

EARLY Diagnostic Centres for Hearing Impaired Children

Hearing loss continues to be the most common birth defect in India. Early diagnosis is crucial for babies with profound or severe hearing loss. With early diagnosis, these children can be fitted with appropriate amplification devices and then receive early intervention, ideally before 6 months of age. Advancement in technology has provided ever-improving opportunities to identify hearing loss in infant soon after birth. Early diagnostic centres have been established for the hearing impaired in 27 districts. Hearing screening with Oto Acoustic Emission (OAE) and Auditory Brain Stem Response (ABR) are done in these centres. A large number of infants have been screened and received treatment at each of these centres.

EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRES FOR THE DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN

Research in child development has shown that the rate of human learning and development is most rapid in the early stage of life. Early intervention is essential as the child may run the risk of missing an opportunity to learn during the early stages of life.

Considering the above facts, Government of Tamil Nadu has established Early Intervention Centres for Children with various types of Disability. All children with disability along with an escort are allowed to travel free of cost in State Transport Corporation buses from their residence to these Centres and back.

EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRES FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN

Hearing loss is one of the most common congenital anomaly, occurring in approximately 2-4 infants per 1000. Early detection of hearing loss is critical for the development of age appropriate speech, language and learning skills. Hence, Early Intervention Centres for Infants and Young children with Hearing Impairment have been established with the aim to provide intensive training in such a way that before the child reaches 5 years of age, the child develops adequate verbal and language skills and is ready to attend regular school in 1st standard. Centres have been established in 30 districts and are managed by the reputed NGOs. Children under the age of 6 years having hearing loss and without any additional disabilities are admitted in these centres. There is no lower age limit for admission. However, one of the parents is required to attend the centre along with the child.

"DHVANI" syllabus and curriculum developed by BalaVidyalaya School for the Young Deaf Children, Chennai is followed in these centres. These centres are provided with teaching, learning and play materials for the hearing impaired children. 660 children with hearing impairment in the age group of 0-6 years have been admitted in these centres so far. Every year orientation training is provided to Special Educators working in these centres to update their knowledge and skills.

EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRES FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

Early Intervention Centres for Children with Mental Retardation in the age group of 0-6 years have been established in 31 districts through Non Governmental Organisations. These centres aim at training the children, their parents and families to maximise their capabilities in mobility, day-to-day living, socialization and other skills.

"UPANAYAN" a systematic and structured programme for the training of children with delayed development and mental retardation developed by the Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children, Chennai is being followed in these centres. Teaching, learning and play materials are also provided at the Early Intervention Centres for the Mentally Retarded children. The Special educators of these Early Intervention Centres are given refresher course every year. 1460 Mentally Retarded Children are attending these centre.

EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRES FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED CHILDREN

Infants with visual impairments have unique needs which require specific interventions and adaptations in order to access and to understand their world. A baby born blind or visually impaired experiences the world differently. Since 85% of all early learning is visual, a blind or visually impaired child is at a great risk of developmental delays. Effective and intensive

intervention is imperative in the early years to enhance available vision and encourage the development of other facilities and skills.

In order to address this issue, Early Intervention Centres for Visually Impaired have been established in 6 districts namely Trichy, Coimbatore, Cuddalore, Chennai, Vellore, Tiruvannamalai, which are managed by reputed NGOs. This scheme benefits 98 Visually Impaired Children below 6 year age group.

EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY AT TIRUCHY:

Cerebral Palsy needs to be treated by inter-disciplinary team members such as Physiotherapist, Occupational Therapist, Speech Therapist and Special Educators. At the centre, these members work together as a team and provide Infant Stimulation Programme for children below 3 years of age and Early Stimulation Programme for children between 3 and 6 years of age. 50 children with Cerebral Palsy attend this centre at Tiruchy.

EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM:

Highly specialized treatment is required to treat Autism which is primarily asocio-neural developmental disorder. Therapies and behavioral intervention are designed to remedy specific symptoms which can bring about substantial improvement. Early Intervention programmes emphasize attending to social stimuli, imitation skills, language comprehension and usage, appropriate play skills and social intervention. In order to address this issue, Early Intervention Centres for Autism have been established in 19 districts namely Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Thanjavur, Chennai, Coimbatore, Cuddalore, Dindigul, Erode, Kanchipuram, Madurai, Namakkal, Selam, Tiruvannamalai, Thoothukudi, Vellore, Tiruvallur, Villupuram, and Virudhunagar. .

PROVISION OF WEANING FOOD AND SUPPLEMENTARY NUTRITIOUS FOOD TO CHILDREN IN EARLY INTERVENTION CENTRES

Infants and children with disabilities can suffer from the ill-effects of under nutrition in the same way as children without disabilities, leading to poorer health outcomes, missing or delayed developmental milestones, acquiring avoidable secondary conditions as well as unnecessary stunting in physical growth. In order to address the issue of access to nutritious food for children with disabilities, Weaning food and Noon Meal is provided at Early Intervention Centres through the nearby Anganwadi Centres functioning under the Integrated Child Development Services. As many as, 1952 children in these Early Intervention Centres are benefited under this scheme.

STATE RESOURCE CUM TRAINING CENTRE AT CHENNAI

The State Resource cum Training Centre, Chennai, was started in the year 2005, with the aim to provide specialized services and information under one roof to all categories of differently abled persons by Governmental and Non Governmental Organizations. Disability certificates and National Identity Cards are issued to all categories of differently abled persons at this centre. 8932 disability certificates were issued from the centre during 2019-2020. Early Intervention Centres for the Hearing Impaired, Cerebral Palsy, Visually Impaired, Autism, Mentally Retarded and Sensory Integration Unit are also functioning at this centre. Children with disabilities in the age of below 6 years are admitted in these Early Intervention Centres. Besides, various Training programmes are also organized at this centre.

REGIONAL STATE RESOURCE CUM TRAINING CENTRE AT TIRUCHY:

In order to cater to the needs of the differently abled persons hailing from the Southern districts, a Regional State Resource cum Training Centre has been established at Tiruchy. This centre is managed jointly by District Differently Abled Welfare Office, Tiruchy and NGOs. This centre works on the pattern of the Chennai centre.

MOBILE THERAPY UNIT

Mobile Therapy Units have been launched for the welfare of the differently abled children in the age group of 0-6 years in all the 32 districts of Tamil Nadu on 16.06.2015 by the Hon'ble Chief Minister. A sum of Rs.4.49 crores has been sanctioned by the Government for this purpose. This

initiative is first of its kind in the country which intends to take rehabilitation of the differently abled to their doorsteps.

Need for Mobile Therapy Unit:

The differently abled children in the age group of 0-6 years, specially in rural areas find it difficult to reach the early intervention centres which are located in the district headquarters. In order to help such children, one mobile Therapy Unit each has been set up in all the 32 districts of the State. In each unit all the required therapy equipment are provided and services are rendered at the door steps of the beneficiaries.

Following are the main activities carried out by the Mobile Therapy unit:

Early diagnosis and identification of different types of differently abled children.

Providing physiotherapy, speech therapy, Occupational therapy,

Assessment for suitable assistive devices, pre-vocational training and special education for the children

Methodology:

The Mobile Therapy Unit vehicle is released to the District Differently Abled Welfare Officers. District Collectors are guiding and implementing this special programme with the services of the therapist and rehabilitation workers and special educators at the district level.

These vehicles move to different parts of the district as per an advance tour programme approved by the Collector.

The Tempo Traveller AC Vehicle which is converted into 2 cabins i.e. Therapy Room and the Driver cabin has the following facilities:-

Therapy Room of the size of 10'X6' is designed in such a way to enable to carry out physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, new born screening, early intervention activities, assessment for assistive devices.

Play way therapy for children with different kinds of disability

Therapy cabin also has a Testing Couch to enable the therapist to provide therapy as in the Clinical room for the differently abled children.

To facilitate IEC activity on prevention of disability, 22 inch LED Television with DVD Players, cordless mike and speakers are flitted in the therapy cabin which is useful for the mothers in getting information on early intervention activities.

Pamphlets, booklets, display boards, Songs etc. relating to the various welfare scheme being implemented by the State Government are also provided in the mobile unit.

SUPPLY OF TEXT BOOKS TO DIFFERENTLY ABLED STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT AIDED SPECIAL SCHOOLS

The Tamil Nadu Text Book Corporation is supplying free text-books to the differently abled students studying from 1st to 12th Standard in the Government and Government Aided Special Schools.

UNIFORM TO THE STUDENTS STUDYING IN GOVERNMENT SPECIAL SCHOOLS

The differently abled students studying in the Government special schools are also provided with four sets of uniform. The number of uniforms has been increased from two sets to four sets from the year 2012-2013.

PROVIDING ANGEL PRO DIGITAL DAISY PLAYER-HITECH DEVICE FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED STUDENTS.

For the benefit of Visually Impaired students doing higher studies, Angel Pro Digital Daisy Player is provided.

Early Intervention:

The main objective of early intervention centres is to identify infants and young children with Hearing Impairment/Mental Retardation/Visual Impairment / Cerebral Palsy/ Autism/ Multiple Disabilities and to provide early intervention services to address the disability with medical and rehabilitation services. It also provides required training to parents and families of such children for social adjustment and to facilitate the maximum development of the children with disabilities.

Special Education

Special Education is provided to Differently Abled children through 23 Government run Special Schools, 54 Government Aided Special Schools and 152 Unaided Special Schools ie. totally 229 Special Schools are functioning under this Commissionerate:-

Following facilities are provided free of cost to the Differently Abled children studying in Government run Special Schools

Special education, boarding and lodging

Four sets of uniform

Textbooks

In addition to the above, the following different types of assistance also are provided.

Scholarship

Reader's Allowance for Blind

Scribe Assistance for Blind

Bus pass

Braille books and text CD's and CD players for 10th Std and +2 Std Visually Impaired students

Study tours

Aids and Appliances such as Tricycles, Retrofitted Scooters, folding Wheel Chairs, Calipers, Artificial Limbs, Modular Artificial Limbs, Crutches, Hearing Aids(Body level and 'Behind the Ear'), Solar Rechargeable Batteries, Folding Sticks, Magnifiers, Goggles, Braille/ Talking Watches and C.P Chairs, etc.

Supply of Laptops with software for Blind and Hearing Impaired students

Assistance to Law Graduates at Rs.3000/- to purchase law books and registration in Bar Council

Further, to encourage the Differently Abled to continue their studies and prevent dropouts cash incentives are given.

The top three State and District level Rank holders of 10th and 12th Std public examinations are given cash prizes and incentives to pursue higher education, purchase books/CD and Hostel fees.

Human Resource Development

To develop Human Resources in the area of Special Education Junior and Senior Diploma Courses for Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired and Mentally Retarded are being conducted by the Institutions with the financial assistance from the Government of Tamil Nadu as indicated below:

Professional Training Diploma in Teacher Education (DTE):

Secondary Grade Teacher Training (DTE) is given to Orthopaedically differently abled persons at the Government Higher Secondary School for the Blind, Poonamallee.

Diploma in Teacher Education to teach the Visually Impaired (DTE) is given at the Government Higher Secondary School for the Blind, Poonamallee.

Diploma in Teacher Education to teach the Hearing Impaired (DTE) is given at the Little Flower Convent, Chennai.

Diploma in Teacher Education to teach the Mentally Retarded is given at Balavihar, Chennai-10.

Other training programmes conducted for provided to the various categories of Differently Abled persons are as follows:

(1) Computer Training for Visually Impaired:

Every year computer training (six months duration) is given for Visually Impaired persons through Regional Centre of National Institute for Visually Handicapped (NIVH) at Poonamallee.

(2) Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology:

This training (two years duration) is given to Ortho and Hearing Impaired persons by the Directorate of Medical Education in 12 Medical Colleges i.e. Chennai, Chengalpattu, Thanjavur, Trichirapalli, Vellore, Salem, Coimbatore, Madurai, Theni, Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi and Nagercoil.

(3) Cell Phone Service Training

Three months Cell Phone training to Orthopaedically Differently abled candidates is given through Directorate of Technical Education in all Districts in Tamil Nadu (Polytechnic Colleges) and the trainees are paid Rs.300/- as stipend every month.

(4) Multimedia Training

One month training on Multimedia is given to the Locomotor Differently Abled and Hearing Impaired persons at National Film Development Corporation Ltd.

(5) Modular Employable Skill Training

Short term Modular Employable Skill training (Vocational Training) is provided to the Differently Abled Persons with hostel facility in all Districts.

(6) Fitter Course for Hearing Impaired (I.T.I.):

Government ITI, Guindy conducts a (two years duration) special training for the Hearing Impaired persons in the trade of 'Fitter'.

(7) Book Binding Training:

This training (One year duration) is given for Visually Impaired, at the Government Higher Secondary School for the Blind, Poonamallee.

(8) Weaving and Chalk- piece making etc.

This training is given for orphan and destitute persons with visual impairment at the Government Sheltered Workshop for Visually Impaired Women, Poonamallee, Chennai -56.

Employment

According to G.O. No.99, Personnel and Administrative Reforms (Personnel S) Department dated 26.2.1988 and G.O.Ms.No. 53 Social Welfare and NMP (SW 4) Department dated 11.4.2005, 3% of vacancies arising in Government Departments and Undertakings have been reserved for Differently abled persons in all the categories of the posts viz. A,B,C and D. Certain posts have been identified in the category of A & B which are found most suitable for disabled persons.

A High Level Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary to Government to monitor the implementation of 3% reservation for the Differently Abled Persons in Government Departments and Agencies.

Special recruitment is taken up by the Government and the vacancies reserved for Differently abled persons are filled up promptly.

Unemployment Allowance:

Unemployment Allowance is being given to the unemployed Differently abled Persons, who have registered in Employment Exchanges and are on the live registers for more than a year at the following rates:

- 1) Upto X Std : Rs.600/- p.m.
- 2) +2 and Under-Graduates : Rs.750/- p.m.
- 3) Graduates and Post Graduates : Rs.1000/- p.m.

Self Employment

Differently abled persons are assisted financially for their self-employment. A maximum subsidy of Rs.10,000/- is given for starting self-employment ventures. Further, National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) is also financing the self-employment ventures. Motorised Sewing Machines are provided free of cost to Differently Abled persons for their self-employment.

Social Security Schemes:

Maintenance Allowance @ Rs.1000/- p.m. is given to 1,11,829 persons with Severe disability, Muscular dystrophy, Mental retardation, Leprosy Cured Persons.

Marriage Assistance of Rs.25,000/- is given to the normal persons marrying Visually Impaired / Orthopaedically Differently Abled / Hearing Impaired along with 8 grams Gold for making Thirumangalyam. If the marrying person is Diploma Holder or Graduate, he/she is given Rs.50,000/- with 8 grams Gold Coin for making Thirumangalyam as Marriage Assistance.

Bus passes are provided to enable the differently abled to go to Schools/Colleges/Hospitals/Training Centres / Work spots-Self employed places. Travel concession is given to escorts of children attending Early Intervention Centres of Deaf/ Mentally Retarded

State and National Awards are given to best Differently abled persons, Institutions, Teachers, Employers and Individuals to encourage for better rehabilitation of the Differently abled persons in future.

Disability Identity Card is given to all Differently abled persons in the State, who are having disability to the extent of 40% and above.

Other social security schemes like assistance for accident death, natural death, funeral assistance, scholarships to sons/daughters of differently abled persons and spectacle assistance etc., are implemented by the Tamilnadu Welfare Board for the Differently Abled.

Aids & Appliances:

Following Aids and Appliances are given to Differently abled persons free of cost:-

Tricycles

Retrofitted Petrol Scooters

Foldable Wheel Chairs

Reflective Sticks

Goggles

Behind the Ear Hearing Aids

Calipers

Crutches

Artificial Limbs and Modular Artificial Limbs

Braille Watches.

C.P Chairs

Magnifiers

Walking Device

Battery Operated Wheel Chair

International Day of the Differently Abled Persons

'International Day of the Differently Abled' is observed on 3rd December every year by the State Government in accordance with the Declaration of the United Nations Organisation. The main aim of observing this day is to encourage the differently abled persons to showcase their skills and abilities in various fields of Arts and Sports. In connection with the International Day of the Differently Abled, "State Level Sports Meet" is conducted. As many as 5000 differently abled children from all over the State participate in the events. Several sports and games are conducted and prizes are distributed to winners and certificates issued to all the participants. On this day, cultural programmes are also conducted and State Awards are distributed to the Best Employer, Best Social Worker, Best Employee, Best Teacher and Best Institution, who render outstanding service for the welfare of the differently abled persons. Aids and Appliances are also distributed on this occasion. The Government has issued orders granting Special Casual Leave for this day to all the differently abled persons employed in Government Departments/ Undertakings to enable them to participate in the function.

AAVAAZ

The current status of Augmentative and Alternative Communication system for persons affected by cerebral palsy (AAVAAZ) which is an alternative communication supporting system for Special children having problem in speech and communication, are given as detailed below.

In accordance with the sanction provided by TANNI, Govt. Order sanctioning a sum of Rs.106.46 lakhs was issued vide reference 2nd cited for providing Augmentative and Alternative Communication device with AAVAAZ software for the use of Special School children with Autism, Cerebral palsy and Mentally Retarded having speech and communication problem.

281 No of device along with avaz software at a unit cost of Rs.37,655/- was procured at total cost of Rs.1,05,81,193/- and distributed to 238 institutions, and the scheme is implemented.

Retro fitted Petrol Scooter

Retro fitted Petrol Scooters are given to the differently abled persons instead of electric scooters from the year 2011-2012, while 400 Beneficiaries were fixed as target in the year 2011-2012, the target was raised to 1000 beneficiaries. In the year 2013-2014 and the target was raised to 2000 persons in the year 2018-2018 and now in the year 2019-2020 the target was raised as 3000 beneficiaries and the scheme is being implemented.

In this scheme both lower limb affected differently abled students, employed and self employed are benefitted. Eligible beneficiaries are being selected by a District level committee headed by the Collector.

From the year 2011-2012 to 2018-2019, totally 9088 beneficiaries were received Retrofitted Petrol Scooters on the basis of eligibility with a cost of Rs.5117.43 lakhs.

Battery Operated Wheel Chair

In the year 2017-2018, for Independent mobility of persons affected by Muscular Dystrophy and Tetraplegic persons, Battery Operated Wheel chair scheme was introduced and 872 persons were benefitted with a cost of Rs.6.50 cores.

Providing this wheel chair for 2000 persons in the year 2018-2019 with a cost of Rs.13 crores and providing 3000 persons with a cost of Rs.24.59 crore in the year 2019-2020 is under way.

District Differently Abled Welfare Office

In order to provide effective rehabilitation services to the differently abled persons at the District level, a team of Specialists is functioning in all the 32 Districts under the control of District Differently Abled Welfare Officer.

This team of Specialists provides rehabilitation assistance to the differently abled persons in the Districts by organising camps. This team co-ordinates with other Government Departments in the districts to tap the available resources for the benefit of the Differently abled persons in the District.

Persons With Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995

Tamil Nadu leads other States in implementing various provisions of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 and has obtained appreciation at the National Level. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was enacted to give equal opportunities to the differently abled, to protect their rights in order to integrate them with the mainstream of the society and to enable them to have full participation in the normal life. A State Commissioner for the Differently Abled has been appointed in Tamil Nadu to monitor the implementation of the Act, besides acting as Head of the Department for the welfare of the Differently abled.

National Trust Act

The National Trust Act was enacted in 1999 for the welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities, with the main objective to enable and empower persons with these disabilities to live independently and integrate with the community. In order to fulfill this objective, Local Level Committees (LLC) have been formed in the Districts to effectively implement the programmes of the National Trust with District Collector as the Chairman of the Local Level Committee. An amount of Rs. 10000/-per annum is allotted to each Local Level Committee to take up activities, which includes awareness generation, appointment of legal guardians, sensitization of Non-Governmental Organisations and highlighting the salient features of the National Trust.

Rehabilitation Homes

10 Government Rehabilitation Homes are functioning for the care of Leprosy affected persons and their rehabilitation. One Government Care Camp is functioning at Melpakkam, Tiruvallur District, to look after the beggars who have been convicted by the Court.