

Enabling Unit Report 2017-2022

Swami Shraddhanand College established an Enabling Unit in the year 2009 for physically and visually impaired teachers and students. Since then, it has been engaged in various activities related to its issues.

As per the guidelines of the 12th plan laid down by the University Grants Commission, the Unit must help the college in constructing an accessible infrastructure which may include construction of lifts, making of ramps, handrails, disabled-friendly toilets, and other required facilities which would enable differently-abled students and teachers to use the college infrastructure properly. Besides this, the Unit has to provide useful study materials to visually challenged students in an accessible format, including setting up a computer lab, purchasing computers with up-to-date software and hardware, screen reading software, and buying digital audio recorders and players.

Along with this, the college is financially sensitive towards the differently-abled students, and it refunds the tuition fees collected during the time of admission.

The Unit has been committing itself to complete all the works mentioned above in a time-bound manner since its inception. In the months of February and March 2017, the Unit played an active role in constructing two disabled-friendly toilets in the old campus of the college, and another bathroom in the same campus was also renovated.

In December 2017, the Enabling Unit initiated the Helen Keller Memorial Lecture Series. Under the aegis of this series, the Unit organized a one-day lecture on the 5th of February 2018 for sensitizing the students and teachers of college about various disability-related issues. The topic of the lecture was "Disability in Two Worlds: Mine and Yours". The speaker was Dr. Indrajit Singh from Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, and the talk was chaired by Dr. Bipin Kumar Tiwari, the OSD of Equal Opportunity Cell, University of Delhi. The programme was a massive success as it aroused much-needed enthusiasm among the students and the teachers as the audience about the much-neglected topic posed many questions.

The desktops in the computer lab were not working appropriately in the college because they were not compatible with the JAWS Screening Reading software. So, in the month of March 2018, the Unit initiated to purchase the latest version of JAWS 2018 by the college for this computer lab.

Although the Unit has been providing study material to Visually challenged students in accessible formats, they still face many difficulties due to the frequent changes in the Delhi University syllabus. In February 2019, the Unit members personally visited the Braille Library and the Equal Opportunity Cell of the University of Delhi. They brought the latest textbooks and other study

materials in an accessible format for such students. The students were also encouraged to take the membership of the Braille Library of the Delhi University Library System.

Swami Shraddhanand College was fortunate to have six differently-abled students enrolled in the college in 2019-20. In the month of September, the then-principal of the college offered the digital audio recorders to these students with the dynamic initiative of the Enabling Unit.

The Unit felt that most visually challenged students in the college often take admission in BA Programme, and their classes are held in the old campus. Keeping the requirement of the students in mind, a new computer lab was established in the old campus in the month of November 2019 so that they could have easy access to this lab.

Meanwhile, the lockdown was declared due to the SARS Covid19 pandemic in the country from March 2020, and the classes were converted to the online mode. Some visually challenged students living in the outskirts of Delhi who were not sound financially, could not pay their monthly rent, and they could not even purchase their food items and other daily needs. The Unit members played an active role in helping these students financially in May and June 2020.

Even during the lockdown period, the Unit continued its positive activities. A webinar was organized in March 2021, in which more than 100 students and teachers participated to sensitize disability-related issues during this period. The speaker of that webinar was Dr. Jagdish Chandra, who spoke on the topic.

Correspondingly, the Unit recommended the names of 10 visually challenged students for the National Scholarship, which is provided to the visually challenged students of the university by a non-government organization named **Help the Blind Foundation** having its India office in Chennai.

In January 2022, the college received a letter from Delhi University regarding the Vice-Chancellor's Gold Medal Scheme for visually challenged students. The Unit recommended the name of Mr. Surendra Kumar, a BA (Hons) Hindi student.

In the same month, the Unit submitted a proposal to the college regarding setting up a new computer lab in the new campus. The lab has to be equipped with three brand new computers fitted with the latest version of JAWS software. The Unit has got the approval of the college for the purchase of these software and hardware. Besides this, the Unit has also ordered the purchase of 5 digital audio recorders for the newly admitted students in the college.

The Enabling Unit has also prepared its budget till the financial year 2022 by following the 12th Plan guidelines of University Grants Commissions and has been submitted to the college for further action.

Apart from all the activities mentioned above, the members of Enabling Unit are pretty active during the admission process to facilitate the admission of physically and visually challenged students. They are the regular members of the admission committee and SC, ST, OBC, and PH Grievance cell. Often, the Unit has arranged readers for the average academic activities and writers during the examination time for Visually Challenged students. The students have also been encouraged from time to time to participate in various extracurricular activities held in the college and other colleges of the university.

The Unit has also worked carefully in preparing the roster of teaching and non-teaching vacancies of the college and has ensured its proper implementation.