

KUDUMBASHREE

Field Visit Report

Place of visit: BUDS School, Iduva, Venganoor.

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Introduction

As a part of the field visit the author visited the BUDS School located in Iduva of Venganoor Grama Panchayath, Thiruvananthapuram District on 23rd November 2017. The main objective of the visit was to study the functioning of the BUDS School and the day to day activities of the children.

1. BUDS School.

BUDS School as a special school started for the children with mental and physical challenges. The conditions of such children in their home were not good. The parents went under great depression due to the inability of their child. The level of poverty of such families increased. As such children needed special care, the parents were not able to go for their works and that added hardship to their livelihood. Venganoor is an agricultural village and had many number of children with such disabilities. The study about such children and the hardship of their parents brought a revolutionary change in this village in the form of BUDS School.

2. History of BUDS School, Venganoor.

One of the socio economic surveys conducted by the Venganoor Panchayath brought the miserable conditions of the mentally challenged children and their parents into the light. Then the Panchayath started the discussion for the rehabilitation of such children and families. The prolonged discussions were conducted in the Kudumbashree units and those discussions led to the proposal of a plan for undertake this problem into a acceptable mode. After many long debates and discussions the Panchayath decided to form a school for such children. It planned to set up a rehabilitation centre by the Panchayath and they named it as 'BUDS'. Hence the first BUDS school was set up in Iduva of Venganoor Panchayath.

The special school was inaugurated by Sri A.K. Antony, the then Chief Minister on 16 August 2004. This project, aimed at finding sustainable solution to the psychological and economic hardships of the families of the differently abled and neglected children. BUDS started functioning with 41 children with different disabilities in the 2-20 age range. Currently there are 57 children in the school.

3. Functioning.

The institution had 20 cents of land when it was established and later purchased 16 cents of land nearby. At present the institution planning the extension of building and other facilities. At present there are 57 children in this school. At present Seven teaching staff, four Ayas, one cook, one driver working in this school. Apart from this one Physio Therapist visits the school three days in a week.

The school works from 10.00 AM to 3.30PM daily. The school day begins with prayer at 10.00AM followed by exercise, physiotherapy and yoga; based on the need of the child. The children are divided into classes according to their disabilities. There is a small garden in front of the school maintained by the children. Their day to day activities included the group activities; learn to read and write, craft, dances, songs etc.

The institution provides the delicious lunch to the children. The kitchen is neatly maintained. The institution follows a particular menu for the mid-day meals of the children. After the lunch half an hour is given to the children to watch television. The classrooms and surroundings are maintained neatly. Two DVR teachers are giving vocational training to the children. They work for two to three days in a week. The children who got trained by them are making many crafts.

There is a small play ground behind the school. It was funded by the Block Panchayath. It has roofed with sheets and made it usable for all season. Many playing articles are also made available in this play ground. At present Vocational training is also arranged for children and mothers. Adequate sanitation facilities also attached with this BUDS school.

4. Funding.

The ownership of the schools rests with the respective grama panchayath but the Kudumbashree mission acts as a facilitator, coordinating the functioning of the schools with other agencies involved in the project. Kudumbashree also helps in raising funds for the schools, apart from the budgetary allocation by the respective grama panchayath. The institution has one school bus maintained by the Gram Panchayath.

5. Achievements

The BUDS school Venganoor achieved Successful rehabilitation of helpless children by giving them education, Food, medical care, social exposure. This achieved in giving relief for parents- to go for work and earn. It also achieved in setting up livelihood centre for parents.

6. Findings

- The children who are reaching the BUDS are well trained and they are very happy.
- Children are showing interest to come to the BUDS school
- The parents are also very happy as their old conditions changed due to the establishment of BUDS school.
- The teachers are satisfied with the working atmosphere.
- The children are able to make livelihood with the support of family members, society and teachers.
- Child friendly teaching methods are followed by the teachers.
- Infrastructure must need some more development.

7. Conclusion and recommendation.

The earnest initiatives must be taken to make the widening of the idea of BUDS school. The benefit of the BUDS schools are not only relished by the children but also made the parents, especially their mothers empowered. In olden days the mothers of the children remained in home to look after their children as they need the help of others whole the day. But when the BUDS schools established the depressive mothers got hope and now after sending the children in to the BUDS school, they are engaged in different productive activities. The BUDS school also provides livelihood training for the mothers of the children enrolled in BUDS. There are some children in this school who can engage in many productive activities like poultry, rabbit care, candle making, soap making, hand wash making etc. If they get more support from the parents they can produce it in a money-making scale.

As per the author's opinion the infrastructure of the institution need some more development. Instead of the temporary wooden segregated class rooms, the class rooms must be separated with walls. The play ground should utilize well and maintain well. All the children must get the chance for the recreation at the play ground. If the space for the garden has more area, gardening can be made a major activity of the children. The interval between the DVR trainers should reduce. Then the children get a

continuation in their training. As the teachers are training the children and spending most of their time for the development of the children, they must have the freedom of implementing the easy and professional methods to train the children.

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