Person with Differently Disabled : Policies and Programmes

Ranadheer Singh
Assistant Professor in Phy. Edu.,
Dr. R.M.L. P.G. College, Bhairotalab, Varanasi

Abstract

Some health conditions are directly associated with physical disability while others are linked to social environment. There is no question that the people with disability (Divyang) are in need of some many specific health care services, policies and programmes. India has prepared inclusive disabilities policies and programmes and gained popularities for advocacy of disability right in the developing world. Various Departments, agencies and institutions are working in the field of Disability. These are the followings : The National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation, Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation, Kanpur, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Institute of Physically Handicapped, New Delhi, National Institute for the Orthopaedically Handicapped, Kolkata, National Institute of Visally Handicapped, Dehradun, National Institute of Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad, Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped, Mumbai, National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research, Cuttack., National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities, Chennai., The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre, New Delhi etc.

Introduction

A society which is good for disabled people is a better society for all. Person with disabilities PWDs across the world had to fight a long battle to show the community that they are equally capable if they are just provided adequate support.

The universal definition and understanding of disability has rightfully moved from a merely 'medical' to a 'human rights' framework and has heralded a paradism shift from charity to rights based approach.

The constitution of India applies uniformity to every legal citizen of India, whether they are healthy or disabled. The constitution secure to the citizens including the disabled, a right of justice, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and of opportunity and for the promotion of fraternity.

In India, the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was enacted to give effect to the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of the People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region. In its definition of disability "Disability" means - (i) Blindness; (ii) Low Vision; (iii) Leprosy-cured; (iv) Hearing Impairment; (v) Loco Motor Disability; (vi) Mental Retardation; (vii) Mental Illness. Further, in order to get certification, it refers to "Person with disability" as a person suffering from not less than forty per cent of any disability as certified by a recognized medical authority".

In terms of proper assessment of magnitude of the disability and collection of data, the primary requirement is to have a common definition of disability to be followed by all the institutions uniformly. As of now, India is having differences in conceptualization of the disability, methodology of collection of data and results. In order to provide appropriate services, a common understanding towards disability is required. In the absence of that, there are many people who are suffering from disability but not included in one or other official data

and therefore, not able to get proper services. The United Nations Disability Convention advocated for not to define disability with specific conditions and symptoms as it recognizes that "disability is an evolving concept". In view of this, the World Report on Disability (WRD) 2011 displays a paradigm shift away from solely seeing disability as an impact of a health condition towards a new integrative model of functioning that understands disability in the light of a health condition in interaction with the environment and personal factors.

Policies and Programmes :

The Government of India also recognized the Department of Disability Affairs as the nodal Department for the overall policy, planning and coordination of programmes for Persons with Disabilities. However, overall management and monitoring etc. of the sectoral programmes in respect of this group is the responsibility of the concerned Central Ministries, State Governments and Union Territory Administrations. Special schemes aimed at rehabilitation and social, educational and economic empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, e.g. supply of aids and appliances, scholarships, residential schools, skill training, concessional loans and subsidy for self-employment, etc., education and training of Rehabilitation professionals and also responsibilities of awareness generation, research, evaluation and training are subjects allocated to the Department.

The important provisions under the Person with Disability (PwD) Act, 1995 with regard to health and safety and overall protection of people with Disability are :

- To prevent disabilities, surveys, Promotion of various methods of preventing disabilities; Screen all the children at least once in a year for the purpose of identifying "at-risk" cases; Provide facilities for training to the staff at the primary health centers; measures for prenatal, parental and post-natal care of mother and child.
- Identify posts, review the list of posts identified and up-date the list, ensuring employment of persons with disabilities, schemes for training and welfare of persons with disabilities; relaxation of upper age limit; Regulating employment; health and safety measures and creation of a non-handicapping environment in places where persons with disabilities are employed; five per cent reservation for persons with disabilities.
- To provide aids and appliances to persons with disabilities, preferential allotment of land at concessional rates for housing; setting up business; setting up of special recreation centers; establishment of special schools; establishment of research centers; establishment of factories by entrepreneurs with disabilities.
- There are provisions for inclusive road, railways and airways facility, road safety symbols, ramps in public buildings; braille symbols and auditory signals in elevators or lifts; ramps in hospitals, primary health centers and other medical care and rehabilitation institutions.
- To promote and sponsor research in prevention of disability; rehabilitation including community based rehabilitation; development of assistive devices including their psycho-social aspects; job identification; on site modifications in offices and factories. Also, it has provision for financial assistance to universities, other institutions of higher learning, professional bodies and non-governmental research units or institutions, for undertaking research for special education, rehabilitation and manpower development.
- To provide social security rehabilitation of all persons with disabilities, financial assistance to non-governmental organizations, insurance schemes for the benefit of its employees with disabilities, schemes for payment of an unemployment allowance to persons with disabilities registered with the Special Employment Exchange for more than two years and who could not be placed in any gainful occupation.

There are many measures initiated by Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment and Health and Family Welfare in India. It includes District Rehabilitation Centre (DRC) Project which started in 1985. Four Regional Rehabilitation Training Centers (RRTC) have been functioning under the DRCs scheme at Mumbai, Chennai, Cuttack, and Lucknow since 1985 for the training of village level functionaries and DRCs professionals, orientation and training of State Government officials, research in service delivery, and low cost aids. Apart from developing training material and manuals for actual field use, RRTCs also produce material for creating community awareness through the medium of folders, posters, audio-visuals, films, and traditional forms, National Information Center on Disability and Rehabilitation, National council for Handicapped Welfare, National Level Institutes-NIMH, NIHH, NIVH, NIOH, IPH. A new scheme, District Disability Rehabilitation Centre for persons with disabilities set up in 2000 was a step towards providing rehabilitation services and implementation of Persons with Disability Act, 1995. The Government had decided to set up District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) with the objective of providing comprehensive services to persons with disabilities at the grass root level. The services include awareness generation, survey, identification and early intervention, counseling, assessment of need for assistive devices, provision/fitment of assistive devices, and their follow up/repair, therapeutic services like physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy, referral and arrangement for surgical correction through government and charitable institutions, facilitation of issue of disability certificates and bus passes, sanction of bank loans, and promotion of barrier-free environment.

The National Policy for Persons with Disability 2006 was an important development and welcome step by the Government of India. The following are the main provisions:

1. Women with Disabilities:

(i) To provide short duration stay homes for women with disabilities, hostels for working disabled women, and homes for aged disabled women.

(ii) It has been noted that women with disabilities have serious difficulty in looking after their children. The Government will take up a programme to provide financial support to women with disabilities so that they may hire services to look after their children. Such support will be limited to two children for a period not exceeding two years.

2. Children with Disabilities

Children with disabilities are the most vulnerable group and need special attention. The Government would strive to:-

- Ensure right to care, protection and security for children with disabilities;
- Ensure the right to development with dignity and equality, creating an enabling environment where children can exercise their rights, enjoy equal opportunities and full participation in accordance with various statutes.
- Ensure inclusion and effective access to education, health, vocational training along with specialized rehabilitation services to children with disabilities.
- Ensure the right to development as well as recognition of special needs and care, and protection of children with severe disabilities.

3. Prevention, Early Detection and Intervention

National, regional and local programmes of immunization (for children as well as expectant mothers), public health and sanitation will be expanded.

Training modules and facilities in disability prevention, early detection and intervention will be developed for medical and para medical health functionaries and Anganwadi workers.

Appropriate plan of action for limiting effects of disability and prevention of secondary disabilities within the existing health delivery system will be evolved.

Attention will be paid towards improving awareness of nutrition, health care and sanitation amongst adolescent girls, expectant mothers and women in the reproductive period. Awareness programmes for prevention will be built in at the school level and at the level of teacher's training courses.

4. Programmes of Rehabilitation

State level centres for providing composite rehabilitation services including human resource development, research and long term specialized rehabilitation will be set up.

Setting up of mental health care homes for severely mental ill persons will be encouraged under district level Panchayati Raj institutions with the involvement of NGOs. Alternatively, family support groups will be encouraged to set up Custodial Care Institutions for persons with mental disabilities without community and/or family support.

Conclusion :

Finally we can say that India has tried to prepare inclusive disability policy and programmes and gained popularity for advocacy of disability rights in the developing world. The Indian Prime Minister also addressed the isue in his popular programkes series "Mann Ki Baat". But still there are many issues to deal with and focus on proper implementation and give justice to people with disability and have more inclusive society. First of all, the magnitude of the disability in India needs to be understood with conceptual clarity and common understanding of its definition. In the absence of that, the collection of correct data and adoption of appropriate strategy is still a challenge. India needs to follow an integrated and multidimensional approach to deal with the issue. It requires better coordination and networking with different departments and agencies working on the issue.

References :

1. J. Rehabil Med 2011; 43 : 869-875.
2. National policies for persons with Disabilities 2006.
3. 12th Five Year Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India.
4. WDR 2011 accessed at http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_reort/ 2011/report.pdf.