



Strengthening Disadvantaged: Policy Unreached

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KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world there are nearly one billion (15% of the world population) people experience some disability. In India nearly 2.13% people are facing disability. Disability means a functional limitation within the individual while moving any body part properly or naturally. The developmental consequences of disability are a part of policy of any people-centric democracy. Unless the persons with disability are included in the post-2016 development agenda, this agenda will fail to be truly inclusive. It is true that developed and developing countries are having very good policies, schemes, acts for the development of disable persons. Besides, there are lacunae. Disables are the poorest in poor. This paper aims at studying analytically the policies, schemes and acts those are introduced for the disabled in India.

PROBLEM FORMULATION

The World Bank Group has been strengthening the inclusion of disability in development and supporting countries in implementing the Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities. The World Bank itself noted that the persons with disability are disproportionately affected by poverty and vulnerability. There are many schemes, policies, besides they face many limitations and problems in education, in getting services, in getting social status. The society does not have an inclusive attitude whereas their family also tries to hide them from the society. There are very limited opportunities for education, occupation, difficulties in transportation and etc. commonly people are never ready to marry with a person with disability. This is the basic problem behind this paper. Could any act, scheme or policy change this stereotype? Could it change the common man's attitude towards disable? Ahead are the questions.

THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, PROTECTION OF RIGHTS AND FULL PARTICIPATION) ACT, 1995

On 1st to 5th December, 1992 the Meeting was held at Beijing to Launch the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002) was convened by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific. The Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region was adopted. India is a signatory of the Proclamation. So it is considered necessary to implement aforesaid. On the background The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 has been enacted by Parliament in the Forty-sixth Year of the Republic of India and started to implement on Jan.1, 1996. An Act as mentioned in the Proclamation aims at full Participation and equality of the people with disabilities. According to Section 2(i) of this Act disability includes blindness, low vision, leprosy-cured, hearing impairment, loco motor disability, mental retardation and mental illness. According to Section 2(t), person with disability means a person suffering from not less than forty per cent of any disability as certified by a medical authority. It is mentioned in the Chapter II of the Act that the Central Government shall by notification constitute a body to be known as the Central Co-ordination

Committee to exercise the powers conferred on, and to perform the functions assigned to it under the Act. It will review and coordinate the activities of all the Departments of Government and other Governmental and non-Governmental Organizations which are dealing with matters relating to persons with disabilities. It will be responsible to develop a national policy to address issues faced by persons with disabilities. It will look after to take up the cause of persons with disabilities with the concerned authorities and the international organizations with a view, to provide for schemes and projects for the disabled in the national plans. An important role of the committee is to ensure barrier-free environment in public places, work-places, public utilities, schools and any institution. To decentralize the work and responsibility of the committee state and district level machineries are established.

SCHEMES AND POLICY

A number of schemes are being formulated under the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities Protection of Rights and full participation) Act, 1995. Those are as following:

Incentives to Employers in the Private Sector for Providing Regular Employment to Persons with Disabilities:

This is a Central Sector Scheme of providing one-lakh jobs per annum to the persons with disabilities. It has been started during the eleventh Plan Period on April 1, 2008. Under the Scheme, the Government makes payment of the employer's contribution to the Employees Provident Fund and Employees State Insurance for the first three years, as an incentive, in return of employment of persons with disabilities with monthly wage up to Rs 25000/- per month.

Models to promote awareness about accessibility features in public buildings

Funds are being provided to Universities / Administrative Training Centres in the States/UTs and State Secretariats etc. for installing lifts etc. to provide barrier free access to persons with disabilities.

Composite Regional Centres for Persons with Disabilities (CRCs)

Due to lack of adequate facilities for rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, the Ministry has set up five Composite Regional Centres for Persons with Disabilities at Srinagar, Sundernagar, Lucknow, Bhopal and Guwahati to provide both preventive and promotional aspects of rehabilitation like education, health, employment and vocational training, research and manpower development, rehabilitation for persons with disabilities etc.

District Disability Rehabilitation Centers (DDRCs):

The Ministry with active support of State Governments has facilitated setting up District Disability Rehabilitation Centers (DDRCs) to provide rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities. Centres have been established in unreached and unserved districts of the country in a phased manner. These centers provide services for prevention and early detection, re-

ferral for medical intervention and surgical correction, fitment of artificial aids and appliances, therapeutical services such as physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapy, provision of training for acquisition of skills through vocational training, job placement in local industries etc. since 2011 the centers are made active in the area.

Awareness Generation Programme

This is a pilot project for creation of awareness on prevention and early detection and intervention of various types of disabilities has been taken up. It covers 30 districts 7 in Uttar Pradesh and 13 in Bihar. The project envisages dissemination of information in rural areas through Anganwadi workers. Recently it has been taken up in 13 districts of Assam also. The programme is under implementation.

Technology Development Projects in Mission Mode

With a view to provide suitable and cost effective aids and appliances through the application of technology and to increase their employment opportunities and integration in society of the physically disabled, the above scheme was started during 1990-91. Under the scheme, suitable R&D projects are identified and funded for developing aids and appliances. The scheme is implemented through the IITs, Educational Institutes, Research Agencies and Voluntary Organizations. Financial assistance is provided on 100% basis. The four Technical Advisory Groups monitor the selection of the projects and also their progress at different stages in areas of disabilities, namely, Orthopaedic (including Cerebral Palsy), Visual, Speech and Hearing and Mental. All the projects those are recommended by the respective Technical Advisory Groups placed before the Apex Level Committee headed by Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Empowerment of persons with disabilities is an inter-disciplinary process, covering various aspects namely, prevention, early detection, intervention, education, vocational training, rehabilitation and social integration etc. Apart from acts, resolutions and resources, it requires dedicated efforts of persons and institutions involved in the process of empowerment. Policy and schemes are the better resources to do the same. But it requires an involvement of a common man. The efforts are made to empower disables as well as to bring the society in this process. Besides and before passing the act few schemes are introduced for the participation of the society in empowering disables. Following are some important programmes.

The Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase / Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP Scheme)

The main objective of the Scheme is to assist the needy disabled persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation, by reducing the effects of disability and enhance their economic potential. The aids and appliances supplied under the Scheme must be ISI.

The quantum of assistance and income limit under the ADIP scheme is as follows:

No	Income Limit	Quantum of Assistance
1	Up to Rs. 6,500/- per month	Full cost of aid/appliance
2	Rs. 6,501/- to Rs. 10,000/- per month	50% of the cost of aid/appliance

The scheme is implemented through implementing agencies such as the National Institutes under this Ministry and NGOs.

Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme to promote Voluntary Action for Persons with Disabilities (Revised DDRS Scheme)

To facilitate delivery of various services to persons with disabilities by voluntary organizations, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is administering DDRS scheme and providing grants-in-aid to NGOs for the following projects:-

1. Vocational Training Centres
2. Sheltered Workshops
3. Special Schools for the Persons with Disabilities
4. Project for Cerebral Palsied Children
5. Project for Pre-School and Early Intervention and Training
6. Home based Rehabilitation Program / Home Management Programme
7. Project for Rehabilitation of Leprosy Cured Persons (LCPs)
8. Project relating to Survey, Identification, Awareness and Sensitization
9. Project for Community Based Rehabilitation
10. Project for Human Resource Development
11. Seminars / Workshops / Rural Camps
12. Project for Legal Literacy, Including Legal Counselling, Legal Aid and Analysis and Evaluation of Existing Laws
13. Environment Friendly and Eco-Promotive Projects for the Handicapped
14. Grant for Purchase of Vehicle
15. Construction of Building
16. Grant for Computer
17. Project for Low Vision Centres
18. Half Way Home for Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of Treated and Controlled Mentally Ill Persons
19. District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs)

The maximum level of support could be up to 90% of the eligible amount of grant for the project.

Scheme of National Awards for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

In order to recognize their effort and encourage others to strive to achieve excellence in this field, separate awards are being presented to the most efficient/outstanding employees with disabilities, best employers, best placement agency/officer, outstanding individuals, outstanding institutions, role models, outstanding creative disabled individuals and for outstanding technological innovation and adaptation of innovation to provide cost effective technology. Awards are also given to Government Sector, Public Sector Undertakings and private enterprises for creating barrier free environment for the persons with disabilities, the best district in the field of disability rehabilitation, best Local Level Committee of the National Trust and to the best State Channelising Agency (SCA) of the National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFD). Preference is given to the placement of women with disabilities, particularly, from the rural areas and self-employed women.

Scheme of National Scholarships for Persons with Disabilities

Under the Scheme of National Scholarships for Persons with Disabilities, every year 500 new scholarships are awarded for pursuing post matric professional and technical courses of duration more than one year. However, in respect of students with cerebral palsy, mental retardation, multiple disabilities and profound or severe hearing impairment, scholarship are awarded for pursuing studies from IX Std. onwards. Advertisements inviting applications for scholarships are given in leading national/regional newspapers in the month of June and also placed on the website of the Ministry. State Government/ UT Administrations are also requested to give wide publicity to the scheme. Students with 40% or more disability whose monthly family income does not exceed Rs. 15,000/- are eligible for scholarship. A scholarship of Rs. 700/- per month to day scholars and Rs. 1,000/- per month to hostellers is provided to the students pursuing Graduate and Post Graduate level technical or professional courses. A scholarship or Rs. 400/- per month to day scholars and Rs. 700/- per month to hostellers is provided for pursuing diploma and certificate level professional courses. In addition to the scholarship, the students are reimbursed the course fee subject to a ceiling of Rs. 10,000/- per year. Financial assistance under the scheme is also given for computer with editing software for blind/ deaf graduate and postgraduate students pursuing professional courses and for support access software for cerebral palsied students.

Trust Fund for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

The Supreme Court in its order dated 16th April, 2004 had directed that the banks, who had collected an estimated excess amount of Rs.723.79 crores annually from the borrowers through rounding off in collection of interest tax, should transfer it to a trust which would be used for welfare of persons with disabilities. The Court had constituted a Committee under the chairmanship of Comptroller and Auditor General of India with Finance Secretary and Law Secretary as members. The Ministry had sought directions of the Apex court for transfer of these funds to the National Trust for Welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities for purposeful utilization. The Supreme Court yet had not taken a view on the request of the Ministry but in the meantime the trust has been set up and the banks have been advised by the Banking Division of the Ministry of Finance to deposit the due amount in the Trust account. Up to 20th September, 2007, the banks have deposited an amount of Rs. 71.54 crores in the Trust account.

Reservation in Transportation

Disable persons are given in transportation. In S.T. buses 75% and in trains in Sleeper and AC III class 75% reservation is given.

AWARENESS AND SENSATIZATION

There are in number of schemes for an empowerment of disables. But all the efforts are useless unless and until those are reached to the beneficiaries. For the purpose of the research, the researcher has interviewed to 20 persons to know how far those are aware of the schemes. 10 out of 20 were working in the sound profession such as Professor, Engineer and Managerial key position in the private field whereas as 10 were in unorganized sector such as roads hawkers, daily wagers, etc. and the findings are:

1. Not only the literate but also illiterate or less studied persons are unaware of the schemes for their development namely, education, occupation etc.
2. The people in a large take benefit of the scheme, i.e. reservation in transportation.
3. Social Justice and Law Ministry is the operating machinery for the schemes.
4. The schemes aim at development and participation of disables. But actually there are many hurdles in accessibility from the government, nodal agency and local agency.
5. A very few people utilizes the schemes and policies.
6. A very low accessibility is observed for the policy.
7. No law can change the mind of society. The society itself has to respect and accept the disable persons.
8. The disables should treat well and have get a chance to participate in a main streamline.

SUGGESTIONS

It needs to sensitize the disable persons for their rights-natural and given by the State. Wide publicity has to done. Disable persons also have to motivate themselves to get their rights. The policy, schemes and decisions timely are published in the newspapers, websites. They have access those at their own.

CONCLUSION

Public policy is a mirror of any nation's people-orientation. Policy must be all-inclusive and all-pervasive. Disable is the class in all societies which is neglected and avoided. Disables are the vulnerable-poorest in poor class. The policies, schemes and acts are the strain of the government to empower them. Though science has got success in all spheres of human life, it sometimes is helpless when the matter arises for mental and physical disability. No can change another's psyche or physique completely. But by doing good policies man can make the lives better. Policy is a remedy on the habitable lives. If policy is implemented properly then the disable will get the stars on the earth and no need to wait for the heaven.

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