

#### 4. Services For Mental Retardation In Malaysia

##### Introduction

Malaysia has an area of about 130,000 square miles. It consists of 12 states in Peninsular Malaysia and two Borneo states namely Sabah and Sarawak. Its economy is based mainly on the export of rubber, tin, palm oil, crude oil, petroleum products and timber. The country has an estimated population of 14.5 million, of which 42 percent are in the age group 0-14 years, 54 percent between the age of 15-64 years and about 4 percent above 64 years old. There is no comprehensive data on the disabled population in the country but a sample survey undertaken by the Department of Social Welfare in 1958 revealed that the major groups of disabilities, namely the blind, the deaf, the orthopaedically handicapped and the mentally retarded, made up approximately one percent of the population in Peninsular Malaysia. Of this one percent mentally retarded accounted for 0.08 percent. Accepting this incidence and applying it to the projected population, we arrive at a figure of 11,120 mentally retarded persons in the country.

##### 2. Prevention And Early Detection Of Disability

Preventive and curative health carried out by the Ministry of Health, Malaysia, has resulted in improvement of health standards with falling infantile mortality and increasing life expectancy. The health programmes have included nation-wide campaigns to control some major causes of disability.

The satisfactory implementation of the programme for the control and eradication of communicable diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, filariasis and yaws has resulted in the rapid decline of these diseases among the rural population. Preventive of accidents in the home is one of the functions of the Maternal and Child Health Services of the Health Ministry.

#### Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation services and programmes for the mentally retarded have been developed over successive years as a result of government policies which are formulated and implemented by the Ministry of Welfare Services. Malaysia is committed to the concept of total rehabilitation which entails a multi disciplinary approach. Medical rehabilitation units are mainly located in general hospitals such as the orthopaedic units, spinal injury units, ENT clinics, eye clinics, physiotherapy and occupational therapy departments. The Ministry of Welfare Services is concerned with the ascertainment through voluntary registration, provision of residential institutions which undertake care, treatment, training and education.

#### Education For The Mentally Retarded

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the special education of the disabled. However, it has no special programmes for mental retardates. Thus, the Ministry of Welfare Services has to plan and carry out the programmes and its activities.

Special education for the mentally retarded in Peninsular

Malaysia is provided by the various Associations for retarded children while primary education for epileptic children are being provided at the Bethany Home for Epileptic Children in Perak.

The Sarawak Social Welfare Council also operates two special school for the mentally retarded between the age of 6 to 18 years and have a capacity for 50 children. The Social Welfare Department Sabah operates the "Taman Didikan Cacat Akal" in Sandakan. It provides special education and social training for 40 retardates up to the age of 18 years. Though the various association played the role in providing the services for the retardates. It has to commensurate with the Ministry of Welfare Services.

The Ministry it self has operates five institution for the Mentally Retarded Children, to cater the retardates for the state of Peninsular Malaysia. The five institutions are:-

Taman Sinar Harapan Tampoi

Taman Sinar Harapan Tampoi was open in 1975 specially for the male retardates between the age of 14 to 25 years. It provides custodial care and training. The objective of this institution is to provide training in up grading their capabilities so that they can look after themselves, and live independently. The total capacity for this institution is 240. The major programmes in this centre are:-

- i) Special Education: Closely geared towards the individual capacity of the rehabilites. The educational programme attempts to impart knowledge in the 3 Rs, Civics and Social Training;
- ii) Vocational training courses in tailoring, wood work, farming, laundry, handicrafts and domestic work,

- iii) Physiotherapy: available for physical retardation and mobility of retardates,
- iv) Occupational therapy for evaluation and training in the activities of daily living.
- v) Speech therapy for those who have speech difficulties or hearing defect ,,
- vi) Counselling and guidance provided to assist in behaviour modification and to cope with their emotional problems so that they can derive optimum benefits from the rehabilitation programme.

Taman Sinar Harapan Jubilee

This institution was established in 1969 and is meant for female retardates between the age of 14-25 years, and has a total capacity of 240.

The programmes and objectives of this institution are similar as Taman Sinar Harapan Tampoi.

Taman Sinar Harapan Tunku Ampuan Najihah Seremban

Taman Sinar Harapan Tunku Ampuan Najihah Seremban was established in 1978 for both male and female retardates below the age of 14 years old. The maximum capacity of this institution is 100. It also operates for mentally retarded children who are trainable. The objective are similar as the other two institution, above.

Taman Sinar Harapan, Kuala Trengganu

This institution was established in 1984, also for male and female retardates below the age of 14 years. There is not much difference between this institution and the other three institution accepts the intakes is only for the retardates from the east coast states of Peninsular Malaysia. Total capacity is 60.

Taman Sinar Harapan, Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor

Taman Sinar Harapan Kuala Kubu Bharu is the fifth institution for the mentally retarded children set up by the Ministry of Welfare Services. It was established recently in 1984, for male and female retardates below the age of 25 years. It is only meant for those severely mentally retarded and those who need custodial care. The total capacity is 400.

The inmates of this institution is also for multiple physical disabilities. The capabilities are very limited and the I.Q. are very low. They don't even know how to look after themselves. Most of them cannot talk and their behaviour are difficult to understand, and need constant care.

Thus, the objective of this institution is to provide custodial care and protection for severely mentally retarded children.

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