

BUDS SPECIAL SCHOOLS FOR MENTALLY CHALLENGED

BUDS schools were the result of Kudumbashree’s social interventions. Many socio-economic surveys were conducted by Kudumbashree in the root level to identify the problems of poverty. The surveys and studies reached the bottom of the community and brought many issues to the light. The establishment of the BUDS Special Schools for Mentally Challenged was the result of Kudumbashree’s community based participatory rehabilitation and socio-economic surveys. Kudumbashree brought out the miserable living conditions of the mentally challenged people who were stuck within the four walls of their houses. This concern were earlier discussed within the purview of Kudumbashree and then planned to intervene in the issue through Local Self Government Institutions (LSGIs). As result of these involvement State Government took serious measures for the Community Based Education & Rehabilitation of the intellectually disabled persons in the state. BUDS special school for mentally challenged was a historical initiative to ensure universal education to those children who are mentally challenged in the state of Kerala. The Persons with Disabilities (PWD)Act of 1995 envisages free education to all children between the age of 6 and 18, who are disabled.Kudumbashree mission took up the challenge to find a remedy to the situation by developing BUDS schools which was later adopted by the government and the first BUDS Special School for mentally challenged was started in 2004.

BUDS REHABILITATION CENTRES (BRC)

The intervention of Kudumbashree in the miseries of intellectually disabled persons in the state brought light to many families as the children were led to the platform of education and rehabilitation. At BUDS schools, those coming in the age group of 6 to 18 only were addressed. These could not give adequate support for those above the age of 18 hence holding them back to the hardships and miseries of their situation. Hence, Kudumbashree seeking approval from the Government entered into the area of BRC. Its formal sanctioning came from government through G.O. (MS)No.144/2013/LSGD.

CONVERGENCE OF SERVICES FOR PEER-SONS WITH DISABILITIES

The services available to the disabled were sectoral in nature- departments like health education, nutrition and likewise. The decentralized planning in Kerala gave rise to scope of convergence at PRI level. Kudumbashree being the state poverty eradication mission took the challenge of establishing BUDS schools through LSGIs which provided a stage for convergence of services for the disabled at this focal point of service delivery.

People with intellectual disabilities joined BUDS institutions and it was a great relief for the parents, family

members and the society. There were many different initiatives for the development of these children.

INITIATIVES FOR THE SKILL DEVELOPMENT

From the beginning the service providers gave attention for the skill development of the children admitted to the BUDS institution. The syllabus prepared for the education and rehabilitation included with special skill development. Motor skills, self help skills, communication skills, cognitive skills and social skills were included in the syllabus and the special educators equipped with sufficient trainings on particular teaching methods. The result of such interference in the education of the differently abled children brought strong changes in their life styles. This proved that the intervention of Kudumbashree was fruit bearing in the field of differently abled person’s education and rehabilitation. Constant training and support would help bring out the special talents of these children in various fields. However, it required proper and timely intervention. Similarly, plans are on to provide training to mothers of BUDS students as well as to teachers.

ARTISTIC SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Each person has their own in-born talent and limitation. Kudumbashree gave a platform to these children to understand their potentials.BUDS Fest is an art festival unique in its structure and organization. The children who joined BUDS institutions were showing fast improvement and hence they were inducted to more activities stimulating sensory-motor activities. They also lack ample opportunity to express their talents before others. At district level, a few attempts were previously done to ensure such a platform.

It was in 2017, a centralized platform for state level gathering for these children was set by Kudumbashreeto express their talents named BUDS FEST.This was an un-



SECOND STATE LEVEL BUDS FEST

– FEBRUARY 2018

The second state level BUDS Fest was unique in all aspects. In advance to the state level fest all the districts organized district level BUST fest and in the same venue the exhibition and sale of the articles made by BRC beneficiaries also arranged. The first fest conducted in 2017-18 academic year included only the children between the age of 5 to 18 and a major number of children from the BRCs not participated in it. Hence in the second BUDS Fest conducted in 2017-18 academic year they were also included. The number of events also increased and the BUDS Fest planned for two days.

The State level Buds festival held on 12 and 13 February 2018 at JDT Islam Orphanage, Kozhikode. The winners from the districts were registered for the State Level Fest and 147 boys and 119 girls who were the winners of the district levels buds festival will take part in the State Level Buds Festival. The events single dance, light music, fancy dress, mimicry, monoact, cinematic music, recitation, instrumental music, painting (crayons), pencil drawing, group dance and action song competitions. The fest was inaugurated by the District Panchayat President Sri. Babu Parasseri, in the midst of cheer and applause of filled audience.

In this fest the ever rolling trophies were also arranged for the aggregate champions, first runners up and second runners up. All these three trophies were sponsored by the private organizations. The first place ever rolling trophy was sponsored by Canara Bank, Kozhikode, the second place trophy was sponsored by Lions Club and the third trophy was sponsored by the Nutrimix consortium of Kozhikode district. All the winners were given mementos and merit certificates. The judging panel appreciated the Kudumbashree initiatives of conducting such festival for the intellectually disabled. The valedictory function was inaugurated by Minister for Local

Self-Government Adv. K.T. Jaleel.

IMPACT

The BUDS Fest was an opportunity to the intellectually disabled children to refresh their mind and provided them the chance to show their talents. The venues in the both BUDS Fest came alive with joyous scenes as the participants were seen dancing, singing, acting, imitating with the trumpet beats. The face of the parents who accompanied their children to the venue was shining with happiness. They clapped not only for their own wards but to all the performances. The teachers and the other supporters came with the team from the districts were busy with rehearsals in the other corners of venue.

The children who were once closed inside their home and miserably pulled their life with their worried parents never got a chance of show their talents. But with the BUDS Fest gave them a chance to bring out their talents in front of the society. The BUDS Fest Day has left a tangible and quite a visible impact on the lives of the participants. While most of them leave with more confidence and a feeling of accomplishment, many schools, parents and families have also shown interest in organising similar events in the school level at regular intervals.

The BUDS Fest made a long lasting impact on teachers, parents, students and the LSGIs. Many teachers identified the talents of the children and started to train them and motivate them. The parents were astonished to notice the real talents of their child and started to give all the support to them for their improvement. Students started the practice different art forms. The LSGIs where the BUDS Institutions located extended the help to develop the talents of the children studying in the institutions. Some children who were performed well in the BUDS Fest -2018 were interviewed by media and broadcasted their talents.



CONCLUSION

Once Nancy Regan told “To my young friends out there: Life can be great, but when you can’t see it. So, open your eyes to life; to see it in the vivid colors that God gave us as a precious gift to His children, to enjoy life to the fullest, and to make it count. Say yes to your life”. It is most suitable to the BUDS fest as in the earlier time the intellectually disabled were marginalized and isolated in the society. When the society opened their eyes towards them their life changed. Their talents brought out and that way our state- Kerala- gave a different model to the world.

