

**GANDHIGRAM RURAL UNIVERSITY**  
**CENTRE FOR DISABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT**  
DEPARTMENT OF EXTENSION EDUCATION

**A Profile**

**Background**

Dept. of Extension Education established during 1956, had been working with the various segments of backward rural communities - *dalits*, poor, landless, small farmers, rural artisans and other vulnerable groups.

On the eve of GRU's completion of 50 years, a major shift was made in organizing extension services to the communities around. From concentrating on the total community, focus was shifted to the most vulnerable group viz., persons with disabilities, (PwDs), since October 2005.

Department of Extension Education organized an array of programmes and services to PwDs, ranging from obtaining identity cards to making calipers and managing self help groups. Three years of constant efforts for the welfare of persons with disabilities, fructified in the form of creation of an exclusive centre for disability.

Centre for Disability and Development (CDD) was established by the Gandhigram Rural University during July 2008, under Dept. of Extension Education. Activities of the centre are coordinated by Dr.M.P.Boraian, Professor and Head, Department of Extension Education.

**Vision**

To mainstream the persons with disabilities in their communities by ensuring them dignity and independence, leading to their empowerment.

**Mission**

- To enable persons with disabilities overcome their struggle for basic needs, including health care and mobility and promote their welfare and dignity.
- To equip them with vocational skills, capacities and opportunities for an organized and self-reliant living.

## **Objectives**

1. To address the basic needs of persons with disabilities such as livelihood, health care, mobility, housing, education, employment, skill training and employment.
2. To empower persons with disabilities by organizing them into community based organizations (CBOs) and Disabled People-run Organizations (DPOs).
3. To examine the policies and programmes of Govt., Donors, Corporates and NGOs and propose necessary modifications and alternatives.
4. To organize courses, training programmes, conduct research, offer consultancies and publish newsletters, directories and reports.
5. To network NGOs, DPOs and CBOs, and serve as a nodal agency for donors in channelising resources for disability related activities.

## **Target groups**

Persons with disabilities may be categorized as under:

- Orthopaedic disability
- Visual Impairment
- Speech Impairment
- Hearing Impairment
- Mental retardation, Cerebral Palsy
- Myopathy and Autism
- Leprosy cured
- Others (dwarfs, fire burn victims and persons with minor physical deformities)

## **Levels of Operation**

CDD operates at various levels - from national down to neighbourhood level. Policy advocacy and consultancy programmes will reach out to the national and state levels, whereas, research, training and networking programmes will focus at the regional and state levels. Field Action programmes concentrate at the community, block and district levels.

## **Project Area**

Athoor, Nilakkottai and Dindigul blocks of Dindigul district constitute the focal point of community service activities. Field action programmes are concentrated in five clusters - each comprising about 10 villages and hamlets, located at a distance of about 2 to 10 kms from Gandhigram. A total of about 15 village panchayats, encompassing both big and small villages comprise the project area.

## **ACTIVITIES**

CDD has undertaken the following activities:

### **Survey**

- Conducted a preliminary survey of the physically and mentally challenged persons in six village panchayats.

### **Awareness and training**

- Organized Awareness Programmes regarding Govt. welfare programmes for persons with disabilities.
- Organized training on rearing domestic animals and poultry birds
- Adolescent girls were trained in nutrition
- Trained the NGO (Action on Disability and Development, ADD India) partners of a donor agency in Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).
- Arranged for interaction of PwDs from villages with university students with disabilities.

### **Organizing SHGs / DPOs**

- Formed Self help groups exclusively among disabled men and women numbering 15 - four among men and 11 among women.
- Promoted a disabled people-run organization (DPO) with half-a-dozen rural women from neighbouring villages with different types of disabilities.

### **Policy Discussion**

- Organized a National level Workshop on Policy Issues in Disability Intervention, (sponsored by CWS, Hyderabad)
- Regional workshop on Policy issues in Empowering the Visually Impaired persons, supported by the UGC grant of Dept. of ACE&E,
- Regional workshop on Policy issues in the care of Mentally Retarded persons

### **Welfare measures**

- Obtained National Identity Certificates for about 120 persons with disabilities identified during the survey.
- Facilitated getting pension for two dozen mentally challenged persons in the service villages.

- Undertook Referral Service with Institutions at Madurai (St. Joseph's Blind school), Trichy (WORTH Trust) and Bangalore (Mobility India).
- Obtained aids and appliances for the various types of disabled persons (Tri-cycles, wheel chairs etc.) from State Government.

#### **Collaboration with Government**

- Provide active support to Government in their special camps for distribution of welfare assistance, aids and appliances and self employment loans

#### **Economic support**

- Facilitated bank loans to the members of two SHGs for purchase of milch animals at Kalikkampatti village.
- Mobilised subsidy from SV Foundation, Chennai for SHG members upto Rs.60,000/- @ Rs.5,000/- for each member.
- Micro credit of over Rs. 1 lakh from SV Foundation channelized to persons with disability through their SHGs in 5 village panchayats
- Fifteen persons facilitated to get individual loan of Rs.30,000/- with a subsidy of Rs.7,500/- each under SGSY, Govt. of India
- Insurance cover provided to persons who purchased income generating assets.

#### **Service from specialized Institutions**

- Facilitated a Screening camp for Free calipers to the Polio affected persons and a physical measurement camp for designing their calipers at Gandhigram University's Workshop by experts from Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Hyderabad.
- Organized Medical camps for mentally retarded persons in villages and hamlets.
- Enabled Children (< 5 - 6) enrolled in GRU Balwadies and Govt. run crèches to get examined by Project Impact India, an NGO at Madurai, specialized in hearing impairment.
- Facilitated the CBR Unit of Arvind Eye Hospital to examine persons with low vision and total blindness, living in the project area for community based rehabilitation.

### **Institution building**

- Facilitated the commissioning of a Rural Vision Centre at Gandhigram for Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai.
- Initiated the convergence of NGOs working for the disabled persons in four districts of Tamil Nadu - Dindigul, Karur, Theni and Madurai districts, to discuss about the areas of coordination between and among NGOs in order to expand and enrich their disability intervention efforts.

### **Our Sponsors**

- Centre for World Solidarity, Hyderabad (thro' T.N. Resource Centre)
- University Grants Commission, New Delhi (thro' Dept. of ACE&E, )
- S.V. Foundation, Chennai.
- Action on Disability and Development (ADD), India (Bangalore).
- Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Gandhigram Rural University
- PSNA College of Engineering and Technology, Dindigul

### **Activities envisaged**

- Form an Association of Parents of the Mentally Challenged Persons.
- Establish a network of NGOs serving the disabled in four districts of TN State, for harvesting their success models.
- Bring out a Directory of NGOs working among the various types of disabled, as a guide for prospective users in villages and remote areas.
- Serve as a platform for the Donor agencies, corporates and government to study, support, monitor and evaluate the NGOs working among the disabled.

## **Invites Partnership**

CDD invites partnership from funding partners for its activities in the following areas:

- Livelihood support for persons living in extreme poverty and extreme disability
- Health care for children with chronic and critical health complaints.
- Sponsorship for school / college going children / youth for education
- Skill training support for educated / drop out youth.
- Distribution of Aids and appliances for the disabled persons.
- Welfare support for the aged among the disabled.
- Promoting income generation programmes by men's and women's Self Help Groups.
- Support for activating the disabled people run organization.
- Initiating policy advocacy and research activities, and training programmes.
- Empowerment of disabled thro' organizing the disabled into self help groups.

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