



**State Level Consultation Meet on DMT:
An Alternate Healing Process**

Organised by: Kolkata Sanved

in collaboration with

The Department of Women and Child Development, Govt. Of West Bengal

and

With the support of: UNICEF, Kolkata and Kamonohashi, Japan

30th June, 2016

The Lalit, Great Eastern Hotel, Kolkata

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Introduction

With a history of over 50 years as practiced majorly in a clinical set-up in Western countries, Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) has been an innovative concept in the realm of creative therapy in Asian countries. Kolkata Sanved's Sampoonata model based on DMT has been formed and practiced over the last 12 years across South Asia. The model set up in the purview of Indian cultural context, uses dance and movement as an alternate healing tool to work in group settings with different populations such as survivors of sexual violence, abuse and exploitation, people living with mental illness and other marginalized communities.

Our years of work with the Government Care Institutions and experience with the Department of Women & Child Development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal gives us the confidence to hold this 'State Level Consultation Meet' and share the contribution of DMT in psychosocial rehabilitation and alternative healing process for individuals.

Purpose of the Consultation Meet

This Meet will be an opportunity for Kolkata Sanved to share the research done to assess the impact of DMT among the residents of the Homes (especially survivors of trafficking, violence and abuse) in both Government and Non-Government sector and to chart a course of action to take the work further to other Homes where the need surfaces.

Objective of the Consultation Meet

This State Level Consultation Meet will be an opportunity for Kolkata Sanved:

- To ascertain the effectiveness of DMT as a creative therapy within the rehabilitation system, for transforming lives of survivors of trafficking, violence and sexual abuse in institutional care
- To sensitize and build awareness about the current scenario among Government authorities, NGOs and active leaders as well as activists for policy level changes
- To further scale-up the implementation of DMT process in various Government Institutions with the support of the Department of Women & Child Development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal



Participants

The participants included:

1. The Secretary, Department of Women & Child Development and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal
2. The Commissioner, Department of Women and Child Development & Department of Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal
3. The Director, Child Rights & Trafficking, Government of West Bengal
4. Chair Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai & Former Director General of Police of National Disaster Response Force, Government of India
5. Dignitaries in various capacities such as the Deputy Director, Assistant Director from the Department of Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal
6. Superintendents/Assistant Superintendents of implementing Government Homes
7. Representatives from Child Welfare Committees
8. Representatives from Juvenile Justice Board
9. Representatives from UNICEF, Kolkata
10. Representatives from implementing partners organizations
11. Non-Governmental Organizations
12. Representatives from Nodal Agencies





Programme Schedule

Date: 30th June 2016

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 02:00 p.m.

Venue: The Lalit, Great Eastern Hotel, Kolkata

Introduction and Inauguration

“There is vitality, a life force, energy, a quickening that is translated through you into action, and because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique. And if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and will be lost.”

The Meet started with a quote of Martha Graham followed by welcoming all the guests and participants who were present on the occasion.



The inauguration ceremony followed where the Chief Guest of the day, **Mr. N. G. Hira, the Commissioner to the Government of West Bengal, Department of Women and Child Development & Department of Social Welfare** inaugurated the Meet by lighting the lamp along with other dignitaries.

Ms. Sohini Chakraborty, Founder and Director of Kolkata Sanved were then requested to deliver the message given by the **Honourable Justice Nadira Patherya of the Juvenile Justice Committee**. Extracts from the speech is being quoted below.

‘.....The first time that I had an opportunity to know about Kolkata Sanved was on my visit to Shahid Bandana, a Government run home in Cooch Behar. I found in a room girls lying on the floor with music on. I at first could not understand what it was? Till I asked them as to what they were doing and it is then that they explained to me that they were practising dance therapy and since that day (24th March, 2016) and today I am enlightened a little with regard to Dance Movement Therapy as an alternate healing process.....’

Please refer to annexure for the whole version



Speeches by all the distinguished members on the dais

Welcome address - Mr. N. G. Hira, the Commissioner to the Government of West Bengal, Department of Women and Child Development & Department of Social Welfare

At the outset, The Commissioner thanked Kolkata Sanved for letting him be a part of the State Meet. He spoke about the miserable conditions of some shelter homes across the state and requested NGOs and other organisations to partake in alleviating their suffering by taking up initiatives like Kolkata Sanved for the betterment of the children residing there.

He further stressed that the government has taken initiatives to uplift these homes by providing them with vocational training but the state government requires the support of such organizations for the proper care and handling of the children. He touched upon the work done by Sanved for the sexually abused children as well as trafficking survivors by boosting their self esteem and encouraging them to live a normal social life.

The state has managed to train 25 residents of a home for a job in a shopping mall. He believes that for such further successes deeper collaboration is required between the government, UNICEF and non- government welfare agencies. He ended by thanking Kolkata Sanved for giving him the opportunity to be present on the occasion and gain awareness about the DMT process.

Sharing on thoughts for the day - Ms.Richa Misra, the Director – Child Rights & Trafficking, Government of West Bengal

According to Ms. Richa Misra DMT is a process which needs to be understood as an alternative healing technique. And for this the difference between dance and movement needs to be understood also. She stated that there are 2 categories of children – one who have been and still are exploited and the other who have survived immense trauma. These children are low in self confidence, violent and sometimes aggressive; so therapy is very important for them. The emotions that are being pent up over time owing to various degrees of trauma can find an outlet through this alternative healing process. It can be used by them for releasing their emotions in a healthy and effective manner, which is important for their rehabilitation in normal social life.

Moreover it is beneficial for the care-givers also as the care-giver is able to understand how to deal with the children and DMT workshops are a unique way of disseminating this knowledge.



The therapy gives an outlet to express which is of utmost importance to these victims. She conclude by stating that *“the children have become trainers now of DMT and empowered themselves. We look forward for more of such activities in the State”*.

Sharing by - Mr. Nasir Ateeq, Communication for Development Specialist, UNICEF Kolkata

Mr. Ateeq shared that the initiatives by Kolkata Sanved are extremely important for the society. Most dances have movement but this is different in the sense that there is movement within the movement. DMT leads to the development of necessary life skills and rehabilitation for the juveniles who live in Institutional care. Therefore, he believed that DMT is an ingenious tool for survivors of sexual abuse. It leads to an improvement in the lives of these people.

He added that protection and promotion of children rights and the opportunity to reach its goal has been the focus of UNICEF. UNICEF wants to provide a crucial psychosocial support to the society. This kind of initiative can be integrated in the flagship program and will be an essential and important step on the whole.

Presentation of Kolkata Sanved DMT approach

The Kolkata Sanved DMT approach was presented by the Founder Director of the organization, Ms. Sohini Chakraborty. She first expressed her heartfelt gratitude to everyone for gracing the occasion and for supporting this emerging field of DMT. She explained that DMT involves psycho therapeutic use of dance for recovery and healing which enables in engaging a person creatively. Unlike teaching dance, it is a free and spontaneous movement from within which aids in release expressions and thus lead to recovery.

What Sanved has observed that, this approach is more successful in group setting. Although the work is being done in group setting, the process is very individualistic. In Indian cultural context, group works like magic rather than individual processes as derived from working experience of Kolkata Sanved DMT practitioners.

Ms. Chakraborty thanked the government for their cooperation and support by permitting Kolkata Sanved to provide its services to the residents of their homes. She reflected that it may occur to many as to why Sanved works in only 4 homes out of the 20. This is because Sanved believes in gaining an in-depth understanding of the situation that prevails and searching for solutions, rather than facilitating therapeutic services per say.



She further explained that Sanved DMT has a holistic approach towards well-being. However no service can cater all aspects of an individual. For example, Sanved can cater to the behavioural, social, communication and healing aspect of the individuals living in a special observation home. Yet there are pathological aspects which still need to be addressed. For this psychiatric intervention is very important.

One of the crucial problems faced by the homes is runaway of children. It must be kept in mind that the world's best shelter has cases of runaways as children face a feeling of confinement and thus remain unhappy when their movements are restricted. This is a natural human behaviour. As care-givers, we can overcome the fear and become a little friendly by allowing them certain freedom of movement by trusting them.

Finally she expressed that whatever service is coming under the realm of institutional care need to be assessed. Apart from catering to their basic needs, it is important that these children be treated as individuals. More innovative services need to be introduced. Other creative therapies can be encouraged as creativity nurtures joy and hope. Sanved hopes to bring in the holistic approach by working in collaboration with the government and other civil society organizations in these homes.

Sharing of Kolkata Sanved's research study on the impact of Dance Movement Therapy on survivors of trafficking and sexual abuse

Researcher: Dr. Upali Dasgupta

Topic: Restoring Smile Through Dance: Assessing the impact of dance movement therapy (DMT) on the traumatic symptoms of the survivors of trafficking and sexual violence

Aim: The main aim of the research study was to assess the impact of DMT on the 'survivors of trafficking'

A systematic assessment was needed to gauge the impact of the DMT intervention, identify any variables moderating DMT's effects, and to create an evidence-based roadmap from which to examine the effects of DMT on the trauma symptoms of survivors and, in the future, to improve, create or continue services based on the needs of participants. This marks the first scientific analysis of Kolkata Sanved's unique programming and one of the first quantitative studies of the impacts of DMT in the region. It is not only a milestone for the organization but will further legitimize the use of DMT as a powerful tool within



rehabilitation programming. The six month study complete with the full range of beginning, mid-line and end-line evaluations, followed a Purposive Sampling method and used a representative sample of survivors of trafficking and violence chosen from two sites. The number of participants in our representative sample was 54. The two sites are the Rescue Foundation home in Mumbai and the Sukanya Home in Kolkata. TSCC (an international standard tool by which information is collected) was used.

In the assessment, the study:

- Compared a Control Group with a Treatment Group in order to find out the impact of the DMT intervention on each of the six (anger, depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, disassociation and sexual concern) domains of traumatic symptoms.
- Identified the variables under study that may moderate the effect of DMT
- Found out whether time-period of the DMT intervention makes a difference in impact on the survivors' traumatic symptoms.
- Compared the effects of DMT between two sites, Mumbai and Kolkata, in order to discern whether difference in psycho-social milieu of the shelter homes makes a difference on the DMT impact.

Challenges

1. Small sample size
2. Floating population resulting in reducing number
3. Lack of literacy level sometimes required the questions to be read out by the researcher which may perhaps had different impact when read and understood by the participants themselves

Sharing Kolkata Sanved's research findings on Dance Movement Therapy as a Case Study in Coochbehar

Researcher: Dr. Chandrani Dasgupta

Aim: To understand why DMT works very well in one Government home and not in another

A case study of the intervention in a government home at Coochbehar was done in order to understand the challenges that were faced and can be faced by the DMT practitioners. 14 girls have lived their lives in Sahid Bandana Smriti Mahila Abash (SBSMA) in Coochbehar. But these 14 girls came out of the home and started a DMT unit in Coochbehar. In SBSMA, the case study



method was used. DMT was understood from a number perspective - the trainers, the girls, the reports. Some information was primary and some secondary. The purpose was to understand the introduction and the analysis of intervention.

There are many children from different backgrounds taking DMT. As a child when he/she enters the home and takes DMT, the child gets resilience framework, vulnerabilities are challenged etc. There are different categories of children and they have different vulnerabilities - abandonment, orphans, trafficked survivors, victims of child marriage. What was found was that, there was a clear segregation - one kind who was in need of care and protection enjoyed a certain amount of freedom; and the other category were children in conflict with the law.

How the DMT occurred?

Rules were formed to weed out the stigma attached to victims. DMT was made available to all children and not just a few. DMT saw the child in the ecosystem and not just as a survivor or victim. The child was enabled to get his or her rights as a child such as education. DMT sessions for caregivers were organised to generate awareness and acceptance, to help them understand the needs of the child for DMT. In Coochbehar, no other therapies were practiced.

Transformation - Behavioural and emotional changes after DMT were noted. Before DMT there were no counselling techniques being practiced. After the girls started to participate in DMT, the children were seen to have more resilience, future oriented understanding, expectation for future, self confidence and love for others, flexibility of body and behaviour.

Collaborative model - of DMT for all children was prepared. For example, a resident of the home came up to the DMT practitioners saying that she wanted to study. Rules did not permit the child to go out of the shelter home and thus her right to education was not being fulfilled. It was brought to the notice of The Chairperson of Child Welfare Committee who ensured that these rules were followed; he allowed the teacher to come in the home premise and teach. So DMT is not only about a person, a single person but the collaborative effect of alternative therapy. It is expected to have an impact on all the stake holders who are part of the child's life.

Challenges

1. Children who were in conflict with the law were also being stigmatised by other children living in the home
2. Vulnerability context varied - rape and trafficking were very serious issues
3. Physical segregation was perpetuating the difference between the children.



4. Emotional sympathy varied according to children leading to unwanted discrimination
5. Operational issues
6. Floating population
7. Lack of caregivers capacities - they were not able to fully support the DMT practitioners

Summary of findings

There was realization of the understanding and transformation that occurred. Training of Trainers (TOT) program was also being implemented. It is a cost effective way to bring about a change. It is not about one process; we are not saying it is the only solution. But it is a good step to begin with. DMT can share the burden with counsellors. Lack of medical resources, is also a big issue. It is seen in the behaviour patterns of the children. Financial investment is also low. Finally, for more effective studies, more amounts of the data will be required.

Open Plenary

- ***How can the research be a sustained process?***
Small steps need to be taken in this direction. Research will show how long the impact lasts. Hence a series of research study is under planning to assess the impact
- ***Children are in deep depression and refuse to come to DMT classes, how do we solve this?***
Any art or mode of expression can be used. A specific model is developed for such children and then applied to them specifically
- ***There are floating children in the shelter homes, so how can we have a positive impact if children are here for short duration?***
Even if it is a one day thing, the therapeutic process can give joy, hope and liberation
- ***Children have sexual concerns, what is the impact and sustainability of DMT?***
Therapy is very qualitative so difficult to assess. The trauma symptoms were the parameters. It is important to keep assessing. Healing is sometimes a lifetime process, but we try to give a wholesome therapy, trauma can keep recurring, a self-care strategy is very important which we give
- ***Should a separate curriculum for children in Dhruvashram be prepared?***
A psycho-social assessment of children in Dhruvashram is necessary. They require a psychiatrist; a pathological need exists which Kolkata Sanved cannot fulfil



Release of Kolkata Sanved's Research Study

The following phase of the Meet led to the release of the research study of Kolkata Sanved *“Scripting Their Lives: A case study of Dance Movement Therapy in a shelter home for children in Coochbehar, West Bengal”* by the Honourable Secretary Ms. Roshni Sen, Department of Women and Child Development & Department of Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal and Dr. P.M. Nair, Chair Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai & Former Director General of Police of National Disaster Response Force, Government of India

Keynote address by the Honourable Secretary Ms. Roshni Sen, Department of Women and Child Development & Department of Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal



“I came to this Conference Meet for two things - to learn about DMT and to make others realise the importance of DMT as a tool to help victims”
Honourable Secretary Ms. Roshni Sen

The Honourable Secretary began with Child rights and trafficking being a major issue to fight through a Directorate with limited man-power. She identified DMT as a very innovative thing happening silently in the state of West Bengal. It is a learning process for her also.

People have always been concerned about physical illness but of late mental issues are being addressed and treated by the Department with the help of organizations like Sanved. Along with yoga therapy and behaviour therapy, DMT has tremendous scope for children.



In the Juvenile Justice Homes, there are doctors who visit to look into the physical aspects, health cards are prepared. But mind is something which is very difficult to access and put into the right track. And counsellors and psychologists are extremely rare. She feels that this new therapy if properly implemented and disseminated can be put forth for the propagation. It is not something which is amateurish but should become an effective tool.

Studies show victims of sex trafficking have more of mental issues, many victims commit suicide. These are warning bells. There is a dearth of resources to address this issue; this new therapy can be a very powerful tool to address the issue for boys and girls. She added that whenever any new thing is introduced, there is a lot of resistance. There is still a lack of understanding that needs a lot of training and the children in the homes are very vulnerable ones. DMT is a very systematic way of dealing with their emotions. This particular therapy is a much targeted therapy. Ms. Sen encouraged making this movement stronger by stating that although DMT is still in a learning curve, support from all is needed to take it forward and make it a huge success.

Guest Speaker of the day

Dr. P. M. Nair - Chair Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai & Former Director General of Police of National Disaster Response Force, Government of India

Dr. Nair began his speech by saying that it was a pleasure to be in Kolkata, a vibrant place with innovative leaders and everyone present who were committed to the cause of welfare for all.

He opined that he had been following DMT for some time and was impressed with it. Taking cue from Dr. Chandrani Dasgupta, he believes that DMT is a way of life; the survivors learn to dance just to their own tune instead of the worlds. Now the world dances to their tune.

He liked the stickers of Sanved which read - ***'dance for revolution' to break free, walk free, no more fetters on mind or on the body; dance to end violence, to break silence, to assert power, to make us happy. It is divine, it is bliss, it has a lasting impact.'***

Research based evidence will help to command the world with it as it is a proven fact. DMT is more than a stimulant, a catalyst, to bring about psychological, social and behavioural change. It can never be short term. The level of change through DMT is very high. Indian dance form is so graceful; it brings grace into the life of people which is wonderful.



Dr. Nair obliged the audience with a small demonstration of human behaviour. He requested everyone to keep their hands on their chin but he kept his hand on the cheek, most people kept their hands on their cheeks too. This shows that a visual impact is more effective than the words of command we hear. It explains that a dancer needs to coordinate everything which requires a great deal of effort.

To conclude, he spoke about three processes to make DMT a success – **Institutionalization, Replication, and Dissemination**

Way Ahead as proposed by Dr. Nair

1. UNICEF to circulate the research report of DMT with all details to all UNICEF formations in India so that they all could take it up at the States
2. Department of Women and Child Development (DWC) of the State Government of West Bengal to incorporate in the SOP which is being finalized and issue advisory to all officials on the State to adopt this as best practice model in rehabilitation and also in understanding the victim's mind
3. Department of Women and Child Development (DWC) of the State Government of West Bengal to write to all State WCDs to adopt this as a good model
4. A copy of the research report and other details be forwarded to all the States
5. Department of Women and Child (DWC) of the State Government of West Bengal to write to Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India to take it forward
6. Department of Women and Child (DWC) of the State Government of West Bengal to write to the Police Department, CID and also Justice Department and State Legal Services Authority to use DMT practitioners of Kolkata Sanved as master trainers for training the police officers, prosecutors, judicial officers, Child Welfare Committee members, Juvenile Justice Board members etc.



Movement experience session on Dance Movement Therapy

Finally the Consultation Meet ended with a movement experience for all dignitaries and other members, facilitated by the senior DMT practitioners of Kolkata Sanved. One of them spoke about her experience on how DMT has helped her to overcome her trauma. She is a live case of empowerment and a transformative change in life brought about by DMT.

A vote of thanks was extended to all for their active participation in the Conference.

