

ANNEXURE: 31

Gadadhar Abhyudaya Prakalpa (Integrated Child Development Project)

and

Vivekananda Swasthya Pariseva Prakalpa

implemented by Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University during 2011-16

Integrated Child Development Project –Gadadhar Abhyudaya Prakalpa

The Concept and Objectives:

Gadadhar Abhyudaya Prakalpa (GAP) was launched in October 2010 as a part of the 4-year long 150th Birth Anniversary Celebration of Swami Vivekananda aiming at all-round development of poor children in slums and other backward areas. Until September 2014 the project was implemented through 174 units in 23 Indian states and benefited 18,302 children.

Presently (April 2016) about 200 units of GAP are being run by the branch centres of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission in different parts of India. More than 1,000 children are regularly participating in these units.

Objectives of the project

- (a) To instil moral and cultural values in children
- (b) To provide special coaching to children in their school subjects
- (c) To inculcate a sense of cleanliness and hygiene in children
- (d) To provide nourishing food to children for their physical development
- (e) To help them become good citizens of the nation

Components of the project

The GAP is a composite programme having a number of activities for physical, mental and intellectual development of children of 5 to 12 years. The programme is conducted daily for about 2 – 3 hours in the morning or evening throughout the year.

Activities for Physical Development: The session starts with prayers followed by exercises. Sports and games are also held. Children are given training in personal health and hygiene-related practices. They are encouraged to keep their living quarters and surrounding area clean and hygienic. Periodical health check-ups are conducted and necessary medicines and treatment are provided. At the end of each day's programme, nutritious food is served to them.

Children are periodically given the following items: school bags, school uniforms, stationery items, books, umbrellas / raincoats, footwear, toiletry items such as toothpaste, toothbrush, tongue cleaner, soap, hair oil, nail-clipper, etc.

Activities for Mental Development: Children are given opportunities to take part in different sessions on music, drama, chanting, painting etc as per the local culture and tradition. They are taught universal prayers for the good of the entire humanity. The children are also given training in meditation and yoga by competent teachers.

Values education is an important component of GAP. The lives of great personalities in the fields of religion, science, arts, literature and politics are taught to the students to help them mould their lives after those great men and women. Films and documentaries on noble themes and self-development are screened.

Activities for Intellectual Development: The children are given special coaching in their academic subjects, as it is often found that financially poor children do not get good educational facilities in their schools. School dropouts are given special attention and are readmitted into schools.

As the GAP addresses the most vital needs of the growing children, it has received wide acclamation. There is a growing demand for from different parts of India for more and more GAP units.

Implementation of the Projects by Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University

As part of the 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, with financial support from Govt. of India, launched two programmes, viz., Vivekananda Swasthya Pariseva Prakashya (VSPP) and Gadadhar Abhyudaya Prakashya (GAP) in 150 selected units throughout the country to be implemented by its branch centres.

Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda University (RKMVU) was, in this context, entrusted with implementing VSPP in 3 such units in the district of Hooghly, viz., Sri Sri Ramakrishna Sevashram (Bhangamora) under Pursura Block, Nivedita Community Care Centre (Ichhapur) under Dhaniakhali Block and Taraknath Maternity & Child Welfare Centre (Tarakeswar) under Tarakeswar Block – together called Bhangamora Cluster – from Jan. 2011 to Sept. 2014, while during Oct. 2014 to March 2016, GAP was implemented in these 3 units, as all the VSPP units throughout the country was changed to GAP after Sept. 2014.

The objective behind VSPP was to improve the abysmal health and nutrition scenario prevalent in the county among the pregnant and lactating mothers and under -12 (particularly under-5) children, with special emphasis on total immunization of pregnant

mothers and under-5 children, arresting child mortality (specially neonatal and perinatal mortality) and maternal mortality rates and improving the nutritional status of mothers and children. In addition to the preventive aspect, promotional and curative aspects of health care were also to be addressed as far as possible. Side by side, attention was to be paid to the physical and moral development of the children.

Accordingly, in January 2011, 100 beneficiaries—pregnant mothers and under-12 children—were selected from socially and economically backward and downtrodden families in each of the above 3 units. Each such beneficiary was brought to the centre in two batches once a week for health check-up, immunization and curative treatment by competent medical personnel and trained health workers providing medicines wherever necessary.

Three more important components were taken care of during these visits. First, each beneficiary was provided with a packet of nutrimix—a horlicks-like mixture, made of wheat, mung dal, soya seeds and ground nuts in prescribed proportion, fried and ground and mixed with adequate milk and sugar – sufficient for one week's consumption. Secondly monitoring of progress in nutritional status and weight-gain by plotting on health cards. And thirdly, providing health education, in different aspects of child care, personal hygiene, food intake and protection of environment. We firmly believe in the dictum: teach a man, and you end up by teaching an individual; teach a woman, and teach the whole family. This was supplemented by fortnightly home visits to each beneficiary by trained health workers.

Each beneficiary was provided with toothpaste, toothbrush, detergent powder, bathing soap and oil, nail-clipper, towel etc in sufficient quantity to ensure a healthy environment in the family.

Besides, children aged 6-12 years were brought to the centre four times a week for providing them with moral education, tutoring in their school subjects, lessons in bratachari and yoga, as also facilities for games and sports for physical development.

List of beneficiaries was periodically updated by treating pregnant mothers after delivery as lactating mothers up to the age of 6 months for the baby, eliminating children crossing the age of 12 years and including new pregnant mothers.

Approximately a total amount of Rs.4,50,000/- (Rupees four lac fifty thousand only) was spent each year for these 100 beneficiaries in each centre. We are happy to report that due to these steps being taken and constant monitoring, the percentage of malnourished under-5 could be drastically slashed among the beneficiaries compared to the base line

situation, and no neonatal or perinatal or maternal death among the beneficiaries took place in any of the above three units during the period under review.

As mentioned earlier, between Oct. 2014 and March 2016, these 3 VSPP units looked after by RKMVU were changed as GAP units. The beneficiaries of GAP were 50 children aged 5-12 years of age at each unit, and no mother. The objectives of GAP were holistic development of these children – physical, mental, intellectual and moral.

Accordingly, 50 children aged 5-12 years from socially and economically backward families were selected for each of these 3 units, retaining as many earlier VSPP beneficiaries as admissible. Each such beneficiary was being provided with nutritious food at the centre 6 days a week, and being provided with tuition on their school syllabus and value education, besides facilities for sports and games, *bratachari* and *yogaasanas*. In addition, they were being provided with text books, pictorial moral story books, value education books and study materials (e.g., note books, pen, pencil, eraser etc.), and occasionally school uniforms, umbrella/ rain coat, foot wear etc., also. As before, toiletry items such as tooth paste, tooth brush, washing soap, bathing soap and oil, tongue-cleaner, nail clipper, towel etc., were also being provided.

For each of these 3 units, an approximate amount of Rs.3,20,000/- (Rupees three lac twenty thousand only) was spent per year for the 50 beneficiaries.

The implementing centres have expressed satisfaction over the significant physical, intellectual and moral progress of the beneficiaries observed during the period.
