

**Indraprastha College for Women**  
**Equal Opportunity Cell & Enabling Unit**

**Annual Report 2018-19**

Indraprastha college for Women, University of Delhi is unique as it is one of the oldest constituent colleges of the University serving the cause of women empowerment through higher education. Besides the above, the College also has a special place for students with disabilities. Accordingly, the College has instituted the Enabling Unit to cater to the students with special needs. In line with the UGC guidelines, the enabling Unit works in close coordination with the equal Opportunity Cell.

The Equal Opportunity cell (EOC) and the Enabling Unit (EU), with the active support and constant encouragement from the College administration, have been working as a support system offering for students with disabilities all services under one-roof. In an endeavour to provide a barrier-free campus, the College keeps accessibility as one of the priorities. In recognition to the efforts the College has made in the areas of accessibility and universal design, thanks to the visionary leadership of the current Principal who took the issues of disability services and accessibility to the forefront, the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) and Mphasis (a multi-national company) selected the College for NCPEDP-Mphasis Universal Design Award 2015 in the category of the best institution providing barrier-free environment.

It is quite satisfying to note that the college has admitted a total of 21 students with disabilities: 15 in Under Graduation and 6 in Post-graduation programmes for the academic year 2018-19. Among the students admitted, there is also a student with Specific Learning Disability (SLD) — a disability newly recognised under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.

In line with the larger vision of the College, the EOC&EU every year conduct various programmes such as: seminars, skill development workshops, cultural events, training and orientation programmes for students with disabilities enrolled in the college. In the academic year 2018-19 we also conducted online courses to build employability skills of students with disabilities. The eOC&EU invited some of the distinguished guests to interact with the College

community on issues of disability, rehabilitation, education and employment for persons with disabilities. Given below is a summary report of some of the major events, distinct facilities and services run under EOC&EU in the academic year 2018-19.

### **Facilities and Services:**

The College has a well-equipped a special computer unit for students with disabilities. The unit contains six PCs, braille printer, a flat-bed scanner and Lex Air Camera (a photo scanner) and a LaserJet printer, all to assist the students with visual disabilities in their day-to-day educational requirements. Students with visual disabilities are also issued notebooks/laptops and Angel Pro DAISY Players on returnable basis. The college freely supplies braille sheet for students with visual disabilities to be able to take class notes in braille script. The college arranges free transportation for all the students with disabilities to travel back to their destinations during the winter month examinations.

The coordinator, Enabling Unit has in the beginning of the academic session conducted a need-based assessment test and accordingly designed a syllabus for computer training sessions to be run subsequently. Mr. Ram Sharan sahu was appointed as Computer Instructor on contractual basis during the odd and even semesters in the academic year 2018-19 to conduct the customised computer training sessions in order to assist the students with visual disabilities who generally come with different levels of skill sets. Periodic assessment tests were conducted to test the progress of the students. The College every semester conducts an in-house skill test for all VH students to gauge their levels of computer proficiency. Three students who joined the College last year, having no knowledge of Hindi language typing, could type their assignments in Hindi on their own at the end of the Semester. The students have themselves appreciated the initiative as they are today much more confident in their computer skills. More students are gradually preparing themselves to take University Examination on computer without the help of any scribe. An effort much supported and encouraged by the College Principal and faculty alike.

Ours is one of the first few colleges in the University of Delhi to have obtained a special braille atlas of India (two copies) designed and circulated by National Atlas and Thematic Mapping Organisation (NATMO), Kolkata in an effort to introduce the same to the students with visual disabilities in the College and orient them with the geographic terrane of the country.

Coordinator, Enabling Unit and Convener, EOC, besides being available on all weekdays in person, also conduct meetings for students with disabilities every week in the Enabling Unit. The weekly meetings proved to be a great platform for information sharing, to hear grievances and to find out quick solutions.

The EOC and EU now have an email ID created in the College domain. The email ID is: eoceu@ip.du.ac.in. The entire official communication relating to EOC and EU is being rooted through the email ID, and all the stakeholders are communicating accordingly.

As a new initiative in the academic year 2018-19, the EOC and EU in collaboration with the College NSS made two NSS volunteers available from 2:30-3:30 PM on all working days in the Enabling Unit. The NSS volunteers assist the needy students with visual disabilities in all their reading and writing tasks. Ms. Archana Mina from the library has also been available from 2:30-3:30 PM in the Enabling Unit to facilitate issuing and returning of books and other equipment's.

It is a matter of encouragement to note that Ms. Santoshi Kumari, B.A Political Science III year Hons and Ms. Purnima Singh, B.A Political Science II year Hons were elected as President and Vice President of Enabling Unit and played an active role in the College Student Union.

The EOC and EU in the beginning of the academic year invited the presidents of all societies in the college to interact with students with disabilities. This facilitation meeting enabled a large number of students with disabilities to enrol in the societies of their interest.

In strict compliance with the directions of UGC, the College makes 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.

It is a matter of immense satisfaction that the college administration takes every possible effort to facilitate external funding to support students with disabilities. In the academic year 2018-19, Help the blind foundation, a Non-Governmental Organisation that offers financial support to the deserving students with visual disabilities across the country, selected a total of 46 students with visual disabilities from the College for their scholarship and sanctioned them a total of Rs.6,31,500/- (rupees six lakh thirty-one thousand and five hundred only). Additionally, All India Confederation of the Blind also offered a merit-based scholarship for 20 students with visual disabilities. Ms. Vasundhara Raturi, a student of III year Music Hons, is the recipient of most meritorious award for the academic year 2018-19. The EOC&EU also feel glad to report

that Ms. Purnima Singh and Ms. Jyoti Gupta grabbed the meritorious awards at the department level, competing with all their peers. It needs to be mentioned without fail that a humongous task of managing the documentation and carrying out the correspondence on time required for the timely sanction of above mentioned support would not have been possible without the diligent work of Ms. Dolly Jain, the current coordinator of EOC.

## **Human Resource Development**

Dr. BR. Alamelu, a faculty in the Department of English (and also currently Coordinator, Enabling Unit in the College) teaches a 6-credit course titled: 'Communication for Special Needs' for the students of BMMMC, Semester-VI. Ms. Ritu Panda — a qualified trainer in Sign Language — takes classes on Indian Sign Language. It is a matter of pride that IP College is the first institute of higher education in the country to have offered a full course on disability in general and special communication needs in particular at the undergraduate level. The first and second batches of students enrolled for the course have had inspiring testimonies to offer. Along with a carefully designed, textual introduction and analysis of disability, the students had hands-on instruction in Braille, Indian Sign Language, white cane mobility and other accessible modes of communication deployed predominantly by persons with disabilities.

## **Events in the Academic Year 2018-19**

EU and EOC of the college conducted the annual Orientation Programme for the Semester I new entrants on August 10, 2018. Students were first briefed about all library facilities which include: Braille books, scanning facility, issuing of Braille sheets, book bank facility etc. The Convenor of EOC and Coordinator of EU took all the participants for an accessible College tour, wherein the new entrants were detailed the accessibility features of the college and techniques of easy navigation around.

Like every year, a fifteen-day Mobility Orientation Programme was conducted for students with visual disabilities of Semester I from 06 August to 24 August 2018. Mr. Anil Kumar, a certified professional in Mobility Orientation for persons with visual disabilities, conducted the said training and offered students with visual disabilities a detailed orientation in the accessible navigation around the College.

A group of students from Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi, visited the College on 07 September 2018 to learn about the accessible environment in the college which they wanted to introduce at their end. The EOC and EU facilitated the same and took them to a College tour.

The EOC and EU organised a fifteen-day self-defence skills workshop for students with disabilities in collaboration with the Special Police Unit for Women and children, Delhi Police, from 18 September 2018 to 01 October 2018. Ms. Bharti, a Head Constable deputed by the Delhi Special Police conducted the training sessions. On the successful completion of the workshop, each student also received a certificate of participation.

The EOC and EU facilitated the students with visual disabilities of the College to attend an audio-described accessible film screening of Sholay organised by Saksham in collaboration with Sapient and Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The screening was on 29 September 2018. The students who attended the film screening enjoyed every bit of the movie as it was well-depicted through audio commentary by accessibility professionals.

The EOC and EU organised a two-day inter-college, Career Awareness and Job Opportunities workshop on 31 October 2018 and 01 November 2018, wherein a total of 60 participants from across the colleges of University of Delhi took an active part. While Help the Blind Foundation extended part-funding, the college bore rest of the funding. Ms. Deepti Natarajan, Mr. Vinayak and Mr. Narendra were invited from the Enable India, Bangalore as resource persons for the workshop. Participants were demonstrated a range of latest assistive devices which include: talking blood pressure monitors, talking weighing scales, colour recognisers, tactile mapping devices, special call mixtures used by screen reader users, etc. All the participants were given a set of special Softwares designed exclusively for the screen reader users to learn English and computer applications through hands-on self learning. At the end of the workshop, the participants were presented with the certificates of participation duly authorised by the College Principal, Help the blind Foundation and enable India representatives.

In a special project undertaken for a period of one month from 15 November 2018, a large amount of audio-recorded material lying unused for several years has been converted from 346 Compact discs (CDs) into digital format. The reading material can now be used using Personal Computers and Mobile Phones.

Two students with visual disabilities from the College — Ms. Arti (B.A Hindi Hons Semester IV) and Ms. Purnima Singh (B.A Political Science Semester IV) — have been selected to receive Apple MacBooks given away by Concor India Limited under their CSR initiative. These students were among a few meritorious students selected across the colleges and departments of University of Delhi. The Programme, coordinated by Society for Disability and

Rehabilitation Studies and Disability Studies Programme of Jawaharlal Nehru University, was held on 12 December 2018.

The EOC and EU organized a talk and interaction titled, 'Smarter and Wiser: Diversity in the Corporate Sector Employment' by Ms. Meera Shenoy on 18 January 2019. Ms. Shenoy is the founder-CEO of Youth for Jobs — an organization that received global acclaim in a short span of time for its phenomenal success in skilling persons with disabilities (with a focus on underprivileged, rural youth) and placing them in industry. Her organization has received national Award for the empowerment of persons with disabilities (2018), presented by the President of India in last December.

The EOC and EU organised a special workshop on Braille Atlas on 01 February 2019 in the premises of Enabling Unit. Dr. BR. Alamelu, the Coordinator of the Enabling Unit took a lead and conducted the workshop. A total of 41 students with visual disabilities took part in the workshop. While quite a few of the participants have had the experience of using braille map, a large number of them didn't have any idea about it. The workshop, therefore, focused on basics and provided participants with necessary guidelines to use the map for the purposes of their studies in the future. In addition to the said workshop, the NATMO braille atlas was also used to orient the students of in a course titled: "Communication for Special Needs", a course offered as part of Bachelors in Multi-Media and Mass Communication.

Like every year, the EOC and EU conducted Samarthya, its Annual Cultural Fest on 05 March 2019. The Principal inaugurated the fest and offered her introductory remarks. Shri Prasanna Kumar Pincha, currently Special Rapporteur for Persons with Disabilities in the National Human Rights Commission, Government of India, and also formerly the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Government of India, graced the event as the chief guest. Mr. Pincha delivered a talk titled, 'Disability Policy and Legislative Framework: Challenges in Implementation', which received accolades from the audience. As part of the Fest, three inter-college events viz, debate, folk singing competition and play competition were conducted. Around 250 students with disabilities from various colleges of University of Delhi took an active part and made the fest a great success.

The EOC and EU in collaboration with the Placement Cell (Jeet) of the College facilitated a group of III year students to participate in a Mega Job fair organised by the Department of Social work, University of Delhi, and Blind Relief Association in collaboration with the society for Human welfare and empowerment on 12 March 2019. The College provided free

transportation to the participants to attend the Job Fair. Out of eight 3RD YEAR students who attended the Fair from our College, four have been selected in various companies. Since each student has been selected for more than one company, the total number of placements goes upto seven. A detailed list of the placements is provided below.

S.No.	Student Name	Department	Disability type	Company
1.	Ms. Varnita Sengar	B. Com	PD	Telewares
2.				B-ABLE
3.	Ms. Surbhi	B.A History	PD	Rogar Ayurvedic
4.				Navjyoti
5.	Ms. Bina Kumari Chauhan	B.A Political Science	PD	Rogar Ayurvedic
6.				B-ABLE
7.	Ms. Jyoti	B.A Programme	VD	Rogar Ayurvedic

As it has been the practice for the last two years, the College observed the World Autism Awareness Day on 02 April 2019. The College joined the world community in sensitising and creating awareness about autism spectrum disorder by wearing blue.

The EOC and EU arranged on 05 April 2019 a visit of students with visual disabilities to Anubhav Tactile Gallery in the National Museum, a novel initiative and first of its kind in the country. The students were accompanied by faculty and NSS volunteers. The students have had the experience of touching and feeling 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. The information in Braille tabs, the pre- recorded audio guide made available to each visitor in English and Hindi and the committed volunteers made the visit a memorable experience.

The EOC and EU organised farewell for the out-going students with disabilities on 24 April 2019. The Principal and other functionaries attended the meeting and wished the students a

great success in their future careers. Recalling their experience in the College, the out-going students thanked the College Administration for their unstinting support.

### **Skilling Initiatives and Achievements**

In an effort to build the employability skills of students with disabilities in general and students with visual disabilities in particular, the EOC and EU took a special initiative and collaborated with Arise Impact — an NGO founded by Mr. Abhishek Syal, a MBA Graduate from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA — that offered a plethora of online courses for students with disabilities in the academic year 2018-2019. Ms. Bhavika kohli, Associate Head of Arise Impact, Delhi Operations, and also a member of United Nations Global Volunteering Team, acted as a resource person for the online courses offered. A total of four online courses were offered, for each of which the interested students were divided into small groups. The details of the courses are given below:

Title of the Course	Duration	No. of students
Professional Introduction	27/09/2018-07/11/2018	5
Resume Building	28/02/2019-02/04/2019	5
Professional Development	28/02/2019-14/04/2019	12
Professional Introduction and Interview skills	28/02/2019-23/04/2019	15

The said courses were offered through WhatsApp study group, wherein students were provided with the reading material in accessible medium instantaneously. Face-to-face contact classes were also held on a weekly basis so as to obtain the student progress and clarify doubts. Certificates of course completion were distributed to the students who completed the course (1) Professional Introduction (27 September-7 November 2018) and 2) Professional Introduction and Interview Skills (28 February-23 April 2019). The Principal distributed the first set of certificates on 15 February 2019 and the second of certificates on 24 April 2019.

It is a matter of pride that a good number of students with disabilities secured jobs in both Government and corporate sectors in the academic year 2018-2019. While there were seven placements in the corporate sector, two students were selected for the Indian Railways.



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. The Equal Opportunity Cell and the Enabling Unit owe special thanks to the office of the Principal and other administrative staff.

Ms. Dolly Jain

Convener

Equal Opportunity Cell

Dr. BR. Alamelu

Coordinator

Enabling Unit