

# FROM SOCIAL STIGMA TO FAMILY REFERENT, BOCCIA FOR A CHANGE ON THE WAY OF THINKING

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## INTRODUCTION



**Boccia** is a precision ball sport, similar to bocce, and related to bowls and pétanque. The sport is contested at local, national and international levels, by athletes with severe physical disabilities. It was originally designed to be played by people with cerebral palsy but now it includes athletes with other severe disabilities affecting motor skills.

- ☑ Totally **inclusive** (all ages, gender, ability or disability)
- ☑ Physical strength is not a key issue
- ☑ **Accuracy and strategy** is more important

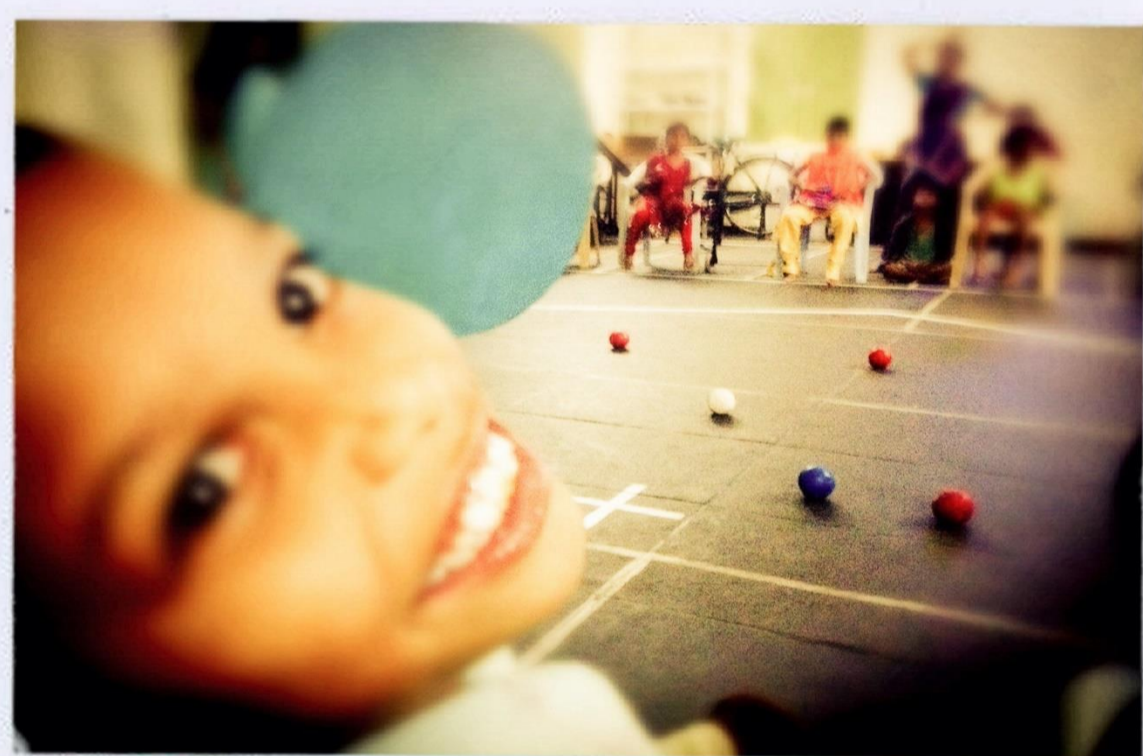


Figure 1. Development of the Boccia game with the disabled children in rural India.

## SELECTED AREA

The study was carried out in the **rural India of Anantapur** district. In this district there are more than 60.000 disabled people (56% male and 44% female; physical, visual and intellectual (Kasi, E., 2015).

Rural areas concentrate 83% of disabled people because of:

- The **lack of awareness** in these areas
- The **difficulty to access to medical services**
- Disabled people in this area are affected by **poverty, vulnerability, deprivation** of opportunities for income and other types of **social exclusion**.

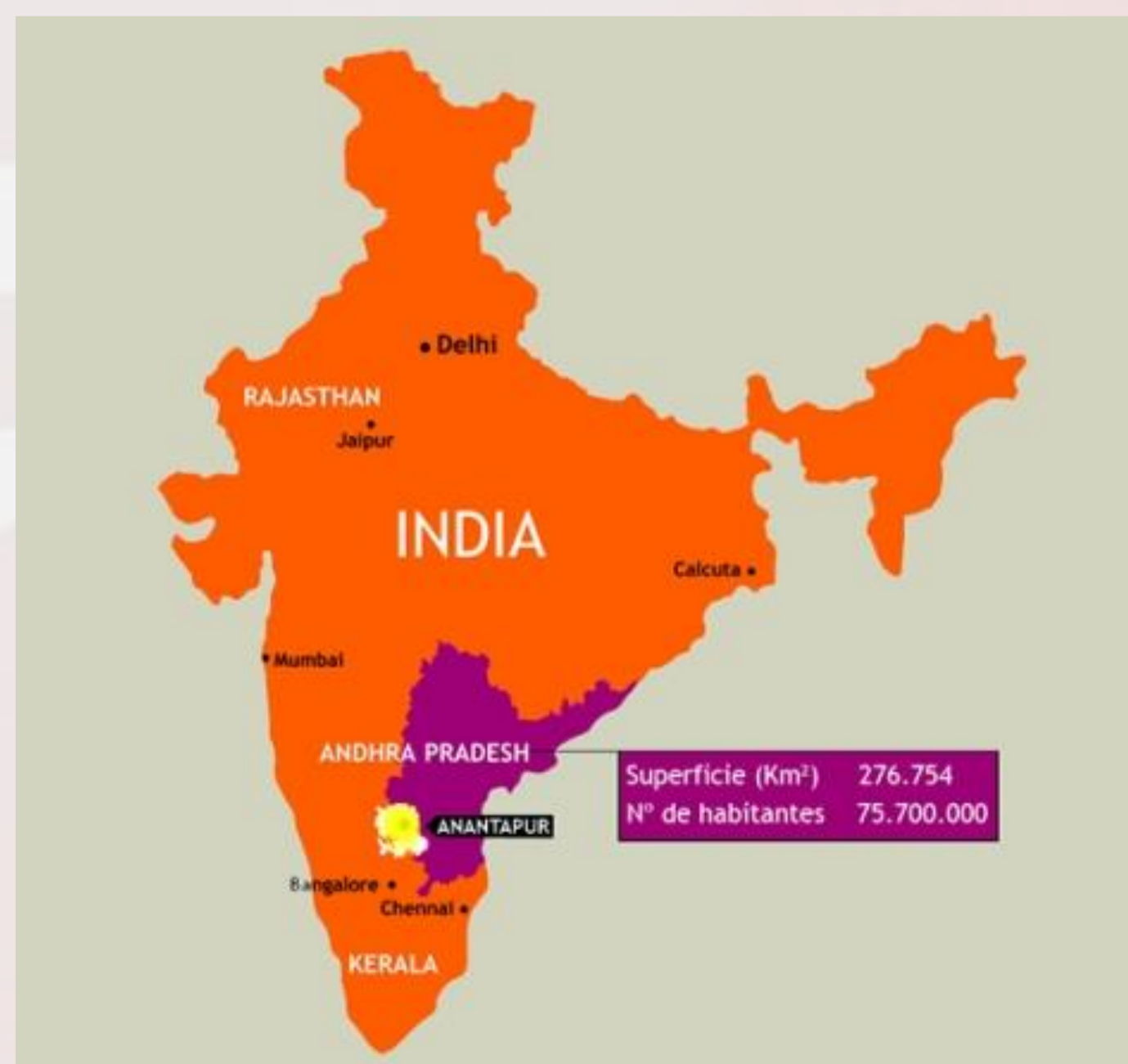


Figure 2. Location of Anantapur in India.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to assess the impact of the practice of Boccia (adapted sport) with children aged between 4 and 14 years old with cerebral palsy in rural India and the changes that this implies in social recognition and quality of family life. This study took place between January 2015 and February 2016. The research aims to fill the knowledge gap given the little information that exists on the importance of the context, specifically in the case of a family with a disabled person. This project is part of the "Family Centred Program" and is based on the use of a structured interview called Family Quality of Life McWilliams (FaQuOL). A statistical analysis using SPSS was conducted to evaluate the difference between the participants who had participated in the championship Boccia with the consequent social recognition and those who did not. The results show that this sport has helped improving the quality of family life and ultimately the social acceptance of the participants. The conclusions we reached are not only quantitative where these children have won awards, there is also a qualitative result showing improvement in their quality of life through sport.

## METHOD

Nine athletes from Fundación Vicente Ferrer Cerebral Palsy Centers participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> National Boccia National India Championship in Kolkatta last November 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> 2015.

- **Qualitative** analysis based on the following aspects observed during the trip: travelling, team work, social, medals and general experience.
- **Quantitative** analysis based on the use of a structured interview called Family Quality of Life McWilliams (McWilliam, R.A., 2010)).



Figure 3. Group of 9 boys and girls children participating in the 1<sup>st</sup> National Boccia Championship in Kolkatta.

## REFERENCES

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- Moore, J. B., Jilcott, S. B., Shores, K. A., Evenson, K. R., Brownson, R. C., & Novick, L. F. (2010). A qualitative examination of perceived barriers and facilitators of physical activity for urban and rural youth. *Health Education Research*, 25(2), 355-367.
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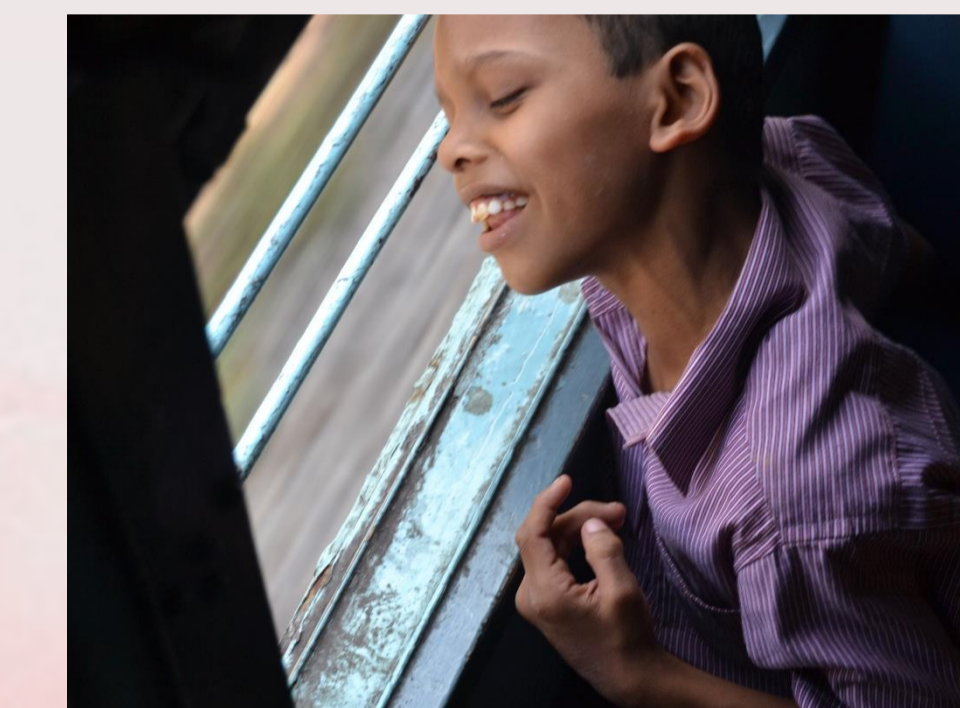
## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

### TRAVELLING

- **Connection** with the rest of the **world** (40 hours).
- **Out of their comfort area**.
- **Learning** and getting **integrated** in other reality/society

### TEAM WORK

- **Empathy** in small group in only 1 week.
- **Helping each other** in order to be on time during daily activities, adaptations in the Boccia matches and during chai time.
- **Giving** snacks to colleagues that were not able to hold them.



### MEDALS

- The team **won all matches**.
- The team reached the **gold medal**.

### SOCIAL

- **Meeting many people** from other side of the country, talking other languages
- Taking a **lift**, sleeping in a **bed**, and eating on a **table** sitting in a **chair**.
- **Fun** as a frequently reported facilitator for children and adolescents (Moore, J. B., 2010))

### ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL RECOGNITION

- **Interviews**. 'Family Quality of Life McWilliams'
- **Statistical** analysis SPSS.
- **Difference** between participants/non-participants

### FULL EXPERIENCE

- **Benefits** of the sport
- **Empowerment** after travelling
- **Opportunity** that these kids are having through **sport** with the support of our **Organization**.



## CONCLUSIONS

- The results show that this sport has helped **improving the quality of family life** and ultimately the social acceptance of the participants.
- The conclusions are not only **quantitative** where these children have won awards, there is also a **qualitative** result showing improvement in their quality of life through sport.