

Awareness Programme on Rights of Persons with Disability (RPWD) ACT



07 September 2022

**Organized by Composite Regional Centre
for Skill Development, Rehabilitation &
Empowerment of Persons with
Disabilities, CRC- Shillong (Under the
Administrative control of NIEPMO
Chennai) Ministry of Social Justice &
Empowerment, Government of India**

**In collaboration with
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
WORK-PG
ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE
SHILLONG**

Introduction

On the 7th of September, 2022, the Composite Regional Centre (CRC) for Skill Development, Rehabilitation and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DIVYANGJAN), Shillong, Meghalaya, in collaboration with the Department of Social Work – PG (MSW), St. Edmund’s College, Shillong, organized an Awareness Programme on Disability and RPwD ACT which is part of the CRC’s mission in bringing to the attention of the public about the various types of Disability that exist, the difficulties that a person with a disability has to go through as well as the Rights that are accredited to People with Disabilities. According to the Vision and Mission of CRC Shillong where it aims and strives for an inclusive society where people with Disabilities are equal partakers of equal opportunity, their rights being protected and they are enabled to lead a safe, productive and dignified life. The Awareness Programme was held in one of the classrooms of the Department of Social Work –PG (MSW) of St. Edmund’s College to fulfill the mission of the CRC Shillong that is ‘to create awareness in the society to recognize persons with disabilities as valuable human resources of the country and to foster an environment which facilitates equal opportunities, easy accessibility, protection of rights and full participation of persons with disabilities, through advocacy, awareness creation, capacity building, rehabilitation services, human resource development and technological advances.’



The Programme took off with the registration of the Students and Faculty members of St. Edmund’s College – PG (MSW) which was then followed by the introductory note

that was given by the host of the Programme, Ms. Pranami Baruah, Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychologist, CRC Shillong. The Officer In-Charge of the CRC Shillong, Shri Ram Shakal Sahani delivered the welcome speech where he briefed the participants about CRC Shillong and its main objective of organizing the Awareness Programme that day. Before the commencement of the first session, one of the resource persons from CRC Shillong delivered the keynote address and then followed by short keynote address from the Head of the Department of Social Work – PG (MSW), Dr. Rituparna Rajendra, and the Dean of the college, Dr. B.W. Nongbri.

There were 51 Participants (37 students, 5 teachers from the M.S.W. Department of St. Edmund's College, the Dean of St. Edmund's college, Shillong, 7 Representatives from C.R.C. Shillong) who attended the programme.

Sessions

1st session: The first Session was taken by Shri. Ram Shakal Sahani, the Officer in-charge CRC-Shillong where he introduced to the participants about the PWD ACT of 1995, the definition of 'Disability', the rights of individuals with disabilities, especially stressing upon the Rights of those with Disability certificates and he also brought to the participants' knowledge through his power point presentation that as per the PWD ACT of 1995, there were only 7 types of disabilities namely – Blindness, Low-Vision, Leprosy Cured, Hearing Impairment, Locomotor Disability, Mental Retardation and Mental Illness, and that a person with a disability will receive only 3% reservation in employment. Shri. Ram Shakal Sahani stressed more upon the RPwd (Rights of Person with Disability) ACT where he mentioned about the 17 chapters in RPwd ACT, 2016; emphasizing on 'Disability', the new recognition and provision as per the RPwd ACT which includes 21 types of disabilities with 4% reservation in employment to the Person with Disability. He concluded with the first session by highlighting the several categories of Disability –

1. Physical Disability
2. Intellectual Disability
3. Mental Behaviour
4. Chronic Neurological disorder
5. Blood Disorder
6. Multiple disabilities



2nd Session: The second session was taken by Ms. Iness K. Warshong, Lecturer, Physiotherapy, CRC Shillong, on one of the types of Disability - Physical Disability, whereby she talked about some of the disabilities characterized as Physical Disabilities and they include:

- (i) Locomotor Disability,
- (ii) Visual Impairment

- (iii) Hearing impairment and
- (iv) Speech and language Disorder.



Ms. Iness delivered a power point presentation that covered some of the Conditions that fall under Locomotor Disability (Congenital or Acquired) and they include:-

1. **Cerebral Palsy:** Ms. Iness highlighted on what the condition is all about, the Risk Factors of Cerebral Palsy, areas of the brain that it affects, the different types of Cerebral Palsy (Spastic Diplegia and Spastic Quadriplegia), the various Signs and Symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of the condition.
2. **Muscular Dystrophy:** She described about the Effects, Causes, Types, Diagnosis and Treatment of the Condition, the description of which was further enhanced as a result of a brief Q and A session between Ms. Iness and the Dean, Dr B.W. Nongbri and one of the faculty member of the MSW Department, Ms. Ainamlin Dkhar.
3. **Leprosy Cured Persons:** The participants were brought to light of the in depth meaning of 'Leprosy Cured Persons', the several issues that need to be understood and tackled upon. Ms. Iness also mentioned about the Grading System in regards to 'Leprosy Cured Persons'.
4. **Dwarfism:** The resource person highlighted and explained dwarfism as a growth disorder also known as short stature and a person with the condition is referred to as a dwarf. When the size of an adult man and woman is less than 147cm, 4 feet, 10 inches dwarfism is the cause.
5. **Acid Attack Victims:** She explained an acid attack victim according to the RPWD Act means a person disfigured due to violent assaults by throwing of acid or similar corrosive substance.

Under the Chronic Neurological Conditions, the conditions that were discussed in the Programme were-

- **Multiple Sclerosis:** Ms. Iness briefed about the effects that this condition has towards an individual, the various types of Multiple Sclerosis, its Causes and Risk Factors; while she was emphasizing upon the importance of Vitamin D in combating Multiple Sclerosis, Ms. Iness appreciated the traditional remedies or ways of acquiring vitamin D illustrating with an example of a family that follows the method of sunbathing, which according to Ms. Iness, is a natural source of Vitamin D that God has given freely to humankind.
- **Parkinson's disease:** She highlighted the description of the Disease, the signs and symptoms and the stages in Parkinson's disease.

Ms. Iness K. Warshong gave a brief account on Hearing Impairment and Speech Disorder, the topics which she concluded her session with.

After the end of the 2nd Session, the participants were given a lunch break of about 30 to 40 minutes which was then preceded by the 3rd Session.



3rd Session: This Session was taken by Ms. Sosthiness K. Warshong, Orientation & Mobility Instructor, CRC-Shillong. She spoke about visual impairment, its types, causes of Blindness, Treatment and Management of Blindness, Skill of Blindness, Career Education, Self-Determination, Self-Advocacy, Orientation and Mobility, Social Interaction Skills, Low Vision, the types of Low-Vision, the Treatment and Management for People suffering from Visual Impairment. Firstly, she explained about the term 'visual impairment' and with the aid of the Power point Presentation that she presented, she explained about how 'visual impairment' is used to describe many degrees of vision loss, including low vision, legally blind, and totally blind. The definitions of what constitutes "low vision" vary, but generally, low vision is defined as an uncorrectable visual impairment that interferes with a person's ability to perform everyday activities. It was made clear from Ms. Sosthiness' Presentation that Visual impairments are caused by injury or disease or are congenital; congenital

blindness occurs at birth or within the first five years of life. An individual who is congenitally blind does not have a visual memory and therefore does not learn by visual images or pictures. This individual relies on his or her remaining senses for orientation. Adventitious or accidental blindness is that which has occurred after the age of five. This individual may use the visual memory of his or her environment and of objects for orientation.

She then spoke about the causes and types of visual impairment which included causes that may result from factors that are genetic;

that arise during fetal development or during the birth process or that occurs in childhood. Various conditions and syndromes, some genetically determined, can be passed to the child by a parent or both parents who may be unaware they carry the condition. Genetic counseling enables parents carrying such conditions to plan for children with this information available to them.



She concluded her session very energetically by saying that we should all promote Cornea Donation and organ donation. She explained how in a corneal transplant, the damaged cornea is removed by a surgeon and replaced with a clear donor cornea. While this type of transplant is the most commonly related to the eye, it is not the only way people are able to regain the gift of sight through transplant. One can donate after his or her death as a life-saving act. She pointed out that Organ donation helps in a transplant which often means a second chance at life. Vital organs such as the heart, pancreas, liver, kidneys, and lungs can be transplanted to those whose organs are failing. It allows many recipients to return to a normal lifestyle.

For others, a cornea or tissue transplant means the ability to see again or the recovery of mobility and freedom from pain. Factors affecting fetal development or affecting the baby during the process of birth can cause visual impairment. For example, maternal rubella can lead to a baby having a visual impairment, or visual impairment may be the result of disease or injury. While the eyes may seem normal, visual messages to the brain are neither correctly interpreted nor acted upon. In childhood, the causes of visual impairment include viral infections, brain tumors, and injury.

4th Session: The 4th Session was taken by Ms. Pranami Baruah, Assistant Professor, Clinical Psychologist, CRC-Shillong, where she explained about the various forms of Intellectual Disability, Specific Learning Disabilities which includes the different forms of learning disability such as Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, dyspraxia, dysphasia/aphasia and dyslalia. She also highlighted on the expressive language disorder and receptive language disorder. She explained on the topic Autism Spectrum Disorder, the clinical features, characteristics features and the treatment of Autism. She also emphasized on the need to understand better about Mental Health and Mental Illness. She concluded the session by addressing the Disability caused as a result of various Blood Related Disorder like Haemophilia, Thalassaemia and Sickle cell disease.



After the end of all the sessions, there was a brief period of Q and A Session between the participants and all the resource persons, which was followed by vote of thanks that was delivered by one of the Representatives of CRC Shillong, Mr. Akshay Kumar, and a Certificate Distribution for all the students as well as the Faculty members of St. Edmund's College – PG (MSW), Shillong.





Last but not the least, the entire programme was concluded with a group photo session.



Reflection on the Awareness Programme on Disability and RPwD ACT

As students, they were bombarded with academic tasks, expectations, and requirements, as well as the additional responsibilities of life. This awareness programme was extra curriculum activity in which the students have gained lots of input and information on Disability and RPwD Act. As social workers, we often encourage our clients to utilize available resources to better prepare themselves for the future. This programme gave the students a clear idea how to help the person with disabilities and what schemes and plans are provided by the government for the welfare of persons with disability.



This programme helps in expanding students learning beyond the required curriculum as they got to learn some of the scientific terms for different kinds of disabilities and how a given issue impacts a person with disabilities in particular. They are facing problems not only physically but also emotionally and mentally. Thus,

to function fully in society as social workers there is a need to help them in all the ways possible and make use of their capabilities and potentiality.

Conclusion

Overall through this awareness programme the participants were oriented about the PWD Act and how it helps the person with a disability to acquire the necessary skills for their self-help, independent living, and leading future life as properly as possible. The programme was well planned and conducted with qualified resource persons. The participants have expressed that through this programme they have benefitted a lot.