

Types of Disabilities and Its Distribution in Census

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Abstract:

Disabilities are an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

Introduction:

India is the largest democratic country in the world and is on its way to become a key player in the global scenario. It is our responsibility to ensure that this developmental cycle touches all the citizens of this country that is able and, especially, the physically handicapped, who are often referred to as the invisible minority. But before we stamp them as minority, let us consider the recent census reports. According to the 2011 census the government figure for the physically handicapped was 2.7% of the entire population. A reserved guess would place that figure between seven to ten crores. The National Policy identifies the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) as necessary and valuable assets of this country and the basic goal is to create an atmosphere for them in conjunction with the basic constitutional rights i.e. equality, freedom, justice and dignity. This will also guarantee equal opportunities for the PWD thereby ensuring the protection of their rights and enabling their full participation in the society.

Physically handicapped are those things that prevent people with impairment from functioning properly in the society. Many studies argue that disabilities can occur at birth but in some cases, disability is acquired later in life. Common disabilities include physical deformities that affect the upper and lower limbs, manual dexterity problems, inability to coordinate body organs and others.

The cause of the disability may be due to old age, a viral infection such as polio, a hereditary condition and paralysis or amputation. Other disabilities include speech and hearing impairment. This category includes individuals suffering hearing impairment; some partially while others totally, a condition also known as deafness. There are a number of individuals who have problems with speech, where others cannot speak and are said to be mute. Sufferers of speech impairment may stutter and stammer while speaking while others may have voice disorders. However, People suffering from disabilities face a lot of challenges every day. Simple tasks that ordinary people perform on a daily basis as routine are extremely delicate and difficult to those suffering from disabilities. Thus accomplishing simple tasks such as taking a shower, dressing up, brushing teeth or even having a meal are tasks that may take much longer than normal and in many cases, may require the assistance of others. Individuals with disabilities are faced with stigma and discrimination from the society where they live. Most people look down on them and treat them as special. Disabled people may find it hard to socialize with members of the society. With above back drop the study assumed great significance to study the problems and prospects of physically handicapped.

Definitions of Physically Handicapped:

According to the medical model, disability lies in the individuals, as it is equated with those restrictions of activity. Faced with the line of thinking, individuals would feel pressured to work on

'their' restrictions, bearing the burden of adjusting to their environment through cures, treatment or rehabilitation.

According to World trade organization disabilities are an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions.

According to Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act, 1995, "Person with disability" means a person suffering from not less than forty per cent of any disability as certified by a medical authority (any hospital or institution, specified for the purposes of this Act by notification by the appropriate Government). As per the act "Disability" means Blindness, Low vision, Leprosy-cured; Hearing impairment; Loco motor disability, Mental retardation; and Mental illness.

Research Methodology:

The size of physically handicapped population is very large in Belgaum district like other district. In view of the said reasons the study of all handicapped in Belgaum district is very difficult and it is time consuming and it is not manageable by the researcher to complete the study on time hence, the study has adopted cluster sampling method and has been divided into different stratum like ten taluka and each taluka has taken 30 sample physically handicapped respondents by adopting simple random sampling techniques. Therefore, the total sample respondents' is 300 while selecting sample respondents from each taluka of Belgaum district, equal weightage has been given to different types of physically handicapped.

Types of disabilities as per Census

According to 2001 census classify the disabilities as viz., seeing, speech, hearing, movement, and mental.

Seeing disability

A person who cannot see at all (has no perception of light) or has blurred vision even with the help of spectacles. A person with proper vision only in one eye was also treated as visually disabled. A person may have blurred vision and had no occasion to test whether her/his eyesight would improve by using spectacles - such persons were treated as visually disabled.

•Speech disability

A person who is dumb or whose speech is not understood by a listener of normal comprehension and hearing was considered to have speech disability. Persons who stammer but whose speech is comprehensible were not classified as disabled by speech.

•Hearing disability

A person who cannot hear at all (deaf), or can hear only loud sounds was considered to have hearing disability. A person who is able to hear using hearing aid, was not considered as disabled under this category. If a person cannot hear through one ear but her/his other ear is functioning normally, she/ he were still considered to have hearing disability.

•Movement Disability

A person, who lacks limbs or is unable to use the limbs normally, was considered to have movement disability. Absence of a part of a limb like a finger or a toe was not considered as disability. However, absence of all the fingers or toes or a thumb make a person disabled by movement. If any part of the body is deformed, the person was also treated as disabled and covered under this category. A person, who cannot move herself/himself without the aid of another person or without the aid of stick, etc., was treated as disabled. Similarly, a person who is unable to move or lift or pick up any small article placed near her/him was also treated as disabled in movement. A person who may not be able to move normally because of problems of joints like arthritis and has to invariably limp while moving, too was considered to have movement disability.

• Mental disability

A person who lacks comprehension appropriate to her/his age was categorized as mentally disabled. This would not mean, however, that if a person is not able to comprehend her/his studies appropriate to her/his age and is failing to qualify her/his examination, she/ he was considered mentally disabled. Mentally retarded and insane persons were treated as mentally disabled. A mentally disabled person generally has to depend on her/his family members for performing daily routine. In Population Census, if a person suffered from two or more types of disability, only one of them was recorded. In all such cases it was left to the respondent to decide as to under which type of disability the person should be categorized. The

definitions, concepts and instructions were designed in such a manner that the question on disability can be canvassed appropriately without hurting the sentiments or feelings of the informant with a view to have good chances of netting the disability characteristics of the population.

• **NSSO Survey on Disability:**

The broad definition has been adopted by National Sample Survey Organisation survey on disability for collection of data and it is as follows:

• **Disability:** A person with restrictions or lack of abilities to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being was treated as having disability. It excluded illness/injury of recent origin (morbidity) resulting into temporary loss of ability to see, hear, speak or move. The NSS definition of disability was much closer to the social model. However, the scope of the definition was not translated in questionnaire designing in compliance with CRPWD and as a result of that, could not fully capture the population that the core definition meant to cover.

• **Mental disability:** Persons who had difficulty in understanding routine instructions, who could not carry out their activities like others of similar age or exhibited behaviours like talking to self, laughing/crying, staring, violence, fear and suspicion without reason were considered as mentally disabled for the purpose of the survey. The “activities like others of similar age” included activities of communication (speech), self-care (cleaning of teeth, wearing clothes, taking bath, taking food, personal hygiene, etc.), home living (doing some household chores) and social skills. The survey the “activities like others of similar age” included activities of communication (speech), self-care (cleaning of teeth, wearing clothes, taking bath, taking food, personal hygiene, etc.), home living (doing some household chores) and social skills.

• **Visual disability:** By visual disability it was meant loss or lack of ability to execute tasks requiring adequate visual acuity. For the survey, visually disabled included (a) those who did not have any light perception - both eyes taken together and (b) those who had light perception but could not correctly count fingers of hand (with spectacles/contact lenses if he/ she used spectacles/ contact lenses) from a distance of 3 metres (or 10 feet) in

good day light with both eyes open. Night blindness was not considered as visual disability.

• **Hearing disability:** This referred to persons’ inability to hear properly. Hearing disability was judged taking into consideration the disability of the better ear. In other words, if one ear of a person was normal and the other ear had total hearing loss, then the person was judged as normal in hearing for the purpose of the survey. Hearing disability was judged without taking into consideration the use of hearing aids (i.e., the position for the person when hearing aid was not used). Persons with hearing disability might be having different degrees of disability, such as profound, severe or moderate. A person was treated as having ‘profound’ hearing disability if he/she could not hear at all or could only hear loud sounds, such as, thunder or understands only gestures. A person was treated as having ‘severe’ hearing disability if he/she could hear only shouted words or could hear only if the speaker was sitting in the front. A person was treated as having ‘moderate’ hearing disability if his/her disability was neither profound nor severe. Such a person would usually ask to repeat the words spoken by the speaker or would like to see the face of the speaker while he/she spoke or would feel difficulty in conducting conversations.

• **Speech disability:** This referred to persons’ inability to speak properly. Speech of a person was judged to be disordered if the person's speech was not understood by the listener. Persons with speech disability included those who could not speak, spoke only with limited words or those with loss of voice. It also included those whose speech was not understood due to defects in speech, such as stammering, nasal voice, hoarse voice and discordant voice and articulation defects, etc.

• **Loco-motor disability:** A person with - (a) loss or lack of normal ability to execute distinctive activities associated with the movement of self and objects from place to place and (b) physical deformities, other than those involving the hand or leg or both, regardless of whether the same caused loss or lack of normal movement of body – was considered as disabled with locomotors disability. Thus, persons having locomotors disability included those with (a) loss or absence or inactivity of whole or part of hand or leg or both due to amputation, paralysis, deformity

or dysfunction of joints which affected his/her “normal ability to move self or objects” and (b) those with physical deformities in the body (other than limbs), such as, hunch back, deformed spine, etc. Dwarfs and persons with stiff neck of permanent nature who generally did not have difficulty in the normal movement of body and limbs were also treated as disabled. In NSS surveys since the data are collected by the non-medical investigators, it is imperative to define disability in a very careful and guarded way to minimize the bias of the investigators and respondents. To minimize these difficulties and to involve feasible and practical concepts and definitions of disability, the experts from the relevant medical disciplines were consulted. Moreover, besides the socio-economic characteristics, information on cause of disability, age at onset, degree of disability, treatment undergone, aids/appliances acquired etc. was collected for each of the disability separately for the persons suffering from one or multiple types of disability. In the case of loco motor disability, a person suffering from multiple types of loco motor disability was considered to have multiple disabilities.

Conclusion:

A physical disability is a limitation on a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina. Other physical disabilities include impairments which limit other facets of daily living, such as respiratory disorders, blindness, epilepsy and sleep disorder. disability lies in the individuals, as it is equated with those restrictions of activity. Faced with the line of thinking, individuals would feel pressured to work on ‘their’ restrictions, bearing the burden of adjusting to their environment through cures, treatment or rehabilitation.

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