

## **Abstract: Community Based Rehabilitation: CHAI's intervention programme across India**

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Access to healthcare facilities is one of the major challenges faced in the Indian context, especially in the rural areas. Most of the healthcare facilities are provided by the private sector which is unaffordable by majority of the population. Around 60% of the rural population does not have access to the facilities barring other issues such as non availability of professionals, lack of infrastructure and services and poor medical facilities<sup>1</sup>. In India around 70% of the disabled population belongs to the rural areas as per Census 2011. It has also been found that only 2% of the disabled population has access to rehabilitation and other services<sup>2</sup>. In view of this, community based rehabilitation (CBR) has emerged as a holistic approach in bringing the services to the community irrespective of factors such as poverty, geographical locations, availability and access to services and human resources.

Catholic Health Association of India has been working extensively with children and youth with disabilities across India since 1994 . The disability intervention programme of CHAI is being implemented especially in the far flung regions where inclusion and rehabilitation are the need of the hour. CHAI along with 117 partner organizations have been able to support approximately twelve thousand beneficiaries yearly through community based and home based rehabilitation. Tailor-made rehabilitative interventions are being provided across thematic areas of health, education, inclusion and work and income ensuring the holistic development of the beneficiaries.

This paper aims to highlight the successful model of CHAI for persons with disability by highlighting on the effective use of community based rehabilitation approach. The programme focuses on building a partnership with the stakeholders and involving them in the process of disability rehabilitation. The programme provides support based on individual child's needs. The key elements of the programme include enhancing the capacities of the partner organisations as well as the parents and community members. This ensures that not only there transference of expertise but also resources are locally available within the communities. The community members are not only provided services such as activities of daily living, physical, speech and occupational therapy but are also trained for the same thus enhancing the capacities within the communities. The uniqueness of this programme is a participatory approach; where there is continuous dialogue with the parents/care givers of children and youngsters with disabilities and their involvement in the rehabilitation process.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gramvaani.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Rural-Health-Care-Towards-Healthy-Rural-India.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Leandro Despouy, 1993, Human Rights and Disabled Persons, UN

Direct child assistance is another important strategy of the programme, where attention is paid to every single child and youth with disability according to their need that influences their wellbeing. . Children and youngsters with disabilities benefit through paramedical services like checkup, therapy, aids and appliances etc. Children also avail special education services along with the learning aids available within the community. The programme highlights how CBR intervention effectively reaches out to children and youngsters with disabilities where access to these services would have otherwise been impossible. The paper aims to highlight this successful model of CHAI in the field of disability rehabilitation which could be adopted for similar need based interventions.