

About Navajeevana

New Life

Navajeevana, meaning “new life”, has been working to rehabilitate people with disabilities in southern Sri Lanka for over twenty years. Our vision is to see people with disabilities as equal and participating members of a non-discriminatory society.

We provide a holistic service for people with disabilities and work with the “whole” person—from early identification, intervention, treatment and full rehabilitation, where the person is able to earn an independent income. It is this holistic approach which makes us unique in Sri Lanka.

Disability in southern Sri Lanka

In southern Sri Lanka, roughly one in ten people has some kind of a physical or mental disability. This makes the region one of the highest in terms of disability in the whole island. People with disabilities are much more likely to live in poverty and experience stigma and discrimination than those without.

This high percentage is caused by many different factors. Communities in the south are very remote and roads and transportation is poor. Hospitals in the area are not equipped to deal with serious injuries and disabilities, and awareness on preventing and treating disabilities is low. Poverty, poor nutrition and birth defects also contribute to this number, and the legacy left by the tsunami has compounded this.

Our Services

We aim to provide support and rehabilitation to any person with a disability living in the Hambantota and Matara districts of southern Sri Lanka. Core to this is our **community based rehabilitation** (CBR) programme, in which trained volunteers and field officers identify people with disabilities and work with them to help them get access to the services they need. Through our programme, we support over 3,500 clients annually.

We also run four **special-schools** for children with disabilities, in which we support them into mainstream education where possible, and help build their confidence in practicing daily tasks, such as cleaning themselves, eating, and helping around the house. Over 100 children are enrolled at our schools.

Through our CBR programme, we have realised that access to therapy and specialist equipment for people with disabilities is sparse in this region. People often need access to more than one service, and have to travel for days to receive it. For this reason, we provide a “one stop shop” where people can access the therapy and support they need under one roof. This programme, which we call **institutional based rehabilitation** (IBR) provides physiotherapy, prosthetics and orthotics, speech therapy, custom made wheelchairs and supportive seats, and audiological services both in the field and in the Navajeevana Inclusion Centre in Tangalla.

The lack of understanding about disabilities in this area often means that our clients are immobilised by their disability, sometimes left isolated in a small room in their family home, or worse still, actively rejected by friends and family members. We work to change attitudes towards disabilities, and run **educational programmes** for parents, care givers and medical health professionals.

Contact us for more information at:

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