



Inclusive Communities

Challenges and Strategies

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Inclusion in Ancient India

In ancient India all children
disabled and non disabled studied
under one teacher or Guru

Those who could not learn were
taught other work they could do.

This was true inclusion.



First Hand Experiences

- ▶ The first experience was in a low socio- economic resettlement colony called Dakshinpuri .It was an urban slum.
- ▶ The second experience was on the north of Delhi in three villages on the borders of Rajasthan and Haryana.

The Urban Experience Dakshinpuri, Delhi.

- ▶ Dakshinpuri is a community of migrant workers caught in a perpetual bind of lack of education, lack of Employment leading to ill health and poverty
- ▶ Residents were mostly Balmiki a group of people earlier excluded from society as "untouchables" until Gandhiji took up their cause and redeemed them.





Challenges. Confrontation or Consultation ?

- ▶ In this community exclusionary practices towards the disabled and particularly the intellectually disabled did exist but accepted.
- ▶ They were manifested through derogatory use of language stigmatization and minimal efforts made to improve the life style of those with intellectual disability.
- ▶ In such a situation the first step was to make efforts to understand community traditions and culture which perpetuated exclusionary practices.

- ▶ We found that persons with disability were being accepted as part of the community but acceptance was apathetic or merely tolerant and not active inclusion.
- ▶ Superstition and myths contributed to negative attitudes
- ▶ A major cause for lack of inclusion was due to the low economic status of the community in general. Matters of sheer survival took precedence over the needs of the disabled.



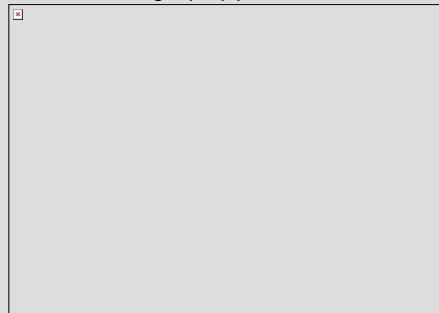
Strategies. Providing a safe place

- ▶ We created a platform for anyone interested to share their thinking about inclusive communities.
- ▶ The aim was to encourage discussion and allow differences of opinions to emerge safely in a controlled environment.
- ▶ This exercise paved the way for future discussions and ensured that people were open to listening and a possible change in thinking .



Puppets spread our message

- ▶ Slide shows, street plays, puppet theater were some of the ways used to bring groups together .
- ▶ Raising awareness was achieved through puppet theatre since a majority had no education and /or were illiterate. Written material served no purpose.





- ▶ Puppets were able to interact directly with the audience, raise issues on disability and provoke discussions. It entertained while it taught.



Sharing Responsibilities

- ▶ Having addressed the community as one entity we now went on to create and address focus groups.
- ▶ We held workshops for various groups. Parents, teachers, Principals of schools, community key members and this helped in sharing our ideas on inclusion.





- ▶ Education is the first social exposure /experience for a child. Survey of 90 schools in the target area showed that a majority were open to inclusive education but were hesitant due to lack of physical infrastructure and trained teaching staff
- ▶ The Delhi Government had made inclusive education mandatory in 2002 but it was mostly not implemented .
- ▶ The recent Right To Education Act of the Central Govt has now resulted in major changes beginning to be seen.

Therapeutic Relationships

- ▶ Everyone has the power to listen and to accept and to voice their opinions .Psychotherapists create a 'therapeutic relationship " and we tried to build similar relationships with members of the community
- ▶ We realized that a group of people is not merely a collection of individuals but "an entity " with its own rights and a life and an identity of its own.



Therapeutic Relationships:cont.

- ▶ We learned that group assumptions actually shaped behavior and attitudes and patterns of group behavior emerged
- ▶ Our strategy now was to allow differences of opinion to emerge but to create an atmosphere of respect for others in the group.

RESULTS

- ▶ A major result of our efforts was the formation of Facilitator's Groups .
- ▶ Groups of like minded people ,teachers, parents and members of the community continued the efforts we initiated of advocating for inclusion.
- ▶ Undertaking surveys to identify schools who need information and help in making their schools inclusive and sharing the information they had



LESSONS LEARNT

- ▶ The lessons we learned were :
- ▶ Take the community with you. Discuss, consult ,allow apprehensions and criticisms to surface and above all have patience .
- ▶ Our road to inclusive communities with reference to education was that inclusive education should be the natural result of an inclusive society .
- ▶ Our goal should be making the community think inclusion .

Rural Experience

- ▶ In 2009 ,World Vision retained SAMADHAN as consultants to introduce inclusive education in the primary schools in three villages.
- ▶ A situation analysis showed that the community was;-
- ▶ a mixed group of Hindus and Mios ,a Muslim sect. But lived in peace and mutual respect of each others religion and traditions .





How inclusive should Inclusion be ?

- ▶ On the surface this community seemed to be excellent example of an inclusive community.
- ▶ Muslims and Hindus lived as neighbors
- ▶ The disabled , unless severely disabled found a place in the village community and did work within their capacities such as tending the cattle , working in the fields or taking the produce to markets
- ▶ But, true Inclusion is not just equality but equality of opportunities and support to reach these opportunities.

▶ In general, gross inequality existed where women were concerned.

▶ Status of women was low and both attitudes and expectations showed this

▶ Girls were removed from school once they reached puberty and mostly married by the time they were 16 years





▶ Muslim children were sent to Madrasas , schools which focused on teaching the Koran along with academics.

▶ Most schools were ill equipped with inadequate facilities



Challenges into celebrations

▶ The lack of medical services within easy commuting distance was a major problem . In this rural situation we realized that providing identified needs was an excellent way to gain support

▶ We conducted medical camps through which we identified all disabilities provided medical relief , basic counseling and referrals to hospitals

▶ We saw approximately 437 children in the 0 to 5 age group and gained the thanks and a willingness to listen to our message

▶ Thereafter we conducted workshops for the teachers , the parents , the community workers as well as the birth attendants.



Results

- ▶ We conducted an evaluation along with the World Vision team and the results showed that ,
- ▶ There was a greater awareness about intellectual disability
- ▶ Mothers were willing to seek support and the superstitions were being questioned
- ▶ school teachers were ready to discuss how to make their classrooms more inclusive
- ▶ The best result was that they wanted to know more about inclusive communities and inclusive education

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion , it is important to recognize the implications of advocating for inclusive communities without taking into account the prevalent cultural traditions of various countries .No two strategies can be the same

- ▶ It is important to build upon existing situations and make efforts to analyze and understand reasons for prevalent exclusion before suggesting changes.
- ▶ To realize that often we focus on the needs and RIGHTS of PWD and do not usually take time to understand why negative attitudes persist
- ▶ Last but not the least is that on the journey towards inclusive communities it is necessary to take everyone along .All stake holders Only then can it be true inclusion.



**Thank You
Namaste!**

