

Annual Report
2020

feathers



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Executive Director's Note



We are happy to present our Activity Report for the Year 2018-19. This year has been a year of new beginning for all of us in FEATHERS.

FEATHERS is a holistic and one-of-a-kind institution promoted to work on the issues faced by the children with special needs. We are committed to impact the lives of children with special needs, who have been chronically alienated from the mainstream education. Growing in numbers, these children need motherly care and professional assistance. FEATHERS commits to engage intensively in research, education and training in the areas pertaining to remediation of a range of disabilities that are affecting physical and psychological wellbeing of the children.

As a team, we are open to learn and grow with the ever changing field of special education and rehabilitation science. We strive hard to provide homely and motherly care and enabling environment for the children to learn and perform. We motivate the children not just to fulfil their academic endeavours, we also encourage them to explore their innate potential and brilliance to set goals for unleashing them despite their physical and psychological inadequacies.

We know the frustration in the families of children with special needs, who may experience a myriad of emotions upon diagnosis, including anger, grief and denial. It is important to accept the reality and be patient. We work hand-in-hand with the parents to focus on initiate the process of helping their child with special needs achieve their fullest potential.

Children with special needs require extra attention, teaching, care – and love!

We are here to support.

Nageswari. R
Executive Director



Annual Report 2019-20



The Problem

Forty percent of Indian population constitute youth under 19 years of age. There exists varying degrees of specific learning disability among 2 to 10 percent of children in India. Dyslexia is the most common type of learning disability affecting about 80% of the children with SLD. And, 30% of children with SLD have behavioural and emotional problems.

While the State of Tamil Nadu in India does not have a problem in attracting children to school and retaining them. The problem, however, is more in terms of improving the quality of services being provided in public schools. Children from poor households and special focus groups, such as girls and children from the SC and ST communities strive much harder to attain and sustain performance quality in their primary schools.

The today's society is concerned much on producing "toppers" and evaluates success in terms of academic merits, employability and economic scale. The schools, which are often driven by results and merits in examinations, are not interested in keeping the so-called "slow child" in their classrooms. Continuous neglect and labelling of such children hinders their learning progress and results in worsening of the problem. Children with specific learning disability (SLD) are often pushed out of schools due to academic underachievement. Our schools and teachers either put excessive pressure on those children without understanding their problems and exhibit lack of patience towards them. The children with Learning Disability who are left unassisted by teachers with expertise in remediation of SLDs will often get out of schools.

Genesis of FEATHERS



‘Feathers’ stands for ‘Foundation for Enabling Action to Transform Human Excellence with Resilience and Self-reliance’.

Feathers is a not-for-profit development organisation promoted on October 10, 2016, coinciding with the World Mental Health Day, which is observed with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health.

FEATHERS is a Trust, registered under Indian Trusts Act. Promoted by a group of development professionals with long years of experience in undertaking development work at the grassroots, FEATHERS envisions “building an inclusive society with enshrined values of equality, equity and humaneness”.

FEATHERS works for building future citizens of the country with physical and mental wellbeing. The path it has taken for realising its vision is to retain its focus on children with special educational needs (SEN).

Run by a team of committed and trained special educators, guided by the experts in the field of educational psychology and therapeutic interventions, equipped with appropriate teaching-learning materials, FEATHERS Learning Resource Centre strives to become a Centre of Excellence in Special Education.

Our Theory of Change

Our remediation approach puts the children at the centre. Every child is unique. So are their learning styles, problems in learning, and remediation strategies. We strongly believe in enabling approach that includes child centred instructional planning, individualised education programme appropriate to child's special needs, continuous assessment for evaluating the progress.

Next to children, parents are the main stakeholders, who can provide emotional and handholding support to the kids in association with the professional educator. We work equally with the parents and children to design intervention, execute and monitor the progress. While the children encounter their learning disability playfully, their parents often exhibit a myriad of emotions upon diagnosis, including anger, grief and denial. We work hand-in-hand with the parents to focus on initiate the process of helping their child with special needs achieve their fullest potential.



Schools are the important stakeholder, with whom we will work for setting up of resource rooms, identify students with SLD, interact continuously to exchange feedback on the progress of the students who are undergoing remediation process. In the process we will strive to influence the administration at the school level, at the district level to initiate such interventions with a long term perspective.

Our Approach



FEATHERS works with the children with specific learning disability who are requiring early diagnosis, early intervention and continuous management through special educators trained in handling different types of learning disabilities.

Our approach in remediation start with assessing the children for issues connected to learning disability such as vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and

motor abilities.

We examine learning styles of children using appropriate tools, and devise teaching methods according to child's specific learning style. We evaluate unique skills and brilliance of children in other areas and encourage and nurture their talents. We follow one-on-one remediation strategy. We engage with parents in every aspect of remediation starting from assessment, planning and executing interventions and evaluation of progress.

We design and pilot a community based model to enable the community to spearhead the remediation through creating localised resource centres set up and run by volunteers in each

slum/village. We have been investing substantial energy in building a pool of trained volunteers, who can serve at the Slum/Village Learning Centres.

Our Mission and Vision

FEATHERS envisions “building an inclusive society with enshrined values of equality, equity and humaneness”. Its mission is “Laying Foundation for Enabling Action to Transform Human Excellence with Resilience and Self-reliance”.

Our objectives are to:

- Reach out to children with special needs requiring professional assistance and offer on-campus and off-campus remediation services
- Create awareness among the parents for identifying special needs in their children, seeking timely and appropriate medical and rehabilitation support.
- Provide education and training to aspiring youth and mothers of children with special needs on rehabilitation, care and support.
- Work with like-minded individuals and institutions to further the cause of children with special needs through research, training and policy initiatives

Our Journey so far...

We have initiated our work since 2016. We have spent initial two years to build our skills and perspectives by way of undergoing studies and training, consulting experts in the field, developing learning materials and conducting awareness programmes among teachers and parents. We have established a Resource Centre in Madurai City in 2018 and enrolled a batch of students studying from 1st standard to 10 standards and began our remediation programme.



We have set-up and run the Learning Resource Centre and began our programme with the support from individual philanthropist and like-minded individuals through financial and material support. There are four volunteers and two full-time professionals associating with us.

We also work with NGOs around Madurai to initiate Village Learning Centres, pilot a community based remediation model for addressing the issues of learning disability faced by the children from socially and economically disadvantaged households, who are often unaware of these complex issues of SLD and have no way out for providing professional care and support.

Activities of FEATHERS

Impacting Children with Learning Disability

We have mobilised students at the Learning Resource Centre we have set-up in Madurai and began administering remediation measures through trained special educators. We have enrolled a batch of 20 students, who are undergoing remediation programme at the Centre. These students are drawn from six private schools, who have shown interest to send their children for remediation.

We have initiated interaction with the public and private schools in and around Madurai, started receiving students referred by them for assessment and remediation. We begin with assessing the children and counselling the parents. We work intensively with children one-on-one by involving a trained special educator for each student.

We have assisted NGOs like the Covenant Centre for Development to promote Village Learning Resource Centres in 130 villages in Madurai, Virudhunagar, Sivagangai, Dindigul, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli districts.

We have started organising awareness programme for the parents on handling children with specific learning disability and familial support by way of organising small group interaction and individual counselling. In the process, they are being made to play a key role in remediation.

The Resource Centre set-up by FEATHERS in Madurai function as a Research, Development and Training Centre, to work continuously with the volunteers at Village Learning Resource Centres through building their skills, designing teaching methods and materials, conducting joint assessments, documenting and disseminating our processes and outcomes. Through working in with 130 VLRCs, we are able to impact the learning outcomes of over 4160 children drawn from different standards.



Impacting Children with Intellectual Disability

Every child is unique. Their physical and psychological development progresses according to certain sequences, but the pace may vary. If children display marked problems or difficulties in one or more developmental area, and their performance shows significant discrepancies compared with other children of the same age, it is advisable to refer the children for professional assessment.

Children with special needs also known as 'special children', 'exceptional children', 'handicapped children' are recognised as having mental, emotional, physical or social needs. They require diagnosis and therapeutic intervention or special care by qualified specialists. Early intervention services are most effective if started before a child turns three years.

Children with Special Needs

Special-needs children include those who have:

- Developmental Disability including down syndrome, autism, dyslexia, processing disorders
- Speech and Language Impairment, difficulty in expressing themselves or understanding others
- Mental Retardation, which causes them to develop more slowly than other children
- Physical Disability, such as cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy
- Sensorial Disability including blindness, visual impairment, deafness and limited hearing
- Learning Disabilities, which distort messages from their senses
- Emotional Disabilities, such as antisocial or other behavioural problems

How we intervene?

Our centre is run by a team of trained and experienced special educators specialised in handling children with special needs. Guided by experts in the field of rehabilitation and therapeutic interventions, special education, we approach the children with professional rigour and motherly care and attention. Our uniqueness lies in:

- Early identification and assessment of disabilities in children
- Early intervention
- Counselling
- Occupational therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Speech therapy
- Psychological services
- Parent counselling and training



Training to Volunteers

Progress

The FEATHERS Special School functions alongside the Learning Resource Centre in Madurai. During the year, we have

Awareness Programme for the Parents of Children with Special Needs

During the year, special educators organised awareness programmes for the parents of children with special needs. They were oriented on the early signs of intellectual disability and opportunities available for early intervention. Also, they were oriented on different types of intellectual disability with associated conditions such as Autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and combination of disorders. They were also explained on various welfare measures available for the Children diagnosed with ID from Government. Modalities for obtaining Identity Card from the Department of Differently Abled at the district level. There were five such programmes organised during the year benefiting 250 parents.



Rehabilitation Programme for Children with Special Needs

In the Special School established in Madurai, enrolment has begun to admit the children identified with intellectual disability. The parents of the children with special needs were advised to admit their children in inclusive schools. The Special School of Feathers is aimed at providing complementary training to the children after the school hours to get equipped on life and social skills. There were five such students admitted in the Feathers Special School at Madurai. There has been a need expressed from the nearby rural areas for establishing such a facility, for which the FEATHERS has planned to initiate a School in the Rural Block of Madurai District covering 3-4 blocks in the coming year.

Knowledge Building and Dissemination

Attending Workshops and Conferences



Meeting Padmasri. Ramakrishnan, Amar Seva Sangam at the Conference

We have attended an International Conference on "Early Intervention" between February 13 and 15 at Chennai organized by Amar Seva Sangam. Hon'ble Governor of Tamil Nadu, Sri Banwarilal Purohit, formally inaugurated the International Conference and it was concluded with a valedictory session to which Sri TS Krishnamurthy, former Chief Election Commissioner of India.

The International Conference dealt with early identification of children with developmental delay, family centred care, education tools, village based rehabilitation, ICF and

words, challenges of implementing an early intervention programme in rural India and scaling up of the model. The speakers from India and abroad elaborately discussed on the theme with their vast knowledge and expertise. From FEATHERS, we have attended the programme and share our experiences in working with special children.

The conference provided an opportunity to meet many stakeholders, from the government, non-governmental organisations, business, for profit sector and corporates, leaders and organisations working with the disabled, service providers, educational institutions, academics, scientists, researchers and scholars in the domain of children with developmental delays. We have attended the pre-conference workshop organised on the themes of prevention, early identification, intervention, assistive and adaptive technology, inclusive education, and technology as a tool for intervention.



Producing Awareness Materials

In order to create awareness on the issues of Intellectual Disability and Learning Disability, we have produced leaflets and folders on the issues related to these themes. These materials were aimed at creating awareness among the parents of children with special needs and remediation. These materials were produced both in English and Tamil and distributed during awareness campaigns organised by FEATHERS during the year.



Future Plan of FEATHERS

FEATHERS has planned to focus on the following areas of intervention in the coming year.

1. Establishing a Special School in Vadipatti, a rural block of Madurai District in the coming year to cater to the needs of poor and vulnerable families in rural areas.
2. Conducting village level awareness programmes to identify the children with special needs and orient their parents on home based care – At least 25 such programmes (one programme) in a fortnight will be conducted in the coming year.
3. Initiating home based early intervention programme
4. Promoting Village Learning Resource Centres will be set up in at least 10 villages with trained volunteers to work on learning disability and Complementary Education.
5. Organising a Workshop for the Special Educators on Remedial Education
6. Counselling to pregnant women on health and nutrition to give birth to healthy babies free of physical and mental health issues.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2019-20



**P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com., FCA.,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT**

No. 3/5, LAKSHMI NARAYANAPURAM AGRAHARAM
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI – 625 001
CELL: 9443799731, Email: srinivasanaca@gmail.com

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have examined the consolidated Balance Sheet of FEATHERS, 114 E.M.S Nagar, Madakulam Main Road, Ponmeni, Madurai – 625 016, Tamilnadu, India (Permanent Account Number: AAATF6558Q) as at 31 March 2020 and the Consolidated Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended on that date which are in agreement with the books of account maintained by the said Trust.

This financial statement is the responsibility of the Trust's management. My responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statement based on my audit.

I conducted my audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in India. Those standards require that I plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. I believe that my audit provides a reasonable basis for my opinion.

I have obtained all the information and explanations which to the best of my knowledge and belief were necessary for the purposes of the audit.

In my opinion and to the best of my information and according to the information given to me, the said accounts give a true and fair view:

- i. In the case of the consolidated Balance Sheet of the state of affairs of the above named trust as at 31 March 2020 and
- ii. In the case of the consolidated income and expenditure account of the excess of income over expenditure of its accounting year ending on 31 March 2020.

Place: **Madurai**

Date: **July 23, 2020**




**CA P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com., FCA.,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT**
3/5, Lakshmi Narayanapuram Agraharam
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI - 625 001
Membership.No: 219094

FEATHERS

114, EMS NAGAR, MADAKULAM MAIN ROAD,
PONMENI, MADURAI-625 016.

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT		(In Rupees)
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED		31-Mar-2020
RECEIPTS		
Opening Balance		
Cash in Hand		1000.00
Cash at Bank		-
Donations Received		3,35,000.00
Bank Interest		14.00
Total		3,36,014.00
PAYMENTS		
Office Advance		85,000.00
Display Board		16,300.00
Purchase of Office Furniture		53,000.00
Purchase of Teaching Equipments		14,000.00
Salary to Teachers		104,000.00
Training to Teachers		5,000.00
Rent Paid		42,026.00
Educational aids		4,750.00
By closing Balances - Cash in Hand		1,000.00
Cash at Bank - PNB 6019.1.19539		10,938.00
Total		3,36,014.00

"Vide my report of even date attached"

for FEATHERS

R. Rathy
Chairperson


Treasurer

R. Nageswaran
Executive Director

Place: Madurai
Date: July 23, 2020




CA. P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com., FCA.,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
3/5, Lakshmi Narayanapuram Agraharam
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI - 625 001
Membership.No: 219094

FEATHERS

114, EMS NAGAR, MADAKULAM MAIN ROAD,
PONMENI, MADURAI-625 016.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT	
(In Rupees)	
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED	31-Mar-2020
INCOME	
Donations received	3,35,000.00
Bank Interest	14.00
Total	3,35,014.00
EXPENDITURE	
Training to Teachers	5,000.00
Salary to Teachers	1,04,000.00
Educational Aids Printing	4,750.00
Rent Paid	42,026.00
Excess of Income over Expenditure	1,79,238.00
Total	3,35,014.00

"Vide my report of even date attached"

for FEATHERS


Chairperson


Treasurer


Executive Director

Place: Madurai

Date: July 23, 2020




CA. P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com., FCA.,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
3/5, Lakshmi Narayanapuram Agraharam
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI - 625 001
Membership.No: 219094

FEATHERS

114, EMS NAGAR, MADAKULAM MAIN ROAD,
PONMENI, MADURAI-625 016.

BALANCE SHEET		
(In Rupees)		
	AS AT	31-Mar-2020
LIABILITIES		
CORPUS & CAPITAL FUND		
Corpus Fund		
Opening Balance	1,000.00	
Current Year Receipts	-	1,000.00
Capital Fund		
Opening Balance	-	
Add: Excess of Income over Expenditure	1,79,238.00	1,79,238.00
Total		1,80,238.00
ASSETS		
FIXED ASSETS (GROSS BLOCK)		
Display Board		16,300.00
School Furniture		53,000.00
Teaching Equipments		14,000.00
CURRENT ASSETS, LOANS AND ADVANCES		
Advance to Office		85,000.00
Cash in hand		1,000.00
Cash at Bank-Punjab National Bank		10,938.00
Total		1,80,238.00

"Vide my report of even date attached"

for FEATHERS

R. Rathi

Chairperson



Treasurer

R. Nageswaran

Executive Director

Place: Madurai

Date: July 23, 2020




CA. P. SRINIVASAN, B.Com., FCA.,
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
3/5, Lakshmi Narayanapuram Agraharam
SIMMAKKAL, MADURAI - 625 001
Membership.No: 219094