

Site Visit to Rural Centers of Spastics Society of Karnataka, Bangalore on 26th June 2006

By Kalyani Rajappa

Spastics Society of Karnataka, Bangalore (SSK) is an autonomous institution working closely with the mentally & physically challenged children. Their main campus is located in IndiraNagar, Bangalore. Sunil @ Asha Seattle introduced me to Mr. Rabindran Isaac. We arranged to meet in the main campus and visit atleast 3 centers supported by Asha in the rural areas. On 26th June Mr. Isaac was held up with meeting Government Officials, hence Mr.Chand Pasha accompanied me.

Mr.Chand, a Special Educator with SSK, closely works with teachers in the different rural centers. When a new child is brought into any center, the local facilitator and Mr.Chand work together to draft the curriculum. This curriculum pays individual attention to the current abilities of the child and sets targets to achieve progress. The teachers work towards the development of the following skills in the children.

1. Active Daily Living (ADL)
2. Gross Motor Skills
3. Socializing Skills
4. Non-Verbal Communications.

The medical condition of the children are also monitored regularly and accordingly referred to Specialist for further checkup and treatment. All centers have well maintained records with details for curriculum, progress monitor & health checkup updates for every child. All teachers maintain attendance register. Mr.Chand periodically checks these records during his visits to the center and does a follow-up.

Unit 2 @ Kempapura Agrahara

Located in the outskirts of the Bangalore City, Kempapura Agrahara locality seemed to be a progressive rural area. Mrs.Jayamma has been working with this unit and is a recognized figure locality. She relentlessly voices her demands with the local politicians to meet the basic needs to the Center. Currently 8 teenager boys and girls come to the center and have to be accommodated in a rented space of 10 x 10 ft room. The parents who can afford contribute to the rent. Soon they will be moving to a bigger space that is under construction and has been wholly donated by the City Councilor. The new space will allow the center to take in around 25 children more and work with them in batches.

When I reached all students attending the center were busy completing orders of roping strings to flyers. The orders that are primarily placed with SSK are distributed to the rural centers for completing.

Chitra an older student of the center has been enrolled into college and is also taking lessons in typewriting.

The girls were excited to show me some of their creations like plastic wire garlands and floor mats made of torn clothes (Chindi). The beauty and perfection in articles was amazing. I bought myself a floor mat that Lakshmi had made.





Rajendran, Meghna & Krishna have been enrolled into a mainstream primary school for the current academic year. I met Rajendran's class teacher and Principal at his school. They both expressed that he is coping well with his disabilities and faring well in studies. Meghna and Krishna could not attend the school being sick.

The attendance in the center is good. Children who have to be necessarily accompanied by parents everyday may show up less. In such cases, Mrs.Jayamma volunteers to bring these kids to the Center and reach them back. Some of the children face the medical problem of Epileptic or Cerebral Fits and hence unable to attend.

Divya Chetna Center @ Kempapura Agrahara

Divya Chetna or The Head Start Unit is a second center at Agrahara. The Center caters training and informal education to children below 12 yrs old. Currently there are 22 students on the attendance register and 8 children who are tutored in their house. These 8 children are either suffering with severe disabilities or their parents are unable to accompany them to the center. There are 2 teachers (1 trained) for assistance in the center. On the same day 2 children has an attack of Fits and were sent back with their parents.

The parent or grandparent of the kids also volunteer in the activities and assist the teachers. Teacher Nirmala shared with me the curriculum charted out for some students and briefed me on their daily activities. It gave me great pleasure to interact with the children and learn their methods.

In the picture above, Rajendran who had come back early from school is painting a sunflower using yellow pulse to show the seeds. Few children were trying their hands with cutting vegetables, corking bottles, and other exercises cognitive to limb movements.

Sanga – Parent Association

Mrs.Jayamma & Mrs.Nirmala head the Sanga, an association fully represented by the parents of the children attending the 2 centers. They have regular meetings with agenda & minutes documented. The group collectively takes up issues relating to renting space, talking their issues with the local politicians, etc. Mr.Chand expressed that participation from parents is enforcing the concept and motivating them to send their disabled children to the centers.

Kadirappa Slum Center

Located within the Bangalore City, the SSK is managing the activities at this Center under the guidance of Mrs.Dhanusya who is trained in Special Education. The space would be 10 x 10 ft with attached toilet for the students. Currently there are 8 students on the attendance register. I noticed that the attendance has been quiet regular. Mrs.Dhanusya demonstrated the methods of teaching used in the center. Students are taught to identify objects with flash cards.

Students attending this center come from very poor background. The parents are chronic alcoholics. Aarthi has lost her parents. Her grandmother who does chores in households wholly supports her. The immediate need for some of the kids seemed to be basic stuff like extra pair of clothing, bathing soap, food items, etc. The center is provided with midday meal from a Government school nearby.

SSK is trying to equip the grown up girls with training in tailoring & paper bag making. Kavitha showed me her scrapbook where she has designed and attached samples of dresses she made. The center has one sewing machine that is used for practice by the students.

Mr.Chand has recommended wheel chair for atleast 2 kids in this center. SSK is in the process of placing orders for the same.



In Summary

I am thankful to Mr.Chand for sharing and educating me on the programs. Mr.Rajan on the wheels was excellent driving us to these places.

On my way back, I also took the opportunity to go around and get introduced to the vocational training & productions units within the SSK Main Campus. As organized it is within the campus, the rural centers are equally being well governed under good guidance of the qualified teachers. The Sanga program that encourages equal participation from parents is a very good model. From what I saw and learnt during this site visit, I believe we can continue to support this project.