



Rehabilitation and Welfare of Physically Challenged in Karnataka

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *Of the four types of disabilities, physically challenged people consists majority of the disabled population. Physically challenged or physically handicapped or physically disabled includes all persons who have either completely lost the use of or can make only a restricted use of one or more of their physical organs. Even though they are all correct to perform all the kinds of work, still due to their physical disability, they can't move or perform all the work easily. Hence, many of the social welfare schemes and rehabilitation measures are formulated by the Government of Karnataka for the welfare of the physically challenged and the paper discussed such schemes and programmes.*

Introduction:

Disability is any impairment from normal, which results in defective function, structure, organization or development of the whole or in part of the individual's faculties. Disability refers to any limitation experienced by an impaired individual of similar age, sex and culture. It therefore leads to a limitation of functioning, whether locomotors, sensory or affecting any other specific organ. Because of this inadequacy, the disabled suffer many disadvantages such as feeling of insecurity, lack of confidence and limited social participation.

Disability is a multidimensional concept, relating to the body functions and structures of people, the activities they do, the life areas in which they participate, and the factors in their environment that affect these experiences. In any society, disability is a normative, cultural, and legal construct more than a physical factor. Disability is a general feature of humanity with disparity in its causes and characteristics in different societies. Disability rates vary noticeably between different countries in the world, mainly due to their differentials in conceptual measurements. According to conservative estimates, approximately 6% of India's population is disabled. The term disabled suggests a person who falls short of normal physical fitness (Rao and Usha, 1995).

In general, 'physically handicapped' are persons who has either completely lost the use or who can make only a restricted use of one or more of their limbs, i.e. the total or partial functional disablement. On the other hand, 'disabled' is a much wider term covering all those who suffer from malformations, deformities and other deficiencies- physical or mental- which prevent their normal functioning. These defects cause special problems of education, employment and adjustment in the society (Mehta, 1983).

The term 'Physically Challenged or physically handicapped' often used synonymously with impairment and disability. As per the classification made by the World Health Organization (1980), these terms have three separate meanings, but related to same concepts, that is 'impairment' means 'loss of function', disability means 'loss of ability to perform specific tasks' and handicap means 'social and economic disadvantage'. It is noted that all of these words given only one concept, lack of some kind of physical or mental ability, which is possessed by other compared to a person. 'In the affluent industrialized societies, occupational hazards and age are the main causes while in developing as well as underdeveloped countries, ignorance, poverty, lack of elementary medical facilities and pseudo-religious beliefs are the principal causes of disability (Lal Das, 1997). Disability is classified into four types and they include (1) Physically disabled or movement

or locomotor (2) Visually Impaired (3) Deaf and Dumb and (4) Mentally Retarded.

Physically handicapped or physically disabled includes all persons who have either completely lost the use of or can make only a restricted use of one or more of their physical organs. A Physically handicapped person is a perfectly normal being except for the handicap from which he suffers. Thus, he is capable of performing all the functions of a normal person except in so far as he is limited by his handicap. They are all disabled persons because they have one or the other type of physical handicap. The normal functioning of any one part of their body has become of no use. In medical terms Physical disability means a limitation of physical function of locomotor or sensory or of special organs irrespective of the cause...sociologically, a physical handicap is a physical defect, obvious or hidden which limits an individuals capacity to work or evokes an unfavourable attitude (Singh, 1997). According to Census of India 2001, the following is the population of physically disabled people in Karnataka and different districts of Karnataka.

Table No. 1. Total Disabled and Physically Disabled Population in Karnataka

Places	Total Disabled Population			Physically Disabled		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Karnataka (R)	375809	285330	661139	121400	70049	191449
Karnataka (U)	161921	117583	279504	47415	27695	75110
Karnataka (T)	537730	402913	940643	168815	97734	266559

The disabled persons have an equal right to participate in social and economic activities like the rest of the community. The central and state governments express concern regarding the needs of the disabled through various policies and programmes.

Currently reservations in services, concessions in employment, disability pension under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1952, medical and maternity benefits under Employees' State Insurance Act 1948, benefits under the Workmen's Compensation Act 1923, special schools for the disabled children, disability specific assistance programmes are available in the country.

Unfortunately, three major Social Security Acts listed above are the employer liability and employment related benefit schemes. They are operative only in the case of disability during the course of employment. There are no programmes for old age and survivor benefits in the case of the disabled who cannot be employed or the disabled person who are not employed even after crossing the employable age.

There are no programmes for the disabled, dependent and aged widows excepting some very meager assistance given by some State Governments (including Karnataka) such as old age pension of Rs. 500 per month. According to the All India Directory of the Handicapped for 1983 brought out by the Union Ministry for Social Welfare, 800 special institutions cater to the needs of the disabled. Assuming that each institution on an average takes care of 50 persons, only 40000 disabled persons out of a total 75 million are covered (Johri, 2005).

Even though a few rural development programmes included benefits for the disabled, but the rate of disabled beneficiaries is only a few. The Central Government and State Governments are already providing only a few benefits such as pension scheme, reservation in education and employment, etc. The Social Welfare Schemes and Rehabilitation of the Physically Challenged people in Karnataka are discussed as under.

Social Welfare Schemes and Rehabilitation of Physically Challenged in Karnataka:

Some of the welfare measures as stated by Rao and Usha (1995) are 1. Seed Money Scheme for the disabled entrepreneurs. 2. Education training under rehabilitation programme for physically and mentally handicapped. 3. Hostel for working disabled men and women. 4. Braille Press. 5. Buildings. 6. Survey of the disabled. 7. Supply of telephone booths to the disabled persons. 8. Incentive Scheme for the marriage of the disabled. 9 Training cum-production centre 10. Scheme for Incentive award to the merited disabled students. 11. Setting up of sound libraries for the blind. 12. Community based rehabilitation. 13. Social services complex. 14. State award for the work done for the disabled welfare. 15. Scheme for strengthening the grant-in-aid institutions. 16. Observance of World Day of the Disabled. 17. Training of Resource Teachers for integrated education. 18. Public Awareness Programme and 19. Developments of Schools for Deaf and Blind.

Persons with Disability Act 1995:

The persons with disabilities do have outstanding abilities. In recent times the abilities of this people are recognized and encouraged to bring them to the main stream of the Society.

As per 2001 census Karnataka has a disabled population (including all the types of disability) of 9, 40,643 out of which 6, 61,139 persons live in villages and 2, 79,904 in urban areas. The literate disabled population is 4, 73,844, which constitutes 51.40% of the total disabled population. Most of the families with disabled persons live below poverty line. Lack of facilities and opportunities prevent disabled persons from gaining suitable, Education, Training & Employment. Unemployment remains a major challenge and inactiveness results in multiple disability and depression among the disabled persons. It is necessary to provide opportunities for them to study, to get trained in skill sets and get jobs to work. It should be kept in mind to provide barrier free environment at the place of education, training and place of working. Mobility is another aspect, which needs to be looked into.

Government of Karnataka has taken serious view about this and has taken keen interest from the beginning to help the specially challenged persons and launched several welfare schemes for the welfare and benefit of the persons with disabilities. Understanding the need of this vulnerable section of the Society the State Government has created separate department for the welfare of the disabled in the year 1988 and added the welfare of the Senior Citizens in the year 2003

to look into the programmes of the PWDs and Senior Citizens separately with the motto to serve and provide services to them only. Non-Governmental Organizations are also the part of the developing system which play an important role.

Government of India have passed a comprehensive legislation called Persons with the Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995, which came into force from 7.2.1996. The State Government has constituted the State Co-ordination Committee as per the Section 13 of the Act and appointed State Commissioner for persons with disabilities as per Section 60 of the Act and constituted the State Executive Committee as per the Sec. 19 of the Act. Action has been taken to implement Act to bring the persons with disabilities to the main stream of the Society.

1. Education Schemes for Physically Disabled:

Many of the Schools were set up by the Government of Karnataka, of which two Special Schools funded by State Government and run by NGOs for the orthopedically handicapped in Karnataka. There are 11 schools for orthopedically handicapped aided by the Central Government and run by NGOs.

To encourage enrollment and to continue the studies of the Physically handicapped, the State Government extends scholarships in the following manner from Class 1 to University Level.

Table No. 2. Scholarship to Disabled People

Standard	Monthly scholarship	Scholarship for hostel students	Reading allowance for blind students	Conveyance allowance for physically disabled
1 to V	50	25	25	25
VI to X	100	25	25	25
PUC	150	140	75	50
Degree/TCH	200	180	75	-
BE/MBBS/LLB	250	240	100	-
M.A, M.Sc, M.Com, LLM & equivalent	300	240	100	

Apart from the above stated facilities, the Karnataka Government also provided incentives and awards to the meritorious disabled students. The scheme provides one time Incentive Award to Meritorious disabled students who secure more than 60% of marks in public examinations. The eligibility criteria to get these awards are that the students must have 40% and above disability, passed previous classes and must submit the application through the Head of the Institutions.

Table No. 3. Incentives and Awards to Disabled Meritorious Students

Standard	Incentive Award
SSLC	Rs.500/-
II year PUC	Rs.750/-
Degree	Rs.1000/-
Post Graduate Courses	Rs. 1200/-
Degree in Agriculture Engineering Technology/ Vet. Science and Medicine	Rs. 1500/-

For encouraging the reading for the blind people, the Government runs a Braille Press at Mysore to cater to the needs of visual impaired students of the State. For blind students studying PUC and BA in humanities subjects 10 audio cassettes and a tape recorder is also provided free of cost by the

State Government and help them to continue their studies.

Apart from the above stated incentives for the disabled, the Government of Karnataka vide its order No: ED 10 STB: 93 Bangalore dtd.2.1.2001 ordered for 3% reservation of seats in all educational institutions for persons with disability students and also preference for PWDs in Hostel facilities. Facilities such as help of the scribe, extra time duration in public examination and selection of elective subjects are extended to visually impaired students. For Hearing Impaired children concession in studying 2nd and 3rd language and also one hour extra time for public examination is given. Special stickers are attached to the answer papers of the hearing impaired students in public examination.

State Government runs 2 special teachers training centre at Mysore for the training of teachers in teaching visually impaired children and hearing impaired children respectively in collaboration with National Institutes with the intake capacity of 20 students per batch every year in each category. It is a 2 years diploma course after PUC. Students with the minimum of 45 marks in PUC are eligible for entrance examination.

2. Rehabilitation Schemes:

Aids and Appliances are provided to disabled persons whose family annual income is less than Rs.11, 500 in Rural Areas and Rs. 24,000 in Urban Areas. To avail this benefit the disabled child must be resident of Karnataka for the last 10 years and should be certified by the Tahasildar and his/her Annual Income limit is Rs.24000 for urban areas and Rs.11500 for rural areas inhabitants.

Further, Karnataka State Disability Medical Relief Scheme for corrective surgeries for the prevention of disabilities aims at providing financial assistance to undergo corrective surgeries. To avail this benefit the disabled persons must have annual income limit is Rs.25000 for rural and less than Rs.50, 000 for urban, treatment should be conducted at Government Hospitals or reputed well-equipped specialized hospitals, disability certificate must be certified by the medical board and treatment vouchers or bills for treatment must be enclosed. Financial assistance up to maximum of Rs.15000/- is extended for corrective surgeries. The said amount will be deposited directly in the concerned Hospitals.

To cater to the needs of illiterate and semiliterate persons with disabilities, home based income generating activity needs to be encouraged and to motivate persons with disabilities for savings. The scheme has been implemented in all the 30 Districts @ one Taluk in each District where percentage of persons with disabilities is more. 10 Self Help Groups in each Taluk have been formed through NGOs. To promote the habit of saving among disabled people this programme was started and also to train the disabled people in vocational skills. It helped the disabled people to form Self-Help groups to engage in production activities.

Another scheme of the Government of Karnataka is Rural Rehabilitation Project for Disabled Persons (Revised NPRPD Scheme). The main aim of the scheme is to deliver all Govt. services at the doorstep of the disabled persons. Disabled persons will be appointed at Grama Panchayat Level and Taluk level as level rehabilitation and multi purpose rehabilitation workers respectively.

3. Social Security Schemes:

i) **Monthly Maintenance Allowance:** Disabled person who is poor and not able to maintain himself with food clothing and shelter and could not meet other basic needs is given monthly maintenance allowance of Rs.400 per month Around 4.00 lakhs plus persons with disabilities are getting this benefit and Annual budgetary burden on the exchequer is around Rs.200 crores. Tahasildar of the taluk is the sanctioning authority. The Tahasildar of a Taluk is empowered to sanction such amount and the appli-

cant's income should not be more than Rs. 6000/-.

- ii) **Issue of Identity Cards:** Identity cards are given or issued to disabled persons to enable them to avail the benefits extended to them under various governmental schemes. Details can be obtained in the office of the Dist. Disabled Welfare Officer attached to the Deputy Director, Women and Child Development Dept. at the District level.
- iii) **Social Service Complex:** This institution provides protection, care and shelter with food and health care to the aged / infirm and mentally retarded persons who are destitute. Presently, 82 inmates are taking shelter in this complex.
- iv) **Insurance Scheme for Mentally Regarded Persons:** Under this scheme, the parents / guardians of persons with mental retardation whose annual income is Rs.12,000/- or less per year, the Directorate of Disabled Welfare contributes the annual premium to Life Insurance of Corporation of India towards a specially designed group Insurance policy. Under this policy, after the demise of the parents / guardians of the mentally retarded person, the nominee will get a one time lump sum amount of Rs.20, 000/- for the maintenance of the mentally retarded person.

4. Employment and Training Schemes:

The Government of Karnataka has provided 3% reservation in A and B Post and 5% reservation in C and 'D' category of posts in all Government recruitments. The Government has also identified different kinds of jobs, which can be performed by disabled persons.

State Government extends 100% financial assistance to Bangalore based NGO called NAB to run a centre to impart vocational training in light engineering, plastic moulding, cane wiring etc. Visually impaired and hearing impaired students who have completed SSLC can take this course which helps them to find suitable job.

The Government of Karnataka through the Directorate Employment and Training has established Special Employment Exchange at Bangalore. The educated / literate disabled persons are at liberty to register their names seeking employment. As of now 3,600 persons with disabilities have registered their names. In all 36,000 disabled persons have registered their names in all the employment exchanges throughout the State.

With an objective of enriching the skills and empowering of the disabled in getting placement in private sector, the Dept. has started a scheme called "Training and Employment to disabled Persons". The scheme started in the year 2006-07 in 20 districts on pilot basis. The scheme would be extended to the remaining 7 districts during 2007-08. The scheme envisages providing the following computer based training to the selected disabled persons at Dist. level, who have educational qualification of PUC and above.

Call Center	- 6 months
PC Hardware	- 6 months
DTP	- 3 months
Data Entry	- 3 months
DCAC	- 3 months.

The non-matriculates are given 3 months training in vocational courses. Free hostel facility will be provided to the trainees during training period. Candidates who are interested should submit their applications to the District Disabled Welfare Officer when the announcement is made.

The department runs 2 hostels for working and under disabled persons separately for women and men at Bangalore. A person with disability whose income is less than 60,000 p.a. is eligible for seeking admission to these hostels. The intake capacity is 50 for each Hostel.

The Government of Karnataka is also provided financial assistance under the scheme 'Adhara' to eligible disabled persons to set up petty business. An amount of Rs.20,000 is given as interest free loan as working capital and a Kiosk worth of Rs.15,000 to setup business. To avail this benefit, the age of beneficiary must be 16 and above and unemployed and also his/her income limit must be Rs. 11500 per annum for rural areas and Rs. 24000 per annum for urban areas. To get this facility, the candidate must be disabled to more than 40% as certified by the Medical Board. The added conditions are he or she must be skilled to run small business.

Further, as per the Government of Karnataka Order No. MMA/433/PHP-96 dated 23rd March 1997, disabled persons are able to get financial assistance of Rs. 12,000 is provided free of cost to set up Telephone/ STD Booths, so as to start their own self-employment. To avail this benefit the candidate must be of above 18 years of age and the income

limit of such candidate must be below Rs. 12000 per annum. Regarding disability, 40% and above disability certificate is needed and all the kinds of disabled persons along with leprosy cured persons are eligible to get such financial assistance.

Conclusion:

It is observed from the above discussion that there are inadequate social welfare and rehabilitation schemes for physically challenged in Karnataka. A few of such areas include health care, family pension, free housing, etc. Further, the monthly pension amount is just Rs. 500 and it is very lower compared to the medical expenses and such other expenses borne by the physically disabled. Hence, there is need to raise the pension amount by the Government. There is also need to give more reservation in Government Sector employment and reservation in private sector to the physically disabled based on their educational qualifications.

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