



Academic Report

Consultation Workshop

On

Community and Special Education - Children's Research University

Date: 18/12/2024

Venue: Virtual (Google Meet)

Organized by: Department of Community and Special Education, Children's Research University

Coordinated by: Dr. Dharmanshu Vaidya

• Introduction

On 18th December 2024, the Department of Community and Special Education at Children's Research University (CRU) held a consultation workshop aimed at gathering suggestions from experts in the field of special education. The workshop brought together prominent scholars and professionals from various disciplines within the domain of special education, inclusivity and disability research. The objective of the workshop was to discuss key issues and brainstorm recommendations for the development of policies, programs and strategies to support children with special needs, particularly in the areas of early intervention, inclusivity, research and teacher training.

• Opening Remarks

The workshop commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Nilesh Pandya, the Head of the Department of Community and Special Education at CRU. In his address, Dr. Pandya highlighted the significance of the workshop in fostering collaboration among experts and emphasized the need for a concerted effort in addressing the challenges faced by children with special needs. Dr. Pandya's speech set the tone for the day's discussions, encouraging active participation and a sharing of insights on how CRU can enhance its offerings and services for the special education community.

• Expert Suggestions and Contributions

1. Dr. Ajit Kumar - Special Education and Inclusiveness

Dr. Ajit Kumar, a renowned scholar in the field of special education, spoke about the importance of inclusiveness in the educational framework at CRU. He highlighted the need for a clear, defined framework for inclusivity, with a particular focus on how the university can adapt its curriculum and strategies to cater to children with special needs. Dr. Kumar stressed the importance of Gujarati language instruction for children with special needs and called for the creation of Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) tailored to these children's needs.



2. Dr. Dhaval Vyas - Research on Disability and Inclusive Education

Dr. Dhaval Vyas contributed his insights into the ongoing research on disability and inclusive education. He expressed his willingness to support the university in this endeavor and emphasized the importance of research in developing evidence-based interventions. Dr. Vyas also suggested organizing parenting talks to support parents raising children with special needs. He recommended training on Braille script to empower children with visual impairments and enhance their learning experiences.

3. Dr. Rajulben - Early Intervention and Teacher Training

Dr. Rajulben presented her thoughts on early intervention programs, which she believed were crucial for improving outcomes for children with special needs. She emphasized the importance of data collection and rehabilitation efforts and proposed a joint venture with schools to establish training programs for regular teachers on how to manage and support children with special needs effectively.

4. Dr. Rajendra Pandya - Book Adaptation and Social Awareness

Dr. Rajendra Pandya spoke about the adaptation of books and other learning resources for children with disabilities (Divyang). He highlighted the need to raise awareness in society regarding the challenges faced by children with special needs and suggested organizing workshops to address this issue.

5. Dr. Sujata Verma - Research and Awareness Campaigns

Dr. Sujata Verma encouraged the university to undertake comprehensive research into the problems faced by children with special needs. She proposed organizing academic fairs and awareness campaigns to foster a deeper understanding of these challenges. Dr. Verma also suggested workshops focused on the various laws that protect the rights of children with special needs. She emphasized the need for short-term certificate and skill-based courses for children with special needs and recommended signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with NGOs and institutions working in this sector.

6. Dr. Nayan Parmar - Special Education and Government Schemes

Dr. Nayan Parmar discussed the creation of specialized education programs for children with special needs. He proposed programs focused on government schemes that could benefit this population, particularly the VDID card for blind children. Dr. Parmar highlighted the importance of public awareness in leveraging these schemes.

7. Dr. Dilip Sharma - Special Education Curriculum

Dr. Dilip Sharma discussed the establishment of a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program in special education at CRU. He also advocated for short-term courses and the validation of data to support the development of these programs.



8. Dr. Dhananjay Deshmukh - Special Education Center

Dr. Dhananjay Deshmukh suggested the establishment of a special education center at CRU, which would provide essential services such as early screening, identification and intervention. He also emphasized the need for creating accessible TLMs and launching a nutritional campaign to support children with special needs.

9. Dr. Hemant Maurya - Support Systems for PWD Children

Dr. Hemant Maurya addressed the difficulties faced by children with disabilities (PWD) from underprivileged backgrounds. He emphasized the importance of building a strong support system within the university to help these children access government schemes. Dr. Maurya also suggested developing new evaluation methods that are tailored to the needs of children with special needs.

10. Dr. Atin Joshi - Ground-Level Work

Dr. Atin Joshi stressed the importance of grassroots-level efforts and the role of the university in community outreach. He advocated for more ground-level engagement to address the needs of children with special needs in rural and underserved areas.

11. Ms. Kalpana Lalwani - Blind Children and Personality Development

Ms. Kalpana Lalwani spoke about the specific needs of blind children and the importance of developing courses for them. She also suggested organizing workshops focused on personality development for children with special needs and working on improving their daily routines to foster better independence.

- **Workshop Format and Coordination**

The entire workshop was conducted virtually via Google Meet, ensuring that experts from various locations could participate and contribute. The session was coordinated by Dr. Dharmanshu Vaidya, who ensured smooth facilitation of discussions and the recording of key points and suggestions for future action.

The consultation workshop organized by the Department of Community and Special Education at Children's Research University was a successful initiative in bringing together experts to discuss the future of special education. The diverse range of suggestions and ideas presented throughout the workshop will serve as a valuable foundation for future research, policy development and program implementation at CRU. Moving forward, it is essential to address the challenges outlined by the experts, with an emphasis on inclusivity, early intervention, teacher training and community outreach. The university's commitment to developing specialized programs, research initiatives and collaborations with NGOs will play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of education and support available to children with special needs.



Recommendations :

Based on the discussions and expert suggestions, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Develop a comprehensive inclusivity framework for CRU.
2. Create and distribute TLMs tailored for children with special needs, particularly in Gujarati.
3. Initiate research programs on disability and inclusive education.
4. Organize parenting talks, workshops on Braille script and legal awareness programs.
5. Launch an academic fair and awareness campaign on special education and disability rights.
6. Establish a special education center and a B.Ed. program in special education.
7. Foster partnerships with NGOs and institutions to improve resource allocation.
8. Increase community outreach, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
9. Implement new, inclusive methods of evaluation for children with special needs.

These steps will ensure a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for children with special needs at CRU and beyond.