



Social audit of ABFL's support to Swabhiman, Orissa

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1. Background: Brief history of disability rights movement

Disability rights movements consisted of several conglomerations of individuals and groups with disabilities that came to be organized in the 1980s under a cross-disability umbrella representing the interests of the disabled as a group. The definition of disability took away from the focus on the impaired body and its medical construction (medical model) to a matter of multi-structural arrangements that were seen as creating a disabling environment for persons with physical or mental impairments and socially engendering and undermining their psycho-emotional wellbeing (social model).¹

Given the context of disability, it was not just important to create enabling infrastructure to support the disabled, but also create enough awareness and most importantly empower the disabled to live a life with dignity.

The struggle for rights of the people with disability first gained expression in 1995 with The persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995. The Act identified seven types of disabilities namely blindness, low vision, leprosy cured persons, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation, and mental illness. This was revised with The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 with the Act recognizing 21 forms of disabilities. For the first time, types of disabilities were covered in the 2011 census under the categories of mental illness, mental retardation and multiple disabilities. According to the Census report 2011, 2.21% of the people in the country have disabilities with close to 70% of them living in rural areas.

However, the progress made thus far is not enough and the much needed push for disabilities advocacy and reforms still continues. With the Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR) Law coming into being, corporates and NGOs have joined the fight to collaborate and create a differently abled society. Barrier free infrastructure for people with disabilities, education in an inclusive environment and skilling programs to help the disabled find livelihood opportunities are some of the focus areas of CSR initiatives in this segment of work.

2. About Swabhiman and Project Saksham

Swabhiman was founded by Dr. Sruti Mahapatra in the year 2001. A road accident in 1987 just before joining the Civil Services, paralyzed Dr. Sruti to the confines of a wheelchair for life. This episode marked the beginning of her activist life and she has since then been vociferously advocating for the physically and mentally challenged in India. Swabhiman has been collaborating with various Ministries and government agencies such as the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, and Odisha Pimary Education Program Authority to name a few in different capacities to help in creating an equitable space for the disabled in the country.

Saksham, which translates to 'capable', was a project initiated in 2016 with the help of Aditya Birla Financial Services to equip people with disabilities in the urban slums of Bhubaneswar to lead a meaningful and independent life. The program works with children and the youth through an education and skill development/job linkage program for the two categories respectively.

¹ Mehrotra, Nilika. (2011). Disability Rights Movements in India: Politics and Practice.

Samhita was commissioned by Adity Birla to conduct a social audit to measure the impact of these programs. This report presents the main findings from the audit.

3. Methodology

The study involved a mix of primary and secondary and qualitative and quantitative methods.

The qualitative evaluation was conducted through interviews with the management of the NGO, field facilitators and government school principals; and focused group discussions with the parent self-help groups (SHG) and school management committees (SMC) of the schools. The quantitative tools involved survey of knowledge attitudes and practices with government school teachers and trainees of vocational program. Secondary data gathered by Swabhiman as part of its monitoring process to analysed to complement the primary research.

The various research tools that were used for the study are as below:

Stakeholder	Tool used	Number
Management of the NGO	Key informant interview	2(Project manager and team leader)
Field facilitator	Key informant interview	4(3 field facilitators and 1 senior field facilitator)
Government school principal	Key informant interview	4
Government school teachers	Survey on the knowledge, skills and attitudes and classroom observation	12 and 1 classroom observation
Youth with disabilities	Key informant interview	10
School Management Committee(SMC) and parent self-helpgroup SHG members	Focused group discussions	2 SMCs and 1 SHG

The report is divided into two sections – the first part presents the findings from the education program and the second part assesses the livelihood program.

4. Findings

4.1. Education intervention for children with disabilities

4.1.1. Efficiency parameters

4.1.1.1. *Leveraging partnership with the government*

The government machinery plays a pivotal role in sustaining and running a program of this nature at scale. 80% of the schools in Odisha are managed and run by the Department of Education which accounts to a total of 56,110 schools- Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary.² Inclusive education in these schools would imply that a majority of the children are taken care of by the public schooling system.

Having realized this, *Swabhiman* partnered with the government since the beginning of the program for all critical aspects of the program – setting up the centres, upgrading the infrastructure in schools and gaining access to teachers for training them in inclusive education, as described below in detail.

4.1.1.2. *Customized Integrated Child Resource Centers(ICRCs)*

As part of the program, sites which would serve as nodal centers for children to actively participate in various activities of the program were identified by conducting household surveys in the slums of Bhubaneswar by the NGO to identify people with disabilities. After the identification, through discussions with the School and Mass Education Department of Odisha, the entire city of Bhubaneswar was divided into eight clusters which formed the hubs for Integrated Child Resource Centers (ICRCs). The Education Department helped the NGO identify and allocate rooms in existing government schools for setting up of an ICRC. Primary importance was given to see that these centers were easily accessible within the cluster and that the school was large and had enough space and rooms (mostly upper primary and secondary schools).

These resource centers hosted various activities for children with disabilities in the second half of the day with remedial education for Maths, English, Science and Odia with special educators; extracurricular activities such as music, dance and art; and therapeutic sessions such as speech and physiotherapy sessions conducted by specialists.

4.1.1.3. *Barrier free infrastructure in schools*

A barrier free environment involves infrastructure that does not limit a disabled person from accessing the premise and safely and smoothly use them. This includes but is not limited to designing of broad corridors, laying of highlighted tiles with ramps with hand rails to name a few.

One of the mandates of the Saksham Project involved elevation of 60% targeted SSA schools to fully inclusive schools with inclusive approach to education and physical environment (accessibility) for all children.

- **Ramps with handrails**

Of the three audited schools, two of them had ramps that were created with government funds after recommendations submitted by *Swabhiman's* accessibility audit. On the other hand, in one of the schools

² <http://opepa.odisha.gov.in/website/Download/2016-17.pdf>

(BJB College Colony Government Upper Primary school) *Swabhiman* built a ramp under the *Saksham* project.

It was also noted that all the buildings were all single leveled classes, hence it was convenient for children with special needs to commute to the classrooms. In the VSS Nagar Government school, the ICRC center was set up in the first room in the school premise, while in the other schools the ICRC center was directly connected via a ramp. The ramps also had hand railings on them for supporting the children.



Figure 1 Ramp with railing at ICRC 3 in Mumtazalli nodal UP school

- **Tactile tiles**

Of the three audited schools, one of the schools had tactile tiles which indicated directions to visually impaired children. This, along with the green boards and yellow border marked switch boards, allowed students with low vision to traverse smoothly across the school.

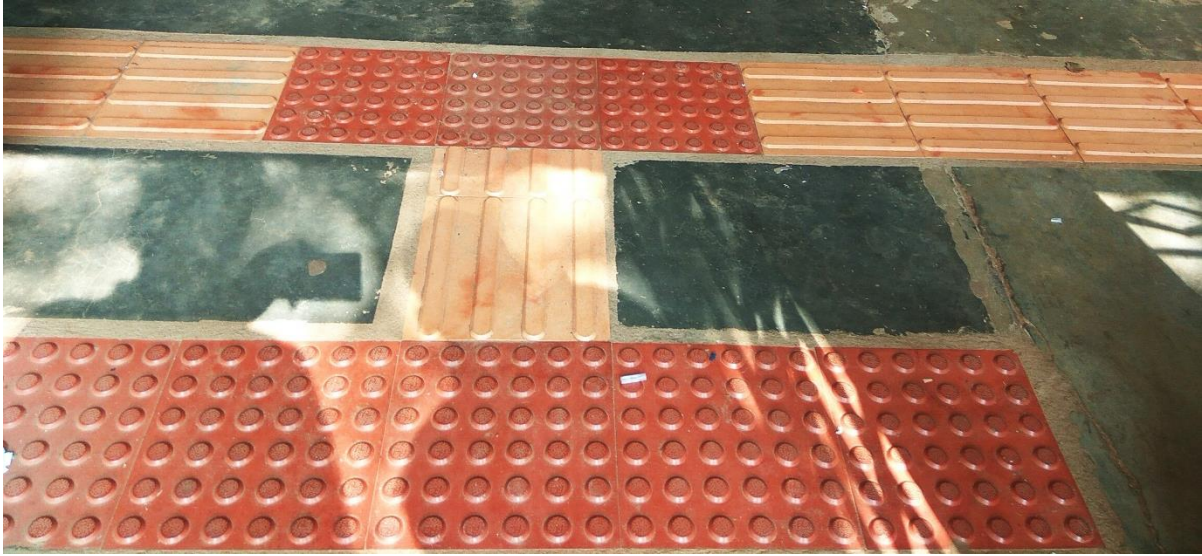


Figure 2 Stop and go tiles for visually challenged students at BJB college colony school

- **Toilets**

The inability to access a toilet may be a major impediment to physically challenged students from attending schools.

The school in BJB College Colony Upper primary government school had a specially designed disabled friendly toilet along with a ramp and hand railings that was constructed under project *Saksham*. The VSS Nagar School constructed a disability friendly toilet from Central government funds five months ago following recommendations submitted through an infra audit conducted by *Swabhiman*. However, the primary school in Nilachakra Nagar did not have any such facility and did not have any separate toilet.



Figure 3 Disabled friendly toilet at BJB college colony school

4.1.1.4. Capacity of the program team

The NGO has defined roles and responsibilities, with clear reporting lines, for each of its team members, which aids the clarity with which the organization functions. Regular trainings for the staff ensured that their skills were revised and updated on as per the requirements.

There were a few roles involved in Saksham –

It is an honor to get to work and learn from Dr. Sruti. She encourages and motivates me through everything that she does. She does not want to make them (CwSN) depend on us forever, she wants them to be on their own.

- Kalpana, Field facilitator.

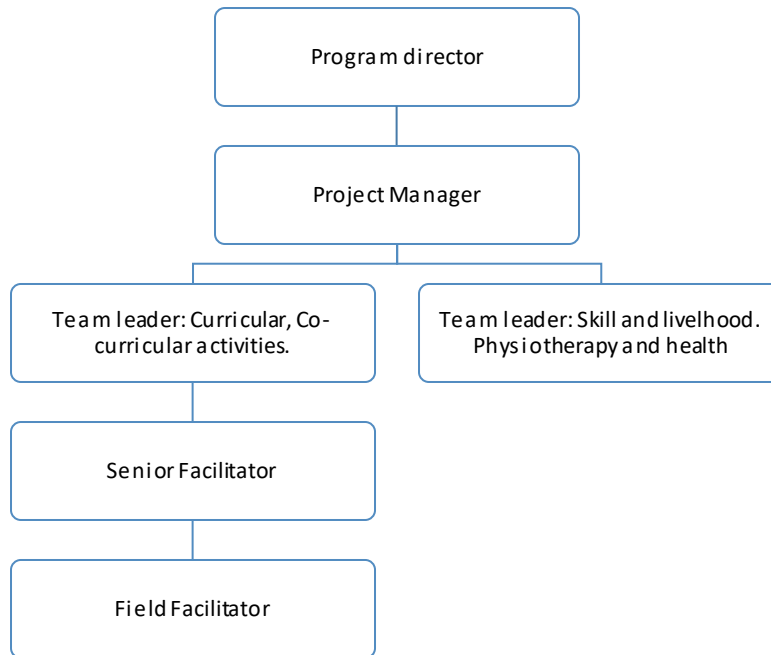


Figure 4 Saksham Project Organogram

The study interviewed three field facilitators, one senior facilitator and one team leader.

They were the first point of contact between the community and the NGO and mostly had a background in social work. They were mainly occupied with school and home visits in the first half of the day, while in the afternoons they facilitated sessions and acted as assistants to the session experts at the ICRC. They are also responsible for maintaining a rapport with all stakeholders associated with the child mainly the school management and staff, the parents of the children and the visiting session experts to the ICRC.

All the interviewed facilitators expressed a deep desire to serve and had previous experience of working with CwSN. The facilitators had a degree in social work barring one who had been working extensively in the field of counselling since a long time. Two special educators had been hired to train the field facilitators on technical aspects of dealing with CwSN. This training included but was not limited to sign language for dealing with speech and hearing disabilities, mental disabilities such as autism, etc.

In addition to this, the field facilitators were trained on an array of topics through the NGO such as creation of Individual Education Plan (IEPs), documentation and government entitlements for People with Disabilities (PWD).



With the advent of the Super Cyclone in Odisha in 1999, Kalpana (37 years old) started her professional carrier to tend to the uncared victims of nature's wrath by counselling orphans, aged and the disabled who were displaced in the cyclone.

Kalpana, the mother of a 11 year old child lives with her aging mother in Bhubaneswar while her husband, who is a private school teacher, stays in Dhenkanal and visits the family over weekends. She emotionally mentioned her struggles to get a good college education due to her family's financial constraints. However, her humility in dealing with challenges, passion to work with the disenfranchised and the quest to continuously learn compensated more than enough for the lack of a degree in Social Work.

Her work with Swabhiman started in 2016 as she was hired as a field facilitator for the Saksham project. She is the role model for the children at the ICRC center and the children and their parents mentioned how relentless her efforts had been until now in counselling and facilitating sessions at the ICRC. Similar responses were echoed by the Principal and the teachers who reported that she would regularly visit the school and work with not just the disabled students, but also sensitized others in the school to treat the disabled students with dignity.

While she cited parental engagement as the biggest challenge to her job as it required umpteen follow-ups, she was hopeful of creating parent self-help groups in what she calls "her community" (the ICRC which she operates out of) in the next one year such that they (the parents) start being interdependent on each other and not entirely dependent on Swabhiman. She exclaimed "Madam e (Dr. Sruti) says that the role of Saksham is to make the community capable of being able to work independently without our intervention. In the longer term, I would want to see us (Swabhiman) move out of the community and the parents taking ownership for their children's future." This sentiment was echoed by most of the staff members of Swabhiman.

They were responsible for creating customized IEPs for each child after careful observation and detailed scrutiny of the child as each child’s needs may be different depending on the nature and severity of the disability. IEPs were used to document and track the progress of the child and included the family and demographic details along with the medical history and the disability of the child. The Individual Education Plan, as reported by the facilitators, were revised every three months, six months and yearly based on the performance of the children.

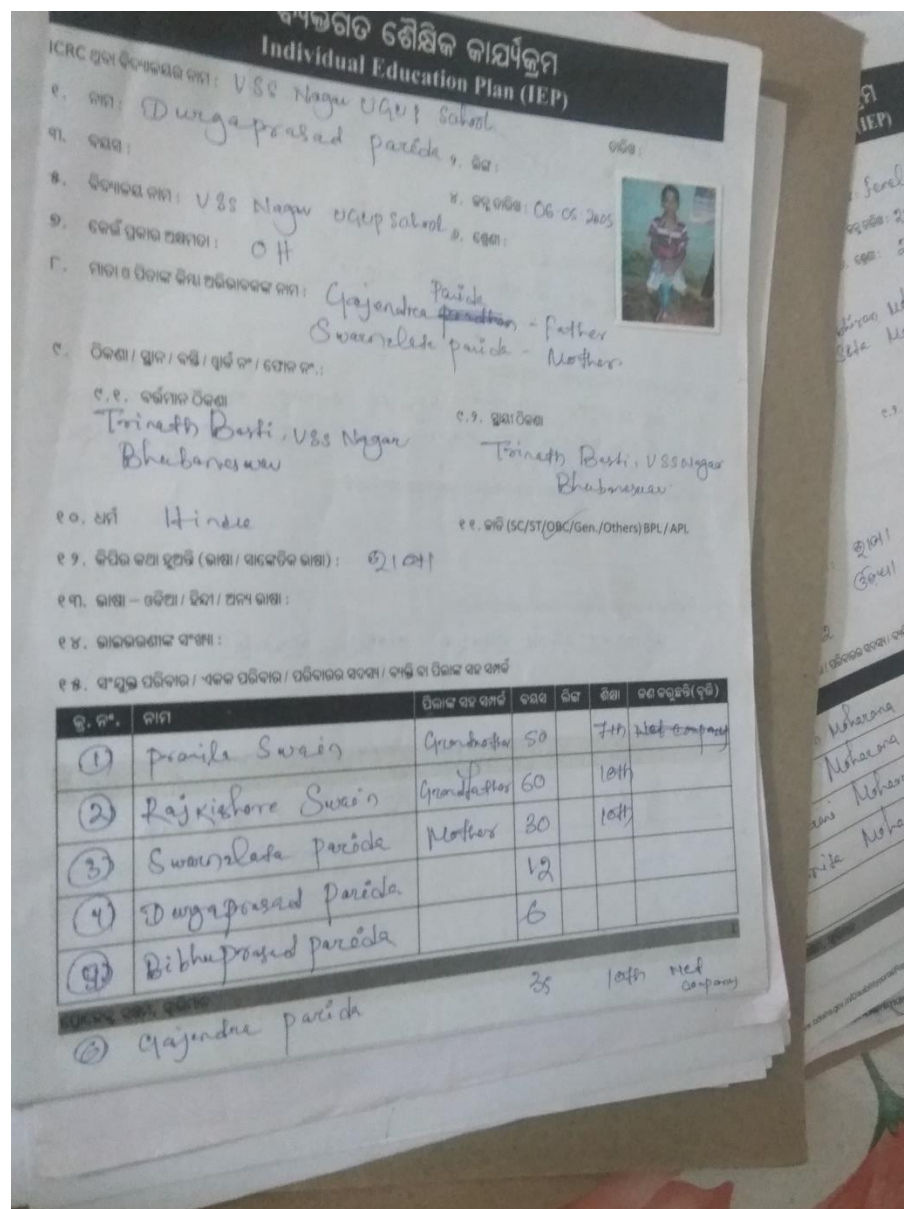


Figure 5 Sample IEP

4.1.1.5. Monitoring and documentation

The field facilitators mentioned that they reported on a weekly basis to the NGO head office. The reporting involved capturing attendance details for various sessions and follow up conducted for CwSN by the field facilitator. The report also detailed the number and nature of activities conducted at the ICRC by the

session experts. The weekly meetings provided a platform to discuss problems faced at the ICRC and take corrective measures for the same.

In terms of documentation, Swabhimansubmitted reports to Aditya Birla Financial Services on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Additionally, an impact assessment was also conducted by Centurion University after the completion of one year of the Saksham program in January of 2017.

4.1.2. Effectiveness parameters

4.1.2.1. Increased attendance and enrolment of CwSN in schools

Enrolment

One of the outcomes that *Saksham* committed to was prevention of school dropouts and retention of CwSN in the schools. The mandate in the proposal included that all the 367 identified children during the household survey, their distribution is shown below –



Records revealed that out of the 367 students who joined the ICRC, 97 were school drop outs and so they were freshly enrolled in various government schools in the last two years while the remaining students were already attending school. In the meanwhile, 18 students migrated to other schools or their native villages and 30 students graduated out from these schools, while two of these children passed away due to unfortunate reasons.

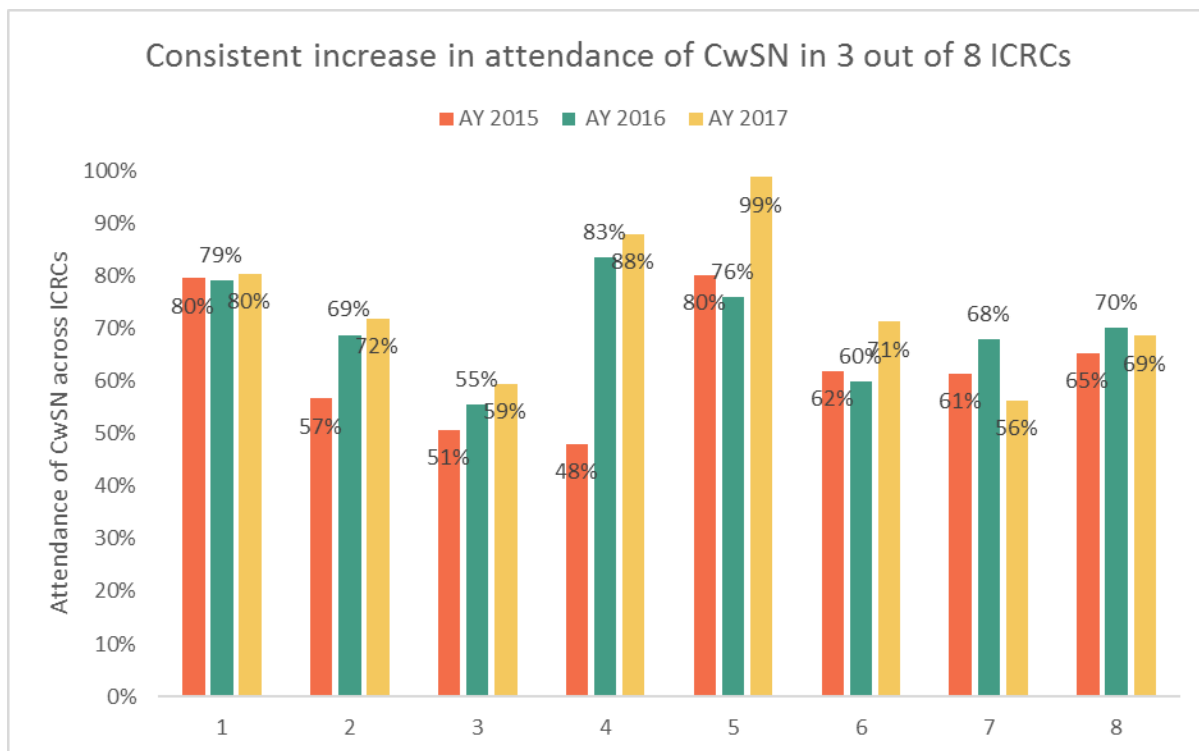
The first year of operations saw close to three-fourth of the new enrolments (71 of 97) while the remaining happened in the second year. This could be attributed to the freshly conducted household surveys followed by counselling sessions which inspired most children with disabilities to enroll in the ICRCs.

It was also reported that in all, 13 students attempted the SSC grade 10 exams in academic year 2016-17 of which eight students passed the exam. This was the only batch to have attempted the SSC exams since the inception of the *Saksham* program due to which a comparative analysis could not be presented in the report.

Attendance

The increase in average yearly school attendance can be noted in all the clusters which the highest noted in ICRC 4 from 48% in academic year 2015 to 88% in the academic year 2017. Similarly, ICRC 5 recorded a growth from 80% before the intervention to almost complete attendance as recorded in 2017. ICRC 5 was a part of the sample covered under the study and of the several factors that could have led to the increased attendance, one that stood out was the rapport that the facilitator built with the children, the school staff and the community at large.

The decreased attendance in ICRC 7 and 8 was reported to be due to the large cluster size and far off distance of the ICRC from the different schools in ICRC 7 while ICRC 8 was closed for over last three months. In light of the above evidence, it seems that student attendance in schools was correlated to the effectiveness of the ICRC. In areas where the ICRC ran effectively, the school attendance was high.



4.1.2.2. Teachers as change agents: Samata training

To institutionalize inclusive education in schools, it is imperative that teachers be sensitive to the cause of CwSN. Project *Saksham* therefore aimed at training 50% government school staff and education related duty bearers of the targeted schools towards inclusive education.

The training

Swabhiman worked closely with the Odisha Primary Education Program Authority (OPEPA). *Swabhiman* acted as one of the curriculum specialists along with government resource persons in designing the training program- *Samata*, meaning Equity, for primary government school teachers. *Swabhiman* staff also executed some of these sessions for the teachers.

The five-day *Samata* teacher training program aimed at sensitizing mindsets, empowering teaching practices and informing knowledge about rights and entitlements of CwSN. The training program was directed at bringing about a significant shift in the way teachers looked at CwSN by demonstrating how every individual lacked some ability thereby making him/her disabled in that field.

In terms of teaching practices, strategies such as special seating arrangements and speaking loudly for children with hearing disabilities were discussed. Additionally, sessions on sign language for the hearing impaired and Braille script for the blind were also held. Further, teachers were also informed about

various schemes from both the Central and State Governments such as transport passes, escort and scholarship plans.

Impact of the training

The study assessed teachers' knowledge, attitudes and practices for CwSN.

4.1.2.3. Higher levels of knowledge

- The knowledge component of the training program was assessed through the teacher's awareness regarding the types of disabilities and the rights and entitlements of Children with Special Needs through seven questions.
- The training module certainly augmented the information that the teachers had pertaining to CwSN. The responses indicated that a majority of teachers knew about the various forms of disabilities and could articulate some of the indicators/symptoms as well. They also seemed aware of basic entitlements for CwSN. While all surveyed teachers were aware that students with disabilities could not be denied admissions into schools, 7 of the 12 teachers were aware that 40% or more disability qualified an individual as a child with special needs.
- 83% of the teachers fared with *good* knowledge levels in the survey, where scoring more than 4.5 on a scale of 7 was considered as good.

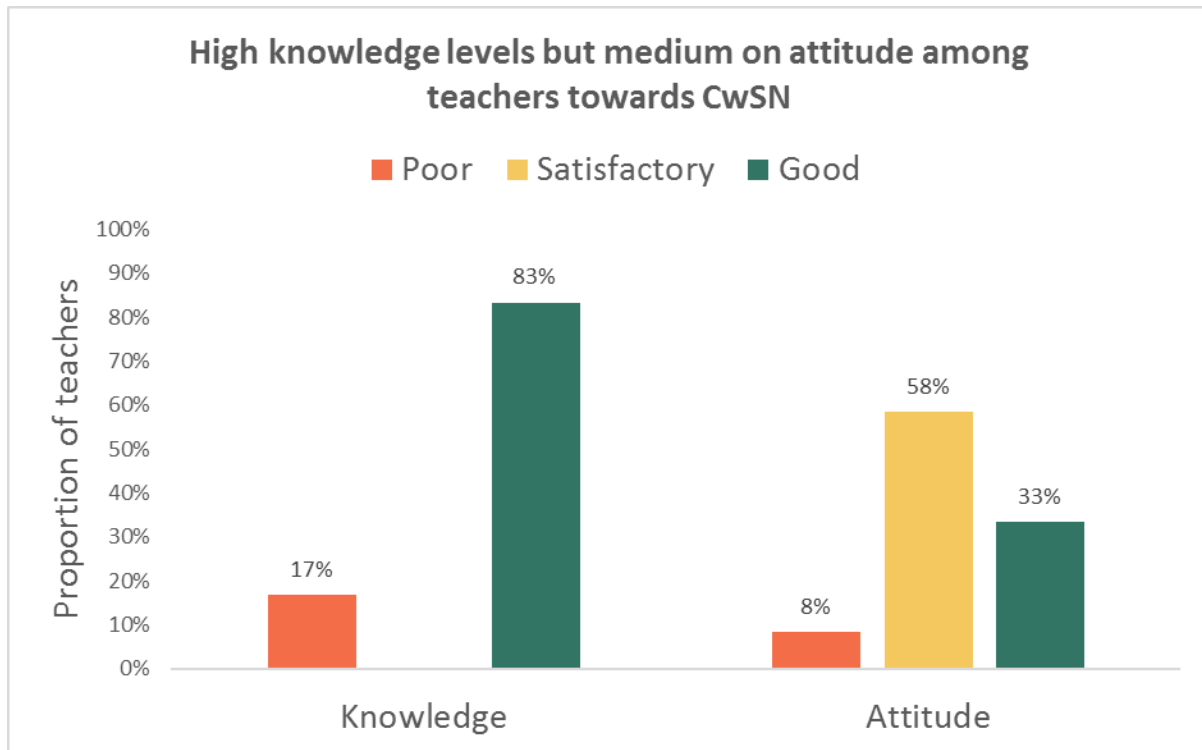
4.1.2.4. Teachers show positive attitudes, but need strengthening

- As the training program for the teachers focused on sensitizing them towards CwSN, the study assessed teachers for their understanding and beliefs pertaining to CwSN.
- Teachers were administered eight questions to evaluate their attitudes towards CwSN. With a total score of 32, a score between 0 and 11 was rated poor, between 12 and 22 satisfactory and 23 and 32 good. While most teachers (58%) scored on the satisfactory levels of the attitude scale, only one-third (33%) of the teachers fared on the *good* range.
- Parents of CwSN reported that their children would, at times, be teased or looked down upon by their peers and teachers in schools. They reported that the intervention helped teachers change their mindset and how they viewed the children.

4.1.2.5. Teaching practices

- In general, all the interviewed teachers mentioned planning lessons daily based on the *Samadhan* template which was provided by the Government of Odisha. The plan broadly included the activities and TLM needed for the class.
- It was reported during the surveys that teachers repeated modelled by using hand gestures and used visual demonstrations to teach CwSN. From the classroom observation, it was found that the CwSN were seated in the front of the class and the teacher spoke loudly to help the children with hearing disability.
- However, it was noted that teachers did not have access to or follow the IEP for the child with disability, which were created with the objective of offering the child customized support based on his/her disability.
- Teachers also complained that they were inapt in dealing with children with mental disabilities as compared to the physical disabilities, who were also more regular in attending classes.

- Teachers reported that techniques such as Braille and sign language discussed in the training did not help as not all teachers had CwSN in their classes or the necessary equipment in the schools to use the learnt techniques and also such techniques could not be mastered in five days.



4.1.2.6. *Holistic development due to extra-curricular activities*

The government school teachers agreed that the extra-curricular activities organized by Saksham, such as Yoga classes, physio classes, music and dance etc. helped CwSN to stay fit and healthy and provided an opportunity to explore and develop a quality that they may possess. The students performed in various competitions and events help within Bhubaneswar and outside to showcase the talent they possessed. The students also performed in *Swabhiman's* signature children's festival- Anjali International Children's Festival which is held between 14th to 18th November each year.

4.1.2.7. *Strengthening parental participation via SHGs*

Parental support makes or breaks the ultimate link in the development of Children with Special Needs. Also, the intervention completes the loop if parents, at home, continue to foster a similar atmosphere as that provided at the ICRCs. *Swabhiman*, having realized this critical aspect of parental guidance, focusses heavily in ensuring that parents are counselled and that they attend classes with the ir children.

So far, three out of the eight ICRCs have set up parent committees with one of them even setting up a bank account for the group. This parent committee functions similar to that of a Self Help Group (SHG) with monthly contributions made by members towards future needs of their children. The SHG, which started in August of 2017, was

When we saw an improvement in our children through Yoga classes, we collectively decided to pool money and increase the weekly frequency of these classes.

- Parent from ICRC

christened *Saksham Swayam Sahayta Gushti* and has a corpus of INR 12,000 with a monthly contribution from members of INR 200. The ten member SHG meets every month. This SHG has been able to pay for the increased number of Yoga classes held at the ICRC, over and above the standard number of classes conducted by the NGO. The SHG has also petitioned to the government by drafting a letter requesting for a special educator in the schools.

As CwSN require a lot of personal attention, parents may not be able to actively look out for employment opportunities as it restricts them from being close to their children. Therefore, *Swabhiman*, as reported by parents, in their next phase of planning is looking for opportunities wherein mothers (which is what majority of the SHG is composed of) could find an alternative and supplementary source of income.

4.1.3. Recommendations for education program

The following are the recommendations for the education program:

- **More focus on sensitization and mindset change of government teachers towards CwSN** – it was found that the training focused on improving teachers' technical skills such as sign language and Braille, which was not very helpful. Instead, the focus of the training should be on general sensitization along with augmenting teaching practices for CwSN. It is also suggested that refresher trainings and in classroom support should be given to allow for more regular exchange and better implementation of ideas. Saksham could also try to give intensive training to one teacher per school (similar to the training received by the facilitator) to ensure that even after its exit, the school has the capability to work with CwSN.
- **Closer coordination between the government school teachers and the facilitators** - this recommendation follows the finding that the Individual Lesson Plans (IEP), which is globally acknowledged as one of the best way to teach CwSN, were created by the field facilitators but not shared or used by the teachers in the class. While a good rapport between the field facilitator and the school staff (management and the teachers) had been established, it is essential to leverage this relationship to get the teachers to use IEPs, which would in turn be a step towards gradually letting teachers have ownership of the CwSN and make the impact sustainable beyond the program.
- **Scaling up parent SHGs** – augmenting parental involvement in the lives of CwSN will help to bring sustainability to the program and ensure that guardians are able to seek the rights and entitlements of their wards for years to come, at different stages of their wards' lives. It is therefore imperative to scale up this aspect of the program, a feeling shared by the Saksham team themselves.

4.2. Youth skill development program

Sakhsam's program for youth with disabilities originated with the aim to engage the out of school youth in productive and sustainable activities for their own livelihood. These were people with mental or physical disabilities and had attained the employable age of 18 years or above.

The support to these youths came from *Swabhiman (the Saksham Project)* in following three aspects.

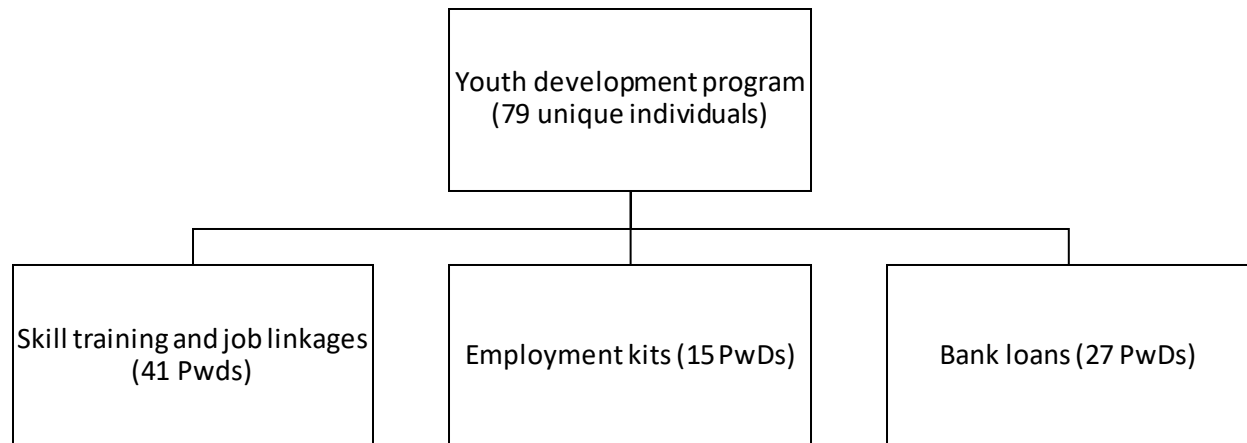


Figure 6 Youth development program structure

Of the figures shown above, one individual benefitted from both the skill training and bank linkage program, while three youth with disabilities (YwD) received both employment kits and bank loans. Given that there were four individuals who were aided through two different programs, in effect 79 unique individuals were beneficiaries of the Saksham skill development program.

Each aspect is described below -

- Skill training and job linkages: A diverse set of training programs were conducted for the youth in sectors such as food production, poultry and tailoring by partnering with different institutions and companies in Bhubaneswar. The training was conducted either in *Swabhiman's* premise (either the main office or the ICRC in the community) or at the partner institute. These courses spanned anywhere between 5 days to 6 months. The youth were also supported by linking them with employment opportunities in Bhubaneswar. So far 41 youth have been trained.
- Employment kits: Youth who wanted to start their own enterprises were supported by providing assistance through employment kits such as sewing machines, stocks for Kirana (grocery) stores, etc. 15 youth benefitted from this intervention.
- Bank loans: Organizing a counselling program for availing loans with the help of Punjab National Bank, which led to 27 YwD being identified as eligible for loans amounting between INR 10,000 and 30,000 and 12 YwDs receiving the loan till January 2018.

4.2.1. Sample profile

The study interviewed 10 youth with disabilities. They were found to be in the age group between 19 to 31 years, with educational qualifications varying from primary education to those who had attended

college. With the exception of one youth, everyone else had completed their primary schooling (till 4th grade). The interviewed trainees reported that the training sessions were conducted in the latter half of 2016.

Eight of the youth were orthopedically challenged, while one of them suffered from speech impairment and one was mentally retarded.

While seven youth in the sample were currently working as employees in different organizations, two had started an enterprise of their own and one of them was unemployed.

4.2.2. Efficiency parameters

4.2.2.1. Identification and mobilization

The identification of youth occurred through household surveys conducted by field facilitators before beginning interventions of the *Saksham* program. Details such as medical history, type of disability and house hold demographic details were captured as a part of the survey. Post this, targeted counselling sessions were held with parents to deal with stigma related to disabilities, which led to family members not allowing their children to step out of the household. The counselling sessions helped family members accept and support the children in their dreams.

4.2.2.2. Training partners

Swabhiman partnered with different organizations based on the requirements of the industry and the capabilities of the youth. Some of the partnerships included Institute of Hotel Management for training in food production, Kelitron Industries for LED bulb making, poultry farming by Central Poultry Development Organization (CPDO) etc. (a detailed list attached in the Appendix).

While it was reported that no customized curriculum or special educators were employed in designing or developing the programs for the participating youth, and that the partners used their own standard curriculum, *Swabhiman* had informed the partners to use mostly audio-visual aids for the training. Additionally, all the sessions were conducted in the presence of a sign language interpreter to facilitate the understanding of hearing challenged.

4.2.2.3. Interest mapping

The training partners were invited to offer a one-day introductory session about the course. This session was open to all youth with disabilities. Once the youth attended this introductory session, based on their interest, they could enroll for the program. There were no limitations placed on the number of trainings that a person could attend. Few of the interviewed youth reported attending two to three training programs.

4.2.2.4. Soft skills

Having realized that soft skills such as communication and social adaptability are essential for employers, *Swabhiman* prepared an in-house training module for soft skill development for the youth. *Swabhiman's* staff facilitated a training program on personality development and interview skills which was attended by 16 YwD, who volunteered to attend this program. Youth were also trained on financial literacy and communication skills to equip them for the world outside.

4.2.2.5. Job linkage

Job linkages for youth with disabilities were conducted by *Swabhiman* post training program by placing them in different companies. These were either large retail super markets such as Reliance Fresh and Udyan Fresh or smaller companies which included a printing press, a spectacle store, bicycle shops etc. The smaller companies were partnered with through personal references of the *Swabhiman* management while efforts were made to get youth placed into larger companies which mandate inclusive working environment for employees and hire youth with disabilities.

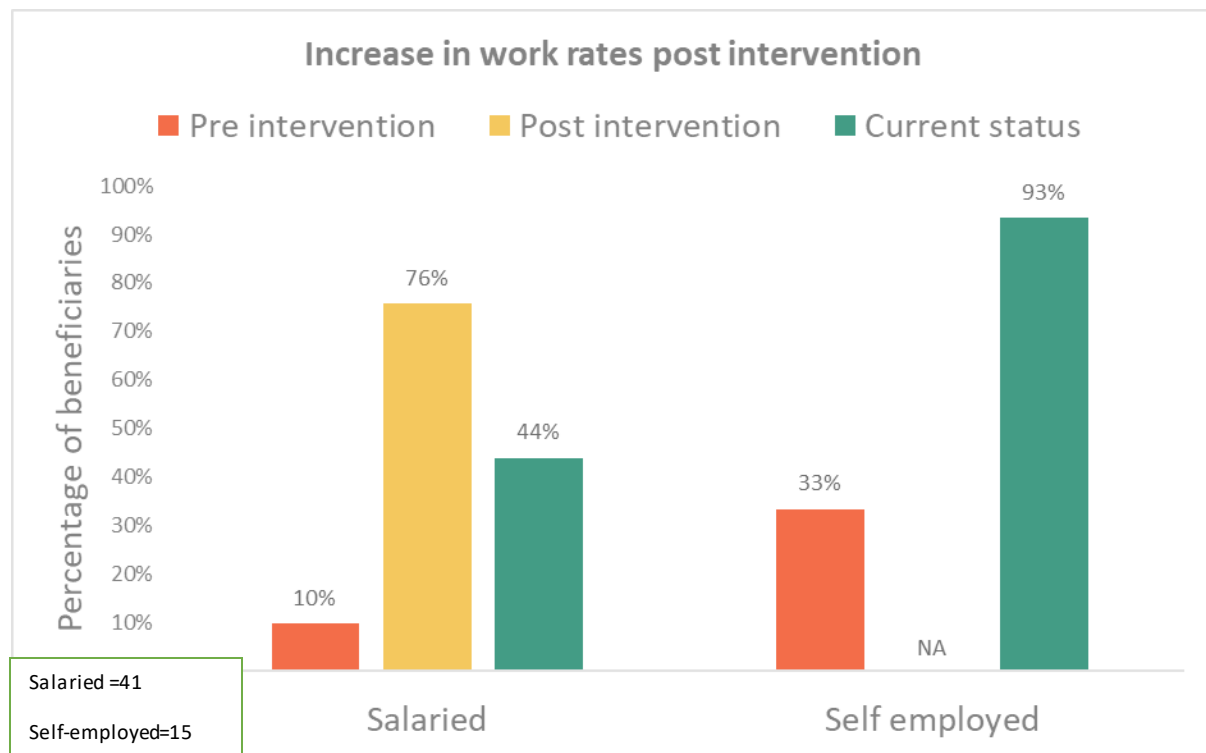
4.2.3. Effectiveness parameters

Work rates and income levels were calculated for the youth by bracketing them in two verticals:

- a. Salaried youth
- b. Self-employed youth

4.2.3.1. *Swabhiman* has positive impact on work rates

Of the 41 youth with disabilities (YwD) who attended the training program, four of them (10%) were previously working as daily wage labors, private tutors or as waiters in local restaurants while all others were either at home or pursuing their education. Immediately after the training, each of the 41 youth were offered jobs, but nine people (24%) did not join the jobs due to several factors which included searching for better job opportunities and the unavailability of the supporting infrastructure such as transport facilities to the job location. Of the 41 youth who received training, 17 (44%) were currently working at the time of the study in their jobs while the others had either gone back home or were unemployed.

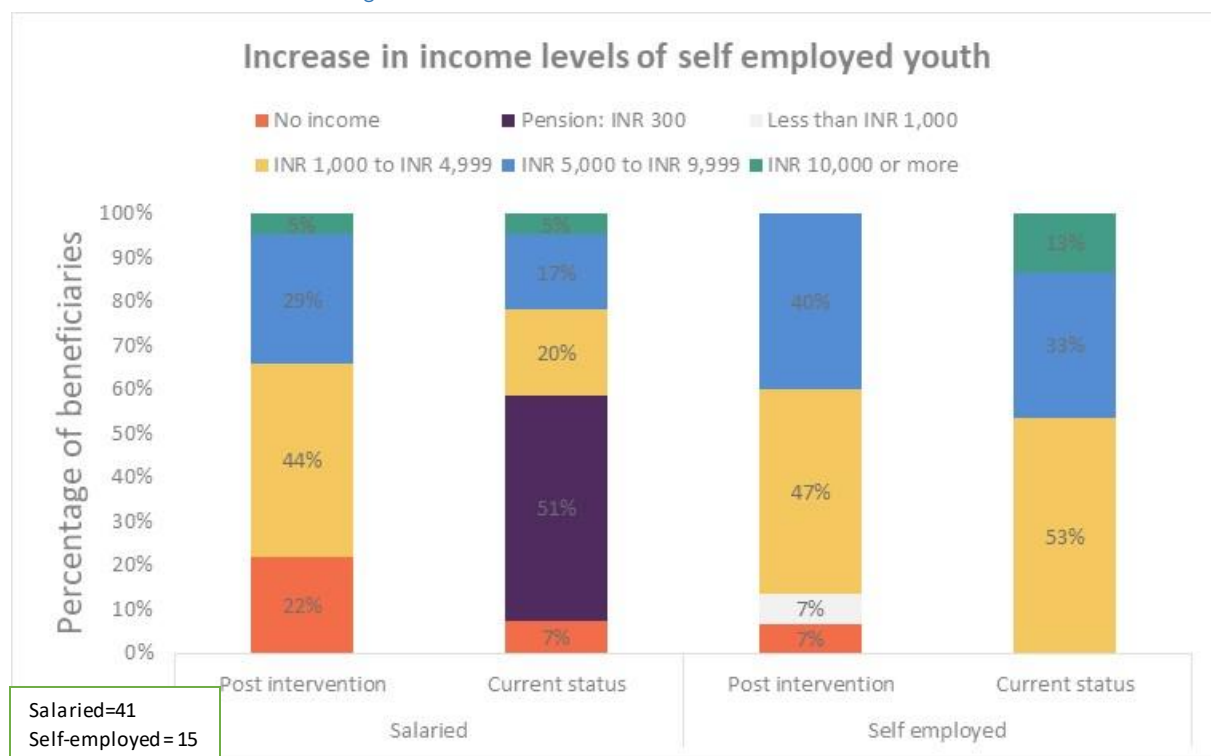


Similarly, only 5 of the 15 people who received employment kits were earning before the support provided through *Saksham* program, which increased to 93% of the youth working currently (14 of 15 youth). The interviewed sample itself included two youth who were self-employed.

The major employment providers were super markets such as Reliance Fresh and Udyan Fresh in the retail sector. *Swabhiman* management also leveraged its personal contacts and references to find employment opportunities in small office premises. The entrepreneurs who received support in the form of employment kits were mostly either running kirana stores, or had tailoring shops.

The work rates at the time of the study were higher among self-employed since many had the flexibility and convenience to work as per their conditions and requirements. It was reported that the some of the youth were unable to join or were irregular at work citing limitations such as long commute to the work location. As salaried employees are mandated to be regular at work with strict work timings this caused distress to the youth who stayed far away from work. While one of the interviewed youth had moved to an accommodation closer to office, this was not possible for some others who were living at inexpensive hostels.

4.2.3.2. Changes in income



As can be seen from the figure above, *Swabhiman* program had led to a drop in percentage of youth having no income, from 22% immediately after the program to 7% currently at the time of the study. The highest proportion of youth (51%) were currently receiving a disability pension from the government, which they were unaware of before the program.

The proportions earning more than Rs. 1000 per month had fallen at the time of the study, compared to immediately after the program, corresponding to the drop in salaried employment seen in the previous section, due to lack of adequate support system.

The findings for self-employed people were more positive - no person reported a total lack of income, a majority (53%) were earning between Rs 1000-5000 per month. Entrepreneurs were supported, as mentioned above, by provisions of employment kits and bank loans. Unlike salaried youth who had to report to work, the entrepreneurs had the flexibility to work close to their homes which provided them greater autonomy at work.

CASE STUDY

Swapnarani was born in a small village named Gopa around 100km from Bhubaneswar in Puri district of Odisha. She was born orthopedically challenged and was the only child in the family. While having a disability was an exceptionally challenging situation in a poor rural household where stigma towards disability is high, recounts Swapnarani, her father stood like a rock to support her with everything that he had.

Looking for greener pastures, her family moved to Bhubaneswar while she was still a child. Life in the largest slum of Bhubaneswar did not have much to offer. Her father was a daily wage earner who started suffering from asthma attacks recently and the family had to incur medical loans. While she dropped out of school soon after completing 5th grade, her zeal to lead a meaningful life ensued. As formal education did not interest her, she decided to not look for jobs which required high educational qualifications.

Her life took a turn with Swabhiman's intervention into the community in 2016. Swapnarani, now 21 years old, runs a kirana store next to her house with the support offered through the Saksham project. Saksham supported her entrepreneurial spirit by helping her procure supplies worth INR 5,000 for her store. She confidently says during the interview, "I'm not scared of anything. It is okay that I have not studied much, but no one can cheat me in the business. I know how to use a calculator on my mobile phone. And everyone knows me in the community, so there is nothing to fear. I run the shop till 10 in the night." With moist eyes, she turns to her father and the facilitator and says "I would not have been able to do any of this without the support of my family. There is a huge stigma in the society towards people like us. Our families are our strength." The lively Swapnarani loves to spend time with her friends and sing songs in her free time.



4.2.4. Recommendations

The following are the recommendations for the Youth development program:






- **Deepening self-employment** - It is recommended that YwD who are orthopedically challenged and are limited in their mobility be provided with employment kits and bank loans rather than being linked with employment opportunities as the former does not involve challenges of commute to work and also provides flexible work timings. This recommendation follows observations that work rates and the income levels of the self-employed youth were higher than those being employed in jobs. Swabhiman can enhance the self-employment training by adding components such as marketing and sales techniques, communication with customers, basic book keeping, inventory management etc., customized to the target group, since these aspects are integral to a successful business.
- **Providing a support system** - As some of the YwDs have migrated to Bhubaneswar and are not local residents, they face challenges of finding inexpensive but suitable accommodation in the city. This leads to some of the youth being unable to take up opportunities provided. It would be beneficial if Swabhiman could assist the youth in finding such facilities. While the NGO need not fund the living costs, identifying and negotiating a subsidized rate with 2-3 good-quality hostels in the city and making the youth aware of these could be helpful. It could also create a list of nearby medical stores, doctors, recreational facilities suitable for them etc. to ease the migration and settling into a new city. Swabhiman can augment the support by ensuring that the youth have essential documents such as transfer certificates, PAN, Aadhar etc.
- **Streamlining vocational training** - As far as vocational training is considered, it is recommended that there be a strong interest mapping mechanism for the YwD before any support is provided to them. This would ensure accountability for the support provided. Leaving the decision entirely to the youth and having them attend as many training programs as they wanted to may be ad-hoc. Additionally, as soft skills are a strong requirement in any form of business or employment, it may be recommended that all the youth be a part of this training program.


5. Appendix

5.1. Training partners and duration of training

Sl. No.	Trades of training	Training institutions	Duration	Number of participants
1.	Training in Food Production at IHM	Institute of Hotel management, Bhubaneswar	2 months	5 YwDs
2.	Training in LED bulb making	Kelitron Industries Ltd.	15 days	4 YwDs
3.	Skill Based training (Photo framing)	Sai Framing	1 month	2 YwDs
4.	Two wheeler repairing (cycle repairing)	Baba cycle repairing shop	2 months	1 YwD
5.	Personality Development and interview skills	Swabhiman	1 day	16 YwDs
6.	Juice Making	Swabhiman	1day	9 YwDs
7.	Poultry Farming	CPDO, Bhubaneswar	5 days	30 YwDs
8.	Basic cooking training at Hotel Presidency	Hotel presidency	5 days	4 YwDs
9.	Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES)	Dr Reddy Foundation at VRC, Bhubaneswar	2 months	7 YwDs
10.	Odia DTP	D-Net Printing Unit, Kharavela nagar, Bhubaneswar	2 months	1YwD
11.	Tailoring	Orthopedic Association , Bhubaneswar	6 months	2 YwDs

5.2. Infrastructure Audit

	Nilachakra Nagar School (ICRC not within the school)	VSS Nagar School (ICRC 7: Adi Kabi Sarala Das)	BJB College colony School (ICRC 1: Utkalmani Gopabandhu Das)
Type of school 	Primary government school (Anganwadi to 4 th std)	Upper primary government school (1 st to 8 th std)	Upper primary government school (1 st to 8 th std)
Physical infrastructure 	Pukka structure without a compound wall or a gate. Windows with grills. This is a primary school close to the ICRC 5.	Upper primary school with a pukka building, compound wall and main gate. Windows with grills. The ICRC is within the premise of the school.	Upper primary school with a pukka building, compound wall and main gate. Windows with grills. Tactile (go and stop) tiles and signage for the visually challenged. The ICRC is within the premise of the school.
Classrooms and TLM 	TLM such as large print books provided under <i>Saksham</i> project. However, the government does not provide any TLM for the disabled.	TLM such as large print books provided under <i>Saksham</i> project. However, the government does not provide any TLM for the disabled.	TLM such as large print books provided under <i>Saksham</i> project. However, the government does not provide any TLM for the disabled. Green boards and yellow borders for low vision children.
Academic Infrastructure 	No library or computer laboratory.	Some books are available but no computer laboratory.	A small library but no computer laboratory.
Ramps and Corridors 	The ramp was connected to the corridor and was at the rear entrance of the school.	The ramp was connected to the main building of the school. The ICRC was allotted the first room after entering the school compound.	Separate ramps connected to each building.

<p>Toilets</p> 	<p>No toilet for CwSN. Same toilet used by boys and girls.</p>	<p>Disable friendly toilet built five months ago.</p>	<p>Disable friendly toilet with a ramp built under Project <i>Saksham</i>.</p>
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