

## NATIONAL LEVEL SEMINAR

Mahatma Education Society's Pillai College of Education and Research, Panvel organized one day National Level seminar on - INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: A SYSTEM RECULTURATION on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 with a mission to share our ideas and thoughts on inclusive education and pondering over the ways as to how can we the educationists can act as a catalyst of change to bring about this positive shift of inclusion within our classroom.

Inclusion is both a principle and process, arising from a clear recognition that exclusion happens not only from education but also within education; education; it requires adapting, transforming and or re-culturing the education systems at large. By the term Re-culturation system it means fundamentally altering an organization's culture like range of interventions, the curriculum, the nature of teaching and the quality of the learning environment.

The day began with the inaugural session and lamp lighting.

Then followed the introduction of the Mahatma Education Society's Pillai College of Education and Research which briefed the audience and dignitaries about the evolution and philosophy of MES family

Dr. Pratima Pradhan- Organizing Secretary of this seminar, unveiled the theme of the seminar and offered a warm welcome to all participants for fruitful sessions in the day ahead.

She emphasised how schools and learning settings must be friendly, safe, and clean and gender focused. We should seek to strengthen the inclusive education by eliminating social, cultural, physical barriers by eradicating the inequity in education. Ma'am also highlighted the importance of educators in achieving the objectives to convey the stakeholders to train the teachers for the changing culture and making education really open to all. She spelt the important objectives of the seminar.

This was followed by Session -1 **Inclusion: Can we make it a reality?**

Prof. Sally George introduced the guest of the session- Dr. Smita Desai, women of substance. Mam highlighted how young she started her career, her forte in counselling. Currently a founder director of DRISHTI program and is a visiting faculty at various eminent colleges along with bagging several awards for her contribution in the field of special education.

Dr. Sally Enos, Principal of Pillai College of Education and Research, Panvel gave the token of love to our esteemed guest.

Dr. Smita Desai enlightened the audience and emphasised how inclusion is nothing but people's mindset. Ma'am spoke about the core issues on integration and inclusion with respect to inclusive education. Ma'am clarified the basic concepts of exclusion, segregation and integration and inclusion. It was a very interactive session and an eye opener to us. She proposed that inclusion must be the way ahead by default, possibilities of restructuring the

infrastructure, going beyond our traditional education set-up and many such alternatives. This session threw light on finding the solution wherein each one of us needs to develop the right sentiment towards inclusion and being non-judgemental towards each individual.

A formal vote of thanks was proposed by Prof. Namrata Saxena. She thanked Dr. Smita Desai for her time and valuable inputs regarding the topic of the seminar.

After a short break the seminar proceeded with Session 2- **Issues and challenges in inclusive education: an Aerial view by our speaker-** Dr. Roda Billimoria- An Honorary Managing Trustee of Sir Shapurji Billimoria Foundation. Her higher studies are in the field of special and general education, which is viewed in a broad spectrum of equal opportunities for all. mam has been awarded with several prestigious awards in her basket.

Dr. James welcomed mam with the token of love and present.

Ma'am stressed on inclusion being a process. The concern of kids being the concern of schools. And their concern is concern about a system...a system to accommodate inclusive education.

She stressed on whole-school approach which is not intended to be restricted within the barriers of any kind. She very well quoted 'respecting each child as they are.'

Ma'am enthralled the audience by her words of wisdom by mentioning that take pride in the way you are. She tried to express how crucial it is to be the teacher of all.

Dr. James proposed the vote of thanks for Dr. Roda Billimoria for her suggestions, inputs and an eye opening session.

After having lots of food for our minds, we dispersed for food for body and soul where the guests and participants enjoyed the meal and geared up for the next session, which was session-3. It had paper presentations on the Sub-themes:-

- Systems change for inclusion
- Access to education of the differently abled students
- Issues and challenges in Inclusive Education
- Inclusive practices in teacher education

The presentations focussed on several aspects like Assistive Technology for helping the disabled population, changing the system rather than the child and focussing on specific learning disabilities, slow learners, designing a new world of Education through inclusive practises and so on. The presentations were both conceptual and research based.

The paper presentations were chaired by Dr. Rekha Chavhan, SNDT University, Churchgate and she expressed joy in his remarks on the papers presented and felt they brilliantly brought out the important aspects of inclusive education and hidden issues and possible solutions for the same.

The seminar served as an eye opener as lots of knowledge exchange took place with great personalities who are already in this cause of introducing inclusion in our classrooms. The seminar was very well received by the audience and guests.

We hope to take it's learning forward and bring the practical application in our work place to make this world a better place by providing education to all..!!!