

Inclusion as a right

The term **inclusion** suggests that all people, regardless of their strengths or weaknesses in any area, become part of the community. In case of the differently-abled, it can mean to say that they should have the right to be accepted as they are. They should be given a chance to live in their communities as their right. We need to aim at giving citizens with disabilities equal status and opportunities. For instance, all the children irrespective of their physical or mental conditions should have access to the education in general not just to include them in the name of inclusive education but as their right.



In this context, there is no longer any need to categorise disabled people, or to place them in special, segregated care systems. In the past, services were segregated, which often led to isolation, neglect, and prejudice. Moreover the Special Care systems were not accessible to the majority of the people. As the segregation still prevails at present, there is a need to stress on integration. A disabled child has to be returned to the group, which he/she belongs to. Integration is thus a repair concept, something we have done wrong and now want to correct.



Today's efforts are towards active and outward-looking services that recognises disabled people as productive members of the society. In this new perspective, existing systems should incorporate policies so as to include every citizen. In addition to creating *schools for all*, *the existing ones has to be encouraged to accommodate all children* that can be considered as the new priority. Such a school should recognise and respond to the diversity of the individuals that make up the school population at large and accommodate individual differences. As a result,

it will create a climate of equality where no children are denied access.

An Inclusive School welcomes all children without discrimination and takes good care of them. There should therefore no longer be any need to talk about integration and consequently *special* education becomes *inclusive* education. The central concern is the equalisation of opportunities and the creation of a meaningful education for all. To reach this stage of development, it is important to stop excluding the differently-abled people from the society. They should be recognised in the dimension of human rights. Disability policy should thereby include planning of active inclusion of disabled people within the overall concept of the society.

AMICI DI RAOUL FOLLEREAU

58, 4th cross, Kavery Layout, Dharmaram PO, Bangalore-560 029

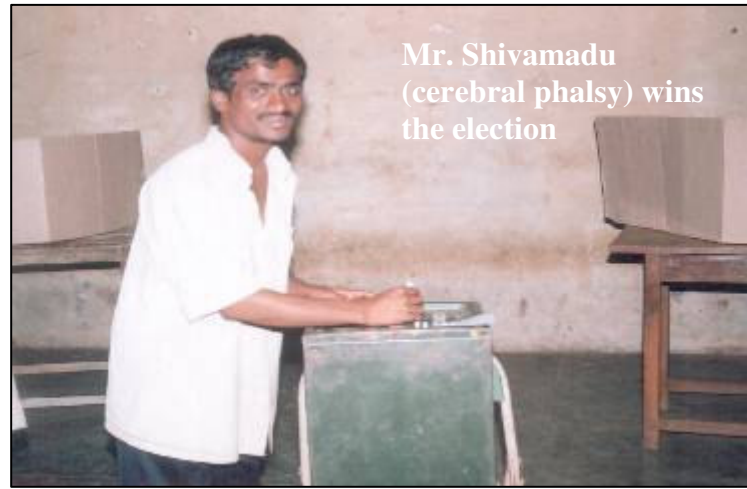
Tel: 91-80-2553 1264/ 51106294, Tel-fax: 91-80-2552 0630

Email: aifo@afoindia.org / aifo@touchtelindia.net

Website: www.afoindia.org

SRMAB's effort towards political empowerment of the people with disabilities

The sense of “**Development**” means that the opportunity should be distributed equally on the basis of the needs and the strengths of the civil society. In developing countries like India, this eqi-sharing of socio-cultural and political space is a challenging agenda. This is because ignorance, negligence and exploitation. In India, much socially discriminated community is struggling hard to get space in mainstream society. Today, people with disabilities are facing to get space in mainstream society.



With global pressure, many developing countries have passed legislation in order to empower people with disability for their comprehensive development. In India, the legislation for people with disability was passed in the year 1995. But the question is about the effective implementation of the policy. As far as the Karnataka state is concerned, people with disabilities are facing lots of problem to access the entitlements mentioned in the PWD Act-95. Many requests made before the assembly to pass state government order based on the PWD Act-95, proved futile.

Keeping all these issues, Malavalli Project put forth its effort to encourage people with disability to contest in the Grama Panchayath Election as the entry point in getting political space. Today the political space is very much an important area where any community can address the barrier which limits their aspiration. The timetable for the local election was announced which took place in the month of Feb-2005. The project persons motivated the self-help group members to contest in the election. The response from the people with disability was quite appreciable. The group members came forward to contest in the election. The respective Self Help Groups rendered support to pay for the nomination fee and expenditure pertaining to advertisement. The effort resulted in an encouraging manner. All together 19 people with disability won the election from 5 taluks. In addition to this, 8 parents of the disabled children have also won the contest.

- Malavalli Project, Karnataka

Orissa DTST: On completing one year in the service of Leprosy:-2004-2005

Extracts from the report of Dr. S.N.Pati, State DTST Co-ordinator

The effective implementation of the activities which included coordinating with State leprosy authorities, building capacity of DTSTs, designing learning materials, organising review and monitoring meetings, support to districts in planning, confirmation of new cases, monitoring SIS and MDT management, analysing NLEP indicators, providing feedback and facilitating POD camps with the main objective to strengthen the integration of leprosy into general health care services and facilitate for sustained quality leprosy services ensured quality leprosy diagnosis and treatment, build the capacity of GHC staff on technical and managerial skills, generate quality information and maintain adequate MDT supply at all levels together resulted in rapid progress towards elimination during the reporting year. Yet there are miles to achieve but with ILEP agencies coming together with a backing-up from Indian government nothing should seem impossible.

MUDHOL CBR TRAINING:

AIFO and management of Mudhol CBR project (Location: Karnataka, India) has jointly conducted a week long basic CBR and leprosy training programme for the project staff at Bijapur in May. The course aimed to sensitize the grass root workers on the concepts of CBR, disability and development. Mr. Jayanth CBR coordinator of AIFO and Fr Vincent Crasta facilitated the sessions with participatory methodologies. Here is the experience and learning of the event shared by Fr Vincent Crasta.

Six days Seminar for the Mudhol CBR staff helped me realize that human possibilities are enormous. Human spirit can overcome any hurdles in life. The participative approach adopted by the resource person made all the difference during the seminar. Here I shall share with you certain peak moments of the Seminar which shows what the human spirit can achieve in life.

Blind walk: It was a moment of entering into the world of the Visually Impaired (VI). The normal person being blindfolded live for a brief moment the life of the visually impaired persons and then sharing their experience gave us a glimpse of the VI persons. Though I was not blind folded, was attentively watching the exercise and made me to realize the struggles of the visually impaired persons in relating to the open world with all its dangers.

Cinema: BLACK: The movie led me to realize yet another complex and yet possible world that of a person with multiple disability (visual impairment and hearing impairment). In a male dominated society a girl child by its birth itself faces social disability. The female child with its social disability having multiple disabilities makes the world of the girl child more precarious. But nothing is beyond the human spirit to transcend any barrier imposed on it. Such a situation needs a creative approach to show to the 'normal' world that the human persons need to be seen from their possibilities than from their inadequacies. In sociological terms that the 'normal' world need to have a 'subaltern' view to set its perspective right. The type of interventions we adopt is very important. The stereo typed interventions or conventional interventions fail to address the world of the people with disability. One need to see the world of the visually impaired persons and listen to the world of the hearing impaired people so as to intervene in it creatively.

GolGumbaz: On the last day of the seminar the participants visited the GolGumbaz, the whispering dome of international fame of Bijapur built by King Adil Shahi to inurn his mortal remains. When I saw Ms. Kasibai Jogi, a physically disabled person who uses two crutches, little did I think that she would climb the steep minarets of GolGumbaz which has more than five hundred steps! For the surprise of all she did climb those steps bravely, and made our heads hung in admiration of her courage.

- Fr. Vincent Crasta (Project Executive)

**“In nature there’s no blemish but the mind;
None can be called deformed but the unkind”**

A Milestone in the policy making: Education for all

Education for all remains a distant dream for most Indian children, more so for those with disabilities. Historically, disability was seen as a charity issue. Education of disabled people termed as ‘Special Education’ was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, whereas mainstream education fell under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The Ministry of Social Justice restricted its role to giving funds to special schools.

Special schools, which are not many in number (compared to the actual need), were focusing on rehabilitation/therapy, etc. and education therefore remained secondary. As a result, there was no standardization of curriculum, no minimum standards for education and no pressure on the performance. Hence the quality of education varied from school to school, with no accountability whatsoever. In the process, academic performance was found to be quite low in special schools. To make the policy makers and general public aware of the dismal situation on the ground, NCPEDP launched awareness campaign on the 15th of August last year in which the Hon’ble Minister for HRD, Shri Arjun Singh was the Chief Guest. He took this initiative forward and tabled before the Parliament the Comprehensive Plan on Inclusive Education of Disabled Children and Youth with Disabilities in March 2005.

To make sure that this plan is put into implementation, NCPEDP organized three Zonal Round Tables Meetings in Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata respectively in June and July. The Round Tables was attended by distinguished people from the education and disability sectors, from all states in each of the three zones, who discussed the provisions of the Plan and give their feedback and inputs on the Plan as well as on its operationalisation.



Mumbai Meeting

The Meetings will culminate in a National Seminar to be held in New Delhi, where the feedback received from the three Round Tables will be discussed and the key inputs culled for incorporation into the Policy.

– Ms. Rati Mishra, NCPEDP

CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES



*Mr. Javed Abidi, Executive Director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (N.C.P.E.D.P), New Delhi has been nominated by the Government of India to the Central Advisory Board of Education (C.A.B.E.), the highest body to advise the Central and State Governments in the field of education. AIFO team wishes him the best and hope to see him as the brain behind C.A.B.E's forming and implementing educational policies which will promote **Education for all** in the country.*

TO,