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RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS



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SERVICES IN THE DAY CARE PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS – A CASE STUDY

* VICTORIA NAOMI, G.

**SELVI, A.

Introduction

“Child care” or “Day care” is care of a child during the day by a person other than the child’s legal guardians typically performed by someone outside the child’s immediate family. Inclusive Education for the Disabled under Sarva Shiksha Abiyan Scheme, a centrally sponsored scheme of Indian government has several components and Day care Programme is one among them. Since this programme is of a new entity, a study entitled services in the Day care centres was carried out in Coimbatore city of Tamil Nadu.

Day care centres for children with disability in Tamil Nadu

There are 362 day care centres functioning for severely affected children across the state of Tamil Nadu. One caretaker and one helper have been appointed by the NGOs, an implementing agency, in these day care centres to take care of the disabled children. In the academic year 2011-2012, there were 6634 severely affected children enrolled in these centres. Provisions for transport facility, nutritious food, supply of play materials and uniforms were given in the scheme. Transport allowance was given to parents of these children to bring their children to the day care centres. The parents of these severely

disabled children were also trained to help their children (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Tamil Nadu) (IED SSA, 2011).

Day care programmes in inclusive education

Day care is becoming increasingly important, not just to allow families to have dual incomes with both parents working, but also in terms of child development. Day care is often the first exposure for a child before formal education and it helps socialization with other children. Some educators believe that the child who has not experienced good day care is at a disadvantage when beginning formal schooling (Oliveri,2002).(www.ehow/education-daycare-teacher-need.html).

Day care centres in Coimbatore district

Children who require training in pre requisite skills before the placement in schools are enrolled in day care centre. In the centre, children are trained and after acquiring skills, they send to school.

Therapies like speech therapy, play therapy, physiotherapy, counselling and guidance to parents, occupational therapy, yoga and sports activities are provided by the experts of their specific field at day care centre.

A time-table is followed for these children. A special educator visits the centre

* Associate Professor in Special Education, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women, Coimbatore-641 043.

** M.Ed student.

daily. The Madras Developmental Programming Scale System, 1975 (MDPS) is used to assess the functional skills of the children. The IEP is planned and followed for these children. Short term and long term goals are set and the achievement are recorded periodically. Occupational therapist and physiotherapist visit these centres twice a week.

Parents are involved in planning and decision making for the progress of their child. Parents are guided to help the child at home.

The day care teacher and care giver are appointed to take care of these children. The other services for these children include provision of tea and snacks, lunch and transportation facilities.

Day care teacher works eight hours a day. The teacher is responsible for a variety of duties which include caring for the personal and emotional needs of young children. Day care teachers must keep accurate records, create lesson plans and cultivate a safe, comforting environment for children.

In Coimbatore district, 18 day care centres provided such facilities to these children. A total of 357 children were benefited.

Molsha (2005) stated that the recent development of formal day-care services for people with disabilities has been a critical thrust step towards supporting their social integration. Improving social-adaptive skills and supporting social inclusion of people with disabilities are main aims of these services. The centres are required to offer 8 hours service including two meals (lunch and hot meal) and individualized work with service users aimed towards improving

their social-adaptive skills and providing them with different leisure activities (visiting city sights, exhibitions, etc.).

Keeping in mind, the importance of day care centre for children with special needs, a study was undertaken with the following objectives: To

- Explore the type of children with special needs in day care centres established under Inclusive Education (IED-SSA) in Coimbatore city
- Assess the status of day care programme with respect to infrastructural facilities, routine activities, safety needs, sanitation and staff training
- Study the role of different professionals involved in the day care programme and
- Develop a case profile of selected day care centre.

Method

The following steps were involved in the implementation of the study

Site description

The current study was conducted in the day care centres in Coimbatore district. The centres were located in the IED-SSA (Inclusive Education for the Disabled – Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) programme in 10 Blocks namely P.N.Palayam, City Block, Perur, Thondamuthur, Pollachi-North, Pollachi-South, Kinathukadavu, Sular, Palladam and Tiruppur.

Sample

The sample for the study included 10 day care centres and children enrolled in the centres. The details of the sample distribution are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Block - wise distribution of the sample

Day car centre programme	VI				HI				OH				MR				CP				AUTISM				DS				MD				TOTAL							
	B	G	T	%	B	G	T	%	B	G	T	%	B	G	T	%	B	G	T	%	B	G	T	%	B	G	T	%	B	G	T	%	B	G	T	%				
P.N. Palayam	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	7	35	0	2	2	10	2	0	2	10	0	1	1	10	6	2	8	40	11	9	20	10				
City block	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	12	8	7	15	88	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	8	17	8.6
Perur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	7	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	59	5	4	9	53	12	5	17	8.6			
Thondamuthur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	14	7	5	12	80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	7	7	8	15	7.6			
Pollachi north	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	12	60	2	1	3	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5	25	12	8	20	10		
Pollachi south	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	10	23	83	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3.6	0	0	0	0	2	2	4	14	15	13	28	14				
Kinathukadavu	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	6.7	0	0	0	0	7	7	14	94	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	7	15	7.6			
Tiruppur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	9	6	1	7	31	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4.4	1	1	2	9	7	4	11	48	16	7	23	12				
Palladam	1	0	1	0.5	1	0	1	5	1	0	1	5	6	4	10	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	11	48	16	5	21	11		
Sulur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	8	18	89	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	14	0	0	0	0	13	9	22	11				
Total	1	0	1	0.5	2	0	2	1	3	4	7	3.5	73	52	125	63	3	3	6	3	3	1	4	2	3	4	7	3.5	31	18	49	23	119	79	198	100				

(VI - Visually Impairment), (HI - Hearing Impairment), (OH - Orthopedic Handicapped), (MR - Mental Retardation), (CP - Cerebral Palsy), (DS - Down Syndrome), (MD - Multiple Disability)

Among the sample the highest number of children are in the Mentally Retarded category (63%) followed by Multiple Disability (23%). The lowest category is Visually Impaired (0.5%). Down syndrome and motor impairment were 3.5 per cent each. Children with cerebral palsy, autism and hearing impairment were three per cent, two per cent and one per cent respectively.

Design

The study adopted descriptive survey to find out the status of day care centres. Through descriptive survey many facts have been found out in the study process.

Tool

Checklist

Checklist was used to identify the overall condition of the day care centres. The checklist included the assessment components such as the physical infrastructural facilities, learning environment, availability of learning resources, routine activities, assessment and learning methods and records used for the progress of the children, quality of meals provided, safety needs, sanitation and staff training details. Scoring was done in the following manners.

Interview schedule

An interview schedule was developed to find out the level of functional, academic and social skill development of children with special needs. It also included

components such as role of parents, monitoring and evaluation mechanism, role of day care teacher, special teacher, physiotherapist, government officer and source of funding.

Data collection procedure

The data was collected in three phases.

I Phase An explorative survey was made to identify the location of the centres. Written permission was obtained from the government officials and the implementing agency to conduct the study in the selected centres.

II Phase A thorough assessment was made to study the status of the day care programmes by administering the checklist. An interview was carried out among special teacher, parents and the implementing agency to collect facts such as role of day care teachers, special teachers, and the details of monitoring and funding by NGO's and Government.

III Phase A detailed case study of one centre was collected.

Results and discussion

The details of the data collected are discussed below :

Table 2 presents the overall status of the centres selected.

Pertaining to the student's strength, Pollachi north had highest enrolment (14%) followed by Palladam (11.6%) and Tiruppur (11%). The lowest enrolment noted was in

City block and Perur each (8.58 %) and followed by Thondamuthur (7.57%).

The qualification of special educator teachers are analysed and presented in Table 5.

Table 5 Gender and qualification wise details of special teachers

Gender	B.ed.D.Spl.Edn		U.G B.Se		UG .B.Ed		PG . B.Ed		UG .M.Ed		P.G. M.Ed	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	-	-	2	4.4	1	2.2	1	2.2	1	2.2	-	-
Female	5	11	2	53.3	4	8.9	1	2.2	4	8.9	2	4.4
Total %	5	11	26	57.7	5	11.1	2	4.4	5	11.1	2	4.4

Among the special educators 4.4 per cent of them were possessing Post graduation with M.Ed. but a majority of them (57.7%) had under graduation with B.Ed. Diploma holders comprised of 5 per

cent. With respect to gender, a majority (89%) of them were female against (11%) male.

The following Table 6 presents the distribution of physiotherapist.

Table 6. Gender wise distribution of physiotherapist

Gender	Qualification				Total	
	B.P.T		M.P.T		N	%
	N	%	N	%		
Male	1	14.3	1	14.3	2	28.6
Female	4	57.1	1	14.3	5	71.4
Total	5	71.4	2	28.6	7	100

B.P.T - Bachelor in Physiotherapy M.P.T- Master in Physiotherapy

There were seven physiotherapists working and among them 71per cent of them were male and 29 per cent were female.

Parent's support in developing functional skills was assessed. The details are given in Table 7.

Table 7. Parent's support in skill development

No. of day care centre	No. of CWSN	Parents direct intervention	%
P.N.Palayam	20	4	20
City Block	17	6	36
Perur	17	7	41.17
Thondamuthur	15	6	40
Pollachi north20	5	25	
Pollachi south	28	4	14.28
Kinathukadavu	15	2	14
Tiruppur	23	6	26
Palladam	21	6	29
Sulur	22	3	14
Total	198	49	100

The direct intervention of the parents in the centre helped their children to develop their skills. Parents of children in Perur Block, (41.17%) were involved in the programme followed by Thondamuthur (40%). In all centres, parents supported the programme in one way or other.

Case profile

The study developed a case profile and an illustration is given below:

Name of the : Day care centre Programme

Location : P.N. Palayam, Housing Unit, Coimbatore.

This centre was located at the outskirts of the Coimbatore city.

The details of enrolment

Table 8. Enrolment of children in the centre

Types of children	Mental retardation	Cerebral palsy	Autism	Down syndrome	Multiple disability	Total
Number	7	2	2	1	8	20
Per cent	35	10	10	5	30	100

In the centre there were 20 children with different disabilities. Out of 20 children, 8 children (30%) were with multiple disabilities, and 7 children (35%)

were with mental retardation. There were 10 per cent each in cerebral palsy and autism and five per cent with down syndrome.

Age of the children

It was noted that the age range of the children was from 4-14years

Escorting

The children were either accompanied by parents or family members.

Physical infrastructure facilities

Building	Area
Classroom - 1	150sft
Kitchen - 1	75sft

Play equipment and assistive devices

Peg board, Lint stunt, shapes, Neil Board, Table, Cycle, Standing table, Corner chair and Cerebral Palsy chair were available.

Professional

A full time day care teacher was available from 9 am to 5 pm for 6 days in a week. Sunday is a holiday.

Special teachers working in the block used to visit the centre to offer technical assistance to the children. The centre was being visited by five special teachers in a week on the basis of one teacher a day. He/ She would stay in the centre about half a day.

A physiotherapist was available to meet the physio needs of the children and his/her visit was scheduled two days a week for about 3 hours in a week.

Activities to develop functional skills

The activities were scheduled in the following manner

Time	Types of activities
09.30 - 10.00 a.m.	Grooming and Prayer
10.00 - 10.45 a.m.	Concept development
10.45 - 11.30 a.m.	Therapy
11.30 - 11.45 a.m.	Break
11.45 - 12.30 p.m.	Yoga
12.30 - 02.00 p.m.	Lunch and sleeping
02.00 - 02.45 p.m.	Life oriented activities
02.45 - 03.30 p.m.	Activity of DLS
03.30 - 04.45 p.m.	Play time

Monitoring and evaluation

The programme was monitored both by government personnel and professional from the implementing agency. On the government side, Chief Educational Officer of the district, Coordinator of IED-SSA and Head of school were monitoring. The professional and authorities from the implementing Agency were visiting the programme periodically.

Transportation

The children in day care centre were provided free transport facility for attending the programme.

Funding

The funding received for the programme from the State SSA Office, through the Implementing Agency was given to the programme every month. A sum of Rs.11, 500/- per month was being sanctioned to the programme. A sum of Rs. 7,000/- and Rs. 4500/- were allocated for food and transport respectively.

Findings

The findings emerged out of the study are listed below:

- In general, the day care centres were found to be effective in serving children with special needs.
- Among the 10 centres selected for the study, the status of City block, Perur, Palladam and Sulur Block were found to be effective. The level of P.N.Palayam, Kinathukadavu, Pollachi south and Tiruppur seemed to be poor.
- Forty per cent of physical facilities of centres were low but in 20 per cent it was found to be high.
- A majority (60%) of the centres conducted routine activities effectively and 40 per cent of them were not regular in their activities.
- Pertaining to the quality of meals, 70 per cent of centres provided good and nutritious meals.
- The study revealed that 60 per cent of the centres followed safety measures and only 10 per cent were found to be lacking safety needs.
- With regard to sanitation, most of the centres (70%) were found to be hygienic and 20 per cent with poor condition. Cleanliness was found to be good in 10 per cent of the centres.
- The study revealed that P.N.Palayam, Sulur, Tiruppur, and Palladam block

enrolled more children with special needs.

- With regard to the qualification of special teacher, nearly 58 per cent had graduation with B.Ed, 4.4 per cent possessed post graduation with B.Ed and 5 per cent were holding diploma. Among them, 50 per cent were with the qualification of X std plus training and 20 per cent with XII plus training. It is also observed that 30 per cent of the teachers were only with school final certificates (X or XII Std) without training.
- There were seven physiotherapists working and among them 71 per cent of them were male and 29 per cent were female.

Conclusion

Today, human development is considered to be a very important aspect of a country's progress. India's concern for children is evident in the constitutional provisions, policies, programmes and legislation. Day care centre for the children with special needs is of recent and effective move by the government of India. This programme is a viable alternative for severely disabled children and their parents. But multiple responses to child care are a must so that individual needs will be met. But today's day care programmes though a boon to children with severe disabilities, a long way to go for scaling up and effective implementation.

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