

# NEWSLETTER

## A Milestone in the Annals of MDA

Madras Dyslexia Association (MDA) organised a Symposium on Concessions and Exemptions for Children with Specific Learning Difficulties on 6 July 2019, at IC&SR Auditorium, IIT Madras. Government of India has included dyslexia, under Specific Learning Disabilities, in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, which offers many concessions to children for appearing in public examinations of various boards in India. However, there is limited knowledge and understanding about these special provisions among parents, schools and special educators. In order to provide a deeper understanding MDA organised the Symposium.

We received 230 registrations from special educators, teachers, parents and heads of schools. Dr Smita Desai, delivered the keynote address and Dr Jayanthi Narayanan was the chief guest. The Symposium received an overwhelming response and the participants appreciated the relevance and importance of such an event. This issue carries snippets of the event.

### Chief Guest



#### *Dr Jayanthi Narayanan*

*Visiting Professor, University of Northampton, UK; Former Deputy Director, NIMH, Secunderabad*

Dr Jayanthi Narayanan is a special educator, currently holding position as a visiting professor at the University of Northampton, UK. She retired as the Deputy Director of the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped (NIMH), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India.

- Dr Jayanthi Narayanan reiterated the importance of the role of a qualified special educator in identifying a child with a learning difficulty.
- Schools must make available a qualified special educator so they will design the right intervention for a child with learning difficulty.
- Schools must also equip the special educator to support regular teachers in their classrooms.
- A flexible curriculum, use of universal design for learning and differentiated instruction are all vital steps for inclusive education.
- An inclusive education will provide the right environment for these children and help them realise their potential.

Keynote Speaker



**Dr Smita Desai**

*Director, Drishti, Mumbai*

**Dr Smita Desai is an educational psychologist and special educator. She is the Co-Founder and Director of Drishti, Mumbai.**

- Dr Smita Desai's address emphasised on the importance of inclusivity in education.
- Inclusive education is about providing equitable education which is both instructional and can be evaluated.
- Concessions mean discounting, which is inappropriate when giving equitable opportunities.
- Currently boards are only giving accommodations, no modifications are provided for. The better word is provisions and not accommodations.
- Structured assessments are geared towards securing a valid and objective diagnosis.
- If we are advocating different instructions for heterogeneous abilities in classrooms then why are we accepting homogeneous evaluation?



**Maheshwari Natarajan**

*Founder Principal, Vidya Mandir  
School Estancia Campus,  
Vallanchery*

**Concessions Offered by CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education)**

- Allows the use of a scribe.
- Exemption from second language/other subjects.
- Choice of a total of five subjects.
- Alternate subject instead of exempted subject/language
- [For more details see the chart here:](#)



**Dr V Sekar**

State Coordinator, RMSA (Rashtriya  
Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan)  
School Education, Tamil Nadu

## Concessions Offered by Samacheer Kalvi

- Extra time.
- Overlooking spelling details.
- Calculator for Maths.
- Scribe
- Exemption from second language.
- Choice of only four subjects if granted second language exemption.
- [For more details see the chart here:](#)



**Mrudula Govindaraju**

Editor, MDA Newsletter

## Concessions Offered by NIOS (National Institute of Open Schooling) - A Parent's Perspective

- Scribe
- Choice of a total of five subjects.
- Choice of dropping second language.
- Option to choose and club main subject with vocational subject.
- [For more details see the chart here:](#)



**Dr Uthra Dorairajan**

Associate Professor, Head,  
Department of Physics  
D G Vaishnav College, Chennai

## Concessions for Admission into College

- Delhi, Madras and Bombay Universities provide concessions.
- UGC gives grants for remedial classes.
- Provisions available for entrance at post graduate engineering courses - GATE exam.
- Joint seat allocation system between IITs, NITs, IIESR and IIITs which reserves seats for such students on rotation.

## Panel Discussion

A panel discussion, where heads of schools of different boards discussed how they implemented concessions provided by their respective educational boards in their schools. The panel was open to questions from the audience.

**The panel was moderated by Sushi Natraj, teacher, special educator.**  
**Heads of schools who participated in the Panel Discussion:**

**Nidhya Guhan**, Correspondent, A V Meiyappan Matriculation Higher Secondary School  
 Mangala Jayachandran, Head NIOS, Lady Andal School

**Kiran Merchant**, Principal, APL Global School

**Vijayalakshmi Raman**, Principal, PSBB Siruseri

**Vijayanthi Bhaskar**, Principal Abacus Montessori School

**Harini Ramanujam**, CEO, Madras Dyslexia Association



## Recommendations

The following recommendations were listed at the end of the Symposium, so the list may be submitted to the Department of Education, State and Central Government.

1. Specific Learning Disability should be a category by itself and not be combined with Intellectual Disability in the Persons with Disability Act.
2. The term "Concessions" to be changed to "Provisions".
3. We would recommend the following provisions be applied across all boards:
  - a. Overlooking of spellings.
  - b. Extra time.
  - c. Use of calculator.
  - d. Children to be provided with alternate subjects in lieu of the subjects exempted from so that the grand total remains at par with other students.
  - e. The provisions should include modification of physical presentation of the paper like
    - Availability of paper on the computer/tab.
    - Change of font, resizing the font, spacing between the characters/words or use of overlays.
  - f. Availability of option of transcription for a student with poor hand writing instead of a scribe.
  - g. Use of appropriate assistive devices during exams.
  - h. Availability of scribe.
  - i. Availability of reader.
4. The committee that grants the provisions for SLD should include a Special Educator in SLD.
5. B.Ed and medical courses should include more detailed sessions on SLD.
6. All schools should have a Special Educator for SLD.
7. All boards must publish the provisions they offer prominently on their website.
8. All boards must publish the procedure parents must follow and the documentation required for their board prominently on their website.
9. Children studying in the Samacheer Kalvi Board of Tamil Nadu state to be assessed in a comfortable environment and not in the Institute of Mental Health.
10. Periodic sessions of awareness of SLD should be conducted in schools of all Boards, for parents, principals and teachers. We ask for this since the incidence of SLD is so high among school going children.





# Advantage Dyslexia

*Embrace Empower Elevate*

MDA organized its flagship event, Advantage Dyslexia from 18-21 August 2019. This event is open exclusively to school children who have dyslexia. This year, 365 children from 25 schools participated in Art, Music, Dance, Story Telling and Kolam competitions. We share pictures below.

## Dance



Sankalp, Shenoy Nagar, 1st Prize



Ananya Learning and Research Centre,  
T. Nagar, 2nd Prize



Saraswathi Kendra Learning Centre,  
Eldams Road, 3rd Prize



# Art





# Kolam



# Storytelling



# Music



# Advantage Dyslexia – Our Sponsors



Rotary Club of Madras Central

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