

Conference

on

Interrogating Disability: Theory and Practice

A three day conference on **Interrogating Disability: Theory and Practice** was held at IDSK in order to explore the varied issues within the field of disability, from problematizing the ways in which disability is conceptualised to understanding the everyday lived experience of disabled people in a society that is largely geared for able bodied people through structures that are exclusionary and discriminatory. Delivering the welcome address on 27th September 2012, Professor Amiya Kumar Bagchi, Director IDSK spoke of the diversity of disability and impairment and the fact that all people stand the risk of becoming disabled at any point of their lives. Thus all people may be termed as TABs or Temporarily Able Bodied. Dr. Nandini Ghosh, Convenor of the Conference highlighted the fact that such academic social science conferences on disability are a rarity in India and hence it was a pleasure to be able to host such a path breaking conference at IDSK. The keynote address was delivered by Professor Anita Ghai of Jesus Mary College, New Delhi. She spoke about Disability Studies as a discipline which has been ignored by academic departments in India and relegated to the position of a marginalised and marginal area of study. She talked about the possibilities of disability studies research adding to the existing body of knowledge and theory and advocated for a robust theory of disability that can be used in the Indian context. The other speakers in the conference included Professor Maitreyee Bardhan Roy, Principal, Basanti Devi College, Professor Achin Chakraborty of IDSK, Dr. Renu Addlakha of Centre for Women's Development Studies, New Delhi, Dr. Jagdish Chander of Hindu College, University of Delhi, Dr. Tanmoy Bhattacharya of University of Delhi, Dr. Rajib Bhattacharyya of University Law College, Guwahati University, Dr. Lakshmi Radhakrishnan of Lady Sriram College for Women, New Delhi, Dr. Madhura Nagchoudhuri of Centre for Disability Studies and Action, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Dr. Shilpaa Anand of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, Dr. Daniel M. of Delhi School of Social Work, New Delhi, Dr. Asmita Bhardwaj of Amity School of Architecture and Planning, Amity University, Noida, Dr. Vanmala Hiranandani of Centre for Disaster

Management, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Dr. A Gangatharan of Banaras Hindu University, Dr. Nandini Ghosh of IDSK, Mr. Santosh Kumar of Centre for Advanced Studies of Linguistics, University of Delhi, Ms. P. Deepa of Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Ms. Ipsita Sapra of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, Mr. Saptarshi Mandal, Legal Researcher, Ms. Jeeja Ghosh of Indian Institute of Cerebral Palsy, Kolkata Ankur Advocacy Group, Kolkata, Mr. Eshwer Kale of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and Ms. Bubali Bag of Jadavpur University.

On 29th September 2012, there was a panel discussion on *Inclusive Education: Debates and Possibilities*, which was moderated by Ruma Chatterjee. The panellists included disabled people themselves, disability activists, and teachers from mainstream and special schools that promoted inclusive education. The panellists all agreed that in the current scenario and with the legal policy frameworks inclusive education is the only mode of delivery of learning to children with disabilities. However they discussed different strategies that might be used to promote inclusive education in mainstream schools, which would lead to a better learning environment and outcomes for all children.