

Country Report of Nepal

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Background of the Country:

Nepal is the only Hindu Kingdom in the world and is the birth place of Lord Buddha and goddess Sita. With the immense diversity of topography, varied climate and the mix of people, Nepal. These diversities combines to produce a magical attraction for outsiders. Nepal Himalaya popularly known as ‘ the abode of the gods’’, stretches as far as 800 kms. Of great Himalayas Range lie within Nepal. It has a convergence of 1310 magnificent peaks over 6000 meters including 8 of the world’s highest 15 peaks of 8000 meters. The world’s famous Mount Everest (Sagarmatha) is in Nepal.

Nepal is a land locked country. It borders with Tibet autonomous region of the People’s Republic of China in the north and India in the east, south and west. It offers an astonishing topographical variation with the altitude from 70 meters to 8848 meters from the sea level amidst a width of 193 kms. Nepal is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of bio-diversity due to its unique geographical position and altitudinal variation.

1. Population : Around 23 Million.
2. GNP/P : US\$ 270.00
3. Life Expectancy : 55 years
4. Infant Mortality Rate: per thousand 66.78
5. Literacy Rate : Around 54% (male 67.9% and female 37.8%)
6. Employment Rate: 30%
7. Incidence of Poverty: 38%
8. Education System: Education is free at elementary level but not compulsory.
9. Medical / Health System: HMG/Nepal has promoted general health facilities for the benefit of the population at all levels. With the decentralized planning of the health sector there has been expansion of sub health units at the village level. The health system in Nepal forms a network under the Department of Health Services .

Situation of People with Intellectual Disabilities

1. National Policy for People with Disabilities (Intellectual Disabilities)

Nepal recognized the human rights of persons with disability in the year 1981 and celebrated the International Year of Disabled Persons with the world community. Accordingly, it enacted a special law known as the Disabled Persons Protection and Welfare Act, 1982. We do not have separate national policy for ID in our country but we have some laws and policies for disabled that include plan, program and legal provision to ensure equal opportunity for full participation of PWDs. These provisions are summarized as follows : (a) National Civil Code 1910 BS, (b) The Constitution of Nepal, 1990, (c) Education Act 1971, (d) Special Education Policy , (e) Children Act 1992, (f) Local Self-Governance Act 1999, ((g) Labor Act, 2056, (h) National Disability Policy 2053(BS), (i) Tenth National Development Plan 2003-2008. Now the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has formed a

Disabled Services National Coordination Committee under the Chairmanship of Minister to regulate the services and implemented the and to make national policy for the disabled including the people with ID. .

2. No. of Children and People with Intellectual Disabilities

An estimated 10% of the population in Nepal have some form of disability of which mental retardation is one prominent disability. It is estimated by a sample survey conducted by AWMR in the year 1989 that about 720,000 persons, ie, 4.06% of the total country's population are mentally retarded nearly 40% of them being under the age of 14. National Census 2001 included the survey of disability including intellectual disability for the first time in Nepal. We have not yet received the accurate final report of this survey.

3. Law Concerned with People with Disabilities (Intellectual Disabilities)

AWMR, its district branches, school management committees are responsible for the community based rehabilitation programmes at the grass root level. AWMR is the only National level NGO that is established to provide integrated individualized and properly adapted special education and comprehensive services to the people with ID and their families. At present acceptance and inclusion of IDs in the society is our main concern but it is not only AWMR's responsibility. Thus, we are trying to cooperate with government and other related NGOs and officials on this part and we are striving hard for the implementation of the inclusive education program to be implemented by HMG/Nepal very soon. By law, special education, has been defined as a regular education for children with special needs.

4. Government Agencies / Department Concerned with Disabilities (Intellectual Disabilities)

HMG/N, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, National Planning Commission, Department of Education, Special Education Council and Social Welfare Council are mainly concerned governmental agencies with ID in our country.

5. Activities of Non Governmental Organization for People with Intellectual Disabilities

Association for the Welfare of Mentally Retarded (AWMR) is a voluntary national organization established during the observance of the International Year of Disabled persons in 1981 to provide comprehensive services directed towards the welfare of the people with mental retardation and their families. It is Nepal's national umbrella organization with 32 centers in 23 districts (Central, Eastern, Western and Mid-Western Regions having district committees to supervise the various activities and serving directly or indirectly about 5,000 people with mental retardation throughout the country. It provides and promotes early identifications and intervention of children with mental retardation through day care centers, training of special

education teachers, parents, social workers etc. Class room instruction, vocational education sheltered workshops, home based rehabilitation programs, parents counseling, home visit program, integrated training program (inclusive Education) for the teachers of Primary, Lower Secondary and Secondary Schools, community education together with general awareness program are the associations other services. The association also acts as an advocacy organization for these children and parents. Apart from this, the teachers of AWMR school are given training in Physiotherapy, Speech and communication therapy, rehabilitation methodology and early intervention. The teachers are also given training in Special Olympics activities. Presently a survey of the disabled including mentally retarded is going to be conducted under the patronage of National Planning Commission of His Majesty's Government of Nepal and UNICEF on the basis of recommendation by the technical committee in which AWMR is also represented.

AWMR maintains internal liaison with Government Ministries & Departments and with the International Agencies through the Social Welfare Council and Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. AWMR is a full member of AFMR and Inclusion International. It is also represented in the National CBR Network in its Executive Board. AWMR works as an advocacy organization and assists the government in the formulation of national policy, action plans and legislation to ensure the rights of the disabled persons.

6. Activity of Parents' Organization :

In the initiation of AWMR some active and dedicated parents were organized in to Nepal Parents' Organization for Children with Mental Retardation in 1990. The parents' organization is working as a pressure group and they are also conducting parents awareness program in different region. This organization is also organizing sports activities, cultural programs and parents to parents contact program.

In 1991 some active mothers also formed a Mothers' Group to fight for the right of their children with ID . This parental involvement in the rehabilitative works for the children is bound to ensure success in the fight against social evils that plague the life and living of their children.

7. Activity of Self-Advocates (People with Intellectual Disabilities)

In the first time in the History of ID, a group of five youth with ID as the ex student of the Association for the Welfare of Mentally Retarded (AWMR), Manab Vidhya Griha-Special School for ID, Thimi have formed a self-advocacy organization under the name of " Madhyapur Sustha Manasthiti Shangh " with under the Chairmanship of Mr. Jagat Krishna Prajapti an ID himself, as its president. This organization has been registered with the concerned government agency. The organization has recently organized Inter School Drawing Competition for ID, conducted tree plantation programs and awareness and training programs. The advocates such programs are

found to be highly vocal with regards to their rights to education, cultural activities, economic. Independence, equality in treatment etc..

8. Services available for People with Intellectual Disabilities (Early Identification)

- 1) Medical Service : HMG/Nepal has promoted general health facilities for the benefit of the population at all levels. With the decentralized planning of the health sector there has been expansion of health sub-units at the village level. The health system in Nepal forms a network under the Department of Health Services. Every Wednesday, we are providing Doctor,s service in the room of Doctors Day in our Resource and Family Counselling center level , that doctor checks up the children and give suggestion to their parents. Similarly, vocational skill development program, parents education and counseling are the other services available for people with ID.
- 2) Educational Service: HMG/Nepal, Ministry of Education, Special Education Council has established assessment centers in 35 districts. The Govt. has also emphasized to involve national level NGOs to provide education services for ID. and AWMR has 32 centers in 23 districts to do the same.
- 3) Family Support: For the support of the Family AWMR has established parents cells, conducted special mother and parents training, parents empowerment programs etc.
- 4) Job availability : A mild ID upon completion of his/her required skills and disciplinary training in pre-vocational and vocational activities, is encouraged to set up appropriate job available in his/her community or around her/his community setting for his/her economy independence. If necessary, AWMR provides small loan (revolving fund scheme) of Rs.2000/- to parents of adults with ID through its local branches to support home based vocational income generating activities such as chicken raising, rabbit raising, goat keeping and other agro-based activities.
- 5) Others : Every year AWMR is organizing Intellectual Disability Day on September 18th throughout the country with funfair, rallies, fund raising, games, cultural and other activities along with the distributing of pamphlets, posters, calendars, pocket diary for community awareness. We also use the media, publish article in the news paper, conduct interviews, and organize radio and tele-film programs etc.

9. Community Based Programs for People with Intellectual Disabilities

AWMR as an advocacy organization has been giving much emphasis on CBR program for raising the status of people with intellectually disability. In addition to this, the organization is delivering family counseling services conducting home visit programs, providing vocational skills development programs, organizing community

awareness campaigns, developing CBR workers and conducting parent empowerment activities along with the formation of parents cells in different parts of the country. Besides that AWMR is an Executive Member of CBR National Network Nepal.

10. Any other Activities / Programs to Empower People with Intellectual Disabilities and Families

For the empowerment of people with ID and families, AWMR has recently amended its constitution to involved more parents in district and central committees. There is a further provision for the self advocates to become a member of the association. For the empowerment of the ID and family, AWMR is also jointly conducting regional parental workshops with assistance from the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare.

Others:

We would like to extend our gratitude to the JLID. By the continuous help of JLID, AWMR got several chances to develop its human resources in many years. We are also hopeful for future cooperation with JLID.