



SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED PERSONS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

The research paper examines the in developed countries, the proportion of people with disabilities ranges from 10 per cent to 20 per cent of total population. Prevalence of disability in developing countries is reported to be 1 per cent to 2 per cent of the population. Persons with disabilities are considered as the world's largest minority. They are more likely to live in poverty than their non-disabled peers; hence a small portion of governmental allocation will not be sufficient to improve the social and economic conditions of differently abled people. The capacity building and overall development of differently abled persons on par with their nondisabled counterparts and their social inclusion in all developmental activities should be ensured. Persons living with disabilities face multiple barriers due to injustice on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national, ethnic, indigenous or social origin, property, birth and age. As a result, persons with disabilities are at a high risk of poverty, which in itself increases the likelihood of having a disability. Social exclusion and inclusive growth have opened up serious debates and discussions on the role of different factors in the development discourse across the globe. In India certain sections of the society are away from the mainstream society and are considered as the most vulnerable groups or outer class. They are often denied minimum access to the basic needs. In India social exclusion is stratified on the basis of caste, class and gender. Differently abled people are excluded from the process of advanced human existence and development (Kummitha, 2015). In addition to social exclusion, problems such as, poverty, unemployment and gender discrimination continue to affect the social and economic development of most of the marginalised groups in India.



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INTRODUCTION:

Disability is a part of the human state, almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life by poverty, malnutrition, birth disorders, accidents, old age, psychological disorders, natural calamities and wars, those who survive to old age will experience increasing difficulties in functioning and living. Most families have a disabled member, and many non-disabled people take responsibility for supporting and caring for their relatives and friends with disabilities (World Report on Disability). One third of families in India are directly or indirectly affected with some sort of disability. Disability and political issues related with disability become more acute due to population growth, increasing number of accidents and increasing number of old age people. The main issue related with disability is the social exclusion of the disabled. The concept and attitude of society towards disability have changed since the 1970's. There is a growing tendency to view disability as a human right issue than a social issue. Once, people with disabilities were relegated to special schools and residential institutions. Now the change is visible from community exclusion to the best integrated social inclusion and community participation. The approach to disability has now shifted from social exclusion to social inclusion through educational and vocational training. Development in the field of modern medicine and medically focused solutions to overcome the conditions of disability have given way to more interactive approaches recognizing that people are disabled by environmental factors. National and international initiatives such as the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalisation of opportunities of Persons with Disabilities - have incorporated the human rights of people with disabilities. Disability is now considered as a human right issue rather than physical problem. The adoption of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of



Persons with Disabilities, (UNCRPD) is an International level agreement to protect the rights of differently abled people among the member countries.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

Economists, Sociologists and Philosophers have always lived among people who could see, walk, or hear; little attempt was made to study about those, who had limited mobility, deformity, or chronic illnesses of various classes of people in the society. Philosophical interest in these conditions was piecemeal and occasional until the past hundred or so years (Altman, B., 2001). But the treatment of disability as a subject of philosophical interest is relatively new. Economists have no such concepts to discuss development related with socially marginalized groups, except inclusive development. Sociologists in general have been thinking of social development without economic development of socially excluded groups. The lack of attention to socially marginalized groups, especially “Specially Abled” in general may have an explanation: there were no such concepts to attend to until 19th century. Once such categories were established, it became possible to talk, and generalize, about the especially abled (Hacking, 1990; Davis, 2002,). The resurgent political philosophy of the second half of the last century, preoccupied with eliminating or reducing unearned disadvantages, tended to treat disability as a primary source of those disadvantages to be addressed with government compensation (G. L. Albrecht, K.D. Seelman, and M. Bury, Thousand Oaks, 2001). Sociologists began to see disability as a source both of discrimination and oppression.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

People with disabilities are generally considered as social evil in the society. Disability is a part of human condition in some stages of ordinary human life due to accidents, diseases, natural calamities, wars or aging. Disability is considered as a human right issue and a social evil. The disability experience results from various factors such as poor health conditions, poverty, personal factors and environmental conditions. Disability is a complex, multidimensional and dynamic problem due to social and environmental barriers.

Disability is neither a purely medical problem nor a purely social problem. Persons with disabilities are diverse and heterogeneous. The concept and reading of disability varies



according to the intention and views. Disability is a dynamic interaction between health conditions and environmental factors. Disability is the umbrella term covering impairment, activity limitation and participation restriction with the interaction between an individual with his environment.

The models of disability, the concepts and views are different. According to World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF, 2001), Disability is a "dynamic interaction between health conditions and environmental and personal factors". Modern political economists have been trying to attend to the problems of the differently abled community. Differently abled persons are the world's largest minority and measures to eliminate disability conditions by way of changes in social mind, vaccination, and malnutrition are taken.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

People who could not see, walk, or hear, who had limited mobility, comprehension or longevity, or chronic illnesses of various sorts are generally considered as differently abled. These conditions were cited in ancient philosophical and moral literatures of different cultures. Hardships or evils of those people who are disabled came into the debates of ancient philosophers, and they inquired the reasons and cause of disability and tried to find out the relationship between disability and philosophical, psychological and social relations. In ancient times disability was considered as a social evil and the society treated them as a social and cultural problem. The treatment of disability as a subject of philosophical social interest is a relatively new area of study.

The lack of awareness on "disability" or "impairment" lasted till the first half of twenty first century. Generally many had a simple reason: that there were no such concepts to focus on human function. Categories of abnormality and disability were established only in the late 19th century. Modern philosophers have contributed more to revolutionize the social concepts and approaches about the disabled. Modern political economists have been trying to address the problems of differently abled people, when they became the world's largest minority. Social and political philosophy of the second half of the 21st century, considered ways to eliminate or reducing disability conditions by way of changes in social mind, vaccination, poverty eradication, health care and malnutrition. To address the issues in



medical, governmental, and social concepts of disability, many theories have been developed in the field of the socially marginalised.

Social philosophers identified disability as a condition due to discrimination and oppression by the societal culture. In the modern world, it became possible to talk, and generalize, and recognize the problems and issues of disabled by analysing and establishing disability statistics. This study attempts to coordinate the disability statistics in India to address the issues of the disabled.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

Disability looks much like sex or race, because women are more disadvantaged than their counterpart, and face multiple discriminations. Disability classification is based on medical or socially constructed base and the disability classification based on right would address the central issues on disability. Well-being of a disabled body is affected by the inherent characteristics on the classification of disability. A world without discrimination, blacks or whites, men or women, abled or disabled would do better on various metrics of social standards in the modern world.

Philosophers and disability scholars say that there are no differences in race or sex to the degree that disability reduces well-being; it is because of the disgrace and prejudice. Disability is fundamentally different from race and gender discrimination in that it necessarily reduces well-being even in a world of non-discrimination, people with blindness, deafness or physically handicapped and mental disability would be worse off than their able-bodied counterparts. Many theories have been developed relating to the socially disadvantaged. Social philosophers identified disability as a condition due to discrimination and oppression by the society. The scope of the study is limited to analysing and evaluating the disability statistics in India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the Socio–Economic background of differently abled persons in India.
2. To review the existing policies and programs at both state and national level for the differently abled.



Socio-Economic Profile of Specially-Abled in India:

In India, at the national level, information about people with disabilities and data on differently abled people is derived from censuses data, population surveys, national Sample Surveys and administrative data registries. But exact data is not available due to difference in approach and focus on disability concepts and definitions. To get accurate data on disability, disability prevalence, and socio economic status, it is very important to take stringent measures on the part of government and other agencies to coordinate the activities under a common approach. Data by sex, age, income and occupation about differently abled people in India provides information about subgroups of persons with disabilities, such as children with disabilities and women with disabilities and older persons.

The existing data available indicates that people with disability are subject to multiple deprivations. As compared to the general population, they suffer more from poverty, low literacy, unemployment, social exclusion and active participation which put them further behind. The differences in access to basic services and degree of social marginalisation among persons with different types of disability are also striking, and they get further marginalised and magnified, with differences on account of gender, caste, types of disability and rural/ urban background etc. It is therefore, important to study the socio-economic profile of the disabled population in India. With population Census and NSSO conducted on 2001 surveys revealing different aspects of the disability scenario, the socio- economic profile of the disabled obtained from these two sources are being important for the better understanding of socio, economic conditions of disabled people in India.

Disabled Population by Sex and Residents in India:

Two major official sources were adopted to estimate the total number of persons with disabilities in India. The census data and National Sample Survey estimates, the estimates of these two official sources show that the number of PWD is increasing due to increase in the number of accidents, calamities, malnutrition, aging and demographic transition. Two major official sources of data on disability differ, with the differences appearing in approaches and definition.

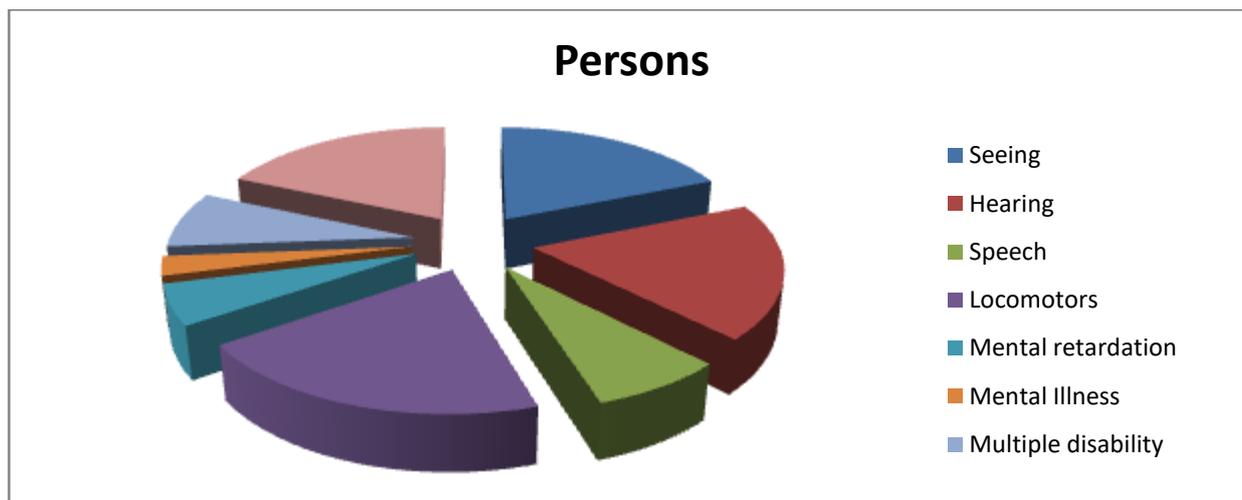


Proportion of Disabled Population by Type of Disability:

| Proportion of Disabled population by type of disability and sex | | | |
|---|---------|-------|---------|
| Type of Disability | Persons | Males | Females |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Seeing | 18.8 | 17.6 | 20.2 |
| Hearing | 18.9 | 17.9 | 20.2 |
| Speech | 7.5 | 7.5 | 7.4 |
| Locomotors | 20.3 | 22.5 | 17.5 |
| Mental retardation | 5.6 | 5.8 | 5.4 |
| Mental Illness | 2.7 | 2.8 | 2.6 |
| Multiple disability | 7.9 | 7.8 | 8.1 |
| Other type of Disability | 18.4 | 18.2 | 18.6 |

Source: Census of India 2011.

Disabled Population by Type of Disability (Percentage):



Source: Census of India 2011.

As per Census (2011) findings, differently abled persons are grouped on the basis of the nature of disability. About 18.8% had vision disability, 7.5% had speech disability and 18.9% were suffering from hearing disability, 20.3 % had locomotor disability, 5.6% had mental retardation, 2.7% of them were facing mental illness, 7.9% of people had multiple disability



and remaining 18.4% of the people were accounted under disability by unknown reasons. The proportions vary marginally across different types of disability.

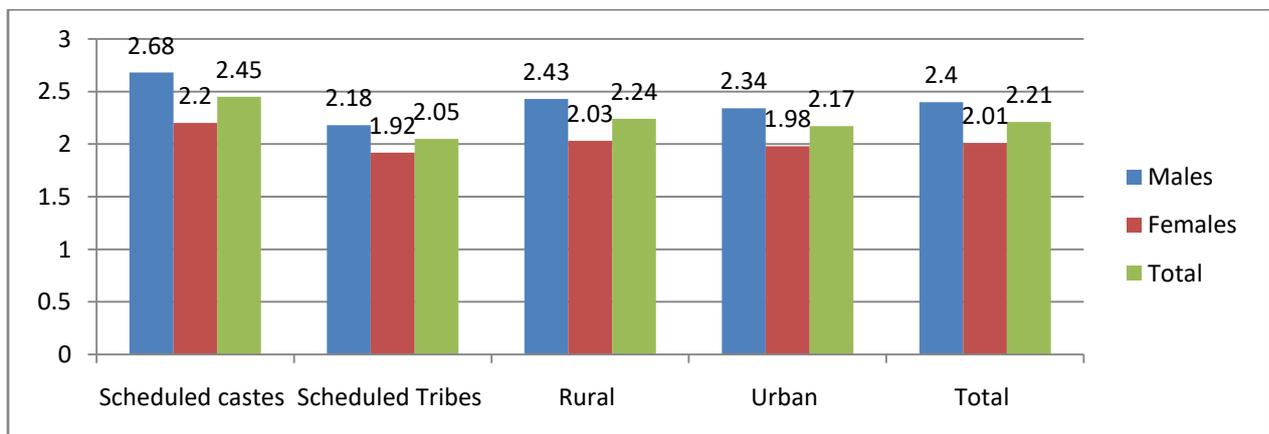
Disabled Population by Various groups and Types

Disability prevalence among various groups is very important to take stringent measures on the part of government and other agencies to coordinate the activities under a common approach. Data by sex, residents, marginalised groups of SCs and STs in India provides information about subgroups of persons with disabilities. Most vulnerable groups are children and women with disabilities and older persons.

Disability Prevalence of Various Groups & Types (Percentage)

| | Males | Females | Total |
|------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Scheduled castes | 2.68 | 2.2 | 2.45 |
| Scheduled Tribes | 2.18 | 1.92 | 2.05 |
| Rural | 2.43 | 2.03 | 2.24 |
| Urban | 2.34 | 1.98 | 2.17 |
| Total | 2.4 | 2.01 | 2.21 |

Disability Prevalence of Various Groups & Types (Percentage)



Source: Census of India 2011.

In the rural areas, the distribution of disabled across social groups was found to be more or less the same. In rural India, the prevalence of disability was much higher (2.24%) as compared to that in its urban counterpart (2.17%). Again, among males, the prevalence of disability (2.4%) was significantly higher than that among females (2.01%). The prevalence



rate among SC population (2.45%) was marginally higher when compared to the general population; while among ST population, it was noticeably lower (2.05%). Among the disabled persons belonging to STs, the proportion of persons with visual, speech and hearing disability was relatively more and those with loco motor or mental disability was relatively less as compared to the general population. On the other hand among disabled persons belonging to the SC category, these proportions were more or less same as those among the general population.

Disabled Population by Type of Disability

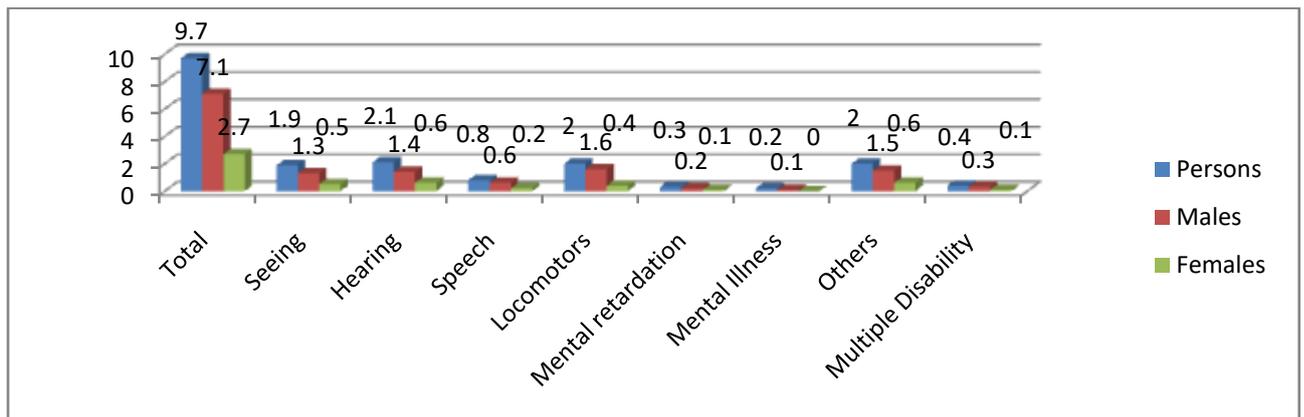
The existing data indicate that the people with disability are subject to multiple deprivations. As compared to the general population, they suffer from poverty, low literacy, unemployment, social exclusion and limited participation. Multiple deprivations lead to poverty and social exclusion; the differences in access to basic services and degree of social marginalization among persons with different types of disability are also striking, and their life become more and more susceptible and overblown. Due to differences on account of gender, caste, types of disability and rural and urban divide are increasing the intensity of vulnerability.

Disabled Workers by Type of Disability (Millions)

| Type of Disability | Persons | Males | Females |
|----------------------------|---------|-------|---------|
| Total | 9.7 | 7.1 | 2.7 |
| Seeing | 1.9 | 1.3 | 0.5 |
| Hearing | 2.1 | 1.4 | 0.6 |
| Speech | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.2 |
| Locomotors | 2.0 | 1.6 | 0.4 |
| Mental retardation | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Mental Illness | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| Others | 2.0 | 1.5 | 0.6 |
| Multiple Disability | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.1 |

Source: Census Report 2011.

Disabled Workers by Type of Disability (Millions)



Source: Census Report 2011.

Table shows the number of disabled workers by type of disability. Out of the total 26.8 million disabled population in India 9.7 million disabled persons are workers. 1.9 million Disabled workers suffer from disability in vision. People with hearing disability have the highest work participation (2.1 million) among total number of disabled in India. Least work participation is found among people suffering from mental retardation.

CONCLUSION:

Disability is a development issue, because of its multi-dimensional link to poverty; disability may increase the risk of poverty; and poverty may increase the risk of disability (Sen_2009). People with disabilities and their families are more likely to experience the economic and social disadvantage than non-disabled people and families. The multi-dimensional impact of disability is adversely affecting and worsening the social and economic wellbeing of disabled people. Poverty through multitude of channels have an adverse impact on education, employment, social participation, access to health care, livelihood, earnings and also increases the expenditures related to poverty and disability.

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