Psychiatric Social work)-Social work and Disability, He spoke about Disability Profile, Psychosocial Issues, Psychosocial Management, Process of relating to a person with disabilities, Intervention, Spectrum of Interventions.

A disability social worker plays the role of of a healthcare social worker who not only works on social issues, bur also works towards helping people with physical and mental disabilities cope with the challenges in their daily lives. Each impairment and the severity of their disability brings with it unique and different problems .

He talks about the scope of practice of social work in the disability field, In all contexts, social workers focus on individual, family, career and community strengths and needs, and working collaboratively to support people to achieve the lives they want.

. He talked about the process of relating to a person with disabilities such as be friendly, be warm, be with the PWDs, be honest open and clear, avoid flooding of advice, accept and respect the person with disabilities. Social workers also provide specialist expertise in addressing the psychosocial aspects of:

1. The impact of disability
2. Abuse, neglect and family violence
3. Mental health, including carrier issues of chronic sorrow and depression associated with grief and loss; individual and family adjustment to diagnosis; and disability, and psychogeriatric issues.
4. Complex family dynamics and limited social supports
5. Homelessness or inappropriate accommodation
6. Addressing and resolving traumatic experiences and crisis.
7. Addressing transition points in people's lives

He explained how social workers offer a unique contribution by providing appropriate and targeted services to meet the whole of life needs of people with disability. He also mentioned this multi-focused approach includes knowledge of human functioning and behavior, and how socio-economic, legal and cultural factors interact and impact to produce the stigma, discrimination, marginalization and social isolation experienced by many individuals with a disability and their families.

## **Self-Advocacy – Dr. Victor John Cordeiro, Samartham Trust, Bangalore**

**Dr. Victor John Cordeiro**, Samartham Trust, Bangalore. He spoke about Self-Advocacy, definitions, types, Advocacy strategies, tactics, planning framework, advocacy, principles/values, stages, a chronology of self-advocacy movement of a person with disabilities. He explained what self advocacy is And explained how for millions of people with disabilities around the world, self-advocacy leads to personal identity, focusing on one's political power and right to self-determination. It is also a civil rights movement that represents individuals of all races, colors, and religions who have been systematically neglected, abused, incarcerated, and misunderstood for most of history. He mentioned the foundation of self advocacy lies in Empowerment, Equal opportunity, Learning and living together and Non-labelling and this is possible if each person works with the following Beliefs and Values of Self Advocacy:

1. Being a person first
2. Making our own decision
3. Believing in my value as a person
4. Having other people believe in you as a person

The self-advocacy movement has redefined the disability problem as being less about rehabilitation and more about equality. The Society said that persons with developmental disabilities must change to fit into society; they have said no, it's a society that must change their attitudes and practices and accept us.

One way that self-advocates have redefined the disability problem is through reclaiming the language used to describe them. If a disability is important in describing someone, it should be secondary to the person. Rather than disabled people, self-advocates prefer people with disabilities. Better yet, don't mention the disability at all unless it's relevant to the situation. People first become just people.

## **Self-Advocacy – Dr. Sumithra Prasad, DORAI Foundation**

**Dr. Sumitra Prasad**, DORAI Foundation, Self-Advocacy, she shared her own son experience. She talked and differentiated the term Advocacy and Self-Advocacy. Her view is that advocacy is acting, speaking or writing to promote, protect and defend the human rights of people. Self-advocacy on the other hand refers to an individual's ability to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his or her own interests, desires, needs, and rights. For people with



disabilities, self-advocacy involves making decisions for themselves and standing up for their rights. Self-advocacy is also about people helping themselves to get what they need and or want. It often very powerful and satisfying when people are able to have their voices heard and accomplish positive change on their own behalf.

Dr. Sumitra Prasad explained about another important strategy for teaching your child to self-advocate is to help a child understand his or her rights and responsibilities as an individual with disability. It is important that he or she is aware of what is acceptable and not acceptable in terms of treatment, access, services, etc. It is also important to teach children how to verbalize and communicate his or her concerns and ask for help in the event of unfair

treatment, or violations of their human rights. She added that the importance of Disability advocacy was as follows:

- Providing information to people with disability about their human rights and identifying instances of discrimination.
- Assisting people with disability to uphold their rights by speaking with and writing to people and organizations to raise awareness of problems and seek solutions.
- Helping people with disability negotiate complaints processes or legal action to enforce their human rights.
- Writing submissions and lobbying government to make changes that promote and protect the rights of people with disability.
- Campaigning for social change by speaking to the media to raise awareness and highlight situations where people with disability are treated unfairly.

Throughout history, people with disability have been hidden away or subjected to abuse, ignorance and prejudice. The power of disability advocacy over the past century has radically shifted thinking to recognize the rights of all people with disability to live in the community, with choices equal to others.

## SIBLING – Saujana Prasad



**Saujana Prasad**, Dorai Foundation, spoke about Life span approach from a sibling perspective, Saujana is a Special Sibling & An Expressive Art Therapist. She spoke about an understanding of the Relationship, Developing Healthy Communication, Caregiver's Burnout and how to overcome it? Effective Overall Family-based Rehabilitation, Reflect on the importance of Sibling Relationships, Responsibility towards one another.

She raised some questions like:

1. Who is a Special Sibling?
2. What are the responsibilities?
3. Who is an Unworthy or a Negative sibling?

She mentioned the following key points when referring to the importance of Sibling Relationship:

- A sibling of a person with special needs is just as special.
- They're often neglected or overburdened.
- The relationship is as unique as clouds in the sky.
- One doesn't have a roadmap you just keep evolving

- Chances to feel misunderstood and stand alone.
- Learn the coping mechanisms that can help overcome relationship straining situations and lighten the stress.
- Importance of Inter communication and Intra Communication
- Need to perceive the Challenges of Excessive Responsibility as a Personality Strengthening Experience rather than a burden.
- Connect with other Siblings and share your Concerns in order to have mutual sharing of Accommodations and Adaptable Measures
- Facilitating Supported Decision Making with a combination of Support Services for a holistic Living
- Feel Special in your Heart, Mind and Soul because Destiny chose You to be a Special Sibling.

## **Feedback:**

Participants felt the clarity of presentation was good and adequate. The content of the sessions were accurately described in the schedule and sufficient time was given to each of the topics covered. Content was perceived as relevant and useful, and their level of knowledge on the topics increased after the sessions, and they felt they had learned something new,

*"Ready to serve people and get trained to handle PwD. Interested to develop the interaction program and standardize the modular training program"*  
 ~ **Participant.**

## **Conclusion:**

Ms. Chitra Shah, Dr. Elamurugu Manickam, Dr. Victor John Cordeiro, Dr. Sumitra Prasad impressed upon us that it is crystal clear why this issue is so important but while the object itself of raising awareness for persons with disabilities is straightforward we have many tasks ahead of us in order to achieve it.

If we are to succeed we must take a multi-directional approach involving many stakeholders. We must include persons with disabilities in all aspects of awareness-raising as they are some of the best ambassadors for changing attitudes.

Importance of disability awareness is said to constitute a positive approach towards people with disabilities. There are millions of people dealing with some form of disability and it's our duty to help make their lives a better one, by contributing and promoting awareness through all types of medium to amplify our voice. We, the Impact team, strongly believe in empowering people with disabilities so that they are willing to learn and explore different concepts on their own.