



Integrated and Inclusive Education for Differently Endowed Children





Training on Painting using Computer for hearing impaired girl



World Computer Literacy Day Celebrations – “Computer Literacy in a Village – Eye Opener Camp”



Mathematical Dyscalculia – New Mathematical Software for Special Children – Release of CD-ROM



Release & Dedication of Software Tool "AUT – SOFT" A Computer Aided Basic Tool for the Language Development of Autistic Children



Release & Dedication of Software Tool “Advanced AUT-SOFT” - Advanced Computer Aided Tool for Autistic Children (in English & Tamil) - **His Excellency Shri.Surjit singh Barnala, the Governor of Tamil Nadu**



Release & Dedication of the New Computer Aided Software Tool “A Learning Guide for Skill Development and Mathematics Readiness for Autistic and Differently Endowed Children – Skill Soft – Parts – I & II” - **His Excellency Dr. K. Rosaiah, the Governor of Tamil Nadu**



Release and Dedication of the New Computer Aided Software Tools – Software for Mathematics Readiness for Children with Down Syndrome



Release of Booklet on “Autism – Information Technology and Autism”



Opening of Digital Talking Library for Differently Endowed Women





Short term Training Programme for teaching Handicapped Children.



Opening of GYM for Women Employees of Bharathidasan University



**A Learning Guide for Skill Development
for Autistic and Differently
Endowed Children - Skill Soft**

Part - I



by
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**A Learning Guide for
Mathematics Readiness for Autistic and
Differently Endowed Children - Skill Soft**

Part - II



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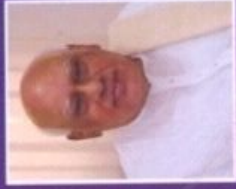


தன்திறனற்ற சிறார்கள் மற்றும்
மாற்றுத் திறனாளிகளுக்கான மொழித்திறன்
பயிற்சி மென்பொருள் - Skill Soft

பாகம் - I



ஆக்கம்
முனைவர் கோ. மீனா
துணைவேந்தர்
பாரதிதாசன் பல்கலைக்கழகம்
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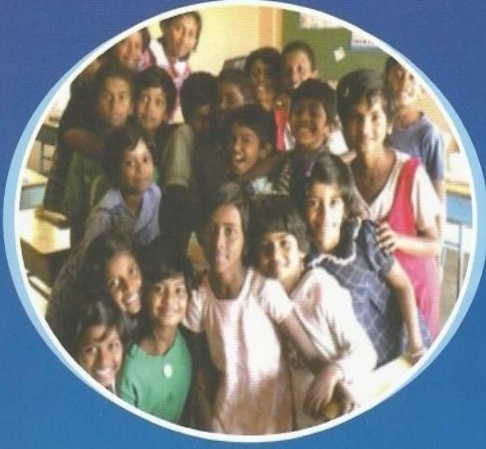
பாகம் - II



ஆக்கம்
முனைவர் கோ. மீனா
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SOFTWARE FOR MATHEMATICS READINESS FOR CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

(டவுன் சிண்ட்ரோம் குழந்தைகளுக்கான கணிதச் செயல்பாடுகளுக்கூரிய கற்றல் மென்பொருள்)



Dr. K. Meena

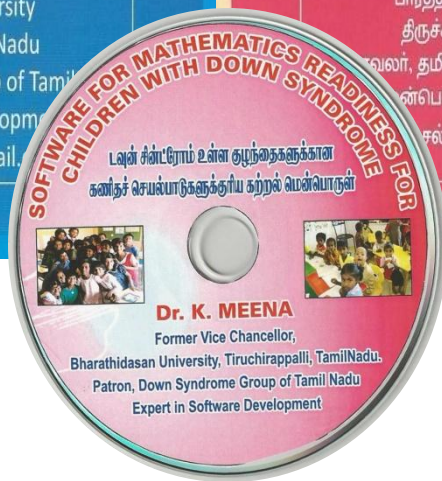
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டவுன் சிண்ட்ரோம் குழந்தைகளுக்கான கணிதச் செயல்பாடுகளுக்கூரிய கற்றல் மென்பொருள்
(SOFTWARE FOR MATHEMATICS READINESS FOR CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME)



முனைவர். K. மீனா

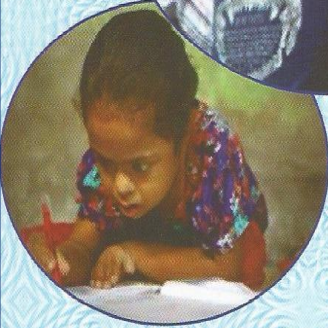
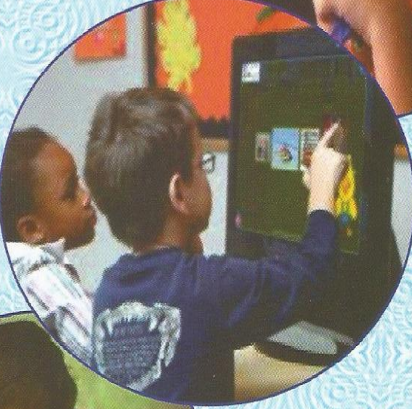
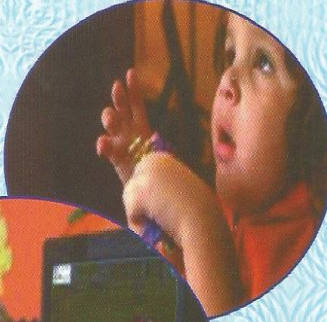
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பாரதிதாசன் பல்கலைக்கழகம்
திருச்சிராப்பள்ளி, தமிழ்நாடு
முனைவர், தமிழ்நாடு டவுன் சிண்ட்ரோம் குழு
மென்பொருள் உருவாக்க வல்லுநர்
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**Technology Transfer - Computer - Aided
Tools for Differently Endowed,
Down Syndrome and Special Children**

ஆட்டிசம்

தகவல் தொழில் நுட்பமும் ஆட்டிசமும்
(பெற்றோர் மற்றும் ஆசிரியர்களுக்கான கையேடு)

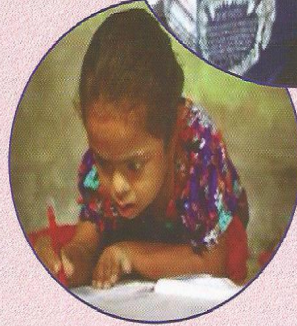
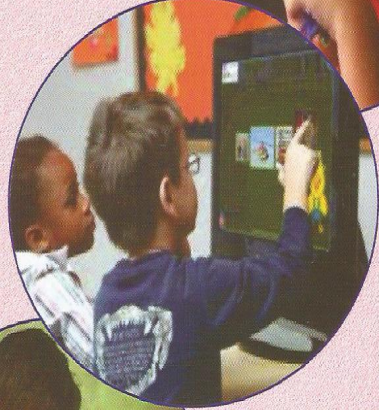
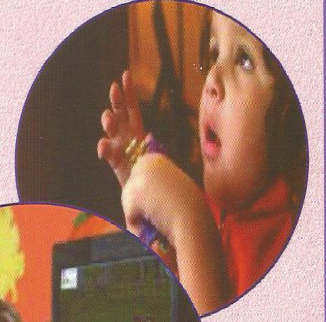


பேராசிரியர். முனைவர். கே. மீனா
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AUTISM

Information Technology & Autism
(A Guide for Parents and Educators)



Prof. Dr. K. MEENA
M.Sc.,M.Phil.,M.E.,M.I.E.,Ph.D.,
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Prof. Dr. S. PRABAKAR IMMANUEL
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Some of the hearing-impaired children from the special schools run by the Holy Cross Service Society in Tiruchi enjoying themselves during the Deepavali celebrations.

native town of Keelakkara from Dubai, when Ramanathapuram district was witnessing a caste flare-up. After reaching Chennai the youths, travelled to Ramanathapuram by the Sethu Express on October 6 last. Since buses and other vehicles were not plying in Ramanathapuram town, they decided to travel to the Mandapam railway station by the same train. After alighting there, they booked a

launch to reach the coastal Keelakkara town. Before setting sail they informed their family members of their plan. Later, they reached the Keelakkara shore, where they were received by their relatives who were otherwise to have met them at the station.

(Contributions from S. Ganesan in Tiruchi, G. Srinivasan in Thanjavur and Syed Muthahar in Tirunelveli.)

Training proposed for teaching handicapped

By Our Special Correspondent

TIRUCHI, Oct. 16.

A training-cum-resource centre for grassroot level field workers, community based workers, pre-school educators, special educators, and teachers in schools on training of handicapped children, would be established in Tiruchi with the help of the NGOs and the Government, said Mr. V. Murthy, District Collector, here on Wednesday.

He was participating in the Deepavali celebrations organised by the Holy Cross Service Society for handicapped children, and the students of the Smt. Indira Gandhi College. The Collector said handicapped children required special attention from the society, parents, teachers, and the Government.

The Collector said Tiruchi had made pioneering work in the field of integration of the special children with the mainstream of the society by admitting them in regular schools, and all the NGOs engaged in training and rehabilitation of the special children should jointly support the integrated resource centre.

New mathematical software for special children

By Our Staff Reporter

TIRUCHI, OCT. 7. A special 'mathematical software' for assessing and teaching children with learning disabilities was released in the city recently.

The software, developed by the Shrimathi Indira Gandhi College in association with the Holy Cross Service Society, aims at addressing the problems faced by children suffering from Dyscalculia, a learning disability manifested in the form of difficulty in understanding arithmetic. The software provides a computer-aided tool for assessment of children with such disability and also in teaching the children.

Releasing the software, Dr. C.R. Muthukrishnan, Deputy Director, IIT, Chennai and president of the Computer Society of India (CSI), stressed the role of computer-aided tools in teaching differently endowed children and those with learning disabilities. Information technology is a great leveller as it provides equal opportunity to all sections of the people. The development of the software is a trend-setter, he said and added that many such unique needs could be addressed using computer-aided tools.

Dr. K. Meena, Principal of the Shrimathi Indira Gandhi College, said children with learning disabili-

ty exhibited a disorder in one or more of the basic processes involved in understanding, listening, thinking, reading and writing. Lessons and tests can be made interesting to such children through specially developed software packages, she said.

Currently, the assessment of Dyscalculia in children is carried out mostly manually, which could now be done through the software. The software will open up a new area in teaching children with dyscalculia and will be distributed free of cost to all rehabilitation centres working with differently-endowed children, she said. The Shrimathi Indira Gandhi College has developed two special software packages for deaf and mentally retarded children, she said and added that the college was working on another software for children with low vision.

Mr. Prabhakar Immanuel of the Holy Cross Service Society said the softwares developed by the college were useful research tools and helped identify a large number of students suffering from learning disabilities. Mr. V. Gopalakrishnan, General Manager, BHEL, said the project proved that computers could be effectively deployed in the field of social work. Mr. G.S. Ragunathan, local unit secretary of the Computer Society of India, proposed a vote of thanks.

Pilot programme to identify disabilities of children launched

By Our Special Correspondent

TIRUCHI NOV. 28. The National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped (NIMH) has launched a pilot programme in 117 districts in the country to identify the disabilities of children at the earliest age, and train adequate number of persons in the community-based rehabilitation, especially in rural areas.

The main aim of the project, funded by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, was to provide under a single umbrella, a service centre to cater for the needs of differently-abled and handicapped children, said Dr. Vijayalakshmi Menon, of the Department of Special Education of NIMH, Secunderabad, here on Monday.

The seven district centres for disability rehabilitation will be in Madurai, Tuticorin, Tirunelveli, Salem, Chengalpatt, Virudhunagar and Villupuram.

Delivering the keynote address at a workshop for trainers on management of persons with mental retardation organised by the Holy Cross Service Society of Tiruchi, she said a sum of Rs. 14 lakh would be spent on each district per annum, for three years.

The programme would train the community-based rehabilitation workers in identification and assessment of children, planning programme for them and vocational training and rehabilitation with location specific programmes in the community itself. The district centres would conduct special camps in every block in the district, along with NGOs of the area, and specialists in different fields.

Dr. K. Meena, Chairperson, of the Computer Society of India, Tiruchi Chapter, and Principal Sreejaya Gandhi college who inaugurated the workshop, said community-based rehabilitation

programmes had come to stay in a country, where the number of special schools and centres for training the staff for such schools were less. Recent studies had revealed that the number of mentally retarded children, were as high in rural areas as in urban areas, and the best way to tackle this was the community-based programme, she said.

The scheme also had the advantage of closely associating the members of the family, and also the community in training and rehabilitation programmes.

Dr. Pushkar Prasad, Director of the Centre who has been recently selected for the national individual award for outstanding work in the service of the handicapped, said 20 community-based workers from Tamil Nadu and Kerala participated in the three-day workshop.

Centre proposed in Tiruchi to train mentally deficient

By Our Staff Reporter

TIRUCHI, April 28.

The Central Government has sanctioned Rs. 7 lakhs for the establishment of a counselling and training centre for the mentally deficient persons in the government hospital Tiruchi, said Dr. M. E. Isakki Muthu, Superintendent of the hospital, here today.

Speaking at the inauguration of the rehabilitation centre for the mentally deficient sponsored by the Anbalayam of Tiruchi, he said while people suffering from any other disease were accepted by the society, those with mental deficiency were looked down upon. Voluntary organisations should educate the community to change this attitude, he added.

Dr. K. Meena, Principal of the Shrimathi Indira Gandhi college, who inaugurated the centre, said when the mentally deficient persons were shown care and love and given training to improve their skills, they would become self-dependent.

Computer software have been developed to teach them to look after themselves, and to adjust to their surroundings, she said. The Principal recalled that during the computer exposure programme organised by the NSS students of the college, the handicapped and differently en-

dowed students had shown remarkable interest, and had learnt very quickly.

Dr. N. Balasubramanian stressed the need for educating the parents and relatives of the mentally deficient children.

Mrs. Subhadra, Correspondent, Kriya Matriculation School, criticised the attitude of the parents who want their children to go for engineering, or medicine. Such heavy pressure exerted on children at a very young age often results in mental derangement, she added.

Mr. T. K. S. Senthilkumar, secretary of Anbalayam, welcoming the gathering, said the objective of the centre was to give training to the mentally deficient in useful crafts. He said Anbalayam had launched a programme in the city three years back for the day-care of the mentally deficient. About 60 mentally deficient persons living in the city were supplied food, and also given a bath, hair cut and clean dress by the volunteers.

Messrs. R. Ganapathi Subramaniam, Educational Advisor to the Shrimathi Indira Gandhi College, Prof. Joseph Hridayaraj of the St. Joseph college, Mr. David Mansingh, Secretary of the Santhana Human Welfare and Educational Trust, Mr. Ramachandran, Mr. R. Basha and Mr. Felix Winson Francis, President, Anbalayam, also spoke.

3 software packages for handicapped released

By Our Staff Reporter

TIRUCHI, Aug. 7.

Three separate software packages for the mentally retarded, hearing impaired and orthopaedically handicapped children developed by the students of the Shrinathi Indira Gandhi College in association with the Holy Cross Service Society were released here today.

Explaining the salient features of the software packages at a function organised at the college, Dr. K. Meena, principal of the college, observed that there was tremendous potential for using the latest technological tools for helping the physically handicapped children as the country had a very high number of disabled persons.

Dr. Meena said the three packages included a language assessment tool for mentally retarded children, a language performance test and a complete case tool package for the orthopaedically handicapped children.

The package for the mentally retarded and hearing impaired children would help them recognise and identify various objects and improve their grasping power through the visual media.

The visual aids were found to be effective in improving the communication skills of the mentally retarded children to a great extent.

The package would also help analyse their performance.

The software for the hearing impaired has been developed to help children below the age of 3 years improve their speech and comprehension skills.

Dr. S. Prabhakaran, secretary, Holy Cross Service Society, stressed the need for making the latest technology available for the physically and mentally retarded children though such ventures may not be commercially viable.

Stating that there were many popular misconceptions about disabled persons in the society, he said many of them could function as normal human beings with proper training and treatment.

Earlier, Mr. Ramasubbu, past president, Rotary Club of Cauvery, released the software packages.

Mr. Valliappan, president, Rotary Club of Cauvery, installed new office-bearers of Rotaract Club of the College.

Computer-aided educational programme for disabled

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, Aug. 8.

The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF) and NIIT, have come together to implement a computer-aided educational programme that will cover an estimated 20,000 severely disabled children countrywide.

The "Computer Aided Teaching and Rehabilitation of the Disabled" (CATERED) project, developed jointly by the RGF, NIIT and the Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu (SPASTN), had been implemented successfully at SPASTN, covering 500 spastic children. Mr. Javed Abidi, RGF's Programme Officer of the Disabled, told presspersons here on Friday.

The project, launched on August 20, 1995, commemorating the 51st birth anniversary of the Rajiv Gandhi, involved development of a special education software based on "I-write" package of NIIT.

The software enabled teachers to enter educational courseware into the system for its easy usage by the severely disabled. Instruction manuals and teacher training have been included together with the monitoring and management support facilities to achieve success.

Mr. Abidi and Mr. D. Krishna Rao, Media Ad-

viser of the RGF, said the total cost of the two-year project was Rs.17 lakhs. As per the agreement entered into then, the RGF funded the cost of the hardware and research to the tune of Rs.6 lakhs; NIIT met the cost of the software and providing training to the computer staff of the SPASTN to the extent of Rs.6 lakhs, and SPASTN took care of all the local expenses, salaries for the computer programmers and the annual maintenance cost accruing to Rs.5 lakhs.

The computer-aided interactive learning environment process had made imparting education to the severely disabled a "fun loving exercise" at the SPASTN, said Prof. J.R. Isaac, Advisor, NIIT, New Delhi. The software package had proved beyond doubt that the disabled did not lag behind in not only using computers but also in applying the hi-tech software.

NIIT, he said, would also write to the University Grants Commission (UGC) and make a detailed presentation to the principals and directors of institutions such as SPASTN for early implementation of the programme.

Mrs. Aloka Guha, Director of SPASTN, said the computer-aided teaching and rehabilitation of the disabled programme opened new vistas in imparting education to the disabled.

Governor launches learning guide for children with autism

Education vital for the differently-abled to participate in society, he says

Staff Reporter

CHENNAI: A computer-aided learning guide for autistic children 'Advanced Aut-Soft' was launched on Wednesday by Governor Surjit Singh Barnala.

Developed by K. Meena, principal, Shrimati Indira Gandhi College in Tiruchi, the guide consists of assessment and remedial tools aimed at making learning interesting and interactive for children with autism. The exercises cover various aspects, including language, word meanings, opposites, shapes, singular and plural usage.

Launching the software, Mr. Barnala said education was vital for the differently-abled, as it enabled them to fully participate in society. "Programmes to help the differently-abled lead a normal life are the need of the hour," he said.

He emphasised the need to care for the differently-abled in rural areas. It was heartening to note that the learning guide had sections on alphabets, pictures, animals, birds, essential grammar and numerical ability.

He recalled a stunning roller-skating performance by 10-year-old Salman Kabir, an autistic child, which he had witnessed recently.



LEARNING MADE INTERESTING: Governor Surjit Singh Barnala presents 'Advanced Aut-Soft', a computer-aided learning guide, to a special child in Chennai on Wednesday. Shrimati Indira Gandhi College principal K. Meena (left) and Principal Secretary to the Governor C.K. Gariyali (right) are also in the picture. — PHOTO: S.R.RAGHUNATHAN

Children with autism were excellent in areas like music and mathematics. They had the ability to memorise route maps and car numbers, he said, adding that parents

needed to identify such talents and encourage their children.

Principal Secretary to Governor C.K. Gariyali, children and special educators from

Vidya Sagar were also present. Ms. Meena, who has been pursuing research in fields related to special education for over a decade, demonstrated a few exercises for

parents and special educators gathered at the function. Once loaded onto a computer, the compact disk was self-explanatory and very user-friendly, she said.

Making learning easy for autistic children

Express News Service

Chennai, April 25

INFORMATION Technology has at last come to the aid of autistic children. A special software tool, 'Advanced Aut-Soft' has been developed to help in addressing challenges in their learning process. The software, to be made available in English and Tamil, will increase the learning ability, comprehension and overall skill development of autistic children.

The learning tool, which will help teachers and students make learning easier and interesting for autistic children, covers a wide range of topics from alphabets, fruits, birds, sense organs and basic grammar to stories.

K Meena, principal of Shrimati Indira Gandhi College, Tiruchy, who developed the software, said that IT played a vital role in developing such computer-aided tools to assist teachers at schools and help parents in the teaching process.

Available in CD format and comprising two parts - assessment and remedial - the software can be used for children in the age group of three to 10 years. Exercises on identifying letters, spelling, formation of new words, language utilisation and meanings are part of the language assessment.



Governor Surjit Singh Barnala hands over a CD of Advanced Aut Soft to a boy at a function held at Raj Bhavan on Wednesday as K Meena, principal, Shrimathi Indira Gandhi College, Tiruchy, and the Secretary to the Governor look on —Express

The 'knowledge understanding software' consists of exercises on finding differences, picture dictionary, match the following, complete the picture and memory

observation. Advanced exercises have also been included.

The software also enables evaluation with model tests.

"It is a slow learning package,

but has several modules. We can also add on exercises to it," she added.

Dedicating the computer aided tool, Tamil Nadu Governor Surjit

Singh Barnala said it would help increase knowledge in autistic children and parental involvement would produce good and effective results.

"Statistics reveal that around 20 out of every 10,000 people are autistic and in the past two decades, there is an increase in the number of persons identified with autism and other pervasive disorders," Barnala said.

However, he pointed out that about 70 percent of persons with autism had an IQ of 70 or below.

"Their IQ may be uneven with excellent abilities in other areas like music, mathematics, memory of route maps or car numbers," he added.

He recalled the roller skating performance of Salman Kabir, a 10-year-old autistic child. "His performance is credited to the identification of the inherent skill, proper coaching and the loving support of his parents," he said, adding that parents are these children's best friends, philosopher and guide.

In addition, he mentioned that most of the disabled persons were in rural areas and should be cared for.

"Institution-based rehabilitation and community-based rehabilitation should take care of their socio-economic, psychological and physical needs," recommended the Governor.

New software tool for autistic and differently abled children launched

Chennai, Apr 25: A new computer aided software tool for autistic and differently abled children launched by Dr K. Rosaiah, Governor of Tamilnadu in the presence of Sudaai Muthu, Vice Chancellor, Karaikudi Alagappa University. The new software was developed by Dr. Meena, Vice Chancellor of Bharathidasan University.

At the function held in Raj Bhavan today, Dr. K. Rosaiah dedicated a new software "A learning guide for skill development and Mathematics readiness for Autistic and differently endowed Children Skill soft I & II" to the autistic and differently endowed children.

Dr. K. Rosaiah said, "The importance of special educators and community based education has gained momentum in recent years. The goal of community based education should be to ensure that the differently abled children attend schools as other children, a barrier free environment is created for them and their needs are attended to exclusively by the special education."

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's vision 2023 envisages inclusive growth pattern and lays emphasis in providing care for differently abled and the special children in the state. It is welcome development that in recent years the society has recognized the need for providing special assistance and support to

"Differently Endowed Children" - Skill Soft - Part I & II
in English and Tamil

on Thursday, 25th April 2013, 10:30 a.m.
Raj Bhavan, Chennai



the differently abled." Rosaiah added.

To ensure uniform method of assessment of the special children their learning capacity has to be enhanced, towards language development.

The new software contains different modules such as reading skills, listening skills, communication skills, writing skills and motivation. The different modules motivate the children on identifying and enabling them in categorical

identification, observation, concentration, clarification etc. This increases the motivation in learning process.

Dr. Meena, Vice Chancellor, Bharathidasan University said, "A numerous organizations, institutions and individuals are at the disposal of children with the special needs with the great philosophy "Service to differently abled is the service to God." In that way, everyone of us is to have an attitude to contribute something which they

can to the people with special needs."

"An objective assessment of the children with special needs gain its significance so as to help the teachers and parents to better understand them with their learning capacity. I do hope modest efforts taken by me for Skill Soft Part I and II would help teachers and children for uniform assessment so that intellectual growth of the children can be fine tuned." Dr. Meena added.

COMPUTER AIDED TOOL

Development and Mathematics Readiness for Autistic and Differently Endowed Children - Skill Soft - Part I & II in English and Tamil

April 2015 at 11 AM
Dr. Chandra



Akila (on the right), principal and speech therapist, Bright Learning Centre receives the CD from K Rosaiah. Also in the picture: K Meena (left) and Ramesh Chand Meena, IAS, secretary to governor

Software tool designed by a vice-chancellor

A new computer-aided software tool - A Learning Guide for Skill Development and Mathematics Readiness for Autistic and Differently Endowed Children - Skill Soft - Part I & II in English and Tamil, prepared by K Meena, vice-chancellor, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchy, was recently released. K Rosaiah, the Governor of Tamil Nadu was the chief guest. Special training programme including reading skills, writing skill and motivation will be available in this software. Part II will consist of separate maths modules.

Maths CD released for children with DS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

TIRUCHI: The Alagappa University will soon create a Department of Special Education and Rehabilitation Science, according to its Vice-Chancellor S. Subbiah.

Speaking at a function here on Saturday after releasing software for mathematics readiness for children with 'Down Syndrome' developed by former Vice-Chancellor of Bharathidasan University K. Meena, he said the State Government had sanctioned posts for creating the department, which is not only aimed at offering courses on special education but also developing a model home for physically and mentally challenged persons. The programmes, which were currently being offered on special education, would be incorporated with the new department.

Recollecting the sufferings



S. Subbiah, Vice-Chancellor, Alagappa University, Karaikudi, releasing the Software for Mathematics Readiness for Children with Down Syndrome in Tiruchi on Saturday. K. Meena, former Vice-Chancellor, Bharathidasan University, is at left.

— PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

of parents of children with mentally and physically challenged persons, Mr. Subbiah said many of them had been taking care of their children with devotion, dedication,

and hope. However, there was a question mark on their livelihood and wellbeing after the parents' lifespan. Stating that it was one of the biggest social issues of the country, he said

as per the 2011 statistics, 2.68 crore people had been living in the country with physical or mental illness.

Ms. Meena, in her address, said the software tool had solutions to the learning challenges of children with 'Down Syndrome'. It would increase their understanding ability and overall skill development. The software would consist of eight modules such as counting objects, identifying shapes, missing number, currency identification and others. It had been developed after carrying out an intensive field test with various homes and schools that taught children with 'down syndrome'.

S. Prabhakar Immanuel, Executive Director, Holy Cross Service Society, Tiruchi, S. Sethuraman, president, Indian Medical Association, Tiruchi chapter, and M.S. Ashraf, Member, Tamil Nadu Medical Council spoke.

SUNDAY TIMES 22.11.2015

City techie develops new software to teach mathematics to Down syndrome children

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Trichy: Considering the need to effectively teach mathematics to children affected with Down syndrome, an exclusive software has been developed by an expert from the city. The software has pictorial representations for various mathematical calculations that would help the children learn mathematics in a simple way.

"The idea was to improve the ability to learn mathematics among children with Down syndrome," said K Meena, patron of Down Syndrome Group of Tamil Nadu, who developed the soft-



The software was launched by vice-chancellor of Alagappa University S Subbiah on Saturday

ware.

She said almost a year has been put into developing the software and that skill development for such children play a major role.

"Most of the time parents and educators are unaware of the methodologies to teach such children and assume they cannot learn mathematics. The software would

address such misconceptions and help them learn mathematics with pictorial representations," said Meena.

"While there are several challenges in teaching mathematics to children with Down syndrome, their enthusiasm and ability to use visual sense effectively is indeed an advantage," she added.

"Close to 50 lakh children suffer from Down syndrome in India, which is also the highest in the world," said Dr M S Ashraf, consultant physician at Ayesha Hospital.

Training of these children is vital and this software sets a bench mark in

their education.

Saying that the disorder is common and not rare as many believe, he said, "Down syndrome is often misunderstood as mental retardation. Parents go for neurological treatment and medication after consulting physicians. Instead, they should be trained from as early as 6 months."

Speaking after launching the software, Vice-Chancellor of the Alagappa University S Subbiah said a separate department has been opened at the university to provide BED and MEd courses in handling children with special needs.

Univ dept for differently-abled

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, NOV. 21

The Alagappa University (AU), Karaikudi, has decided to establish an exclusive department for differently-abled people for their welfare at a cost of Rs 25 crore. A detailed project report will be sent to the UGC shortly for its approval, said AU vice-chancellor Dr S.Subbiah.

Releasing the country's first software for mathematics readiness for children with Down's syndrome (a CD rom and a

brochure) created by Dr.K.Meena, former vice-chancellor of Bharathidasan University here at a function on Saturday, Dr Subbiah said that the project included a residential school for differently-abled and Down's syndrome children and a special training centre to train teachers for handling children with special needs.

He called upon parents of such children to positively support this programme and stressed the need to create greater awareness about this disease.

Alagappa University, has taken up this unique initiative

In her address Dr.Meena pointed out that she has been involved in the preparation of computer-aided software tools since 1996. These software tools are distributed free of cost to numerous individuals / organizations in India and abroad. She added that these tools would be very useful for special teachers and parents to teach them. The programme has eight mod-

ules namely, counting objects, identifying shapes, missing numbers, addition, subtraction, currency, numbers, names and place value.

Others who participated in the function included Dr S.Sethuraman, president, Indian Medical Association (IMA), Tiruchy, Dr M.S.Ashraf, member, Tamil Nadu Medical Council, Dr S. Prabhakar Immanuel, founder and executive director, Holy Cross service society, Tiruchy, and veteran print journalist V Ganapathy.

■ Removing misconceptions about the malady is vital

Tiruchy collector releases booklet on IT and autism

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, NOV 1

There are many misconceptions about Autism. Most people think Autism as a condition related to intellectual impairment. Many others think autism as a medical disorder needing treatment. But in reality, autism is a physical disorder which has an impact on certain developmental needs of children.

Autism is a condition which can be addressed only through training a child for his individual-based developmental needs. This condition is not new. Even in the year 1940, Khanner a psychiatrist has stated about the group of children who have certain stereotype behaviour.

The children with autistic conditions will show some differences in social interaction, speech and language communication, abnormal relationship to objects and events, abnormal responses to sensory stimulations and developmental delays. These characteristics are seen during early developmental period of two to three years of age, say medical experts.



Tiruchy collector K. Rajamahi releasing the booklet. To his left is Dr K Meena. —DC

These factors clearly show autism is not a condition of intellectual impairment. Some children may have associated conditions of intellectual impairment.

But since most of the characteristics when not addressed do not help the child to participate and learn by six years of age, most children with autistic spectrum disorder seems to fall under the lower cognition group.

But in reality, nearly 80 Per cent of autistic children when receiving goal oriented, family-based, individual-based inter-

vention programme for total development needs, they will move away from low cognition group.

In order to create an understanding of the needs of autistic children and the need for a total development programme for this group of children from the young age, efforts have been taken by Dr K Meena, former vice-chancellor of Bharathidasan University and National Award recipient for outstanding services to children with disabilities.

Dr. Meena along with the National Awardee Dr S. Prabhakar Immanuel, executive director of

Holy Cross Service Society, has written a booklet on 'Autism - Information Technology and Autism' and Use of information technology to assist autistic children."

This guidebook specifically focuses on the needs of parents and educators. This guidebook provides basic information on autistic nature, characteristics and need for early intervention in the first part.

In the second part, the focus is given to information technology applicable to the needs of autistic children and also has a questionnaire to identify needs and meet the same in the learning environment.

Ms. Meena said, the content and principles of information technology is applicable to children with special needs and autistic conditions, while there is need for "Training of Trainers (TTTs)" in order to concentrate on skill development of autistic children.

The booklet was released by Mr. Rajamani Tiruchy Collector here at a low-key function.

He hailed the efforts of both Ms Meena and Dr S. Prabhakar Immanuel.

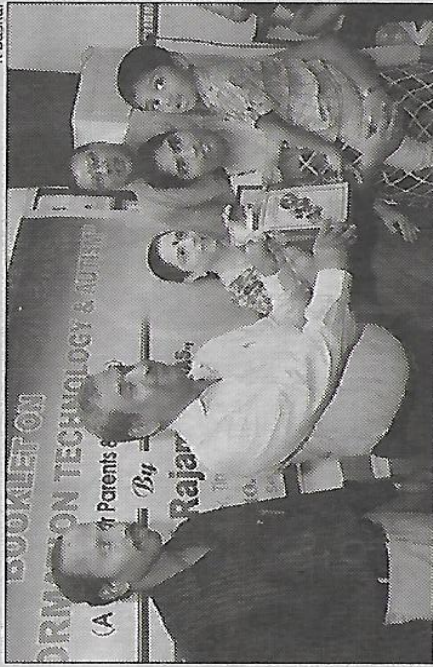
IT-powered training effective for autistic kids'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Trichy: Children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) could develop better communication skills if they're taught or trained through software built specially for them, according to a booklet released by the district administration here on Wednesday.

Titled 'Autism - Information Technology & Autism', the booklet also has a screening tool to detect developmental disorder in children aged below five years. The authors, former vice-chancellor of Bharathidasan University, K Meena, and the executive director of Holy Cross Service Society, S Prabakar Immanuel, base their claim on the premise that autistic children are "visual learners". They said

R. Baskar



District collector K Rajamani released a booklet 'Autism - Information Technology & Autism' in Trichy on Wednesday

that information technology and computer-aided teaching methods could be very effective in upgrading the abilities of such children. It was released by district collector K Rajamani at Holy Cross Service Society. According to Immanuel,

with ASD should primarily

focus on visual and auditory processing rather than on reading and writing skills directly.

"If they can be provided auditory and visual training, it will help them much better in terms of communication. There are software tools available for free. To make sure the apps and software reach children, we should first teach special educators on how to use them," he said.

The booklet has 56 yes-or-no questions as part of a study to determine how far software tools are being used in Trichy district and if they had a positive impact in a child.

Two softwares - Basic Aut Soft and Advanced Aut Soft - developed by Meena are being used currently by a few in Trichy. Other promi-

nent softwares for children with ASD include Boardmaker and apps like Autism Language and Cognitive Therapy with MITA, First-Then Visual Schedule.

"We taught basic mathematics to children with ASD through the software developed by me and it worked really well," Meena said.

Apart from this, the booklet also has a screening tool of a set of 23 yes/no questions for parents and teachers to detect autism among children below five.

Collector Rajamani said that the booklet would be distributed to village health nurses (VHNs), anganwadi teachers and other staff from Integrated Child Development Services and an autism detection drive would be conducted across the district in a few days.

THE HINDU 01.11.2018

Identify autism at early stage

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHI

Releasing a guide for parents and educators on "Autism - Information Technology and Autism," authored by former Vice-Chancellor of Bharathidasan University K. Meena and Executive Director and Secretary of Holy Cross Service Society S. Prabakar Immanuel here on Wednesday, Collector K. Rajamani said that early intervention was a key to bring autistic children under the mainstream of overall physical and psychological development.

It was important to provide them formal school

education on a par with other children. Due to ignorance of symptoms of autism on the part of parents and guardians, particularly in rural areas, many children could not be identified at the early stage making it difficult for parents and educators to bring them to the mainstream of development.

It had been decided to create awareness of autism, causes and rehabilitation among ICDS workers, village health nurses.

As they were visiting villages on daily basis, it would enable them identify autistic children at early stage. So,

orientation programmes would be held in all blocks for the staff of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS).

Ms. Meena said that most children with autistic spectrum disorder had severe behaviour problems. Autism was not a condition of intellectual impairment or mental retardation but a neurological based disorder.

Researches had shown that high quality early intervention could improve learning, communication and social skills as well as brain development. As autistic children were visual learners, infor-

mation technology and computer aided teaching method could be very effective in upgrading abilities of them

Mr. Immanuel said that intensive, systematic and customized approach could be very effective in making autistic children adopt to the formal education. If proper care was given at early stages, more than 80% of them could be made strong in social and communication skills.

S. Amuthvalli, City Engineer, Tiruchi Corporation, S. Ramesh, secretary, Indira Gandhi College, participated.

Booklet released on early recognition of autism

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Tiruchy

More than 80 per cent children who are diagnosed with autism can progress when given proper training and diagnosed in the early stages,

Dr S Prabhakar Immanuel, executive director of the Holy Cross Service Society during a special programme for guiding parents and educators to identify autism in the early stages on Wednesday in the city. District Collector K Rajamani released a booklet on the occasion.

Dr Immanuel said, "Some children may have some stereotyped behaviour by birth. Such autistic children will have difference in social interaction, speech, language communications, abnormal relationship with objects and delay in development. These characteristics are



seen during the developmental period of the child from the age of 2 to 3."

The booklet containing 56 questions in the form of checklist was released.

K Meena, former vice chancellor of Bharathidasan University, said that as the concentration level of autistic children oscillates more than normal children, specific video training is being used for attracting their attention.

The collector added that all ICDS field workers in the district shall be made aware on early diagnosis of autism among children.

Digital library for visually-challenged



Trichy district collector Jayashree Muralidharan after inaugurating the library

Trichy: District collector Jayashree Muralidharan on Friday dedicated a “digital talking library” for visually challenged persons at the Bharathidasan University. The digital library is the eighth in the country and the second in Tamil Nadu, the first being functional at Bharathiar University.

Lauding the “brainchild” of university vice-chancellor Dr K Meena, the district collector said differently able persons had more sensory perception than normal people, and hence they do not necessarily need others' sympathies.

“We cannot stay in darkness for a few seconds, but they remain like that in their entire lifetime, and yet they achieve remarkable things,” Jayashree said.

Dr K Meena said the digital library will help the visually-challenged to jump from one chapter to the other, and one could get all the available resources at one place. TNN

Digital Talking Library Inaugurated at BDU

Tiruchy: The District Collector, Jayashree Muralidharan, inaugurated the digital talking library (DTL), the second of its kind, at the Central Library of Bharathidasan University on Friday.

Inaugurating the DTL, she said technological developments helped her a lot in solving people's problems and keep track of the happenings in City.

She said, the DTL, which is dedicated to the differently-abled persons, would provide them confidence.

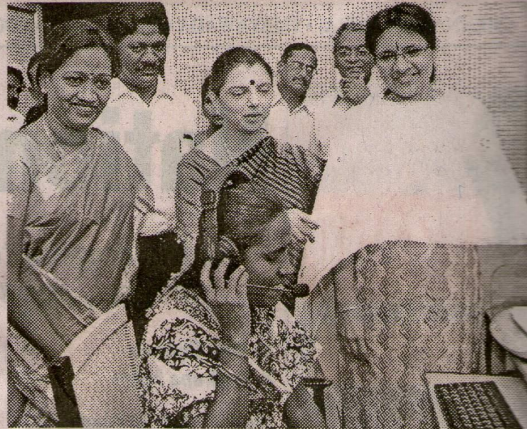
The smile of a differently-abled student the moment she accessed the DTL, speaks for it', she added.

Dr K Meena, Vice-Chancellor, Bharathidasan University, in her address said, now technological tools were being used for the differently-abled persons.

Explaining the concept behind the DTL, she said, the traditional talking book was outdated.

The DTL is a multi-media representation of the print publication, wherein voice plays the major role.

In addition to improved sound quality, the DTL al-



Digital talking library is being dedicated to differently-abled persons at Bharathidasan University, Tiruchy, on Friday. Also seen are District Collector Jayashree Muralidharan and Vice-Chancellor Dr K Meena | Express

lows the user to rewind, forward, set book marks, mark over chapters and enables him to skip paragraphs'.

She said there were eight DTLs across India and Bharathiyar University and Bharathidasan University were the only two educational institutions in the State to have installed a DTL, she added.

Speaking on the sidelines of the inauguration, M Prabavathy, Head (In-Charge, Centre for Differ-

ently-Abled Persons, Bharathidasan University, said, nearly 600 books on various subjects are fed into the DTL.

The District Collector also distributed sewing machines to two differently-abled persons, Krishnamoorthi and Annakili and distributed the first PhD Bio-Informatics application to Suganakala, AVC College, besides releasing the newly framed PhD regulation book. ENS