

COUNTRY REPORT - INDIA

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INTRODUCTION

Historically, being an agrarian country, India is endowed with a large population living in rural area. Indian villages are traditionally known for their culture of community living. Persons with disabilities are treated as equals and part of the community and they are eventually included. They are provided due care and rehabilitation services through institution of family. Rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities in an organised manner started as a movement after independence, particularly with the influence of urbanisation and institutionalisation. In the subsequent times many developmental programmes have been launched in which both the government and non-government organizations have worked together to create facilities for the rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities. Gradually a paradigm shift has occurred replacing the "charity" mode with the "rights" mode.

In 1951 planners perceived the potential threat posed by rapid urbanization and population growth to development activities and put in place the five-year plans. The present five-year plan is the tenth. Keeping in view the special issues/problems being faced by the disabled, social deviants, aged, street children, drug addicts and the like, special approach initiated in the ninth plan for 'Empowering Persons with Disabilities'; 'Reforming the Social Deviants'; and 'Caring Other Disadvantaged'; need to be further strengthened through following measures:

- Effective implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 to ensure social justice to disabled with equitable terms.
- Strengthening and consolidation of the outreach and extension programmes through National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (NRPD).
- Strengthening and expansion of social defence services to address the problems of drug abuse/addiction, trafficking among women and girl children, destitution etc.
- Overall welfare and development of the aged through special measures for their protection, socio-economic rehabilitation and social security.

(Approach Paper to the Tenth Five Year Plan, 2002-2007).

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

Approach to Rehabilitation

As per the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) surveys there is a population of 3% with developmental delays and 2% with other disabilities. Even the recent census of 2001 indicated estimated figure of 6% population with disabilities. Rehabilitation is high on the agenda of the government. A number of schemes, programmes and projects are implemented by an infrastructural network of the Disability Division in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The infrastructure includes:

1. National Institutes
2. Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)
3. District Rehabilitation Centres (DRCs)
4. Regional Training Centres (RRTC's)
5. National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities
6. Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)
7. National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation (NHFDC)
8. The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995

NATIONAL INSTITUTES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped - Secunderabad (Andhra Pradesh)

The National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped is an autonomous body under the Ministry. It was established in the year 1984 as a registered society.

Objectives:

- To develop appropriate models of care and rehabilitation for persons with mental handicap appropriate to Indian conditions
- To develop manpower for delivery of services
- To identify, conduct and co-ordinate research
- To provide consultancy services to voluntary organizations and to assist them wherever necessary
- To serve as a documentation and information centre
- To acquire relevant data to assess the causes of mental handicap, rural urban composition, socio-economic factors, etc. in the country
- To promote and stimulate the growth of various kinds of quality services throughout the country

National Institute for the Orthopaedically Handicapped - Calcutta (West Bengal)

For promoting, education, training and rehabilitation of the orthopaedically handicapped children and adults suffering from a wide range of disabilities which limit their mobility, muscular coordination and manipulative ability, the National Institute for the Orthopaedically Handicapped was registered as an autonomous society in the year 1982.

Objectives:

- To develop manpower by training of physiotherapists, occupational therapist, orthopaedic and prosthetic technicians, employment and placement officers, vocational counsellors etc.
- To develop model services in the areas of restorative surgery, aids and appliances, vocational training etc.
- To conduct and sponsor research into all aspects related to the total rehabilitation orthopaedically handicapped persons
- To standardise the aids and appliances and to promote their manufacture and distribution
- To serve as the apex documentation and information centre
- To provide consultancy services to the state governments and voluntary organisations, working for the rehabilitation of orthopaedically handicapped

Ali Yawar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped-Mumbai (Maharashtra)

The Ali Yawar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped was established in Mumbai in the year 1983.

Objectives:

- To conduct, sponsor, coordinate and subsidise research for the education and rehabilitation of the hearing handicapped
- To undertake, sponsor, coordinate or subsidise research for biomedical engineering resulting in the effective evaluation of aids, also surgical or medical procedure or the development of the new aids
- To undertake or sponsor programs for trainees and teachers, employment officers, psychologists, vocational counsellors for promoting education, training and rehabilitation of the hearing handicapped
- To distribute or promote or subsidise the manufacture of prototypes and distribution of any or all aids designed to promote the education, rehabilitation or therapy of the hearing handicapped

National Institute for the Visually Handicapped - Dehradun (Uttar Pradesh)

The National Institute for the Visually Handicapped was established in 1979 by upgrading the National Centre for the Blind. It was registered in 1982 and gained the status of an autonomous body.

Objectives:

- To conduct, sponsor, coordinate and subsidise research for the education and rehabilitation of the visually handicapped
- To undertake, sponsor, coordinate or subsidise research for biomedical engineering resulting in the effective evaluation of aids, also surgical or medical procedure or the development of the new aids
- To undertake or sponsor programs for trainees and teachers, employment officers, psychologists, vocational counsellors for promoting education, training and rehabilitation of the visually handicapped
- To distribute or promote or subsidise the manufacture of prototypes and distribution of any or all aids designed to promote the education, rehabilitation or therapy of the visually handicapped

National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research - Cuttack (Orissa)

The National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research was registered as a society in 1984 and is an autonomous body under the Ministry.

Objectives:

- To promote the use of products of Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation
- To undertake, sponsor or coordinate training of personnel such as doctors, engineers, prosthetists, orthotists, prosthetic and orthotic technicians, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, and multi-purpose rehabilitation therapists
- To conduct, sponsor, coordinate or subsidise research on biomechanical engineering leading to the effective evaluation of the mobility aids for the orthopaedically disabled or suitable surgical or medical procedures or development of new aids
- To promote distribute, subsidise the manufacture of prototype designed aids and to

- promote any aspects of the education and rehabilitation therapy of physically handicapped
- To undertake vocational training, placement and rehabilitation of the physically handicapped
 - To promote and disseminate information on rehabilitation in India and abroad
 - To undertake any other action in the area of rehabilitation of the physically handicapped
 - All the income will be utilised for the fulfillment of above aims and objectives

REHABILITATION COUNCIL OF INDIA (RCI)

The RCI was set up as a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. Thereafter, this was converted to a statutory body under the RCI Act, 1992.

Objectives:

- To regulate the training policies and programmes in the field of rehabilitation of people with disabilities
- To prescribe minimum standards of education and training of various categories of professionals dealing with people with disabilities
- To regulate these standards in all training institutions uniformly throughout the country
- To recognise institutions/universities running degree/diploma/certificate courses in the field of rehabilitation of persons with disabilities
- To recognise foreign degree/diploma/certificate awarded by universities/institutions on reciprocal basis
- To maintain central rehabilitation register of persons possessing the recognised rehabilitation qualification
- To encourage continuing rehabilitation education in collaboration with organisations working in the field of disability

DISTRICT REHABILITATION CENTRES (DRCs)

The government of India launched the DRC scheme in early 1995, to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services to the rural disabled right at their doorstep. The scheme, at present, is operational at 11 different districts of the 10 states of our country. These are -

- Bhubaneswar (Orissa)
- Bilaspur (Madhya Pradesh)
- Kharagpur (West Bengal)
- Mysore (Karnataka)
- Chengalpattu (Tamil Nadu)
- Sitapur (Uttar Pradesh)
- Jagdishpur (Uttar Pradesh)
- Vijaywada (Andhra Pradesh)
- Bhiwani (Haryana)
- Kota (Rajasthan)
- Virar (Maharashtra)

The services provided in the scheme include:

- Prevention and Early Detection
- Medical Intervention and Surgical Correction
- Fitment of Artificial Limbs, Aids and Appliances
- Therapeutic Services
- Training for acquiring Vocational Training, Job Placement etc.

REGIONAL REHABILITATION TRAINING CENTRES (RRTCS)

Four RRTCs have also been set up at Chennai, Cuttack, Lucknow and Mumbai for training and manpower development in the field of rehabilitation particularly for the DRCs. The RRTCs also have been conducting training programmes for communities, parents and persons with disabilities themselves.

NATIONAL TRUST FOR WELFARE OF PERSONS WITH AUTISM, CEREBRAL PALSY, MENTAL RETARDATION AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

The National Trust Act came into force with effect from 30th December 1999. The Trust supports programmes which promote independence, facilitate guardianship where necessary and address the concerns of those special persons who do not have their family support. The Trust also seeks to strengthen families and protect the interest of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities after the death of their parents. The Trust is empowered to receive grants, donations, benefactions, bequests and transfers. It is exempted from the income tax.

NATIONAL HANDICAPPED FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NHFDC)

The objectives of NHFDC include providing concessional finance for a wide range of activities including self-employment ventures, upgrading of skills, assistance for infra-structural activities which support economic pursuits, loans for education etc. Assistance is given to disabled persons who are below the poverty line.

NHFDC functions as an apex financial institution for routing funds through the channelising agencies authorised by the state governments/union territory administrations. NHFDC has also introduced a new "Micro Financing Scheme" under which assistance to disabled persons is provided through the NGOs.

ARTIFICIAL LIMBS MANUFACTURING CORPORATION OF INDIA (ALIMCO)

ALIMCO was registered under Section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 in the year 1972 in Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) as a government company not for profit.

Objectives:

- Manufacturing orthotics/prosthetics and rehabilitation aids
- Training orthotic technicians and engineers
- Carry out research and development in the field of orthotics and prosthetics

THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 1995

"The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995" has come into force on February 7, 1996. This law is an important landmark and is a significant step in the direction of ensuring equal opportunities for people with disabilities and their full participation in the nation building. The Act provides for both preventive and promotional aspects of rehabilitation like education, employment and vocational training, job reservation, research and manpower development, creation of barrier-free environment, unemployment allowance, special insurance scheme for the disabled employees and establishment of homes for persons with severe disability.

The main Provisions of the Disabilities Act :

Prevention and early detection of disabilities

- Surveys, investigations and research shall be conducted to ascertain the cause of occurrence of disabilities
- Various measures shall be taken to prevent disabilities, staff at the Primary health Centres (PHCs) shall be trained to assist in this work
- All the Children shall be screened once in a year for identifying 'at-risk' cases
- Awareness campaigns shall be launched and sponsored to disseminate information
- Measures shall be taken for pre-natal, perinatal, and post-natal care of the mother and child

Education

"Right to free Education"

- Every child with disability shall have the rights to free education till the age of 18 years in integrated schools or special schools
- Appropriate transportation, removal of architectural barriers and restructuring of curriculum and modifications in the examination system shall be ensured for the benefit of children with disabilities
- Children with disabilities shall have the right to free books, scholarships, uniforms and other learning material
- Special school for children with disabilities shall be equipped with vocational training facilities
- Non-formal education shall be promoted for children with disabilities
- Teacher's training institutions shall be established to develop requisite manpower
- Parents may move to appropriate forum for the redressal of grievances regarding the placement of their children with disabilities

Employment

1. 3% of vacancies in government employment shall be reserved for people with disabilities, 1% each for persons suffering from :
 - Blindness or low vision
 - Hearing impairment

- Locomotor disability and cerebral palsy
2. Suitable schemes shall be formulated for
 - The training and welfare of persons with disabilities
 - The relaxation of upper age limit
 - Regulating the employment
 - Health and safety measures and creation of a non-handicapping environment in places where persons with disabilities are employed
 3. Government educational institutes and other educational institutes receiving grant from government shall reserve at least 3% seats for people with disabilities
 4. All poverty alleviation schemes shall reserve at least 3% for the benefit of people with disabilities
 5. No employee can be sacked or demoted if they become disabled during service, although they can be moved to another post with the same pay and condition, no job promotion can be denied because of impairment

Affirmative Action

1. Aids and appliances shall be made available to people with disabilities
2. Allotment of land shall be made at concessional rates to the people with disabilities for:
 - House
 - Business
 - Special recreational centres
 - Special schools
 - Research schools
 - Factories by entrepreneurs with disability

Non-Discrimination

- Public buildings, rail compartments, buses, ships and air-crafts shall be designed to give easy access to disabled people
- In all public places and in waiting rooms, toilets shall be wheel chair accessible. Braille and sound symbols are also to be provided in lifts
- All the places of public utility shall be made barrier-free by providing ramps

Research and Manpower Development

Research in the following areas shall be sponsored and promoted :

- Prevention of disability
- Rehabilitation including Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR)
- Development of assistive devices
- Job identification
- On site modifications of offices and factories
- Financial assistance shall be made available to universities, institutions of higher learning, professional bodies and non-government research units for undertaking research for special education, rehabilitation and manpower development

Social Security

- Financial assistance to non-government organisations for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities
- Insurance coverage for the benefit of the government employees with disabilities
- Unemployment allowance to people with disabilities registered with the special

employment exchange for more than a year and who could not be placed in any gainful occupation

Grievances Redressal

In case of violation of rights as prescribed in that act, people with disabilities may move an application to :

- Chief Commissioner for persons with disabilities in the Centre or
- Commissioner for persons with disabilities in the State

SCHEMES IMPLEMENTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

- Assistance to persons with disabilities for purchase/fitting of aids and appliances
- Scheme to promote voluntary action for persons with disabilities
- Scheme of National Award for the welfare of persons with disabilities
- Scheme of National Scholarship for persons with disabilities

NEW INITIATIVES

1. A Directory of Assistive Devices on Educational Tools and Barrier Free Features for persons with disabilities was formally released by the Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment on the 'World Disabled Day' on 3rd December 2000. A revised edition of the Directory with great details is being brought out shortly
2. A complementary scheme to the DRC scheme namely National Programme for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (NPRPD) has been formulated as a State Sector Scheme. Through this scheme rehabilitation services are being provided right from the grass root level upto the state level involving community and the other existing organizations
3. A project on support to children with disability for providing educational and other supplementary services funded by UNDP is being implemented in 10 blocks of Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh each
4. Five Composite Regional Centres (CRCs) are being set up in different parts of the country to provide services for different kinds of disabilities and for creating infrastructure for training and manpower development, promoting research and awareness
5. Four Regional Rehabilitation Centres (RRCs) for persons with spinal injuries and orthopaedic disabilities are being set up as a Centre Sponsored Scheme to strengthen services
6. Four Auxiliary Production Centres of ALIMCO are being set up to expand the production capacity and for easy availability of quality aids and appliances
7. Guidelines for issue of Identity Cards to persons with disabilities by the respective States/Union Territories have been issued by the Ministry, after consultation with state governments and NGOs