



किरोड़ी मल कॉलेज

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Annual Report - CDRT

The Centre for Disability Research and Training (CDRT), Kirori Mal College was established last year in June, 2021. Perhaps the first Centre of its kind in a college in India, the prime objective of CDRT is to promote and popularise disability studies as a legitimate field of academic inquiry within Indian academia.

It strives to function as a nodal institutional site to produce, systemize and disseminate academic knowledge about disability. The Centre engages with all aspects of disability experience ranging from the sociology of the phenomenon, its representations in literature and culture, disability politics and policies, disability law and human rights, to accessibility and universal design, inclusion and education, capacity building and skill development, professional training and employment.

But above all, it aims to empower the disabled community through the creation of multiple opportunities and platforms for their sustainable socio-economic, academic and professional upliftment.

In the pursuit of the above goal, the Centre in its inaugural year has organised a wide range of academic and sensitization activities, from faculty development programs and certificate courses to international conferences, webinars and awareness workshops surrounding disability studies.

Academic Activities

The Centre initiated its academic endeavour with a Certificate Course on Disability Studies in collaboration with Saksham. This spanned over 4 weeks, comprising 22 lectures with the objective to orient disability studies as a liberating, inclusive epistemology that problematizes and rethinks notions and hierarchies of ableism. This Certificate Course was a pilot project conducted from 22nd of February to 19th of March 2021 prior to the inception of the Centre. Its resounding success inevitably led to the creation of CDRT and its engagement with a wide range of academic activities.

The inaugural academic engagement of the Centre was a two day National Webinar on "Conceptualising Disability and Disability Studies" with Dr. Shilpa Das (National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad) on the 27th and 29th of September, 2021. This was followed by a five-day International Webinar from the 4th to the 8th of October, 2021, on "Why does Disability Research Matter?" The resource persons for this event included Prof. Nicholas Watson (University of Glasgow), Prof. Shilpa Das (National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad), Prof.



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Dan Goodley (University of Sheffield), Prof. Eva Feder Kittay (Stony Brook University), Prof. Margrit Shildrick (Stockholms Universitet), Prof. Stephen Kuusisto (Syracuse University), Prof. Dr. Anne Waldschmidt (University of Cologne), Prof. Amita Dhanda (NALSAR University of Law Hyderabad), Mr. Dipendra Manocha (Founding Managing Trustee Saksham), Prof. Gregor Strutz (inkl.Design GmbH - Agency for inclusive Design Berlin), and Prof. Lennard Davis (University of Illinois).

Towards the end of the year, the Centre also hosted the IDSC (Indian Disabilities Studies Collective) International Conference on the topic “Disability: Resistance, Disruption and Transgression”, spread over 5 days from 29th of November to 3rd of December of 2021. The keynote of the conference was delivered by Prof. Tom Shakespeare (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) and its valedictory note by Prof. Anita Ghai (Ambedkar University, Delhi). The plenary speakers included Prof. Stephen Kuusisto (Syracuse University), Prof. Sandhya Limaye (Tata Institute of Social Sciences), Prof. Fiona Kumari Campbell (University of Dundee, Scotland) amongst others.

More than 60 disability scholars from all parts of the country and the world presented their views and discussed the various aspects of disability culture production, academics, and activism. The Conference concluded by laying stress on the need to disrupt and transgress normative perceptions of disability and unsettle the ablist power structures.

Furthermore, from the 17th - 21st of January, 2022, the Centre in collaboration with the Xavier’s Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC), St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai and Mizoram University, organised a week long interdisciplinary Faculty Development Program, “Inclusive Pedagogy: Engaging Students with Disabilities”. The goal of this program was to develop an understanding of the various disabilities and how to accommodate them in the classroom.

The Centre also conducted a Certificate Course from the 16th of February to the 20th of April, 2022 in collaboration with the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) on, “An Introduction to Disabilities Research: A Legal and Social Studies Perspective.” The prime objective of this course was to develop an understanding of disability laws and its relevant concepts, the significance of disability law, rights and advocacy in an inclusive society, and to train and encourage students to carry out research in the field.

Aiming to broaden the knowledge base of disability studies, the Centre actively encouraged undergraduate students to engage with disability research under the expert mentorship of renown disability studies scholars. For this purpose in the months of January and February, the Centre organised a series of mentoring sessions



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with Prof. Shubhangi Vaidya (IGNOU) on Disability and Care, Family, Society & Cinema on 14th January 2022, Prof Renu Addlakha (Centre for Women's Development Studies) on Disability and Gender on 15th January, 2022, Mr. Sandeep R. Singh (Ambedkar University, Delhi) on Disability, Literature and Culture on the 16th January, and 5th February, 2022, Prof. Papia Sengupta (JNU) on Disability Law, Rights and Policies on the 26th January, 2022, and Prof. Sandhya Limaye (TISS) on Disability in Education, Employment and Deaf Studies on 29th January, 2022. These sessions were specifically designed to help the students to evolve their own projects and understand the various layered nuances of research.

With the view of encouraging the students to carry out research, the Centre organised "Dhristikon", a one-day colloquium on "Disability and Hindi Cinema" on the 6th of April, 2022, in the Academic Auditorium of Kirori Mal College. The resource persons for this event were Dr. Ravikant (Centre for the study of Developing Societies), Dr. Mithuraj Dhusiya (Hanraj College, DU), Ms. Mansi Grover (Jamia Millia Islamia University), and Ms. Priyam Sinha (National University of Singapore).

The resource persons dwelt upon the representation of disability in Bollywood and critiqued the predominantly flawed portrayal of the phenomenon in Hindi films. However, they also brought into the purview of the discussion, movies like "Dosti", "Koshish" and "Margarita with a Straw" which effectively portrayed the various complexities of the lived experiences of disability. To carry this research interest further, the Centre plans to organise a 3-day workshop in May on the same theme.

Sensitization Workshops

In addition to fostering academic interest in disability studies, the Centre has organised a number of sensitization workshops and community awareness campaigns on disability.

In March 2022, the first offline event of CDRT, "Sanket" - a Sign Language Awareness Workshop was conducted, in collaboration with the Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India. The workshop, organised in the Academic Auditorium of the college, intended to spread community awareness about sign language and sensitise the students with the experience of what it means to be deaf.

CDRT also aims to conduct "Anubhav" - a sensitization workshop in April 2022, for all students of the college to spread awareness of the different kinds of disabilities and their lived experiences. Through interactive activities, this experiential workshop seeks to make the students more sensitive and conscious with regards to the phenomenon of disability.

Promotion of a Wholesome Inclusive Education Experience



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The intention of the Centre is to create an egalitarian society that appreciates the abilities of persons with disabilities, and willingly provides equal opportunities for all. For this purpose, it strives to profile the students with disabilities in college, identify their specific needs and provide them with customised solutions and support services to maximise their potential.

In August 2021, CDRT in collaboration with Xavier's Resource Centre for the Visually Challenged (XRCVC), launched Project Shamil, which stands for – Services Harnessing Accessibility Models to Inclusive Learning. This project focuses on a model of the 360-degree approach to inclusion, involving various initiatives for both disabled students and faculty, working towards building an accessible and inclusive environment across the campus.

In September 2021, CDRT in collaboration with Saksham, launched Project Aarohan – an initiative towards creating opportunities for inclusion of students with Blindness and Low Vision in Higher Education. Under this project, assistive devices such as Laptops, Electronic (Refreshable) Braille Display, Daisy Players (digital recorders) and Tablets have been distributed to the visually impaired undergraduate students of the college. The Centre also provided regular guidance and counselling services to the PwD students as a part of this Project.

The Centre, thus, through various academic and sensitization activities, has laid the foundations of disability awareness and action, in its first year of establishment. The Centre for Disability Research and Training aspires to create an inclusive teaching and learning atmosphere on campus and foster a level-playing field for students with disabilities so that they could realise the fullness of their potential and become significant contributors in India's growth story.