

Loyola College (Autonomous)

Chennai – 600 034.

Department of Service Learning (Outreach)

Thematic orientation for the interventions with intellectually challenged persons

The team belonging to the care of elders and differently abled from each class was given orientation on 16th July 2015 at the conference hall of Commerce Building. About 300 students from shift - II in the morning and 250 students from shift - I in the afternoon attended this thematic training, which was formally started in the presence of HoD of Department of Service Learning (Outreach). He gave an introduction to the rationale of this thematic training. His enlightening words gave us an insight about the reality of the society.

The highlight of the thematic training was four overtly anxious intellectually challenged children or rather 'special' children who were round about our age. It was an interactive session for the students with the parents of the children. This made them understand the true situation of special children.

There were four parents of Intellectually Challenged person, namely Mrs. Sandhya Krishnamoorthy, Mr. Shiraj, Essakki Sundar and Mrs. Saraswathy, who individually described their experiences in bringing up their children. From their sharing and interactions, the students of Loyola through department of Service Learning (Outreach) could sense the emotions of the parents in the upbringing their children with much difficulty.

They felt their children were unique. They were so proud of them, for they did what thousands dream but only a few achieve. It was wonderful listening to the two of the intellectually challenged persons namely Salman and Surya who were selected to represent India at the World Para-Olympic Games to be held in Los Angeles in the month of August. Salman is a national level cyclist and Surya being an ace heavyweight lifter. They were not normal kids, they were star kids. Even another intellectually challenged girl namely Arti was a national level swimmer.

The vast majority of the students had not met such people before their lives and thus every single person present there had his heart filled with several emotions. Students looked upon their parents with so much of respect for what they have been doing for their children. Parents praised the students for an intention to serve the needy. Finally, students were informed about the various schemes, welfare programmes and benefits available with government for intellectually challenged persons. The students were instructed to visit the stakeholders and dialogue with the government to tap such schemes and welfare programmes for the benefit of the stakeholders.

The same session was organized in the morning for Shift - II students, totaling to 300 and for Shift - I students in the morning totaling to 250 students.

All in all, it was a brilliant experience and this session ignited the mind and spirit of Loyola students to start this eventful year by serving the needy through the outreach program of the college.