

GLOBAL AUTISM CONVENTION – REPORT



The Global Autism Convention was conducted between the 19th and 21st of May, 2011 at the NIMHANS Convention Centre in Bangalore.

The convention was inaugurated by Shri. Rajanna - the Commissioner for Disabilities for Karnataka, Mr. P.R. Mundewadi – Chairman of the Vidya Vardhaka Group of Institutions and Rtn. Manandi Suresh – District Governor of RI District 3190.

Ms. Merry Barua – the founder of Action For Autism, Delhi was the key note addressee on the 19th of May and she started the convention on a very positive note talking about the future of autism and the present scenario in India. This was followed by speakers from South Korea, Nigeria, Israel, Netherlands and USA who told us about the interventions and methodologies being used in their countries to deal with autism. In a parallel session, a workshop on interaction with technology was conducted during the day where approximately 20 parents and children with autism participated. Dr. Jeongil Kim and her team from South Korea conducted a play therapy workshop in the evening which was very informative and interactive.

The second day of the convention, i.e. the 20th, began with a key note address from Dr. MC Matthew, Professor of Developmental Pediatrics in Pondicherry. 16 speakers from various medical fields presented the work that they are doing in their institutions and showed us the variety of therapies and medications being used in autism.

The day's sessions was followed by a wonderful entertainment programme where upcoming singer Mihika Bolangadi enthralled us with semi-classical music. The students from Shree Ramana Maharshi Academy for the Blind did a spell binding dance with diyas and the students of ASHA performed to popular Bollywood songs. This was followed by an energetic and interactive performance by star singer Sairam Iyer who is well known for singing in a dual voice.

The third day was focused on the educational aspect of autism and 15 speakers from all around India gave us a glimpse of the various techniques being used in their centers along with creative methodologies using music, theatre and other allied therapies.

A total of 38 speakers and close to 350 delegates attended the convention.

Pre convention workshops on Yoga and the use of Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale were conducted at Spastics Society of Karnataka on the 18th of May.

The Convention came to an end with the valedictory address given by Father Lawrence, Director of St. John's National Academy of Health Sciences.

The Convention has been very well received both by the professionals and parents concerned with this complex disorder. The audience appreciated the large scale event and expressed that such an event was being held for the first time in India.

We would like to thank BBMP, D. Veerendra Hegde of Dharmasthala, Rotary International District 3190, Anuradha Foundation, Monprit Jyoti Trust, Vidya Vardhaka Group of Institutions and Pearson Education, India for their generous contributions towards the convention. We look forward to all your continued interests in this field and would like to plan better and better programs for the affected children.

Jayashree Ramesh
Secretary, Organizing Committee