

## **Annual Report (2009-2010)**

The Resource Center for the Differently Abled organized as many as thirteen programmes exclusively for the differently-abled students for the academic year of 2009-2010 with the help of the UGC HEPSN fund.

With the objective of imparting the English language learning skills to the differently-abled through electronic systems, the first workshop on ' Language Lab- Level -1 ' held at UGC-Language Lab on 29 th of July, 2009. The resource person was Professor James Sundaraj, Head of the Department of English, Loyola College. Smt. Meenakshi Rajagopal, IAS, State Commissioner for the disabled, Government of Tamil Nadu inaugurated the event and also the launch of the development of the RCDA for the academic year.

The second programme was the workshop on Web Resources: Internet and Web Textbooks on the 1 st of September 2009. The main objective of this programme was to introduce Web resources available for imparting knowledge to the differently-abled. Shri K. Ramachandran, Manager - Corporate Communications, Cognizant Technology Solutions, Chennai, Shri. A. E. Karthik, Worth Trust, Chennai and Smt. Gayathri, Sri Verma & Sri Anubahv, Bookshare India, Delhi were the resource persons. On the same day, the newly established Model Resource Center for Disability Services (MRCDS) was inaugurated by Hon. D. Napoleon, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. Twenty five new computers with JAWS and other necessary devices and software were installed at the MRCDS.

The third programme was the Right to Read Campaign which happened to be the first of its kind in India organized in coordination with the Loyola NSS, Loyola Student Union and Department of Sociology on 26th of September 2009. The event focused on the rights of the differently abled. NSS students from about

a hundred colleges from in and around Chennai had gathered at Sauliere Hall. The main objective of the campaign was to accelerate change in copyright law, to raise public awareness on the issue and to gather Indian support for the Treaty for the Blind proposed by the World Blind Union at the World Intellectual Property Organization. The Chief Guest of the event was Mr. Shri Kumar Verma, a well known writer, social activist and a professor of creative English and English literature. The programme was sponsored by Center for Internet and Society (CIS), India . The event included a signature campaign, a rally, a panel discussion and also a music extravaganza by the music band from the National Association for the Blind (NAB), Chennai.

The fourth programme was the biggest of the events. It was the National Conference on ICTs for the Differently abled for Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship (NCIDEEE 2009) which was held from the 1st to 3rd of December 2009 which also happened to be the World Day of persons with disability. The National Conference was organized in association with NASSCOM, Computer Society of India and Centre for the Internet & Society. The Conference was sponsored by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Tamilnadu State Council for Higher Education & Tamilnadu State Council for Science & Technology. Over forty resource persons who are pioneers in the field of Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Text To Speech (TTS) and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines from across the country participated in the Conference and shared their experience and knowledge with the others. The chief guest for the inaugural function was Dr. S. S. Singh , Technical Director, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, New Delhi . The chief guest for the Valedictory function was Smt. Kannegi Packianathan , IAS, Special Secretary, and Government of Tamil Nadu. In addition, a capacity building workshop for the differently abled and a workshop on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines for Web Architects and Web Designers were also

organized. In remembrance of the conference, the conference proceedings with the ISBN number 978-81-910217-0-7 had been released.

With the purpose of training the trainers, our fifth event on "Orientation Course for the teachers of the differently abled students" was organized from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> of December 2009. The event was sponsored by the National Institute of Visually Handicapped (NIVH), Chennai. Shri. K. Jeyakrishnan, Editor, PC-Friend, Tamil Computer and Valar Thozhil was the chief guest of the inaugural function. Over twenty five selected teachers in Tamil Nadu participated in the orientation course and benefitted from it. Professor Albert Antony Raj, Department of Computer Science, Professor Vijaya Peter Raj, Department of MCA, Shri. A. E. Karthik, Worth Trust, Chennai and Ms. Jemmimah from Vasam Eye Care were the resource person. They trained the participants in various fields.

The sixth event was The General public awareness and networking programme on Managing and solving Retinal problems held on 11<sup>th</sup> of January, 2010. The chief guest and resource person for the event was Dr Rajat N Agarwal , University of Southern California, U.S.A. The event was organized in coordination with the Helen Keller Research Center, Loyola College and Retina India . Over a hundred retinal patients from in and around Chennai participated in the event.

The seventh programme was the Counseling program for the parents of Visually Impaired : A Special Care for the Special Children. The event was organized in association with the Parents Teachers Association of Loyola College. The parents of fifteen differently-abled students in our college participated in the event. The guests of honor/Councilors for the event were Mr. Rajesh Parack, a visually challenged graduate and entrepreneur and Mrs. Uma Rao, the Chennai coordinator, Retina India .

The eighth programme was the Sports Event for the Visually Impaired students from Loyola College which included competitions in Chess, Volley ball, Standing long jump and Discus throw. The event was held from 8th to 12th of February 2010. More than forty students from the college participated in the competitions and the prizes for the various events were distributed on the College Sports Day 2010. The event was sponsored by Sri. D.K Patel, Hong Kong.

The ninth programme was the workshop on 'Computer Applications and Essential Tools for the Differently Abled' which was inaugurated on 23rd of February 2010 by Sri.DAS SURYAWANSHI, State Commissioner for Disabilities, Karnataka State, which was done especially for the development of the differently-abled final year students of the college. The workshop concluded by 24th March 2010 enabled several students to benefit out of it. A similar programme is proposed to be conducted during the summer vacation for the school students.

In our continuous effort in imparting the English language learning skills to the differently-abled through electronic systems, our tenth programme on "Language Lab: Level 2" was held at UGC-Language Lab on 4th March 2010. The resource person for the event was Professor X.Manoharan, Department of English, Loyola College . The event was mainly based on the introduction of phonetics and the basic fundamentals of speech sounds in English and its classification.

The eleventh programme was the workshop on music for mind and soul. The inaugural function was held on 09th March 2010. In lieu of this fest being organized, the events are scheduled spanning for three weeks, under the

auspices of music master H. Balachandran . The consigned event was sponsored by Sri. D.K Patel , Hong Kong.

The twelfth programme was the workshop on soft skills to empower the differently-abled students which was held on 10th March 2010. The main idea of the event was to enable the students to realize the Opportunities available to them for recruitment and the behavior and the various sections of the recruitment process. The resource person for the event was Mr. Sabarish from Smart Training Resources, Chennai. More than sixty differently-abled students participated in the event and they were introduced to the various dimensions of soft skills such as communication skills, language flow, verbal toning, etc. The resource person also informed them about the various job opportunities available to them today. The event was organized in association with the Training and Placement Cell of Loyola College.

The thirteenth programme was a workshop on the Introduction of Online talking books & Libraries held on 15th March 2010. The resource person for the event was Mr. Venkataraman, BookShare India, Chennai. The event also witnessed the signing of an MOU for accessing web libraries of more than forty thousand books for a period of one year.

The student volunteers for the RCDA include Dhanraj. K, Andrew Dominic Claremont, Shrayas Rajagopal, Arnold Geo, Alfred Jerome Lazarus and Aravind all of whose work in this academic year has been commendable. In addition new staffs have been appointed to the MRCDS since the 10th February 2010 and they have been organizing regular training sessions for the differently-abled students from 9 am to 6 pm every day. The new staffs have been funded by the NIVH, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India. The new staffs include a coordinator cum social worker, and IT manager cum instructor

and an assistant. Shri D. K. Patel from Hong Kong has also sponsored two additional staffs for sports and music.

The academic year of 2009-2010 happened to be a remarkable one for the development of the differently-abled students in our college. This year saw a differently-abled student, Lawrence Joseph Jebarathinam, a 2009 pass out of the Department of Tamil who received the gold medal for B.A. Tamil Literature. One of our differently-abled student R. Muthu , (07-TL-32) has secured third place in the Car Rally held on Feb 28, 2010 organized by National Association for the Blind, Chennai. Also, a team led by a differently-abled student D. Balanagendran (07-CO-010) won first prize in the Quiz competition organized by Welfare Foundation for the Blind held at MCC, Chennai on Mar 20, 2010. Loyola College Student Union confers 'Excellence in Leadership Award' to a differently-abled student D. Balanagendran. (07-CO-010). He also received the Karisma Award worth Rs 50,000/- on the College Day instituted by Sri Ram Agarwal, Mumbai given by Freedom Scientific. USA . A differently-abled student Kannadasan (08 TL 019) also received a gold medal on the College Day for his excellent Academic performance. Differently-abled volleyball team members led by Captain Karthick P. (07-TL-026) secured second place in Villupuram Para Olympic Meet among 12 teams played at Vilupuram on Mar 21, 2010. One of our differently-abled student E. Arun (08-PEL-11) got placement from Tamil Nadu State Government and some other students also have got placements in some MNC companies through campus recruitment. The College management also appreciates M. Mahendran (07-TL-013), a representative for the differently-abled for his best cooperation.