



Director's Message

The pandemic reinforced the adage *health is wealth*. As BREADS repeatedly saw in its COVID relief activities, the adverse impact of the correlation between health and wealth is very clear among people with low incomes, especially in rural areas without access to decent healthcare. In this Slice, we report on BREADS' mobile clinic that takes basic healthcare to people's doorsteps in remote areas of Karnataka.

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Executive Director, BREADS

The Health of the Rural Healthcare System

The health of its citizens is the responsibility of the State. So why should NGOs and private parties address the subject, especially because it requires systemic intervention? But what is the condition of the healthcare system in rural India?

Primary healthcare is provided through a three-tier system of Sub Centres (SC), Primary Health Centres (PHC) and Community Health Centres (CHC), with the sub centres being the first point of contact for communities in remote areas. The CHCs are expected to provide specialised medical care of surgeons, obstetricians & gynaecologists, physicians, and paediatricians. As on 31 March 2021, there were 15,610 SCs, 25,140 PHCs and 5481 CHCs in rural India. (*Dash, A., Mohanty, S.K. Do poor people in the poorer states pay more for healthcare in India?*)

Even with the increase in Auxiliary Nursing Midwives (ANMs) and doctors in SCs and PHCs in 2020-21, there was still a significant shortfall of staff at all levels.

- 21.1% health worker and ANM (female) posts at SCs & PHCs were vacant
- 41.9% health worker (male) posts at SCs were vacant.
- 64.2% health assistant (male & female) posts at PHCs were vacant
- 21.8% doctor posts in PHCs were vacant
- 68% specialist posts at CHCs were vacant

The Cost of an Ailing Healthcare System

Without health workers, let alone doctors, how do people get medical attention? The alternative becomes private

healthcare, which comes at a very heavy cost. In 2018, Indians spent around **62.7%** of their total health spendings as out-of-pocket (OOP) expenditure. The Indian Express, in April 2022, citing WHO, reported that OOP health expenses, especially for medicines, continue to push over **55 million** people in India into poverty, with over 18% households incurring catastrophic expenditure annually.



BREADS' Response to the Situation in Devadurga

Historically, Devadurga has ranked lowest among the taluks on health indices in Karnataka. The poor health status of the rural people impacts their family income, increases the drudgery of women, increases school dropouts, ultimately impacting the rights of vulnerable people. Therefore, over the years, BREADS and its partners have intervened to provide education about their health, facilitate their access to primary health services, and in many cases, provided primary health care at their doorsteps to support the development process in these areas.

This intervention took the shape of a mobile clinic, which travels to **25** villages in the taluk, reaching out to communities every fortnight.

Primary beneficiaries are women, children and the elderly, the most vulnerable populations. Besides their domestic responsibilities, women are compelled to work, either due to the indifference of the male members or dire economic need. The absence of basic facilities such as sanitation and water impose extra hardships on women.



Most women are illiterate and girls are forced to give up their studies to look after younger siblings or work for the family. Child marriage and child labour are a constant threat. Malnutrition, especially among women and children, hampers productivity and increases susceptibility to infections; a situation worsened by unhygienic practices. Women feel shy about approaching doctors for treatment or advice and therefore, do not access timely medical intervention leading to more serious illnesses.



At the height of the COVID pandemic, the mobile clinic was a godsend to the remote villages, as most public healthcare centres had been designated for exclusive COVID care. With special permission from the authorities during the lockdowns, the Don Bosco Devadurga mobile clinic delivered basic healthcare to these areas, also serving as an ambulance in times of need. These crucial interventions were much appreciated by the people and the Government officials.

Health workers from the mobile clinic visit the villages and Anganwadis, to identify and mobilise sick people while the doctor and trained nurse perform basic health checks and treatment and provide medicines if required. Patients are referred to the Taluk or other hospitals in Raichur city.

An important aspect of the work is to educate people on healthy practices: personal and environmental cleanliness, social distancing, importance of handwashing, nutritious food and building immunity, preventive measures against COVID 19, information on common sicknesses and their prevention, and encouraging people to use scientific solutions instead of superstitious practices. The health workers were well-trained on COVID-19 prevention and care services. They were also educated on Community-based Disaster Management techniques, especially for epidemics.

In 2021-22, the mobile clinic benefitted more than **19,600** people in **25** villages

- **19180** received free medicines
- **310** were referred to other hospitals
- **1918** received sessions on health education

In addition, **15** young volunteers were trained as COVID warriors, providing services for prevention of COVID (through awareness classes, distribution of health aid materials), healthcare and transportation for COVID patients and quarantined people, and support for the last rites of COVID victims.

Some important socioeconomic outcomes through the mobile clinic:

- A notable change in the people's outlook and attitude towards health and hygiene.
- A tremendous decrease in the use of superstitious practices and rituals during illness, going to quacks, burning the skin on the shoulder as a cure for jaundice.



- Provision of antenatal, postnatal, and neonatal care for mothers and children who otherwise would not have survived.
- A reduction in maternal and child mortality rates in the villages where the mobile clinic operates.
- Critical assistance to patients with typhoid and other serious illnesses, helping their recovery to normal health.

Experimenting with Telemedicine

BREADS collaborated with Triquetra Healthcare and Technology Pvt Ltd to test whether the existing mobile clinic and associated healthcare by Don Bosco Devadurga could be successfully augmented with technology for better healthcare management. In a pilot intervention, as part of their CSR initiative, they offered their technology platform TRIAS free of cost to the healthcare team in Devadurga to support affordable and modern healthcare through:

- Digitising of currently available patient/health data in various health and outreach programs of BREADS/Don Bosco Devadurga using TRIAS.
- Promoting automated healthcare provision through teleconsultation services using TRIAS, supported by digitised health records.
- An envisioned model health clinic at Don Bosco Devadurga that can be easily replicated in the taluk and enabling it with state-of-the-art cost-effective telemedicine facilities.

The Triquetra team visited Devadurga to conduct a feasibility study. They provided TRIAS-enabled tablets and IOMT vitals-checking device kits to the staff to effectively document and analyse patient issues and health outcomes.

They trained the staff to use the technology with the goal to automate healthcare practices, equip the mobile clinic and healthcare workers to improve healthcare using modern facilities.



Impacting Lives

Sabanna is a farm worker, aged 50, hailing from the Mudalagunda village of Devadurga taluk. His income is usually insufficient even for his food expenses. He had an acute skin disease, for which he consulted a local doctor and was being treated but without any improvement. One day, he met the health workers of the Don Bosco Devadurga mobile clinic and expressed his painful situation. Assessing the need, the health workers took him to the Navodaya Medical College Hospital, Raichur to consult with a skin specialist. He was diagnosed appropriately and given proper medicines. Gradually, his condition improved and ultimately was cured. He was able to go back to earning a living without needing to spend extra on ineffective medical care. Sabanna is very happy and grateful to the mobile clinic for the timely intervention and support that has improved the quality of his life as well as his livelihood.

Enabling Employment for the Differently Abled — JPN

Don Bosco Job Placement Network (JPN) in collaboration with Bangalore Rural Education and Development Society (BREADS), organised a unique service for the community of differently abled job seekers in Bangalore on 29 April 2022. Together with Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled, JPN successfully organised an exclusive job fair in Bell Hotel – Majestic for more than 100 candidates with varying levels of disability.

Quess Corp Pvt Ltd, Bangalore accepted the invitation to be partners in recruiting. The organisation recruited candidates for various posts in warehousing, business process outsourcing and e-commerce, logistics (packing and billing). The JPN Coordinator and the Quess team were able to assist the candidates in career counselling, explaining the nature of work and the job roles. Nearly 40 candidates applied for these posts, out of which 12 were selected for immediate joining while others were shortlisted for future placement.

The Don Bosco Job Placement Network aims to improve the livelihoods of underserved jobseekers by enhancing their aspirations through career guidance and skill training, enabling access to secured job markets through job referral services, ensuring retention and improving their livelihood and social integration through quality job opportunities with adequate wages, decent, safe and secure working conditions.

This special job fair for the differently abled was a happy experience of being able to truly fulfil the goal to support underserved job seekers, enabling their journey towards self-reliance and a dignified life.



BREADS NEWS



Awareness programme and distribution of masks in Horamavu, Bangalore

The Karnataka Interstate Migrants Alliance for Transformation (KISMAT— a BREADS' project) in collaboration with the Department of Social Work, Kristu Jayanti College, Bangalore conducted an awareness programme on...[more...](#)



Street play in Chitradurga

To educate girls and their parents to say "NO" to child marriage, Don Bosco Chitradurga under the project Women Empowerment through Collective Action and Networks (WECAN) presented a street play...[more...](#)



Digital Literacy Programme by WELivE Kannur

The Women Empowerment through Livelihood and Entrepreneurship (WELivE) programme in Kannur, Kerala in association with the Computer Science Department of Don Bosco Arts and Science College Angadikadavu organised...[more...](#)



Inauguration of the 17th Skill Training batch-DB BEST Academy

The 17th skill training batch at DB BEST Academy (skill training centre of BREADS Bangalore) was formally inaugurated on 23 April 2022. The ceremony was attended by the new batch of students along with their parents, and the staff...[more...](#)

Calendar

April 2022

- Monitoring and evaluation of BREADS' projects
- Presentation of the CREAM model at YESS Forum, Bangalore
- BREADS' funding partner monitoring visit

May 2022

- Inauguration of renovated SUPRABHA, Davangere (shelter home for children at risk)
- Monitoring and evaluation of BREADS' projects
- DREAM state-level Staff Meeting and Training
- *Santoshadinda Shalege*—BREADS' campaign to send underprivileged children back to school with a smile.



**DO YOU
REMEMBER
YOUR TIME IN SCHOOL?**

**SOME CHILDREN CAN'T
THEY DIDN'T GO.**

**GIFT A CHILD HAPPY
MEMORIES OF SCHOOL!**



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Remember the anticipation of school reopening? The thrill of new books neatly covered and labelled. The pleasure of reading pens and pencils, erasers and geometry boxes, school bags and water bottles. The eagerness to meet up with friends after the break.

Let children enjoy these pleasures! It's their time to learn and play. A time that does not return. Ensure that it is not stolen from them.

[Partner with BREADS to sponsor fees and school materials for children in need.](#)

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