

Better Society for “Differently Abled People”: Possibilities and Challenges

Daisy

Research Scholar

Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut

Email: daisy29atapex@gmail.com

Abstract

Changing dimensions of our journey as a nation from Amritmohatsav kaal to Amrit kaal challenges, achievements and the road ahead.

This paper explores the idea of a better society for “Differently Abled people”: possibilities and challenges by creating a more inclusive society and potential advancements for greater accessibility and their empowerment. From technological innovations to changing societal attitudes, this paper unfolds the multifaceted dimensions toward a better society for everyone.

In the 1970s scenario when a child in a family was born disabled it was called that particular family was disabled because it affected the members of family, their quality of life, use of time, and financial resources. They were considered as defectologists which implies disabled persons are of less intrinsic value also they constitute for world's largest minority, India has a total population of 2.68 cr people registered as disabled. Here, social exclusion is stratified based on class, caste, and gender, differently abled people are excluded from the process of advanced human existence and development but in recent years the focus on the differently abled has gained significant focus.

In today's scenario when development is taking its own pace, and India is heading towards Amritkal which is aimed to improve the lives of the citizens, bridging the development gap between villages, cities and persons too. Govt of India has brought such policies which may lead to transformation for an equitable society. Issues like accessibility, education, self self-empowerment are need to be focused upon for persons with disabilities. Though schemes are benefitting them but still there are many discrepancies and loopholes that are not allowing them to work at their full capacity due to which they face many challenges.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

Daisy

*Better Society for
“Differently Abled
People”: Possibilities and
Challenges*

*Vol. XIV, Special Issue,
Dec. 2023
pp.141-149
Article No.17*

Similarity Check: 24%

Online available at:

[https://anubooks.com/journal/
journal-global-values](https://anubooks.com/journal/journal-global-values)

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31995/
jgv.2023.v14iS3.017](https://doi.org/10.31995/jgv.2023.v14iS3.017)

Challenges and possibilities are two sides of a coin. Though overcoming the obstacles is itself a challenging task but appropriate policies and their proper implementation will eliminate the structural, social, and psychological disparities in society. Efficient use of technology and collaboration between ministries, private and public partnerships, and the inclusive role of NGOs,s can help to tackle the situation and their future more efficiently and successfully.

Keywords

PWD (Person with Disability), Differently abled people, Amritkaal, Amritmahotsav, Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas, Equitable society, empowerment, National Policy, PwD act 1955, govt of India, Accessibility, Hygiene and Sanitation, Psychological Disability, Education, Empathy, Challenges and Opportunities, Discrimination, Awareness, Rights, UDHR, Constitution, Rehabilitation, Skilling and Vocational Training, Policies, Smart Card, Fund Utilisation.

This paper explores the idea of a **Better society for “Differently Abled people”: possibilities and challenges** by creating a more inclusive society and potential advancements for greater accessibility and their empowerment. From technological innovations to changing societal attitudes, this paper unfolds the multifaceted dimensions toward a better society for everyone.

Objective

Focusing on key challenges and issues faced by Persons with Disabilities.

Identify strategic opportunities to improve and expand the participation of Persons with Disabilities.

PWD’s

In the 1970s scenario when a child in a family was born disabled it was called that particular family was disabled because it affected the members of family, their quality of life, use of time, and financial resources. They were considered as defectologists which implies disabled persons are of less intrinsic value also they constitute for world’s largest minority. In India, social exclusion is stratified based on class, caste, and gender, differently abled people are excluded from the process of advanced human existence and development but in recent years the focus on differently abled has gained significant importance but still a long way to go.

Introduction

Even after the Independence of 75 years the situation of persons with disabilities is not considerable. The majority are engaged in minimal living standards, and in poverty only a few of them contribute to the country’s GDP. Their social and financial status is still not good. They live sympathetic and miserable life compromising their self-respect and dignity and being deprived of their rights. We need to understand that these people too, do have some basic rights which need to be adhered to and protected so that they can also live a respectful life.

Problems of PWD's :

In today's scenario when development is taking its own pace, and India is heading towards "Amritkaal" the term given by PM Narendra Modi on completing 75 years of Independence which is aimed to improve the lives of the citizens, bridging the development gap between villages and cities and persons too. Govt of India has brought such policies which may prove exceptionally workable in coming years. Various Schemes are being announced for persons with disabilities. Though these are benefitting them but still there are many discrepancies and loopholes that are not allowing them to work at their full capacity due to which they face many challenges like,

Changing or rephrasing the name will not work for them. They face challenges daily.

"Where there is a will, there is a way, but what if the way is made up of stairs instead of a ramp"! This saying absolutely fits Manoj with clutches, who has to struggle daily to attend his Ph.D. classes on the 2nd floor, which is also in a renowned state university in Uttar Pradesh. Similarly, Ramu has to again tussle up and down to get a document signed at the magistrate building in Orissa. These are not only the stories of Manoj and Ramu, but of 70% differently-abled people out of a total of 3 crore people in the total population according to the Office of Chief Commissioner for Person India, where the situation of women is even worse. To address such variations, the government introduced Person with Disability Act of 1955, which honed its way through the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities of 2016.. However, persons with disabilities are being provided access to universities, technical institutions, and other institutions of higher learning to pursue higher and professional courses. The Government of India is providing scholarships to students with disabilities to pursue studies at post-school levels but the point of accessibility is not taken into account on a serious note till now and as a result the reality is different in every aspect and despite the existence of this policy, the reality on the ground shows that there is still a long way to go in achieving a truly inclusive and accessible society for persons with disabilities.

Here I would like to draw the attention towards the 1. Area of accessibility: It's been 17 years since the policy was framed but we still PWD have to struggle daily. Everywhere they encounter the hurdle in accessing public places from schools, and colleges to hospitals, stations, and magistrate offices as they lack ramps or elevators, making it impossible for individuals with impairments to enter, public transport be it metro, bus, train or even local auto and have to stand in queues for hours. Sometimes they cannot convince other people that they are genuine ones

who deserve extra assistance. They have to tell everyone about their problem publically even if they do not want to disclose and by doing so again and again, everywhere they feel dejected, emotionally weakened and frustrated. They have to put extra effort into seeking basic rights in these places. The irony is their struggle is for basic necessities and important places is such huge that we cannot think of them going to other places that are made for fun and relaxing. Those who fall in the high-income group somehow get support but the majority lacks proper backing and support which generates a gap.

2. Sanitation and Hygiene: According to National policy for PwD 2016 govt has framed schemes and provisions which sound very lucrative. Lets take an example, whenever we go to public buildings, despite being a dedicated toilet for wheelchair, people cannot use it because the sanitation is so poor that it is better not to use it rather than use it even in an emergency. It's a scenario of AIIMS Delhi which has recently made a new hi-tech building. The problem of Sanitation and hygiene is also an unseen arena.

The other issue which needs to be addressed is 3. Education with Vocational training: The common scenario is seen children with disabilities are not given preference in school, they are mocked for their condition which makes their morale down. Though dedicated schools, and NGOs are functioning but still they are not enough. Even if secondary-level education is gained, the tussle for higher education is quite pathetic. They do not get desired subjects and end up taking random streams which lead them nowhere.

The problem is not only about institutions, the challenge is too for the way they must be taught. The quest for getting job is another hurdle as no one shows any interest in hiring them especially corporate firms. They are found ineligible mostly for every job. Even though our Constitution says there is equal opportunity to work, still it is not followed.

Now the issue : 4. Limited Tools and technology: available to them, however with the advent of smartphones they have got a powerful tool but still in the long run we have not been able to fulfil their need. For example, even the basic "Braille" is not provided in all schools and colleges in the country.. Even though the Right to education is a Fundamental right these people are still deprived of it in a way that does not have proper facilities which are specific. Lets say, that even if they manage to acquire a particular degree they still struggle for job.

5. Psychological Disability: Disability is not only what can be seen , disability is such which cannot be seen. A differently-abled person doesn't mean he

has a deformity in limbs only, the mental disability is equally challenging. This category of people is most vulnerable and susceptible to mishappening and misfortune as they demand extra care and facilities.

They need protection and are dependent on others even for their everyday routine work. This category includes people having Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, etc

6. Discrimination and Inhumane Treatment: Person with disabilities are discriminated against in various places, they are not equally treated and deprived of their rights. Such discrimination and inequality at different places such as government offices, job opportunities, and government schemes and so on make their lives more problematic and sorrowful. If they are been given equal opportunity, they may make their lives better. But in India the disabled persons are kept away from the all sections due to the discrimination and inequality. For example, if they visit any public place like a Bank or hospital, they are asked to wait and called again and again unnecessarily causing frustration and anger which sometimes leads to down Morale, sometimes they are even charged money for their work to be done. Such inhumane treatment makes them feel agitated, make them feel helpless. They are misguided and ignored which leads to low confidence. Everyone is known by others due to their identity in the world. The identity gives the man respect and a sense of pride to move in the society. But the disabled persons have to struggle to create their identity. The loss of identity makes their identity as only their disability which seems to be so miserable. In today's world of globalization and technology, they have to suffer from a lot at every now and then. When they become disabled either by birth or accident, their attempt at life seems to be very pitiable and struggling. Their sufferings and sorrows can never be felt and understood by the normal people who never faced such conditions. They crave for identity. There are very few disabled persons who are well educated struggling against the circumstances even if they don't get the desired employment due to their disability. They are neglected and shown only sympathy. Disabled persons are ignorant about the government laws and schemes and they are often misguided so that they do not avail their Rights and this leads to corruption and improper utilization of funds.

What Can Be Done

Challenges and possibilities are two sides of a coin. Though overcoming the challenges is itself a challenging task but precise policies and their proper implementation will eliminate the structural, social, and psychological differences in society. Efficient use of technology and cooperation between ministries, private

and public partnerships, inclusive role of NGOs,s can help to tackle the situation and their future more efficiently and successfully.

To empower the disabled persons, there is an extreme need for remedies for the empowerment of their rights. If their rights are empowered, their problems will end to some extent. Prof. Stephen Hawking stated, 'Disability need not be an obstacle to success. 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. (<https://thewire.in/health/persons-with-disabilities-challenges-india>)

If we talk at the International level, India is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPO) but India has not ratified ILO Convention, 159, which concerns Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment for Disabled Persons Convention, this needs to be ratified as it promotes equality of treatment between disables and non-disabled workers as it makes mandatory to provide vocational rehabilitation and employment services for them. But still many efforts are lacking in the development and empowerment of them. A genuine will to uplift them and make them part of the mainstream is lacking.

There is an urge to decode the problems and provide them familiar environment and we can start with the:

Firstly we need to recognize them and then their need. The first step towards this direction would be, updating the UAID database like ADHAAR indicating a column of pwd connecting it with a card("SMART CARD") with a dedicated colour theme can be issued and this may be available by applying online so it can be showed or swiped anywhere (without personal detailing), and this card should be recognized all over India. It should be used especially for hassle-free travel, like getting seats on public transport, not to mention that the surroundings need to be disabled-friendly by constructing ramps and elevators everywhere so next time whenever these people will go out they will go will equal confidence.

After recognizing all the differently abled persons, dedicated schemes are to be made. The policies that are already running need proper implementation but policies that are not up to mark or have shortcomings need to be revised or improvised according to the exact demand.

The second issue can be addressed with proper management of network of sanitation working authorities. Dedicated departments for the sanitation of Public buildings and washrooms need to be made so that sanitation can be maintained.

Surprised and uninformed visits of Higher authorities can also help keep these places cleaner.

Education is such a powerful weapon that can eliminate all sorrows of the life of a human. The foremost step is to make these people educated by any means and going to any extent. Education must reach to even person at the last mile. Running education programs and skilling programs will encourage all these people to do things out of their capabilities. They would not be considered a burden anymore. For specific disability a specific education program is needed. For Instance, Vision disabled people need their books to be written in braille language and audio versions to be made available everywhere, similarly people with hearing and speech disability need special sign language teachers and instructors. Locomotor disabled need proper infrastructure like lifts, elevators, and ramps, so that their accessibility is not hampered.

Empowering them by providing skills and training so that they can bear their own finances. There is a very good example of a Café in Delhi. The unique thing about this café is that all the staff working here are deaf and mute. Such kinds of things need to be get encouraged by normal people and even by the government by providing firms with special aids who assist to disabled.

Similarly recently a video went viral on YouTube in which a girl having Parkinson's disease was operating a burger stall. She was solely making the burgers and giving them to her customers. She was helped by her father.

Sheetal Devi who became the India's and the world's first female armless archer has set another tremendous example that they can become a good athlete too. Recently, she received the Arjuna Award from the President.

Sports colleges must be opened for those who would dedicatedly work on enhancing their skills. Nothing is impossible.

"These instances show us the true meaning of Differently abled and not disabled". Also they set example that if they are provided some assistance, not discrimination they too can lead a respectable life by becoming an asset to a country and not a burden.

However, this can only become possible if they are not discriminated against on any ground and even if they are, those people must be punished as there are provisions of punishment. The National Policy of Persons with Disabilities 2016 provides a total of 17 chapters out of which the most effective chapter is 16 which are entitled to offenses and penalties. In this chapter, section 92 is very prominent because the provision of punishment for offences of atrocities is given which is

follow- · intentionally insults or intimidates with intent to humiliate a person with disability in any place within public view; · assaults or uses force to any person with disability with intent to dishonour him or outrage the modesty of a woman with disability; · having the actual charge or control over a person with disability voluntarily or knowingly denies food or fluids to him or her; · being in a position to dominate the will of a child or woman with disability and uses that position to exploit her sexually; · voluntarily injures, damages or interferes with the use of any limb or sense or any supporting device of a person with disability; · performs, conducts or directs any medical procedure to be performed on a woman with disability which leads to or is likely to lead to termination of pregnancy without her express consent except in cases where medical procedure for termination of pregnancy is done in severe cases of disability and with the opinion of a registered medical practitioner and also with the consent of the guardian of the woman with disability, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to five years and with fine. (Sec.92, Rights of PWD Act 2016)

Fund Utilisation : According to TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences) showed, institutions like NHFDC that provide financial support for entrepreneurial activities to Pwd could not even use half of the funds. So, a commitment is needed and a robust mechanism for implementation.

Conclusion

In this way, the above-mentioned explanation of the various problems of differently-abled persons is discussed with ample references. The problems of disabled persons have always been serious concerns and hurdles in the ways of their careers, progress and happy lives. Moreover normal people in society do need to feel that being empathetic is necessary and not being only sympathetic. They too need love and recognition in terms of humans. Upbringing starts from home itself so we need to make ourselves more broad-minded. We need to create an inclusive society by protecting their all rights like the right to live, right to education, health, work, marriage, privacy, etc.

The role of awareness is also crucial, we need to educate people and make them aware through mass education using advertisements and social media apps like Instagram and Snapchat, Twitter which are famous among youth, so that they can become empathetic and sensitive towards them and learn how to deal with people with disabilities, so that they do not feel dejected from the mainstream of society.

We must try to create an inclusive environment so the purpose of Sabka Sath Sabka Vikas Sabka Vishwas cannot be defeated and this can only be achieved with proper implementation of policies and utilization of funds, educating and sensitizing people.

References

1. ADB. (2011). *Outlook 2011 Update: Preparing for Demographic Transition*. Asian Development Bank, Manila.
2. ADB. (2011). *Understanding Poverty in India*. Asian Development Bank, Manila.
3. CII. (2009). *A Values Route to Business Success: The why and how of employing persons with disability*. Confederation of Indian Industries: Delhi.
4. CII. (2010). *Indian IT/ITES Industry report*. Confederation of Indian Industries: Delhi.
5. GOI. (2007-08). *Annual Report of Labour & Employment*. Ministry of Labour and Employment. Government of India, India.
6. GOI. (2007-08). *Annual Report of Ministry of Rural Development*. Ministry of Rural Development. Government of India, India.
7. GOI. (2007-08). *Annual Report of Ministry of Social Justice & Employment*. Ministry of Social Justice and Employment. Government of India, India.
8. IDFC. (2009). *Indian Education, A long way from graduation*. Infrastructure Development Finance Company, India.
9. World Bank. (2007). *Development and Next Generation*. World Bank, Washington.
10. World Health Organisation.
11. Census 2011.