



AMICI NEWS



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Positive action on disability can enrich the whole community

Positive action on disability is an important part of the process by which a community gains more control over its life and more hope about its capacity to solve immediate problems. Work on disability raises levels of community responsibility and civic consciousness. Ignoring disabled people simply perpetuates despair and hopelessness in the whole community, not just for disabled people and their families. As soon as some kind of service is available at community level, there is always a flood of applicants to use it. In HB Halli and other remote villages in Karnataka state, the experience of starting neighbourhood centres for disabled children shows that the presence of such centres provides a source of pride and raises morale in the whole community, not just for those who directly benefit. The truth is that people operate more effectively when they feel valued and are able to value each other.



Disability provides a key to unlock the secret of where the deeper values lie; it challenges all of us over our fundamental attitudes to what determines the value of life. A society which ignores its disabled people or shuts them away in institutions is deprived of its necessary corrective. It fails to see that society itself is invisibly dependent on the disabled for a critique of its humane norms and values. In view of both our domestic social problems and the problems of the world community (for example starvation, apartheid and the gap between rich and poor), it is becoming ever clearer that the solution to these problems depends less and less on power and money and increasingly on the radical thinking and learning.



The contribution that disabled people can make to a more holistic understanding of the world is enormous: We have noted that many disabled persons - especially those who have managed to learn skills and lead fulfilling lives - have developed an exceptional 'view of the world'. They feel a sort of brother-and-sisterhood with other disadvantaged, exploited and oppressed peoples - the Earth's 'socially handicapped'. They are committed to working in their own different ways toward a fairer world, one in which the silent speak out and the weak grow strong by joining hands. They feel that all who are disabled should be given an equal chance. They would like to help in the rehabilitation of a socio-politically disabled Human Race on ecologically disabled Earth.

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Programme for the leprosy cured - Sheltering the homeless

Housing has been the forte of Sumanahalli since many years. The process got a boost in 2003-2004, when Sumanahalli decided to have 100 houses built as the main jubilee programme. Approaching the government, the housing department made an order, that Rajeev Gandhi Housing Corporation allot 100 houses for the leprosy cured along with the poor housing scheme.

The salient features of this housing project are listed below:

- ☞ *It is community based since; the houses are allotted along with the other houses for the poor. In Kengeri, the 19 houses are part of the 185 houses built by the government. This makes the leprosy affected to integrate with the community over a period of time.*
- ☞ *15 out of the 19 families have been given government jobs earlier and so housing is a further rehabilitation programme. The other four are offered income generation activities by Sumanahalli. Two are helped with starting shops and other two with jobs with Sumanahalli.*
- ☞ *A nursery and tuition centre is started to cater to the educational needs of children. A teacher and a maid take care of over 30 children. The children from non leprosy families are also taken to facilitate integration with the community.*
- ☞ *A women's group is organised who are now meeting every week for their awareness programmes and savings.*



Thus every area of need of the leprosy cured is covered through this programme and is indeed the best example of community based rehabilitation for the leprosy cured families.

Tsunami Relief Funds from Beggars!

Beggars can also be givers. The residents of Indiranagar Lepers Colony, Dhurwa in Ranchi, mostly beggars, have proved this point. Moved by the colossal loss of life and property in the wake of tsunami tragedy, they took the voluntary initiative to collect Rs. 1,300 from among themselves and handed over the amount to Don Bosco Kokar Parish priest, Fr. Naikam. The colony was founded by the Don Bosco and is managed by it in association with other philanthropic organisations.

“We were left wordless when we first came to know of their noble gesture. Given their sentiments involved we could not stop them from contributing their might” Fr. Naikam said.

Words of Wisdom ...

Faith may increase sometimes & decrease at other times, but he who is able to make his way through all this wavering, reaches the ultimate goal and his life becomes worth saluting.

Awareness programme of ADOR



Raichur's ADOR CBR staff conducted awareness programmes of leprosy and disabilities its background, prevention and control of disabilities, teaching and helping them to develop their skills and to get all the possible aids given by the Government. The programme gives the awareness that the disabled are also the part of the society and special opportunities are given to come out in the way they can. In most of the Schools 4 to 5 students are being found with different disabilities. The project staffs are happy to inform that most of the school teachers welcomed, joyfully and they were happy about the awareness they received through Health Education and audio visual programmes.

The ADOR staff also gave Health Education in 40 schools. Around 5450 students took participation. CBR workers took special interest to give Health Education to women in 86 villages in which around 11248 attended. The staff also found cooperation from Teachers / Anganwadi workers. CBR staff conducted several community meetings, mainly for the men in the year 2004. The meetings emphasised the negative impacts of drugs, alcoholism, smoking and stressed on the importance of personal hygiene. The staff also gave awareness to the parents and Anganwadi, workers, training them how to look after their children in their tender age about hygiene, in which regular counselling were given to the PWDs and PAL's to encourage them. The result, PALs and PWDs have been successfully integrated in to mainstream community. ADOR says that impact of such awareness programmes was so much that many people from the villages offered voluntarily to help the project and took initiative to conduct TV programmes and medical/Nutrition camps. *- extracts from Activity Report, Raichur Project*

Bangalore Adoption - Getting organized for the better cause

WE CARE an AIFO supported project recently adopted a programme called Bangalore Adoption for the children of less privileged from the slum areas of Bangalore South. It was January 31st, WE CARE's foundation day; the club was formed with 10 children from the target area of different slums. Now the club has 35 children **Innovative Education programme** is implemented to improve their skills and have better education, **Educational**

Exposure programme, gives opportunity to experiment and explore through educational tours and picnics on alternative months. The children express their gratitude through their involvement in social activities like polio immunizing programme, and cleaning of the surrounding area of the CBR centre. They contribute their best in awareness programme for the community.

The Case of Gowramma- *Mr. Jayanth Kumar Y.B, our CBR Coordinator reports from Bhalki Project visit.*

In every village and town across the developmental countries, large numbers of disabled remain hidden away behind the walls of homes and institutions. In their struggle to achieve full potential and lead a dignified and useful life, they are more frequently victims of extreme social isolation and prejudices. This small article attempts to draw our attention towards some of the issues of women with disability within the disability and rehabilitation sector through the life story of Gowramma, a visually impaired person of a certain village in Bhalki taluk in Karnataka.



Sr. Immaculate with Abedabee and Gowramma

At the age of 5, Gowramma lost her eyesight due to an eye infection and was shut within the walls of the house. She lost her parents and was living with her elder brother helping in the household work according to her ability. In the year 1999 the staff of Arogya Mata Seva Kendra of Bhalki, Bidar, a project supported by AIFO identified her in a CBR survey. Her brother and other relatives were reluctant to disclose the matter and tried to hide her. Even Gowramma refused to talk personally and did not co-operate with the CBR workers. However, the CBR staff carried out constant counselling and motivation. Gowramma finally accepted to participate in activities outside the house. Later, the staff trained her in identifying and counting the currency and the skills and techniques of weighing scale. At the same time, a lady volunteer by name, Abedabee from the same village was identified and was motivated to help her in starting a small scale business as vegetable vendors. She was also introduced to the wholesale vegetable vendors at Bhalki Town, requesting them to co-operate and to support her business enterprise.

She was provided with free Bus pass to travel to Bhalki and the surrounding. In the initial stages, the staff had to motivate some generous volunteers to support this business. The project facilitated her to get loan from the government which she has repaid. Today Gowramma experiences the economic empowerment and self-fulfilment and is proud of her being some one in the society. Daily she earns about Rs. 40 to 50 and she is happy about it and expresses her gratitude for the project intervention which made changes in her life.

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