

Promotion of Inclusive and Protective environment for children with special needs (CWSNs) through community based rehabilitation - (CBR) Intervention in Puducherry Union Territory, India

Activity: Training of PWDs and volunteers on Street Play

A team of **20 persons** were identified from the active community volunteers and PWDs in five communes and they were provided training on street play skits on disability. The training was conducted in September month.

5 days training program was conducted and developed two themes of street play on the need for inclusive society and school for the disabled. They were taught about awareness songs and role plays during the training program. This year five training programs were conducted for the team. Living allowances for the food and travel for the street play team was provided.



The two themes for the street play were chosen as follows. The first theme was that a child with disability born in a family of agricultural background is denied of access to education, participation in the society but later the same child is given opportunity to learn and prove his skills therefore the community understands and accepts the child in whatsoever condition.



The second common theme was teacher attitudes toward inclusion. Almost all our observations in the field revealed that negative perspectives about inclusive education. Because in most schools teachers do not practice inclusive classrooms even though there are plenty of legislations pertaining to the rights of children with special needs. One of the primary influencing factors of teachers' negative perceptions is that of the teachers' lack of confidence in their ability to teach special needs students due to a lack of training in the area of special education.



Why use theatre? Unlike other diseases, mental or intellectual disability has not acquired the desired attention as far as creating awareness is concerned. Additionally, the conventional methods of using pamphlets, posters may have a limited effect on the rural population due to

their low literacy levels. And the people with low literacy can be given social development information by watching and listening, rather than by reading alone. Therefore, theatre, especially folk theatre or street theatre are popular means of conveying educational information in such rural communities.

The best practice in educating and communication for the rural target community as there is evidence that they have poor awareness and prominent stigmatizing and discriminatory attitudes. We also proposed to target the community members as people/family who may know someone with a mental retardation. In this way we planned to address the significant gaps in not only improving awareness but also to do it in a manner that is appropriate, effective and cost-effective. The street theatre and its application in spreading messages about special needs and inclusive society through street play has played a vital role in reaching out the community.
