



Role of Rehabilitation Centre in Empowering the Disabled - A Case Study on 'Swastha'

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ABSTRACT

Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities may be summarized as meaning to integrate or reintegrate physically, sensorial, mentally and psychologically impaired people into as full and as normal life roles as is possible. It implies an understanding of the life role expectations of the particular individuals had they been fully able-bodied. Rehabilitation in its fullest sense necessitates, on the one hand, maximizing the physical and mental fitness of individuals and their capacity to work and to enjoy life with the intervention of medical, paramedical, counseling, vocational training and job placement; and on the other hand rehabilitation refers to promoting the accessibility and openness of the physical and social environment to people with disabilities. This paper focused on studying the role of Swastha (rehabilitation centre) in uplifting the disabled people and their community based strategies for rehabilitation in empowering the disabled people.

KEYWORDS :

Introduction:

In the wake of the growing realization of the conditions of the people with disabilities and the urgency to provide all rehabilitation services to this section of the society the Swastha came into being in the year 2003. 'Swastha Centre for Special Education and Rehabilitation' started for the wellbeing of special children by "The Coorg Foundation", a trust established and funded by TATA Coffee Ltd. The term 'Swastha' is Sanskrit and means 'to be oneself or to repose in oneself' and 'to be healthy in ones natural state'. Aptly named, the institute aims at providing a meaningful life for the vulnerable children teaching them in crafts they are interested in: such as envelope and file making, screen-printing, making greeting cards, tailoring and other paper products. The products of Swastha have been well received and provides for the company's stationery needs.

Importance of NGOs in development of society:

India is having around 2 million NGOs in 2009 survey, i.e., just one NGO per 600 Indians. NGOs are playing a very important role in society upliftment and their improvement in all aspects like socially and economically strong. Without these organizations it is very difficult to imagine the society. These are struggling a lot to improve the backward community of the society by implementing lot of interesting programmes to those communities. Hence these are essential for the countries like India which is socially and economically still backward.

Types of NGOs:

By Orientation: Charitable orientation (meeting needs of poor people), Service orientation (provision of health, family planning or education services), Participatory orientation (self help projects—by contributing cash, tools, land, materials, labour etc., Empowering orientation (clear understanding of social, political, and economic factors affecting their lives and strengthen their awareness of their own potential power to control their lives).

By level of operation: Community based organization (CBOs) arise out of peoples own initiatives, helping to urban and poor in understanding their rights in accessing needed services and providing such services, City-wide organizations (chamber of commerce and industry, ethnic or educational groups and associations of community organizations)

Overlapping terms in use for NGO includes:- TSO (Third sector organization), NPO (Non-profit organization), VO (Voluntary organization), CSO (Civil society organization), SMO (Social Movement organization), PVO (Private Voluntary organization), SHO (Self-Help organization), SBO (Social Benefit organization) etc.,

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the functional aspects of Swastha
- To evaluate the performance of Swastha
- To study the role of Swastha in empowering and uplifting of disabled

Methodology: The present study is based on the both primary data and Secondary data. The primary data was collected with formal interaction with employees, students and staffs of Swastha. The information so collected is explained in descriptive way and few observations were made in connection with the role of Swastha in up-lifting the disabled people and benefits provided to them.

Profile: Swastha - Centre for Special Education and Rehabilitation

Kodagu a small district of Karnataka having a population of about 5.33 Lakhs has 3866 persons with different kinds of special needs (disabilities), which is very high compared to other districts. In Kodagu, Somwarpet Taluk has the highest number of persons with Special needs, out of the 3 taluks.

To cater to the needs of the differently disabled children, The Coorg Foundation decided to start a Centre. TATA Coffee Ltd., has kindly agreed to spare their premises at Madapur Road, Sunkikoppa. Swastha, Centre for Special Education and Rehabilitation, was started on 23rd August 2003 with the intention of educating, training and rehabilitating those children kept away from the mainstream of society because of mental and physical impairment which make them differently disabled.

"Swastha" which was/is very much needed in the district in rehabilitating differently disabled children since the Kodagu district is alone having more than 8,000 disabled. Initially Swastha was started with 20 children on its role, but now it is providing the required care and training to about 125 Special children through its Centres in Sunkikoppa and Pollibetta. The centers are well equipped with experienced special educators, speech therapist and psychologist.

The second unit was inaugurated on 27th February 2007, at Pollibetta. The Swastha's Rehabilitation Unit aims to minimize the impact of disability by improving the quality of life of the disabled individuals and thus achieve the goal of socio-economic independence with dignity and self-confidence.

The Centre also conduct Skill development programmes every year in association with Vocational Rehabilitation Council, Bangalore and the training programs were funded by NABARD. On verifying the activities of Swastha, The J.R.D. Tata Trust has come forward to support and granted 92.75 Lakhs for a period of 3 years (2006-2009) out of which 34.80 lakhs towards infrastructure development. Tata Coffee Ltd. is the only source of funds on which the Swastha is running. It is purely a private organization and they do not accept any donations, helping hand in terms of cash.

Motto: "Enabling Future"

Vision: "To change the quality of life of individuals with Special Needs in that they live independently to the maximum extent"

possible.

Mission: "To change the face of disability with love and care empowering individuals to look beyond disability, to achieve economic independence and thus live life with dignity and self confidence.

Values: Integrity, Transparency, Compassion, Commitment. Belief in full participation by Parents, Professionals, Employees in improving the quality of life the individuals with special needs.

Aims & Objectives

The principle of Swastha is changing the face of disability with love and care. The aim is to develop their hidden talents and through special education give them a purpose towards a better life. With these ambitions in mind, Swastha is doing well.

Swastha is the only residential school in the district providing the required facilities at free of cost to the students. Curriculum includes - Special Education, Pre-Vocational, Vocational skills, Speech Therapy, Counseling, Skill Development Programs, Yoga and Sports and Cultural Activities. The students are being trained regularly in various skills - Making of Envelope and files, Screen printing, offset printing, book binding, greeting cards, mushroom cultivation, making of candles and dining table mats and agarbathi etc. It conducted certain valuable programmes like special education, vocational training, rehabilitation, and CBR, now taken up butterfly project which is still not yet started.

Special Education

At the Special School children are taught the basic things like to dress up, to brush, to take bath, to eat, to clean their surroundings just to them live independently. Apart from this there are other activities functional academics, reading, writing, communication skills, self-help, pre-vocational skills like money values, weights and measures etc. and vocational skills like making paper bags. Every child here is assessed for a period of two months after which individualized education plan for each child is prepared. After these basic skills are learnt by the children, they are sent to the rehabilitation centre for further training. There are examples for children working in various fields after getting the training from Swastha, some of the students are self employed and leading their life independently imbibing the skills learned from Swastha. Few students have also passed SSLC exam and there as an examples for even we can do anything.

Rehabilitation Centre

The centre is providing various training programmes to the trainees in the rehabilitation centre. Each student is exposed to different vocational skills and allowed to pursue what they are interested in. The programmes are as follows: 1. File and envelope making. 2. Offset & Screen Printing 3. Making of pressed flower greeting cards, table mats & gift tags. 4. Fashion designing & tailoring 5. Candle making 6. Mushroom cultivation.

It is worth while mention that the stationeries required for Tata Coffee and its other units in and around Coorge is being supplied by both Special School for disabled and Rehabilitation centre at Suntikoppa and Palibetta respectively. The stationeries and other articles are made by disabled students. They get bulk orders for greeting cards, table mats, handmade gift bags, fashion designing, paper bags etc. Portion of income generated out of sale of stationeries, printing, greeting cards, table mats, candles etc are transferred to the respective students bank accounts.

Facilities

The centre is offering the following facilities to the students for both day care students and boarding children.

1. Free boarding and lodging
2. Free uniforms
3. Free education and training
4. Free transportation facility to the day scholars.

5. Free medical checkups and free medicines to the boarders.

6. Free counseling to the students and parents by the experts.

Other activities:

Apart from teaching the academic activities the students are given opportunity to learn: Yoga, Dance, painting, poultry, gardening. The children are also given opportunity to participate in debates, drawing and painting competitions a community sports. To involve the children in various cultural activities, we conduct Annual Day Celebration, World Disabled Day, Independence Day, Republic Day and Gandhi Jayanthi Celebrations.

The students of Swastha have witnessed in proving we can also do anything, the students have participated in various TV programmes, Represented state level, national level and International level sports meets, cultural competitions and got awards and medals.

Placement and Services

The students of swastha are imparted skills required for job market. The Institute is actively placing students in different sectors i.e Agriculture industry, Software companies and Hospitality sector, many of the students are given importance and are placed for various clerical and vocational training jobs within the organization.

Community Based Rehabilitation Programme

Community Based Rehabilitation programme focuses on creating awareness in the community to aid identification and early intervention and to instill the sense of responsibility in the community towards disabled. CBR rationally aims in extending need based service for differently disabled in community setup, so as to isolate them from community life and society at large, foster active participation. CBR is a cost effective approach to improve the well being of the people with disabilities, bringing them to main stream.

CBR works with an objective in providing services to persons with disability in their community, address all areas that are central for the improvement of quality of life of disabled, making the service delivery system, accessible to the persons with disabilities, supporting persons with different kinds of disabilities, identifying the need for medical aid, training in mobility and daily living skills. CBR also focuses on facilitating vocational training programme to make them to build confidence to live independently. The CBR facilitate school enrolment and scholarship programme, increasing awareness in the community on disability through street-play, drama, door to door visiting, counseling them to improve the quality of relationship with in the family. The CBR also create awareness and works for aiding accessibility to government services, different government schemes, facilitating formation of local Self Help groups, DPO (Disability People Organization).

Activities of CBR:

Stake holder's sensitization programme: Stake holders are identified across the community from private and public organization, trained and sensitized on the needs of the disabled so that they take the ownership of the programme and work closely with the organization, to provide service to the beneficiaries. Local Panchayath members, school teacher, anganwadi teachers/workers, Asha workers, PHC Doctors are trained periodically.

Liaisoning with the government: Constant efforts are made to keep track of government schemes and the centre acts as a link between the various government schemes and differently disabled. Supporting the beneficiaries to access pension, ID cards, Bus Pass, Aids and appliances are relentlessly pursued.

Medical Intervention: quarterly medical check-ups is organized at the field after the field workers identify the beneficiaries. Severe cases are referred to hospitals for surgery and financial support is given in limited cases.

Aids and Appliances: Beneficiaries in need of aids and appliances are

identified in the community and aids and appliances are provided at free of cost for unaffordable poor

Social Security Schemes: Social security schemes being provided to the disabled persons in collaborations with the government disability department.

Self Employment: The Swastha works on identifying the skills and talents of students and the students were encouraged to take up self business and other economic activities by providing the necessary aids.

Awards and Achievements: Swastha won State Award on 3rd December 2009, and the Director of Swastha Smt.kaakamada Ganga changappa won 80th Akhila Bharath kannada sahithya sammelana award held at Madikeri, Kodagu (dist) on 7th, 8th and 9th 2014, she also won Kaakaka Shree Prashasthi in 2012 by Veerashiva Prathishtana Samsthe Bangalore for her contribution towards this sector.

Some of the achievements like disabled children will involve themselves in nursery maintenance, garden cleaning, and those students involve in sports activities held at Pollibetta, Chennai, Mysore, Australia and won the 1 gold—2 silver—1 bronze medals, participated and won state and district level sports meet held at Bangalore and Mangalore respectively. These children have also participated in Udaya TV champions meet at Chennai, disabled students gave a programme on the disabilities at Guddehosur and Shirangala etc.

Performance of Swastha:

**Table No. 01
Community Based Rehabilitation Report
From 2010 to 2014 (For 4 Years)**

Sl. No	Particulars	Total Number of Beneficiaries
1	ID Card Issued	111
2	Pension Issued	48
3	Bus Pass Issued	2
4	Aids And Appliances Issued (Govt. Schemes)	80
5	Aids And Appliances Issued (Swastha, CBR)	11
6	Physiotherapy And Assessment	157
7	Medical Assessment	24
8	Surgery (Spursh & Mangalika)	7
9	Vocational Training	41
10	Counselling	88
11	Employment Card	22
12	School Enrolled	2
13	Scholarship	65
14	Adhar Schemes	2
15	Medical Support	3
16	Medical Support	6
17	Speech Therapy	1
Total Beneficiaries		670

Source: Swastha report

The CBR project of Swastha identifies a total of 1834 beneficiaries in the taluk including 6 hobalies, 42 Grama Panchayaths and 130 villages and the various benefits as per the table no. 01 is being provided to the differently disabled persons with in Somwarpet Taluk. It is to be noted that Somwarpet Taluk is having about 3500 disabled persons with in the taluk as per the records of Disability Department of Kodagu District

**Table No. 02
Details of Swastha's students**

Sl. No.	Particulars	Students at Hostel	Day Scholars	Total
1	Special Education	55	26	81
2	Rehabilitation Section	22	8	30
3	Rehabilitation Section (Pollibetta Unit)	17	0	17
Total		94	34	128

Source: Swastha report

The above Table No.02 shows the details of Swastha's Students both Special Education and Rehabilitation Section. The Special Education is being provided to 81 students out of 128 students which is almost 75%.

**Table No. 03
Statistics of Number of Disabled surveyed in Somwarpet**

Sl. No.	Year	No of Disabled surveyed
1	2011	805
2	2012	397
3	2013	560
4	2014	76
Total		1834

Table No.03 shows the survey statistics of disabled persons with in the Taluk. It is worthwhile to mention here that the CBR took nearly 5 years to cover one single taluk (Somwarpet) and there is a necessary to survey and counsel the remaining beneficiaries to surveyed.

**Table No. 04
Details CBR Activities from 2011-2014**

Sl. No	Particulars	Total No of activities	No of Participants
1	Awareness Programms	21	2880
2	Health camps	01	470
3	Training for Anganavadi Teachers	02	93
4	Training for School Teachers	02	115
5	Staff Training	02	4
6	Parents Meeting	02	188
7	Mangalika Camp Assessment at Bangalore	02	12
8	Aids and Appliances Measurement Camp	03	37
9	School Follow-up	-	82
10	PHC Card Issued	-	83

Source: Swastha report

The above table shows the various activities of CBR towards identifying and providing benefits to the disabled persons. The Swastha has conducted so far 21 awareness programs have been conducted and benefited to nearly about 2880 beneficiaries. The organization is involving in various activities like training programs to Anganavadi and School Teachers, Health Camps, Staff Training, parents meeting etc.

Observation and Findings

Swastha being a centre for special education and rehabilitation centre, the source of funds for meeting all the expenditure is Tata Coffee alone and it is purely a private organization. It was also observed that the NGO is accepting the helping hands from the society.

It was observed that there needs an expansion of organization size and its activities as there is a growing need for concerns towards disabled in Kodagu district since there are about 8,000 disabled persons in district.

As it is already said that the organization accepts the helping hands from the society but that helping is only in the form of Kind and not in the form of Cash.

It is observed that the income generated out of vocational training is being transferred to the respective bank accounts of students. The individual student is having separate bank account that is being controlled by the organization just to ensure that the income earned by the student is not being misused.

The students and other beneficiaries of Swastha are being educated in knowing the various government schemes for disabled like Mobility aids like tricycles, wheelchairs, crutches walking sticks and walking frames/rotators. Motorized tricycles for persons with locomotor disability, special laptop for blind persons etc, and Bus pass, pension, ID cards for getting these benefits. The Swastha is acting as bridge between government and beneficiaries in identifying the disabled persons and providing benefits required.

It was noticed that there is lack of awareness among persons with of various schemes which are there and the procedure to get that benefits. Only few are aware of basic schemes like bus pass and ID cards.

The important thing noticed at Swastha is the students of the same organization are given opportunity and selected as staffs for various clerical works. The skills are identified and the training is given based on the type of work.

Do not show sympathy towards the disabled persons but make them realize that there are hidden talents and skills in them. Educated them in bringing out those things and help them in achieving their goal.

Though the statistics of CBR reports says there are about 1830 disabled persons in Somwarpet Taluk, the Swastha has provided ID cards to only 111 so far. There is a greater demand for identifying and providing benefits to the remaining.

It is observed that the Swastha is providing Aids and Appliances to the disabled persons under the project of CBR apart from the government schemes.

Physiotherapy and assessment activities have been done for 157 cases of physically disabled persons from last four years.

The organization is being involving in various empowering activities like awareness programmes, Health Camps, Training for Anganwadi, School teachers and staff training.

Suggestions :

- The Swastha / Coorg Foundation should encourage the funds from general public donors.
- As there is greater need of helping hand for the disabled in Kadagu district the organization (Swastha) needs expand its operation in terms of size, staffs, facilities etc.
- The Swastha should to take up initiative in conducting various awareness programs with regard to government schemes which are still unaware by the disabled class.
- The department of disabled should take initiative in identifying the disabled and provide the benefits to them.
- The Swastha should take initiative in training the students in using the benefits like laptops, computers and other electronic devices so that the government schemes are used to the maximum extent.
- Instead of linking the disabled persons with other institution in Bangalore and Mysore for physiotherapy and surgical treatments, the organization should open up the primary healthcare centre in meeting basic surgical treatments.

Conclusions:

Swastha, special education and rehabilitation center is doing quality research and training work under the guidance of Gangachangappa, the director and founder of Swastha. They have a dedicated and hard working team. The activity that impressed me the most was the CBR project and progressive development of children of Swastha, their achievements and concern of Swastha towards the societal wellbeing. I feel this is an area that we should look into in more detail and being

a human being we should encourage the disabled and uplift them for their betterment.

Reference:

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