



# **PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FACED BY DISABLED YOUTH IN INDIA : AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

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## INTRODUCTION

There has been a long debate over gender and disability in academia for a long time. In the advanced countries of the world and later on in India also, however, disability is still being seen as an inability of the individual rather than some special ability that a so-called disabled person may enjoy. Though, we have jargon for disabled people to call them differently-abled rather than disabled. But this name-sake change in the approach in society towards disabled people has failed to mark a significant difference in the lives of people who have been ordained to live as disabled people.

Disability is not a new phenomenon in human history because, in every period, a small number of people are treated to be disabled, whether physically, mentally, or socially. In the earlier days, society blamed it on the individuals because of their deeds in the previous life or as a punishment for the act of sins in the present life. As such, sympathy is lacking in society's approach while dealing with such people. Therefore, disability is a burden on society to take care of the needs of specific individuals who cannot contribute as other people usually do; therefore, the disability of an individual taken to be a burden on society that it has to bear as an unwanted responsibility.

However, in the modern era, a lot of debate and discussion whether in the academia or the policy-making circle, slowly it has been recognised that it is the responsibility of the society at the large to cater to the special needs of the disabled people so that they are also given a chance to lead their life in the most fruitful way that is why we see a positive fervour in favour of the disabled people in policy-making as well as in the society also to a certain extent.

When we deal with disability, we need to understand that disabled people are not a monolith group; there are different kinds of disabilities. It has social and economic dimensions also. Therefore, any policy or idea that deals with a disability needs magnanimity. Disability has generally understood as not only a physical or biological phenomenon. The natural aspect is only the prominently visible dimension of disability. Still, the most pinching aspect of disability is its social size more punishing for a disabled person to be treated differently by the members of society, starting from the family itself. Disability is not a punishment when the club accepts it as a normal phenomenon - it treats the disabled person commonly. Apart from the social aspect, disability also brings in the issue of economic deprivation because our economics are primarily market-driven, running on the premise of achieving the highest level of competitive efficiency. Disabled people are in a very disadvantageous position in such an economic architecture.

Therefore, our economic policies must be more sensitive towards disabled people's needs and aspirations, which have not been achieved so far.

Thus, disability brings many challenges to disabled individuals, especially youth. In the early ages of disability, the family structure catered to the needs of disabled individuals. When an individual reaches adulthood, a significant challenge comes to him to lead a challenging situation of economic self-sufficiency. Slowly and slowly, when parents or guardians leave a disabled individual, he has to look up to other social structures for his survival and growth. Therefore, comes the requirement for intervention by the government to extend support to such people so that they can also contribute to the development of society. They need many enabling provisions so that they are in a good condition along with happiness. This can be done by giving more and more employment opportunities to such people so that they can become self-sustaining.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### ● Introduction

Research methodology is a strategy to identify and analyse the purpose of the study. **According to Black and Champion (1976) “ scientific research consist of obtaining information through empirical observations that can be used for the systematic development of logically related proportions attempting to establish causal relations among the variables”**

While methodology aims to provide a set of rules or guidelines for solving the issues and challenges with specialised tools, methods, techniques, and strategies.

### ● The Rationale of the Study

In India, PWDs experienced worse surviving conditions during the covid-19 pandemic. It is also believed that usually, PWDs faced harsh behaviour from the normal people living in society as they judged them based on their appearance and level of disability. Their exclusion from mainstream society raised the hurtful voice with pity. However, a lack of sensitivity toward them made them low and put several questions about their dignity and existing identity. According to the census of India in 2011 about 26.8 million people have different forms of disability. Nearly, about 2.2 per cent of people have a physical

and mental disability. Youth who are recognised as the future of development due to some form of disability are treated as less human. Apart from this, women faced double discrimination, especially in the educational sector. According to the Census of 2011, about 55 per cent of women are illiterate and only 7.7 per cent of women are graduates.

This shows how women with disabilities, especially youth, are denied opportunities in which intersectionality also plays a crucial role. Dependency on others whether female or male made other family members conscious as a society will perceive this issue.

Pandemics become catalysts as it shows the condition of PWDs especially youth both at the national and international level.

### ● **The Relevance of the Study**

It can be understood from the fact that very few such studies have taken place in India and the lack of academic discourse directly hampers the flow of input for policy formulation. This study would also encourage many readers to carry out such studies in future so that the policymakers have a sharp view on this subject and take into account such studies for revising the welfare policies.

### ● **The Purpose of the Study**

Is to find out the connection between gender and disability in the present scenario of India where the issue of disability has not caught the type of attention it deserves. There is also a lack of academic discourse on the subject leading to a lack of policy formulation at the level of the government. As such this study helps in creating awareness among the people based on objective analysis obtained from primary sources. So that it can help the policymakers to understand the various nuances of the subject.

### ● **The Problem of the Study**

The present study aims to highlight and represent the social challenges and issues experienced by PWDs youth in India. The covid-19 pandemic has become an alarming element to acknowledge the problems experienced by PWDs youth.

### ● **The Objectives of the Research**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To understand the experience experienced by youth due to societal prejudices.
2. To study the level of awareness among the disabled youth about the legal provisions.
3. To understand the intersectionality of the disabled youth.
4. To study the role of the state in making provisions for disabled youth

### ● **Research methodology**

The mixed-method is taken as the methodology of a research study in which both the quantitative and qualitative elements are taken into consideration.

### ● **Sampling size**

The data of 40 respondents were collected from different parts of the country along with the confidentiality of the data.

### ● **Data Collection**

The data of the research study is collected from two sources

**Primary** - The primary data has been collected by the researcher through open google forms from January to March 2042.

**Secondary** - research in the form of existing literature about the concerned topic helped the researcher to get desired knowledge.

## DISCRIMINATION AGAINST DIFFERENTLY-ABLED CHILDREN AMONG RURAL COMMUNITIES IN INDIA - NEED FOR ACTION BY N.JANARDHANA et.al

Persons with Disabilities constitute at least 4 to 8 per cent of the Indian population where children and youth with disabilities are key to many deprivations. Out of 10, one child was born with a disability such as physical, mental or intellectual sensory. However, only 35.29 per cent of people with disabilities have access to education and other related facilities. However, while referring to PWDs he mentioned that the condition and situation of PWDs especially youth and children are deplorable in rural areas. They are subjected to deprivation of resources along with confined opportunities - at several phases in their life. He also claimed that many of them still do not have access to education along with confined awareness of schemes and policies.

Thus as a solution, he keenly stressed the community-based rehabilitation (CBR) as a global dynamic programme, supporting PWDs and children to live a quality life with respect and dignity so that their rights should remain safe and guarded in their community.

However, along with the suggestion, he also wanted to highlight the factors and context due in which PWDs faced discrimination.

### 1. **Stigma and Societal Attitudes**

He asserted that due to stigma and having a fear of being judged and mocked in society, families suppress their human rights which leads to violation of rights and abuse. As differently-abled people are kept in hidden places, it restricts their mobility and they become dependent on others. However, it is believed that social attitudes and stereotypes play a crucial role in limiting the chances and opportunities so that these people do not participate in the decision-making process nor do they address their needs in mainstream society.

### 2. **Denied mental disability**

He showcased the situation of people suffering from mental disabilities. Families mainly denied this type of disability and placed them in social isolation due to the stigma attached to it. As an outcome, this denial becomes an obstacle and young children lose their opportunity to be cured. He emphasised that acceptance should be present so that instead of fearing, people start working as well as supporting them for their better existence in society.

### 3. Physical constraints

In this context, he stated that due to superstitions, persons with disabilities also become the target in the eyes of other people. He mainly refers to the black magic as persons with disabilities suffering from this badly. As a result, their mobility is restricted and they are not allowed to share their concerns with anyone.

### 4. Societal Boycott

Young people with disabilities always face the issue of being socially boycotted by family or society. They are not allowed to participate in family festivities as a result they become isolated and everyone sympathises with them while mocking at the back. Thus it is important to understand the concerns and needs of PWDs so that proper support and safety measures are provided to them.

### 5. Land and property rights denied

He highlighted that in India, all kin are eligible to claim property and land rights. But in the cases of PWDs, they are denied such rights as they are judged by their level and type of disability. Families perceive that PWDs especially children and young people are incapable of taking care of property and land. Thus they become dependent on them and always suppress their identity and dignity.

### 6. Marital relationships chances denied

He stated that in India, marriages are arranged by the elders of the family as it is a matter of family honour. Girls specifically, who are disabled, are denied the opportunity to get married as the stigma of being disabled is attached to it.

### 7. Sexuality and disability.

It is believed that the component of sexuality is very critical and sensitive as it defines the personality and self-esteem of an individual. Due to overprotection by parents and family, young people with disabilities are recognised as innocent or asexual. Thus it is important to address the issues and challenges faced by PWDs so that they should be sure and never face remarks related to their sexuality.

Hence, after discussing the issue of disability in different contexts, scholars now want to showcase the condition of women with disabilities.

### Women with Disability

❖ He asserted that due to differences in gender roles, young women with disabilities faced more discrimination in different dimensions of society. In the context of the educational sector, girls' dropout rate is higher than boys. Due to over-protection and representation of boys in society, families especially parents become restrictive to girls' specifically when they attain puberty.

❖ Travelling to schools and universities is an arduous task. Parents have a fear of sexual abuse in public transport which is why they do not let them travel alone.

❖ As disabled bodies, family and parents sometimes consider them a burden and therefore confined their aspirations and desires as they are allowed to fulfil their dreams so they compromise with the situation occasionally.

However, it is crucial to make a change in the mindset of society so that these people could also enjoy their rights satisfactorily. In the end, he recommended the suggestion to make society disable friendly as follows:

- It is important to ensure a dignified life for all PWDs, especially children and youth with disabilities.
  - It is important to make sure that PWDs will participate in community programmes.
  - It is important to ensure that they should have access to good infrastructure along with assistive measures.
  - In schools and universities, for PWDs there should be separate dealing cells so that they can share their concerns freely without any fear.
  - In policies and programmes, both the government authorities and NGOs take their needs and concerns as positive interventions while framing them.
- Thus, it becomes significant to address their concerns and provide them with a disabling friendly environment so that they can uplift their position in society positively.

## MAJOR FINDINGS

- 0.00% of persons with disabilities believed that bus services are neither safe for travelling nor disabled-friendly.
- Majority of respondents believed that thalassemia is not a temporary health condition but also comes under disability.
- 42.68% of respondents claimed that the metro is both disabled-friendly and the safest mode of transportation.
- 68.3% PWDs do not have awareness about the assistive measures.
- 43.9% of respondents are discriminated against by classmates in educational institutions.
- 43.9% of respondents do not have accessibility to assistive devices at their workplace.
- 19.8% of respondents experienced discrimination by employees at the workplace
- Most respondents mentioned that autism is not only a health condition but it is a separate category as a disability.
- 51.1 % of respondents do not avail any schemes and programmes.
- Around 43% of respondents have mentioned that public places are not disabled-friendly and they have often been judged because of their disability.
- 41.5% of respondents revealed that due to fear of harassment, they did not complain if they faced any

uncomfortable situation.

- 43% of respondents asserted that because of passengers they faced discrimination while travelling in public transport.
- Persons with disabilities, especially young people, still demand common facilities such as ramps, wheelchairs, helping desks etc. so that they can be mobile without any dependency. It has also been observed that after the availability of special assistive facilities, PWDs faced issues which is why checking these facilities is a must.
- Young women with disabilities are categorised as asexual and denied the opportunities such as availing of education and health facilities. Health professionals do not share any information related to health programmes related to reproductive health specifically.
- It has been observed that young people with disabilities always wanted inclusion with abled bodies, especially in educational institutions. However, because of division in curriculum, they do not explore new things.
- Many PWDs urged for respect and identity as they face mocking in society. They also wanted equality with equity.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.**

It is believed that PWDs in society faced many preconceptions because of their condition. Mostly abled bodies judged them, mocked and cracked jokes on them. However, gender plays a crucial role while understanding disability. It is witnessed that women with disabilities faced harsh conditions in the family and also in society. Because of their disability, they were denied several opportunities for education and social setups.

Eventually, they always felt alienated from society and accept the reality. Thus to uplift their and PWD's position in the society, various measures need to implement such as

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Government authorities should give them space and consider their needs while formulating the policies and programmes.
- Equal education opportunities should be given to all without any division and discrimination.
- In workplaces, proper cells particularly for PWDs should be established so that they can report uncomfortable issues without any fear.
- There is a need to incorporate all policies according to the need so that PWDs include all gender and uplift their positions in society.
- For young women with disabilities, proper awareness campaigns should be arranged and provide knowledge about health-related issues.
- In the initial stage of learning, schools and universities should involve counsellors in the mental development of PWDs.
- Course on sign language should introduce for both people with and without disabilities so that people will explore it and help others while communicating with them.
- For visually impaired beings, room no. and basic information should write in braille everywhere, especially in schools and hospitals.
- Awareness campaigns should organise to create sensitivity in society.
- Government should organise learning workshops on different types of disability so that people should become aware and handle situations accordingly.

By implementing these recommendations society can ensure a basic disabled-friendly environment in

which PWDs uplift their position in society. Gender and disability are not a new concept of discussion about covid-19 made it an area of concern. Thus it is important to address their needs with an inclusive approach.

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