

Differently Abled Persons in India: Current Challenges for Their Development

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ABSTRACT

We are living in 21st century where speedy development is taking place in every field of human life. Due to invention of Information and communications technology, information is generated, published, circulated and exchanged across the world in a very fast manner which is called as Information explosion. To cope up with this enormous information and to keep them abreast, people are accessing required information from Library and Information centres or through using internet. But 15% of the world's population - approximately 1,000,000,000 users are still deprived of required information or not getting latest information in timely manners, they called differently abled persons. Out of which five percent of the total population of differently abled people is children. It means there are a total of 5 million disabled people in the world are children and they comprise a largest minority group of the world. Like normal people, differently abled persons also require latest information to update, to educate, to empower, to employ and to be independent. According to PWD act, differently- abled persons have equal right to access the social, political, and economic life which includes not only physical access but access to the same tools, services, organizations and facilities for which everyone pays. As per guidelines of Government of India, information is a primary and fundamental right of all people of the country, including differently abled persons and their information need must be fulfilled. On the 1st of January 1996 the Government of India passed the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995 which ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and implicitly mandates an inclusive society for all including the persons with disabilities.

In India, due to lack of education and awareness such diseases and problems got areas to stretch their arms. Researchers were keen to find solutions to such problems and faced troubles in covering the wide areas and taking aid from government authorities and NGO's to overcome such issues. With the help of this research paper, scope and major issues, challenges concerning disability and rehab measures in India are being tried to discussed upon and adoptive measures regarding health care for disabled in the community.

KEYWORDS: Differently abled, Disability, Issues, Challenges, rehabilitation

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I. INTRODUCTION

Today, we are living in an era of information technology, in which information is generating at a very fast speed in each and every domain of human life across this universe.

According to WHO estimates, 15% of the world's population - approximately 1 billion persons in the world experiences some form of disability. *The disability is defined as physical or mental conditions the person that limits his/her ability to function, to move and to act.* The disability means physical and mental impairment, such as Visual Impairment (VI), Speech Impairment (SI), Hearing Impairment (HI), Orthopedically

Impairment (OI), and Mental Challenged (MR). It can be an in-born disability, an acquired disability, or a developed disability. As the population rises, the disabled minority group is also expected to rise in number. **According to the UN Development Program** 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries such as India, China, Bangladesh, Brazil, Hungary, South Africa etc. Moreover, five percent of the total population of disabled people is children. It means, there are a total of 5,000,000 or 5 million disabled people in the world are children that comprise a very good number and their information need, Educational need and Medical need cannot be neglected at any cost because it affects hundreds of millions of families where differently abled persons is only earner.

The World Bank estimates that 20 per cent of the world's poorest people have some kind of disability. It is also estimated that in the next thirty years, the number of disabled people will rise in some countries. In which, blindness and sight impairments are very common disabilities in all countries of the world. Globally, it is estimated that approximately 314 million people worldwide suffer from blindness and partially sightedness. Out of which, 269 million are low vision and 45 million are complete blindness. As per a study, about 80% of the world's population of people with disabilities lives in low-income countries. Moreover, approximately 19 million children are visually impaired who are below 15 years.

Persons with disabilities are a key note which depicts impairments, restrictions on public participations. Impairment as a term is defined as 'state of having a physical or mental condition which means that part of your body or brain doesn't work properly' whereas a restriction on public participations is basically a problem that's experienced by a person in involvement in routine work. Such groups are considered to be marginalised as they are the people who anticipate more care, attention and care in comparison to non-disabled persons.

December 3 is a significant day for disabled persons and the day has been marked as '**International Day of Persons with Disabilities by the United Nations since 1992**'. The sole motto behind the annual observation of this day is to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all aspects of society; and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

In India's diversified population, people with one or more disabilities can be found among masses. The 2011 population census data reveals disabilities to be around 26.8 million, constituting 2.21% of India's total population. People working for rights of disabled and other social workers are in opinion that these numerals provided in the census are in a very small percentage of the actual data. World Bank with disabilities in India suggests the number between 40 and 80 million. Inferences from the data secured from across the globe suggest the disabled persons in India are significant in comparison to other developed economies.

Despite significant proportion of the total population in India, persons with disabilities live a very harsh life. Their 'disability' is perceived as their 'inability' by employers and people have conceived their own thoughts about their capabilities. There are various cases where employers have denied a job to candidate's with disability looking on to their conditions instead of boosting their morale, studies suggest that at many times disabled persons have turned up more fruitful in comparison to non-disabled person.

The Disability need not be an obstacle to success rather it should be ladder to climb unusual. We have a moral duty to remove the barriers to participation, and to invest sufficient funding and expertise to unlock the vast potential of people with disabilities. Governments throughout the world can no longer overlook the hundreds of millions of people with disabilities who are denied access to health, rehabilitation, support, education and employment, and never get the chance to shine.

India is still lacking behind in providing infrastructure to disabled persons despite several efforts and campaign. It is a high time when we should work together to create a stress-free environment for such persons breaking the barriers with the aim of changing negative attitudes about disabled persons into positive recognition of their attributes, skills and their sole rights.

II. WHO IS A PERSON WITH DISABILITY?

An important question that arises in the discourse is who can be considered disabled. Disability differs from person to person. Every disabled person can be classified on the parameters that make them disabled as even to obtain government grants and subsidy, one has to submit disability certificate from a medical practitioner who would certify after examining the percentage of disability in any part of the body and how does he become disabled.

There is no universal definition of what constitutes a disability or of who should be considered as having a disability. Moreover, there is no one static condition of disability. A disability is a result of the interaction between a person with a health condition and a particular environmental context.

This report reveals that as per 2011 population census, 20% of persons with disabilities in India have a disability in movement, 19% have a disability in seeing, 19% have a disability in hearing and 8% have multiple disabilities. The report also highlights that the number of persons with disabilities is highest in the age group 10-19 years (46.2 lakh people).

The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities defines disability differently. It says: Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The World Report on Disability 2011 sums up the various definitions of disability by stating that “**Disability is complex, dynamic, multidimensional, and contested**”.

III. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Persons with disabilities are one of the most marginalised sections of society. The word disability is being seen as a social stigma, according to which parents feel ashamed of their children, and in fear most of them feel uncomfortable in public upfront. This not only makes lives of persons with disabilities miserable, but they continue to be depressed throughout their lives.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, has been almost a year since the government of India came up with this landmark Act on disability which was implemented for empowerment of persons with disabilities and to build confidence and dignity in society and at workplace. It helped to provide individual autonomy and freedom to take decisions. This act laid stress on non-discrimination among other members of the society. The act provides 3% reservation in government jobs and education institutions.

Indian education system and Government institutions both are failing in making arrangements for the welfare for disabled persons to an extent. There should be proper seats for disabled persons at classrooms as well as at the exam centres. Vehicles for PWD candidates should be made available at all such places for their mobility.

Most of the government buildings or private offices and other infrastructure are inaccessible for disabled people. The physically handicapped persons face a great deal of uncertainty because of their restricted movements or limitation or the loss of locomotors abilities. There are hundreds of activities which a person performs from the moment he wakes up in the morning till he goes to sleep at night. The activities comprise everything entailed in human life and relationships.

There should be reforms in Education system to build better society through which disabled persons can face the challenges of life with courage and conscience. Despite, UN proclamation of declaring 1992 as 'International Year of Literacy, illiteracy is particularly prevalent among disabled people and constitutes for them a double disadvantage. In addition to being disabled, they are isolated by illiteracy.

“Education plays a pivotal role which brings equilibrium between medical and vocational rehabilitation and brings societal changes of the disabled. It is more crucial element than that of the muscular strength or swiftness in the movements of the joints in a body. Through education a revolution may occur by which social uplift as well as the scenario of life would get changed. The education of the crippled child must follow the law of compensation i.e., the development of intellectual abilities to compensate for physical inadequacy”. Where a child who is born blind or physically challenged has to spend years of childhood in rigorous training in overcoming such hurdles rather than taking education at right age. The child whose development gets delayed and by age of seven starts walking that too with external aid, the child who utters the first word at the age of eight or the child who starts spelling at the age of nine cannot be normal in receiving education in comparison to his counterpart who starts walking, talking and writing at a much lower age.

In India, there shall be compulsory education for children at schools about treatment with disabled persons and special teachers should be engaged in schools for sign language training as well as providing special classes for disabled persons for their overall development.

That National Policy on Education for the first time considered education for all as one of the cherished goals of national development. Revolutionising primary education is a major step towards attaining this goal. The policy states that non-engagement of such groups of special children is one of the major hurdles in the realization of this goal. Disabled children are one such special group which have received inadequate attention so far.

Unemployment being one of major factor as at such times disabled persons are the ones who are scapegoats in getting fired at tenure of recessions. They are first to be discharged from their services when cost cutting methods are adopted by the companies and it is assumed that efficiency of such employees are low in comparison to other employees.

Job-oriented training is need of the time; it is found out that the nature of the job has no relation with his training. The training imparted to the candidates gives limited exposure in handling the jobs. There should be well trained professionals for training who can ignite the minds and train them to cater the needs of service industry.

Inadequate environmental facilities are also a key environmental factor responsible for sustainable and healthy environment. Sanitation, stair-cases, ramps, canteens and recreation rooms, separate wash rooms, garden areas are also not suitable in the working place. For the disabled persons who live in rural areas and employment opportunities are situated in the urban areas. The disabled, either has to start living in the city or vehemently forced to leave the job as conveyance facilities are not up to the mark. The environmental conditions for them are not made to cater the special needs of the disabled workers.

Handicapped person feels apprehensive about his communication with others. Inter-personal transfers of emotions are quite important for the mental health of the individual. The physically handicapped person is subjected to lot of stress because of lack of social relations. In addition to increased physical and emotional stress, the crippled individual is condemned to a similar outcome in his social life. The attitudes of society towards the physically handicapped are always reprimanding when it comes to the capabilities of them.

Restrictions are imposed on handicapped persons since the inception of impairment of his body, such individual faces lot of uncertainty and insecurity in many situations. Frustration, anxiety and insecurity are major factors seen in disabled persons due to their inability to do work efficiently.

Behaviour of the family towards person who is disabled would always be soft and they would always remain in fear about their health and overall aspects of their life. People due to lack of knowledge could not provide vaccination to their children and they were grabbed by deadly viruses like Polio. Effects of which could be seen since their childhood and in such type of disease, growth which should take place were restricted and particular children were not able to walk properly, stand and could not do normal household chores. Parents and siblings of such children were always in fear that how would their child sustain in competing world. Attitudes of the family towards their children are more crucial than the attitudes of the society at large in determining his self-concept and his attitude towards the world. If the individual is treated normal by his family members, a child feels accepted by the parents and the family then his approach towards his life gets changed dramatically and it helps him in developing a positive self-concept and a favourable attitude towards the world. Parents are too sensitive to the adverse and negative attitudes of society towards the disabled and find it hard to reconcile to the reality of child's disability.

The Disabled persons are meagre to be found in government jobs due to lack of confidence and their attitudes towards life. They always feel shattered and find themselves in dilemma what to opt and where to fall.

Lack of IT services Prevent access to information and knowledge and opportunities to participate. Lack of services or problems with service delivery also restricts the participation of people with disabilities.

Funding by the government and projects undertaken by the NGO are inadequate. Improper financing is a major obstacle to sustainable development of disabled person. Generally, indigent persons are unable to meet their daily expenses and can't afford and avail technologies which in turn hinder their growth. Providing training by trained teachers to disabled person and to train them to handle their work in different and efficient manner. Vocational and linguistic teachers should be recruited for overall well-being of the people. Seminars should be arranged in auditoriums to impart training to them. Camps should be arranged to distribute free bicycles to poor persons and to provide adequate facilities to them.

IV. CONCLUSION:

Disability is considered to be a social stigma in society which needs to be improvised. Disability is nothing but impairment in mind of people rather than being impaired by limbs. People in the society have such belief for them which makes them unable to stand on their own. Factors like funding, training, attitudes of families and friends are major factors responsible for slow down of growth of disabled persons. In the areas where they have been taken care of, they have proved their mettle and reached heights and achieved highest scores in society. Disabled persons who have made their aim and have worked hard towards attaining goals are successful today and churning various important posts in government as well as in private organizations. People are excluded and prevented from participating effectively on equal terms in mainstream society. Disability is an unfortunate part of human life which can affect not only the natural way of living but also despair strength and power. It is said that a person can win everywhere but when it comes to home and he has lost the battle at home, it is the point where a person dies.

With the amendments in Rights of persons with disabilities act, 2016, various provisions have been added in the benefit of disabled persons. Our law has also strengthened and gross benefits are provided to disabled persons. In limitation act, 1963, under section 6(3) of limitation act, 1963 empowers legal representatives to file a suit after the death of a person suffering from legal disability, this provision is supported by order 22 rule 3(1) of Civil Procedure Code, 1908. Every person has right to life with dignity that includes disabled persons also as guaranteed under article 21 of Constitution. However, mere passing of the act is not sufficient and it has to be implemented in actions. Through its kind perusal, it is seen by deeds and actions that law makers have been able to enact better provisions for disabled section of the society. It is clear that the position of the disabled section will not improve unless there is an active participation among government, non-

governmental organization and other members of the society. The government has done a commendable job in driving its attention towards the education and employment of the disabled section. Several schemes and benefits have successfully served to provide equal opportunities to the disabled sections of the society. The government needs to launch more social security schemes for disabled sections and generate more employment opportunities for them.

For implementing all the social security schemes, government or the society have to make collective efforts to remove socio- legal impediments which were the cause of disturbing all the efforts of state and NGO's and other social workers. Its scope lies in rehabilitation with transparency between the state and its citizens and methodology to be adopted for implementation of the rehabilitation programs.

Disabled population is great in numbers in India and cannot be overlooked. Though, estimates of India's disability population vary, researchers have put the figure to 70 million. This is a huge population which in any foreign country would be its total population. An estimated 75% per cent of people with disabilities reside in rural areas of developing countries and have very limited scope of attaining the services they require. The best possible manner to train, educate and boost the morale of disabled sections of society is by linking them to labour jobs opportunities. The key stakeholders are government, companies, NGOs and the disabled community. There are challenges at different levels. When a person has been able to study and develop themselves against all odds and finds themselves in such a situation where they are not finding any suitable jobs, this affects their self-confidence. Disabled people who live in rural areas are cut off from self centric development and no knowledge of English and computers, which is must for employment are the people suffering the most. Government's reservation policy of 3% reservation in government and public sector jobs does not translate to a reality because the disabled cannot pass the online recruitment tests and the method of job identification is cumbersome. In public sector, it is identified that persons with disability tantamount to 1-1.5% of their workforce. It is seen in most of the cases, that if a person thinks to attain success breaking all the barriers of the society and at home, he might become successful. For example: A business is being handled by one such group of persons in Gujarat where all the employees are physically challenged and they are making profits out of the business by manufacturing bags by used clothes.

There is an opportunity to skill the disabled for industry needs. Vocational skills are imbibed in such persons based on the needs of the industry. India has set up an ambitious task of skilling 500 million youth in five years to garner its demographic area with financial budget. National Skilling Development Corporation and government departments have taken initiation on training youth. Technological advancement is also needed to aid in overall development of disabled persons as every department and government is technology driven. An employment portal should be set up, which should have a data of all classes of people and should offer job opportunities to all sections of society. This would serve as a knowledge base with articles and research publications.

Carrot and sticks idiom should be followed with best companies and organizations indulged into facilitating best services for disabled persons under overall situations. Their names should be highlighted and should be rewarded so that it will help in persuasion to others. Some entrepreneurs are building their business model based on workforce consisting of disabled persons. These best practices need to be mapped to inspire others and help them perceive the persons with disability as a valuable alternative labour force.

Through government, technical aid should be provided to training centres for persons with disability. NSDC and other government departments should be encouraged to have a separate window of funding for the disabled. An initiative should also be taken on social networking websites to urge such discouraged persons to learn new things and to interact with other people which in turn would make them lively and live their life with ecstasy. This will help build a positive environment for the public including important stakeholders to come on board to mainstream persons with disability.

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