

Report on “CBM Include Vidya Campaign” in Madhya Pradesh India

“CBM Include Vidya Campaign” started in the year 2014 by district level events organized by the DPO leaders in more than 4 districts. The DPO leaders developed the questioner for short study on the current status of barriers in the community & formal educational institutions in the rural villages of MP. A survey in 29 Schools from 10 districts was organised with over 1,500 students participating in various activities. The event concluded by the big group of DPO leaders dated on 24th February 2015 by the support of CBM. The team from CBM has given their full guidance & encouragement for the completion of this successful event.

The event started with more than 120 participants from around more than 20 districts as per following details—

1. Ms. Fairline Sozi, Ms. Anita Alexander & Mr. Umesh Baurai from CBM
2. Mr. Paras Chandra Jain, Minister of Education
3. Mr. Tomar, District Education officer for Bhopal districts
4. Dr. Gautam, Head of the department of Sociology & social work from Barkatulla University Bhopal
5. Mr. Mukesh Patel, President from *MP Viklang Manch* & Leaders from Disabled People Organizations.
6. Mrs. Suman Dhurve, President Naman Seva Samiti.
7. Network partner organizations with Naman Seva Samiti
8. Other Organization working in the area of integrated education & Institution based Rehabilitation.
9. Media from different channels

Honorable, Minister of Education, Mr. Paras Chandra Jain Madhya Pradesh

The Minister congratulated Naman Seva Samiti and CBM on the importance of reaching out to the last person and urged the organizations to present the recommendations of the workshop to him.

He shared that funds were available from different the organizations to look at different funds that education of children with disabilities. For example, there is a lot of fund in the *mandis* which could be diverted to education. He declared his support to this group for the promotion of inclusive education in MP. He appreciated this initiative taken by the leaders from person with disability and other organization those supporting the event.

In the end the Honorable Minister facilitated person with disabilities who were DPO heads and who had come from different parts of the State to the one day workshop.

Mr. Tomar (District Education Officer Bhopal)

Mr. Tomar reminded the audience that education is one of the major rights and that many other rights are interlinked with education.

Mr. Tomar informed the participants that the government of Madhya Pradesh and the Ministry of MHRD at the national level was giving great importance to the inclusive and quality education of children with disabilities. During visits to the Model Schools set up by the State, the Deputy Secretary of the MHRD focused on aspects each as availability of ramps, accessibility of toilets and drinking water.

He acknowledged that the statistics on enrollment of children with special needs in Madhya Pradesh were alarming and that schools are not yet totally ready for schools inclusive education.

Teachers were not fully trained and environments were not fully barrier free as yet. There is a need to look carefully at the quality of teacher training and have more special educators. In the end of he has given his consent to be a part of the core committee.

Mr. Shishir Kumar, Executive Director of Naman Seva Samiti

Shishir Kumar , Executive Director of Naman Seva Samiti shared the work that Naman Seva Samiti had done as part of the **CBM Include Vidya Campaign being a partner with CBM** and also shared that a network of organizations was being formed in Madhya Pradesh to jointly work on for the quality education of children with disabilities. The network will plan to take forwarded the issues in the leadership of DPOs.

Ms. Faireline Sozi & Mr. Umesh Baurai, CBM

Mr. Umesh Baurai, & Ms. Faireline Sozi from CBM shared the CBM Include Vidya Campaign that has been initiated by CBM. They have appreciated the innovative way to organize this event in MP. The team has shared the objective of this campaign with participants.

Ms Radhika M Alkazi (Founder and Managing Trustee AARTH- ASTHA, Delhi)

Ms Radhika M Alkazi, spoke about the status of children with disabilities in education, nationally and internationally. She began by sharing the major findings of the **Include Vidya Campaign** organized by Naman Seva Samiti in Madhya Pradesh partner with CBM in MP. A survey in 29 Schools from 10 districts was organised with over 1,500 students participating in various activities designed to understand their views on the inclusive education of children with disabilities.

The major findings were that there was a lack of knowledge and negative attitudes towards children with disabilities. The system is still not prepared for inclusion with no trained personnel or materials, equipment or support available for the specific needs of children with disabilities.

There was a need to have a target oriented approach and ensure the participation of children with disabilities in all activities. Barrier free environments and availability of accessible study material was stressed. Sensitization and training of all teachers was required. A strong monitoring mechanism was required. The importance of school management committees and of parents of children with disabilities being part of these bodies was emphasized.

This was shared that the children with disabilities continued to be most vulnerable in education internationally and nationally. In India as per the IMRB study of 2014, they continue to be the largest group of out of school children.

Ms. Alkazi shared the statistics of Madhya Pradesh which had stayed more or less the same for at-least four years and then looked closely at the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability and major clauses of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009.

Prof. Dr. Gautam, Head, Deptt. of Social work and sociology, Barakatullah University

Prof. Dr. Gautam brought the attention of the participants to institutions of higher learning such as universities. Universities should also be part of drive for quality education for children and persons with disabilities he felt.

As part of the Include Vidya Campaign, a letter could be written to Vice Chancellors of every university to include matter on the right of children with disabilities in their B.Ed courses. There should be a team at every university level to coordinate for the rights of persons with disabilities.

He appreciated Naman Seva Samiti and CBM for their work and spoke about focusing on abilities and not segregating and drawing lines of separation between men women, persons who are disabled and those who are not. "The right to dream and go forward was every ones right". Prof. Dr. Gautam started of the signature campaigns to support the **Include Vidya Campaign**.

Mr. Ram Narayan Sayag, Samavesh (Founder member) Organization working for integrated education

Mr. Sayag Initiated an interactive session urging person with disabilities and participants of the workshop to express their views some of the major issues

discussed were. These issues were discussed further in the afternoon session of the workshop also.

1. Lack of employment for persons with disabilities.
2. Inadequate pensions for persons with disabilities.
3. Low level of scholarships given to students with disabilities.
4. Lack of sensitivity in society towards children and persons with disabilities.
5. Lack of awareness about the right to education of children with disabilities with in communities and amongst Govt. officials and schools.
6. Lack of political participation for persons with disabilities.
7. The situation of education in tribal areas is particularly pathetic with most schools having only one or two teachers teaching all the classes simultaneously.
8. The *Panchayats* are important stakeholders and must be sensitized to the cause of education of children with disability.

Recommendations

1. Scholarships to students should be linked with minimum wages.
2. Persons with disabilities must be part of decision making and monitoring bodies such as the *Panchayats*.
3. A focus on quality education for all children will lead to quality education for children with disabilities. This means that any work to be done for the right to education of children with disabilities should be done in the context of issues in the education system.
4. It is important that different movements in the state come together for peoples the cause of inclusive education. This is already happening in Madhya Pradesh and needs to be strengthened.
5. It is important that there be a concerted move to bring children with disabilities to school.
6. At village level it is important to work closely with *Panchayats* and the different *Samiti's* that are created to monitor and take decisions. The role of the *Panchayats* in the right to education is most vital and important.
7. It is important to understand all the laws related to education both at the national and state level and work with them.

Presentation by Ms. Fairlene CBM

Ms. Fairlene shared details of the Include Vidya Campaign and the events in different states. She shared how partners organizations in the states of Meghalaya, West Bengal , Karnataka etc. had organized the events and created unique partnerships to showcase the Campaign and raise awareness.

Experience sharing by the DPO leaders

The new president from Madhya Pradesh Mr. Mukesh Patel has expressed the efforts of Naman Seva Samiti to take DPOs movements in MP & continuation support for their motivation in more than 15 districts. He shared the survey process and meetings organized for the event planning to make it success. He has given motivational encouraging statements to all DPO leaders targeting present existing barriers of the inclusion in the society and how they will remove it.

The DPO leaders from different districts have shared their experiences and plan to take forward the issue of inclusion in future. The organizations are working in the network of Naman partner with CBM appreciated the CBM initiative for the inclusion of children in the formal education system. They have given their commitment to make it success in the future.

Press Conference

Ms Fairlene & Mr. Umesh from CBM , Ms. Suman Dhurve President of Naman, Mr. Mukesh Patel President of MP Viklang Manch have attended Press Conference with more than 20 news channels/papers. The teams from CBM started with CBM include Vidya Campaign. Although it is new for all but it was very clear for all. Team shared their future plan to include more than 10 thousand children with disability in the formal education system through the Naman Seva Samiti partner with CBM.



Ms. Anita Alexander from CBM

Ms. Anita has given her closing gratitude to the participants on behalf of CBM. She expressed the thanks especially from the Regional Director of CBM Dr. Sara Varghese to the participants.

FIELD VISIT TO BETUL TO UNDERSTAND STATUS OF EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES : A REPORT

- School does not refuse to admission to children with special needs.
 - **However, once within the school, no changes are made in method of teaching, or supporting children to participate in school activities. This is a major issue as children with disabilities will not be able to stay in school or learn if accommodations/changes are not made for them.**
- Teachers and Principals have very little idea of how to include the child with special needs
 - The quality of learning in schools is extremely low for all including for children with disabilities. Parents who are motivated and want their children to learn have chosen to send their children to a boarding school in Maharashtra. For example, we met a family with two children with disabilities with one having hearing impairment and the other having mild intellectual disability and difficulties in mobility. They had first enrolled their child in the Govt. school in the village. But for two years the children attended the school they did not learn anything. Now in special residential school they are learning a lot.
 - **The example also throws up the issue of quality of educational that all children are entitled to near their homes.**
 - Some of entitlement of children with disabilities though the Right to Education Act 2009 such as transport or escort allowance were not being provided to the children. It was not clear how much of the entitlements were actually known to the teachers, and the parents.

During the school visit the following issues come out

- There were only 2 teachers in the school teaching classes 1 to 5. The lack of adequate number of teachers to teach the children impacts the quality of education. It makes it more difficult to include the child with disabilities or any child who has special needs. Teachers felt that they were unable to do justice to teaching in such a situation.

- Teachers did not feel empowered to teach children with disabilities. Although they had undergone training it was very short term training and not enough to teach a child requiring changes in teaching strategies well.
- There seemed to be very little community or parents involvement in the school and in the education of all children including children with disabilities. Teachers also felt that parents were often not motivated enough to educate their children. There was a little family support for children to study and revise at home. Although money had been given for uniforms to the students very few students were actually wearing the uniform. This also brings up questions of whether the education being imparted had any relevance for the child or the parent.
- There is a lack of discipline amongst the students the teachers felt and this was not inculcated at home. Children were often absent during some seasons where their parents required them for work with them in the farms or when parents migrated for work during some seasons.
- It was unclear to me whether school management committees had been formed and whether they were functional. Teachers spoke of apathy of the admission in getting proper infrastructure, safe ramps and even in issues such as putting a safety net on the well in the school compound.

Some Positive Practices that could be strengthened

- There are strong institutions such as women's group and DPOs who can take responsibility for monitoring the educational of children with disabilities. These institutions can be given more information on the Right to Education.
- There is consortium of NGOs that is working together in education and that group can be very useful in providing inputs and strengthening the education initiative of Naman Seva Samiti.
- Naman Seva Samiti has a good voice and standing in Betul as well as in MP.

Knowledge of Disability amongst staff and motivators of Naman Seva Samiti

- Parents have had access to therapists and other supports through NAMAN and motivators seemed to be well trained. These are strong points already for Naman Seva Samiti to start with parents are seeing changes in their children and are motivated. A lot can still be done to keep their motivation and support children to continue to be in school.

Some Recommendations

- The *Panchayat* is an important institutional in the village with regard to education and *Panchayat* members could be sensitized more on issues of education, particularly education of children with disabilities.
- There need to be a lot of discussion within the community on the importance of education and what families feel about good education and how they can come together and work for the education of their children including the education of children with disabilities.
- Children with disabilities will require support in education and Naman Seva Samiti needs to think whether it will demonstrate how this is to be done to the government or advocate for this.
- Families of children with disabilities need to be motivated to continue to send their children to school and to advocate for quality education for their children.
- Knowledge of the laws and the schemes, orders in education, rehabilitation and other areas should be there with the staff.
- It would be important to have a common understanding on the framework in which we are talking about inclusive education and how to work towards it. This is important because different people talk and think about inclusive education in different ways.