

Indraprastha College for Women
Equal Opportunity Cell & Enabling Unit

Annual Report 2016-2017

Equal Opportunities Cell (EOC) and Enabling Unit (EU) of Indraprastha College for Women strives to cater to the needs of students with disabilities enrolled in various courses both — Undergraduate and Postgraduate — programmes of the College. The primary aim of EU and EOC is to provide accessible means and create barrier-free environment for students with disabilities enrolled in the College. The work carried out by EU and EOC receives constant encouragement from the college administration. The college theme of the year 2014-2015, "Visibility of Disability: Issues of Access", consciously crafted by the Principal, is in itself a testimony to the value attached to the creation of disabled friendly environment. It is worth mentioning that designating the college theme around disability and accessibility is the first-of-its kind initiative in the history of the institution. In pursuance of that theme with its concerted and sincere efforts Indraprastha College for Women was selected for the 6th National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People , Mphasis Universal Design Award 2015 under the category : Companies/Organizations.

Ms. Jaya Mishra (Coordinator, Enabling Unit) and Dr. Shubhra Seth (Convenor , Equal Opportunity Cell), and other members in the EOC: Dr. B.R Alamelu, Mr. Vijay Gautam (the Librarian) and Ms. Vimala Parihar have all been working tirelessly towards taking forward and realizing this vision of the college.

Services and Facilities

EU and EOC of the college conducted an orientation programme for the Semester I new entrants on August 10, 2016. Dr. Bipin Tiwary, Officer on Special Duty in the Equal Opportunity Cell of University of Delhi, participated as the Chief Guest and detailed the facilities available for students with disabilities both at the University level and in all Colleges affiliated to the University of Delhi. The first semester students were then taken for an access tour of the College by the Convenor EOC with a view to orienting them with the accessibility features of the institution.

Like every year, a fifteen-day Mobility Training Programme was arranged for students with visual impairment in the beginning of the in August 2016. Mr. Anil Kumar, a Mobility Instructor trained the students in free and comfortable mobility around the college.

Mr. Lalan Kumar was appointed as Computer Instructor on contractual basis — during both the semesters in the academic year 2016-17 to train, enable and enhance students with Visual Impairment in computer skills. The College now conducts an in house skill test for all VH students to gauge their levels of computer proficiency. The students have themselves appreciated the initiative as they are today much more confident in their computer skills.

Notebooks/Laptops given to students with visual impairment are well equipped with Lex scanning/reading software, Hindi Optical Character Recognition (OCR Professional), a licensed version of Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) and Braille Face. These softwares are also installed in the notebooks/Laptops that came along with the Lex Air Camera, which are made available in the Enabling Unit/ Library for use during the working hours.

Angel Pro Talking Digital Pocket Daisy Players of advanced version were distributed on a returnable basis to students with visual impairment to assist them in recording their classroom lectures and to help them have easy access to the study material available in audio and DAISY formats.

Braille Printer in the Enabling Unit was made fully functional, and students with visual impairment can now freely opt for the conversion of their printed study material into Braille Script. Also Braille books for students with visual impairment in B.A Programme Courses and Non-Credit English were purchased and made available in the library.

Braille maps have been ordered and will be available for the use from the academic session beginning in July 2017.

Devnagiri — an Hindi OCR — has been procured and installed in the computers of the Enabling Unit especially for the benefit of those students with visual impairment who are pursuing various courses in Hindi medium.

The EOC, Convenor, besides being available on all week days in person, also conducted meetings for students with disabilities every fortnight in the Enabling Unit. A common email id was created and all students were encouraged to communicate through the same for information dissemination. The weekly meetings proved to be a great platform for information sharing, to hear grievances and to find out quick solutions. Students with disabilities were made aware of various scholarships, Government schemes run to support their studies and important college events.

The college arranged free transportation for all the students with disabilities to travel back to their destinations during the winter month examinations.

In strict compliance with the directions of UGC, the College made a provision for the allotment of an extra 20 minute time per hour to all students who employed scribes to assist them in writing the exams.

Ms. Raksha Gupta (B.A Hons. Political Science, III Year), was awarded the most meritorious physically challenged student for the academic year 2015-2016.

ACTivities: Highlights

The College during CBCS online admissions introduced by the University of Delhi for the academic year 2016-17 made online payment of 'token fees' for every PwD student admitted thereby completing their admission process under one roof in the Enabling Unit from June to August 2016.

A one-day workshop and awareness campaign titled, "Welfare Schemes for Persons with Disabilities" was organised in August 2016, wherein Ms. Vandna Mishra from Pandit Deen Upadhyaya Institute for the Physically Handicapped (PDUIPH) acting as the key resource person, introduced to the PwD participants the Programmes and Schemes for Persons with Disabilities under Government of India. Also various activities and schemes of PDUIPH functioning as a key institution with Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, were presented to the students.

The Student's Union 2016-17 in September 2016 warmly welcomed the addition of two members from PwD students in the larger spirit of inclusion and equitable representation of the student community. As one of their novel initiatives the team of PwD students and the Convenor, EOC prepared the 'College Canteen Menu in Braille.'

Vasundhara Raturi, our Visually Handicapped (VH) student from B.A Hons, Music, Semester I created a historical moment for the College and a landmark for the University of Delhi by taking her Semester Examinations (November-December 2016) on computer. The College provided her with all the required infrastructural and technical support much appreciating her decision of taking examinations without any assistance from a scribe.

Two of our visually challenged students won a competition organized by All India Confederation of the Blind (AICB). This competition was sponsored by CMB/Marga Schulze Foundation, Germany giving visually challenged female students a chance to win laptops with screen reader through a computer based skill test. The shortlisted candidates appeared for the skill test on December 11, 2016 and out of 20 selected candidates from the All India level test two of our students are amongst the winners. Soni Tomar,

B.A Hons. Political Science, Semester IV and Raksha Gupta, B.A Hons. Political Science, Semester VI. Both the students were awarded laptops at a function organized on the occasion of birth anniversary of Louis Braille on January 4, 2017 at AICB.

The visually challenged students visited in February 2017 Anubhav Tactile Gallery in National Museum, a novel initiative and first of its kind museum in the country. The college for the second year in a row visited the Anubhav Tactile Gallery where accompanied by faculty and alumna (Ms.Renu Nawani), the students had the experience to touch and feel certain artefacts dating back to as early as the Harappan civilization. By touching the selected sculptures and paintings the students acquainted themselves with various cultures and visited the pages of history just as sighted people. The information in Braille tabs, the pre- recorded audio guide made available to each visitor in English and Hindi and the committed volunteers who answered each and every query of the students made the visit a classroom of holistic learning.

'Samarthya' – an Annual Cultural Fest of Equal Opportunity Cell and Enabling Unit of our College – was held on March 7, 2017. It began with the Principal's introductory remarks followed by an inspiring lecture delivered by Mr. George Abraham , CEO, Score Foundation. He spoke on the topic, "Transforming Lives: Access and Digital Technology " which yet again reiterated the effort by the College on the continued theme, "Visibility of Disability: Issues of Access".

Creative writing competition received wide participation from several colleges, folk song competition and short plays on myriad social issues were presented. More than 170 PwD students of various colleges affiliated to University of Delhi actively participated in 'Samarthya-2017' and appreciated the event organization.

All round the year students have been encouraged to participate in various cultural and sporting events conducted by other colleges of University of Delhi and several of them stood as winners in various categories. From creative writing, to self composed poetry, singing, radio show anchoring and short play our students have humbled us by their immense talent and creativity.

In April 26, 2017 a workshop on Android Technology and Testing of Android Application (Lecture Hall) was held for our Visually Challenged students by Dr.Archana Singhal and Ms. Ritu Singhal from the department of Computer Science , IP College.

The coordinators of Equal Opportunity Cell and Enabling Unit wish to place on record their sincere appreciation for the committee members and other co-opted members for their cooperation throughout the year in translating our goals into concrete actions.

None of the events briefly highlighted above would have been possible without the kind assistance, wise guidance and the firm support of our Principal and her administrative staff. The Equal Opportunity Cell and the Enabling Unit owe special thanks to the office of the Principal and other administrative staff for their constant help.

Detailed EOC Representation/Participation in various events and workshops in 2016-2017 at a glance.

Recommendations

- An attempt should be made to create an inclusive academic forum to meet and discuss disability issues, create awareness about disability through the screening of films, documentaries, etc.
- An attempt should be made to label the classrooms and other important places with Braille Signboards.
- It is suggested that a Sound Indicator be installed in the College main gate, so that the students with visual impairment can easily recognise the location of the College and make an easy entry.
- An attempt should be made to organize a two-day National Conference to academically deliberate the issues of disability, with a particular focus on women with disabilities.
- The publication of Magazine carrying exclusively the creative writings/views of students with disabilities should be considered. This can be planned as an inter-college publication and circulated widely in accessible formats.
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Ms. Jaya Mishra

Dr. Shubhra Seth

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