



# Perspectives on Disability and Inclusion in Educational Settings

19 - 22 April 2021



A workshop organised by:  
Azim Premji School of Education  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad

## CONCEPT NOTE

The Azim Premji School of Education at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad is organizing a three-day workshop titled - 'Perspectives on Disabilities and Inclusion in Educational Settings' for the students of Masters in Arts in Education programme. The workshop aims to make students aware of issues relating to education for the differently-abled which are often ignored or understood without a critical and political perspective. Using an interactive participatory format, the workshop will help students engage with larger theoretical frameworks developed by critical disability studies. It will also examine the working of the dual system of education, produced by education discourse and by teachers (both general and special education teachers) through which students will engage in knowledge production and transformation. The workshop will consider how disability is constructed in education at the individual, institutional, state, and national levels.

Core thematic areas to be covered in the workshop:

- i. The first theme will focus on the historical and philosophical foundations of the education of people with disabilities. This theme will discuss the notions and characterization of disability while tracing the history of education for people with disabilities. The theme will also discuss the aims and practices that underpin disability studies.
- ii. The second theme will explore the educational opportunities for people with disabilities, and access to education across mainstream, special and inclusive schools and higher education. The session will deliberate on types of curriculum and curricular changes that are available in these settings. It will explore the inclusive practices that are/should be incorporated in these settings. Further, the limitations of educational opportunities for the people with disabilities will also be deliberated on.
- iii. The third theme will discuss the role of education in developing human capital of people with disabilities. The discussion will focus on the skill and vocational training available to people with disabilities. Employment opportunities and challenges in the mainstream sectors will also be deliberated on.
- iv. The fourth and last theme will deal with the legal and policy issues related to people with disability. The session will introduce students to the laws and policies for people with disabilities. It will also focus on policies and law especially in relation to education and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Issues in the present policies and the way forward will also form part of this session.

# SCHEDULE

**DAY 1****Monday, 19 April 2021**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
10.30 am – 11.00 am	Introduction	<b><i>Sonia Sawhney,</i></b> Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad
11.00 am – 12.30 pm	Experiential Narratives by Parents of children with Disability	Parents
12:30 pm – 01:00 pm	Asynchronous session	
01.00 pm – 2.00 pm	Lunch Break	
02.00 pm – 3.30 pm	Asynchronous session	
03:30 pm – 05:00 pm	Historical and Philosophical Foundations of the Education of people with Disabilities	<b><i>Shilpa Anand,</i></b> Birla Institute of Technology & Sciences, Hyderabad

**DAY 2****Tuesday, 20 April 2021**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
10.30 am – 12.00 pm	Exploring educational opportunities for people with disabilities	<b><i>Afshan Jabeen,</i></b> Ripples –Centre for Enhanced Learning, Hyderabad
12:00 pm – 01:00 pm	Asynchronous session	
01.00 pm – 02.00 pm	Lunch Break	
02.00 pm – 03.30 pm	Legal and Policy Issues related to people with Disabilities	<b><i>Nandini Ghosh,</i></b> Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata
03.30 pm – 05.00 pm	Asynchronous session	

**DAY 3****Wednesday, 21 April 2021**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
08.30 am – 10.00 am	Language Difference or Learning Difficulty? Understanding how Language and Medium of Instruction Can Complicate Learning	<b>Maya Kalyanpur</b> , University of San Diego, California
10:00 am – 11:00 am	Break	
11:00 am – 12:30 pm	Maximizing educational opportunities for learners with Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia	<b>Bhimali Indrarathne</b> , University of York, York
12:30 pm – 01:00 pm	Asynchronous session	
01.00 pm – 02.00 pm	Lunch Break	
02:00 pm – 05:00 pm	Asynchronous session	

**DAY 4****Thursday, 22 April 2021**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Speakers</b>
10.30 am – 12.00 pm	Barriers for Persons with Disability to enter the labour force	<b>Mala Ahoja</b> , Gateway School of Mumbai, Mumbai
12:00 pm – 01:00 pm	Asynchronous session	
01.00 pm – 02.00 pm	Lunch Break	
02.00 pm – 03.30 pm	Framework for inclusion	<b>Sonia Sawhney</b> , Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad
03:30 pm – 05:00 pm	Asynchronous session	

Registration link [https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYrd-Cpqj8oHteBMGhZLvHx6cEXM2\\_yACv](https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYrd-Cpqj8oHteBMGhZLvHx6cEXM2_yACv)

**SPEAKERS**

## SHILPAA ANAND



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Shilpaa Anand has a PhD in Disability Studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago and an MA in English from the University of Hyderabad. Her research interests include literary and cultural disability studies, historiography of disability and culturally different concepts of corporeality. In her doctoral work she explored the conceptual history of disability in the Indian context.

Her papers have been published in edited volumes on disability studies in India and South Asia as well as in scholarly journals. She moderates a lively email list called Disability Studies India and has co-edited multiple issues on disability of the web magazine *Cafe Dissensus*.

She has recently become associated with the Centre for Disability Studies at NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad as Distinguished Research Fellow.

### Abstract

Discourses of disability as a socio-cultural and socio-political category have a strong presence the global North what with its several decades old history of political mobilizations by disabled people, known as the 'disability movement'. In what we refer to as the global South, the presence of the disability discourse is not necessarily weak but different as well as diverse. Tracing the diversity of disability in the global South, the proposed session will foreground some philosophical and historical aspects of disability as a concept. Some of the questions the session will hope to discuss are: How do social realities of the global South that are socio-economically and culturally distinct from those of the global North inform and reconfigure our normative notions of disability? How is disability conceptualized in heterogeneous ways? How can we trace the histories of a concept that is not self-evident by virtue of its diversity? In due course, we will think about the implications of these questions for disability *and/in* education.

## AFSHAN JABEEN



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'Be the change, you want to see in the world', is the thought that inspired Ms. Afshan Jabeen to embark on this journey of learning. She is the Founder-Director of Ripples – Center for Enhanced Learning. She is a Clinical Psychologist (RCI), Sounds in Syllables Dyslexia Therapist (IMSLEC) and a Montessorian (AMI). She has been active in the field of education for over 24 years and in the field of dyslexia for the last 21 years. She is a founder member of 'Dyslexia Association of Telangana' and the force behind the formation of 'I Read Foundation', a non-profit organization and actively works towards and promotes their cause of 'Learn to Read & Read to Learn'.

She had worked as a consultant Psychological Counsellor in Glendale Academy International and Kangaroo Kids Preschool before starting her center 11 years ago. She strongly believes that we all have inherent potential to be the best and the secret of getting ahead in life is getting started!

### Abstract

The constitution of India declares the right to education as one of the fundamental rights of the citizens. Despite that, even getting primary education is a tough battle for people with disabilities. Very few children with disability progress beyond primary school level because of lack of support and structure in the regular school. Inadequate resources, the inability of the teachers to teach them effectively, and a mismatched curriculum are reasons for high dropout rates.

The last few years have seen several initiatives by the government to bring about remarkable changes favouring pro-disability policies and we have to give due credit to the government for trying to evolve with time. Unfortunately, the policies are not getting translated into a concrete reality due to several hurdles. Analysis shows that we lack in primarily the following three dimensions:

1. Creating an inclusive culture;
2. Producing inclusive policies; and
3. Evolving inclusive practices.

An inclusive culture is analyzed by studying the knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers and parents in accepting children with disabilities. Enrolment policies of the government are examined to identify inclusive policies. Inclusive practices include awareness, teacher training, modification of materials, methodology, and evaluation criteria for the benefit of all children.



## NANDINI GHOSH



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Nandini Ghosh is an academician-activist working on the intersectional issues of disability and gender. At present she is working as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata, India. She has a PhD degree in Social Sciences from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences Mumbai where her research focuses on cultural ideologies of disability and gender and ways in which they impact on lives of disabled women. She is widely published in academic and other journals, highlighting issues of disabled people in India. She is closely associated with disability activism within India.

### Abstract

The presentation will try to interrogate policies in India that have attempted to address Inclusive Education in order to include children and young adults with disabilities in the education system. While the welfare state has always purported to mainstream disabled children in education, the efforts have been mostly half-hearted. India has a sound policy regime for inclusion, yet the lack of will by bureaucracy and social attitudes have ensured that inclusion remains conditional and piecemeal.

## MAYA KALYANPUR



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Maya Kalyanpur, PhD, is Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning at the University of San Diego having received her PhD in Special Education from Syracuse University. She started her career as a teacher of children with intellectual disabilities in India, and was a Professor at Towson University, Maryland, and at the State University of New York at Potsdam. She was an international advisor in inclusive education to the Cambodian Ministry of Education under the World Bank-supported Global Partnership for Education program and received a Fulbright senior research fellowship to study services for students with learning disabilities in India. In 2020, she was awarded the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Multicultural/Multiethnic Education Carlos J. Vallejo Memorial Award for Lifetime Scholarship. She has conducted research on the intersections of culture and special education and international development and disability studies in India, the US and Cambodia, with a specific focus on international inclusive education policy and practice, and families of children with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. She co-edited the book, *Disability studies in South Asia: Redefining boundaries and extending horizons*, with Dr. Shridevi Rao, which presents an alternative analysis to disability appropriate to South Asia, and is currently co-authoring a book on English language education and social inequality. She co-founded the Proteep project, which supports girls to complete high school in Cambodia.

### Abstract

Access to the English language is generally considered a passport to economic success and social mobility, resulting in a proliferation of English-medium schools for students at all socio-economic levels. English-medium low-fee-paying schools in particular attract students because of this promise. Despite research indicating that students learn to read most effectively if they do so through the language they are familiar with, many students are disadvantaged by the typical immersion models with 'English only' policies, which most of these schools offer. Students for whom English is not an everyday language are learning academic English at the same time they are learning academic content in English. For instance, an alphabet song might teach students "I for igloo" even though they may be completely unfamiliar with the word igloo, instead of using a more relevant connection like "I for India". As a result, most teachers and students focus on rote memorizing content rather than developing comprehension or conversational fluency in English. Further, the immersion model denies students opportunities to bring in their preferred language, which leads to a diminishment of fluency, particularly in reading and writing, in the mother tongue. In the ultimate analysis, although children come to school with a rich multilingual heritage, they fail to gain both literacy in their preferred language and proficiency in English. Some of these students might end up being labeled 'learning disabled' because their language difference is misunderstood as cognitive deficit or learning difficulty. This session describes some of the complexities in language acquisition in 'English only' schools where students do not typically speak English in their home communities and offers some alternatives to facilitating students' language competencies and biliteracy.

## BIMALI INDRARATHNE



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Dr. Indrarathne joined the Department of Education, University of York in January 2019 as a Lecturer in Applied Linguistics. Before joining York, she worked at King's College London and Lancaster University. Prior to that, she worked as a lecturer at Kotelawala Defence University in Sri Lanka and as an English language teacher in several government schools in Sri Lanka. Dr Indrarathne's main research interest is in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and in her PhD she studied how second language learners process input given to them in different teaching conditions. Another area that Dr Indrarathne is working on is dyslexia and language teaching. Under this, she has run several teacher education projects in Sri Lanka and one in India. The main focus of these teacher education projects was raising awareness of both English language and generalist primary teachers on features of specific learning difficulties, impact of learning difficulties on learners' educational achievements and maximising educational opportunities for such learners.

### Abstract

Specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) is an umbrella term used to categorise learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and so on. Sometimes the term dyslexia is used to describe just reading difficulty; however, there are other difficulties that learners with dyslexia encounter. They include difficulties in sound, letter and word recognition, pronunciation issues, poor spelling, mixing up letters and words, difficulties in understanding and following long instructions, poor handwriting, difficulties in organising ideas, taking time to respond when someone asks something, being messy and having a short attention span. They may also lack social skills and prefer to be with the same friends or on their own. We should also remember that some children may experience some of these difficulties but will outgrow them with their development. Hence, having some of these difficulties does not mean that the child is dyslexic, a proper observation and diagnosis should be done to verify it. In this session, I will provide an overview of SpLDs and dyslexia in particular and discuss how to identify struggling learners at classroom level. We will also have a look at teaching techniques that can be used in order to accommodate struggling learners in the teaching-learning process. This includes a discussion on the multisensory structured language teaching (MSLT) approach and assessment techniques that should be used when assessing learners with SpLDs.

## MALA AHOOJA



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Mala has A Bachelor's Degree in Occupational Therapy for Seth G.S college and KEM Hospital, Mumbai and has completed a Certificate Course in Sensory Integration from the University of Southern California, USA. She is a founding member of The Gateway School of Mumbai (GSoM) and joined the team in 2012. She has been practicing as a Pediatric Occupational Therapist since 2010.

Currently, she works as the coordinator of the High School Adaptive Program that focuses on life skills and community engagement. Though she has moved to another role, Mala still loves to support the Sensory Motor team and is involved in their outreach endeavours.

She has been one of the leading members of the Gateway Team that work towards community inclusion through internships and service-learning programs.

Mala loves to cook and spend time with her family.

### Abstract

In this session we will be exploring together:

- Challenges faced by persons with disability when approaching employment
- Breakdowns that the employers experience
- Some practical approaches that Gateway has tried to overcome these barriers
- The way ahead --> what's in the pipeline for students moving towards adulthood

## SONIA SAWHNEY



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Sonia is an Assistant Professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences and specializes in education. Sonia has worked as a teacher and a junior headmistress before joining TISS, Hyderabad. During the years as a teacher, she has interacted with children with different abilities and from socially marginalized groups. Her research interest lies in the areas of teaching learning environments; inclusive education and special educational needs; technology for children with special needs; education of marginalized children; personal, social and emotional development of students in schools; socio-cultural learning and disciplinary practices.

### **Abstract**

Studies on inclusive education in the Indian context have found inclusion to be restricted to the mere enrolment of students with disabilities into mainstream schools. However, inclusive education needs a 'whole school approach' that ensures inclusive practices and inculcates inclusive values in all its students. Deliberating on the issues involved in such an approach and drawing also on discussion from the earlier session, I will discuss aspects of inclusion ranging from providing accessibility to all students to removing barriers to learning. The differences between integration and inclusion in education and efforts towards greater participation of students with disability will also be highlighted.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad  
2021