



## PERSON WITH DISABILITIES AND SOCIAL POLICIES: A REVIEW ON ODISHA

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### ABSTRACT

*Historically Person with Disabilities (PWDs) are remain in the margin of the society. They are remained an excluded agenda in all aspects of the development process. Though in the later phase policies and programmes are formed for the development of PWDs in national and international level, these are far away from the reality. This paper deals with evolution of the policies framework and concerning approaches that have turned from charity and address the rights of PWDs throughout the country and in the later part it deals with different policies which are being made for the development of PWDs.*

**KEY WORDS:** Margin, Development, Policies, Rights

### INTRODUCTION

Persons with disabilities constitute a socially, economically and politically disadvantage group which has been neglected by the successive governments since independence. Even no government ministries concerned on the issues of PWDs (Alur 2000). Though different governments have taken up several initiatives, the extent of marginalization of the PWDs in the country has not declined. This is reflected in the socio-economic status of the PWDs, particularly in rural areas and

among women. The most economically and socially backward are those people living with impairments. The association between poverty and disability is an established fact. Social scientists concerned with the issues of disability have successfully articulated the theoretical perspectives of social oppression on the impaired persons thus bringing the significant shift in the policy framework and approach of the state towards PWDs.

According to the 2011 census data the total population of the country is 121,08,54,977 where men and women represent 51.47 percent and 48.53 percent respectively. Out of the total population about 68.89 percent are residing in villages while the rest i.e. 31.11 percent reside in urban areas. As a marginal community the PWDs constitute about 2.21 percent of the total population of the country. The state of Odisha comprises 3.47 percent of the total national population having a gender composition of 50.54 percent men and 49.46 percent women. Here about 83.32 percent people are living in rural areas while 16.68 percent live in urban areas. The literacy rate of Odisha is 73.45 percent. As far as PWDs population is concerned Odisha comprises 2.97 percent of the total population of the state with 54.23 percent men and 45.77 percent women. The percentage of the disabled

population to the total population of the state, which is 2.97 percent, is higher than the national average i.e. 2.21 percent. As far as the national figures are concerned majority of the PWDs i.e. 69.50 percent live in rural areas while the rest i.e. 30.50 percent live in urban areas. But in the case of Odisha the percentage of PWDs residing in rural areas is high, i.e. 85.50 percent while only about 14.50 percent live in urban areas.

### CHARITY APPROACH

In the traditional society the disabled people were considered by the non-disabled people as incarnation of devil. The non-disabled people conceived disability is the consequences of the past sign of wrong doing. It suggest that there was a dominant body ideology prevailed over the perception of the non-disabled people in the society by which the disabled were not recognized as fully human being in the society. The PWDs did not have social and religious rights. Though the PWDs were treated with pity, their right to equality never recognized. Following the same argument historically the PWDs were excluded from the mainstream society and taken care by the family members (Nagia 1988). At the same time people had thought that helping the marginalized is the good practice and people expressed a sympathetic attitude towards disabled people. Many people helped the marginalized including destitute and disabled which were found mostly on the kings empires and the religious places. In this respect people with disabilities were considered as the recipient of charity rather an active member of the society with personal dignity.

## COMMUNITY BASED REHABILITATION (CBR) APPROACH

Disability is a cross cutting development issue that needs to be taken into account in the development discourse (Motsch 2013). Though various initiatives have been taken for the development of the marginalized, that is far behind from the reality. Educational and economic backwardness creates more problems for the PWDs in the society. Poverty and disability has a correlation in such a way that poverty is regarded as the cause and consequences of disability<sup>1</sup>. The disabled people are also disadvantage in respect to education, health livelihood and social life (Klasing 2007) which creates socio-economic burden on family and community also. Consequently Person with disabilities especially children do not have access to most of the services of the international development cooperation due to the negative social stereotype and stigmas. Social discrimination and cultural taboos act as a driving force for the derogative status of the disabled people in the community life. As a result the international community realized to open specialized programmes for disabled people and tried to ensure the facilities to mobilize the PWDs. The World Bank (WB) realized that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which focused on the areas of eradication of poverty, hunger, ensure universal primary education, gender equality, women empowerment, cannot be achieved without inclusion of the PWDs. As a result Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) emerged as a new mechanism to address the issues relating to the PWDs.

Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is an integrated approach towards the inclusion of the disabled people in the community. CBR was initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) at the Alma Atta conference on primary health care in 1978 and introduced in early 1980s, to enhance the quality of life of PWDs and their families ensuring their basic needs and also to promote inclusion and participation in the community. CBR offers a community based inclusive development approach which can be imagined beyond functional and health related rehabilitation to a socio-economic empowerment of the disabled (Geiser &Boersma 2013). This approach has been adopted in different programme of UNO, NGOs and DPOs.

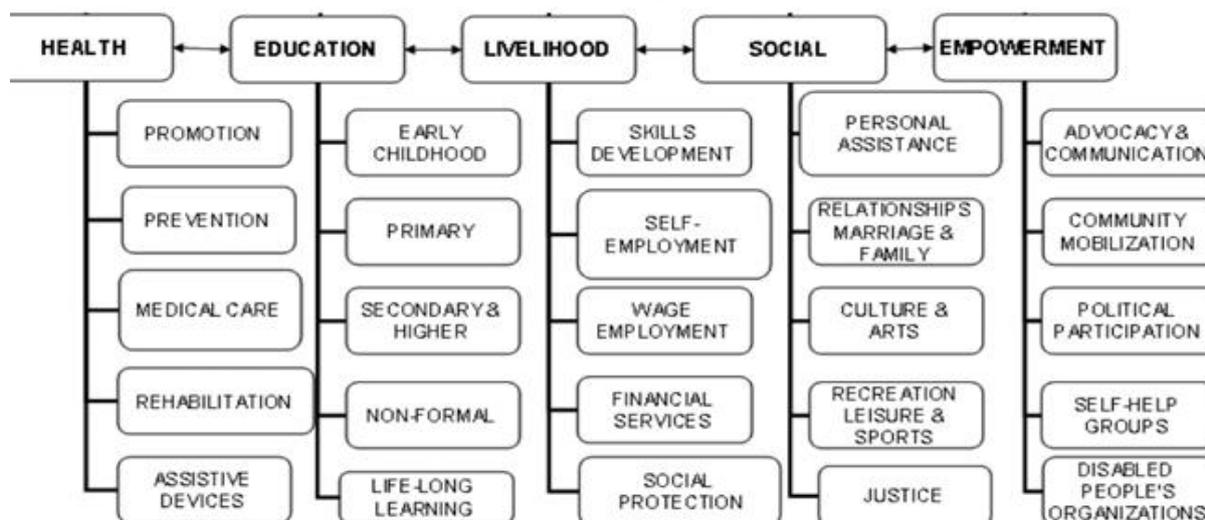
*“Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a strategy within community development for the rehabilitation, equalization of opportunities and social integration of all people with disabilities. CBR is implemented through the combined efforts of disabled people themselves, their families and communities, and the appropriate health, education, vocational and social services”.*

(ILO, UNESCO and WHO, 1994)

CBR is not only as an intervention brought from outside to the community but practiced as a strategy that involves the community members and make use of available resources in the development practices to improve the condition of the community (Geiser & Boersma 2013). CBR has a pragmatic influence on the marginalized community which offers a sustainable and equitable service delivery mechanism for their development (Motsch 2013). CBR considers PWDs, their

family and their organization as primary stake holder. Rehabilitation includes all measures aimed at reducing the impact of disability for an individual and also helps to improve social integration for PWDs to lead an independent life in the community. This approach places special attention on poor and disadvantaged groups of the community. Followed by three principle i.e rehabilitation, equalization of opportunity and social inclusion, CBR tries to address the problems concerning the areas of health, education, livelihood, social and empowerment. It follows a partnership approach where the community, NGOs and the government work together for the development of the disabled people. The aim of the CBR is to utilize the local resources for the development of the PWDs. CBR includes special activities that can help full to overcome the barriers for the inclusion of the PWDs. It follows an inclusion approach for the PWDs in the areas social, economic, cultural and community sphere and helps to increase their potential. Further WHO published a CBR manual as “Training in the community for Person With Disability” in 1989 which strengthened many development activities within and outside disability sector.

However realizing the importance of CBR approach world organizations like ILO, UNESCO, WHO prepared a joint position paper in 1994 on CBR to adopt a common approach for the development of implementation mechanism of CBR services and restructure their policy orientation for the grass root mobilization of the PWDs and was also revised in 2004. CBR extends its role to ensure the rights of the PWDs on an equal basis. As a result rehabilitation, equal opportunity, social inclusion and poverty reduction of the PWDs become the essential part of the CBR programme<sup>2</sup>. Though this suggest an inclusive approach for the development of PWDs, in the functional level it did not consider the complex nature of the disability that the multiple impaired were excluded and also it did not take into account of gender equality that excluded women with disabilities from the development practices. This condition created problem for CBR services which attract the attention of the world organizations and they felt that effort should be made to focus on all individuals irrespective of their diversity and to ensure same right and opportunity to all PWDs irrespective of their diversity in relation to age, sex, nature of impairment etc. Consequently this issue was highlighted in the international consultation meeting which was organized by the WHO at Finland in 2003, where UN organizations, NGOs and DPOs were participated; to review community based rehabilitation services. The main objectives were made to improve their ability, ensure opportunity, promote and protect human right of the PWDs in the community level. The emphasis was put on the human rights of the disabled people to address the problems they faced due to inherent inequality, poverty and to expand the role of the DPOs in the community. In this respect the policies were designed in such a ways to promote the rights of PWDs and to ensure equality in every aspects of their life. In the consultation meeting they decided to address five major areas i.e. health, education livelihood, social and empowerment in the CBR policies.

Human Right = Socio-Economic Development = Poverty Alleviation<sup>3</sup>

This guideline provides multi-dimensional cross disability and right based approach to the policy planners to implement full range of mainstream and disability specific services. This also aims to promote full participation in educational social, cultural, religious, economic and political activities of the PWDs and also ensures gender equality without any discrimination. In the subsequent period UN adopted Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in 2000 to address the areas of poverty, hunger, education, gender equality, and women empowerment. Being a part of UN all member countries agreed to implement policies to achieve these goals. As a marginalized community the disabled people were also included. In this process CBR strategy used as a poverty reduction and community development mechanism for the PWDs. As a result countries were asked to develop strategic plans to mobilize the PWDs and increase their participation in the community and claim for international funding. There are also some essential functional prerequisites like coordination between national policies, a well-organized management structure and an organic relationship Govt. ministries and NGOs, required for the successful implementation of the CBR approach. Inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation is also an important tool for the implementation of the CBR strategy. Finally CBR strategy is used as an important mechanism to reach out the needs of the disabled people in their community.

Though CBR programme covered all aspects of PWDs including issues relating the areas of health, education, community participation, training etc. for the mobilization of the disabled people, the socio-cultural diversity create problem for universalization of the CBR programme (Miles 1996). Realizing this problem the review committee acknowledged that member countries may design their own policy in favor of their own socio-cultural situations.<sup>4</sup>

### DISABILITY RIGHT AND SOCIAL POLICY

Human rights are the fundamental principle by which every person can get justice equally without any discrimination. In this way, being a disadvantage group the disabled people do not have equal access to the available services in the society and they do not have equal participation in the socio-cultural life in the community as well. This marginalized condition made disability a human right issue in

the world. As a result many international conventions were made to address the prevailing issues of the PWDs. Out of them UNCRPD is regarded as the most important universal international agreement where every member countries agreed to take disability as a human right issue as well as committed to protect and promote the rights of the PWDs. Subsequently influenced by UNCRPD, a human right based approach has been initiated by the international community to ensure equality of opportunity and improve accessibility to every PWD. In this way UNCRPD helps the international community to expand the scope of existing human right law which includes non-discrimination and accessibility as two major area of concern, that need to be addressed in the ongoing development discourse. Following the norms of UNCRPD the development cooperation take action to make the environment (Physical, Attitudinal and Communicational) accessible for PWDs. It has a great relevance in the areas of health, education, infrastructure social protection economic and employment sectors where the PWDs are victimized more. In this the development approach moves beyond the medical perspective towards focusing on the removal of the socio-cultural and physical barriers to ensure the basic human rights so that PWDs can lead a dignified life. As a result the development practitioners should restructure their design, implementation strategy which will accommodate the PWDs. For this purpose the UNO has developed indicators to measure the achievements of the countries with respect to disability and development.

### POLICY IN INDIA

#### The national policy for PWDs

A national policy has been formed by the government for PWDs in 2006 whose main area of concern is to build an environment which provides them equal opportunity, protection of right and also promote equal participation in the society. In this policy the ministry of social justice and empowerment works as central implementing agency. This policy mostly concentrated on the principle of equality, freedom, justice and dignity of PWDs to strengthen their lifestyle in the society. This policy mostly concentrated on three major areas (Physical, educational and economic) to develop the standard of living in providing rehabilitation services to PWDs.

## Poverty Reduction Scheme and Promotion of their Livelihood

Poverty is the main cause of disability in India (Thomas 2005) because a majority number of people are under Bellow Poverty Line (BPL) category, are suffer from mal nutrition, and also they do not have access to proper health care facility, education, healthy environment and also have lack of awareness. These are the most vulnerable criteria which are responsible of the increased number of disability in India. The aforesaid conditions forced disabled people to lead a marginal life in their community. In this way though the disabled people are considered as the poorest of the poor in India, the disability issue has not considered as a poverty issue in India. The disability condition of the person affect the socio-economic condition of the family, in which the PWD belongs to, in such a way that being disabled the individual lost their productive capacity. Simultaneously having a disabled member in the family, the productive member of the family loses their work for the purpose of care, which the impaired people need in the family. As a result the productive member of the family do not able to invest more time for their work which increases the economic burden of the family, that leads to poverty. Meanwhile lack of opportunity for the disabled people to overcome poverty fuels the economic marginalization of disabled people in the society. The disabled people are marginalized in terms of their voice also. The above discussions clearly indicate that the marginalization of disability needs state interventions in different areas to promote inclusion and equal participation of them in the present development discourse. To have a disabled friendly society the state, service provider and the DPOs have an influential role. There is a proper coordination needed for the successful implementation of disability policy in India. Realizing its importance the government of India has taken some initiatives to develop the status of PWDs through different policies and programmes.

### Swarna Jayanti Gramina Swarogogor Yojana (SJGSY)

This programme was launched in 1999 by the ministry to promote self-employment. The main objective of this programme is to assist the family above the poverty line within 3 year by providing income generation asset through bank credit and financial subsidy to the marginalized group including disability. This policy mainly focused on the SHG formation where the PWDs have a proper representation (5%).

### Samporna Gramina Swarjogor Yojana

This policy has initiated by the central government. The main objective of this project is to ensure additional wage employment in all rural areas and food security and improve nutritional level of the disadvantage group. This project also focused to create desirable community, strengthen social and economic asset and infrastructural development in rural areas. In this policy the main target groups are agricultural wage earner, non-agricultural unskilled wage earners, marginal farmers, women, SCs, STs, parents of child labour, parents of handicapped children and also adult children of handicapped parents.

### Swarna Jayanti Sahari Yojogor Yojona

The main objective of this programme is to make a provision to ensure gain full employment to the urban unemployed poor by encouraging self-employment venture or ensuring wage employment. This programme also addresses

to create a favorable community structure and also strengthen community empowerment.

### Priminister Employment Generation Programme

This programme is the outcome of two different programme i.e. prime minister's Rojagar yojona and Rural Employment generation programme, which aims to generate employment opportunity through the establishment of micro enterprise in rural as well as urban areas. It is a central government scheme which id administrated by the ministry of micro, small and medium enterprise. The Khadi and village industry commission too the charge of the implementation of this policy. The main objective of this programme is to generate employment opportunity through new self-employment venture, different projects and establishment of micro enterprise. It also aims to promote the livelihood of traditional artisans, rural and urban unemployed youth and make them self-employable which is sustainable to increase to strengthen their income capacity.

### National Handicapped Finance And Development Cooperation

National Handicapped Finance And Development Cooperation (NHFDC) is a welfare oriented company was established by the government of India under the ministry of social justice and empowerment department in 24<sup>th</sup> January, 1997. The main objectives behind this establishment is to promote economic development activity and self-employment ventures by ensuring financial assistance to the PWDs for the up gradation of their entrepreneur skill to manage their self-employment venture in an effective way. This corporation also provides financial loans to the PWDs to take professional/technical education relating to vocational rehabilitation or self-employment.

### National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)

It aims to provide a strong institutional platform to enhance their own human, social, financial, and other resources which enable them to entertain their rights, entitlements, livelihood opportunities in both public and private spheres.<sup>5</sup> The core principle of NRLM is inclusion and transparency which enables the people to take their own decision. The main objective of the programme is to reach to all the poor families of the rural areas and ensure them a sustainable livelihood opportunity in providing various supportive structures like capacity building programme, promotion of financial accessibility and other related services to generate their livelihood, which help them to lead a decent life in the society. This programme provides soft skill training to the rural youths to get employment and also promotes self-employment in establishing micro-enterprise in the rural areas. It also mobilizes the person in establishing SHGs which promotes collective action and mutual cooperation among the rural poor. This programme also provides a broader mechanism in such a ways that it acts as a bridge between the poor and the government institutions to address the core livelihood issues of the marginalized. Following the core principle of inclusion this tries to have an appropriate representation of people from different sections of the society in the livelihood programme. For the promotion of the universal mobilization of the poor, this programme adopt an approach to formulate SHGs including all groups where equal representation ( SCs/STs 50%, minority 15% and PWDs 3%) to promote their livelihood in providing them institutional support and financial assistance.

## Education

Education played a vital role for the development of a child. As a fundamental right irrespective of the differences on the ground of every child should get quality primary education. But being a disadvantaged group the PWDs are far away from the educational system. The socio-cultural and structural problems influenced by unscientific prejudices act as a hurdle in the path of educational development of the PWDs. (Alur 2001, Klasing 2007). Realizing its importance the govt. of India has put special attention to address this issue in implementing the scheme i.e. "Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC)" in 1974 by the MHRD. In this scheme the govt. provided financial assistance for study materials and hostels for PWDs in Govt School. Simultaneously the National Policy on Education 1986 took into account of the issues relating to the education of PWDs and emphasized to establish special schools with adequate hostel facility, vocational training, and teacher training programme to accommodate disabled children.

## Employment

The problem of unemployment has become a serious issue for the PWDs in India. As a result the government of India provided 3% reservation to the PWDs in all Government offices where each category (visually impaired, hearing impaired and orthopedically impaired) have one percent reservation in both government and public sector offices<sup>6</sup>. For this purpose the government has opened 47 special employment exchange and 41 special cells in the general employment exchange to ensure gainful employment to all PWDs in India<sup>7</sup>. Though Govt. of India has taken various initiatives in the institutional level to ensure employment opportunities for PWDs through various programmes, the employment ratio is very minimal (Mitra & Sambamoorthi 2006). In spite of this the Govt. of India has taken some initiatives like providing financial support, vocational training to mobilize the PWDs. The policies are being implemented not only directly by the center but by the help of state agencies, NGOs and commercial banks which paid little attention to facilitate this programmes. The policies and programmes have made in such a way that does not include all disabled people and the gender aspect has completely neglected.

## POLICIES FOR PWDs IN ODISHA

### Baneshree: Scholarship scheme for the students with special needs

It is a comprehensive scheme for the students with disabilities which was formulated by the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare Development under the Government of Odisha in December 2008. The primary objective of the scheme is to encourage students with disabilities to complete their education and to obtain technical, professional or vocational training to gain employment. The precondition is that the family income should be less than Rs.60,000 per annum.

### Madhu Babu pension scheme

This scheme was introduced by the government of Odisha in January 2008. As part of this programme the government provides pension to the widows, leprosy patients, PWDs (above five years), widows of AIDS patients, AIDS patients, persons above 60 years, whose family income is not more than Rs. 12,000/- per annum.

## CONCLUSION

This paper discussed various programmes launched by the central government and Odisha state government for the welfare of the persons with disabilities. Several policies have gone through changes or modifications according to the needs of the PWDs and to fulfill the international commitment by which the policies took a turn from charity to CBR and then to the rights mode to address the issues relating to PWDs. Further, the enactment of PWDs Act in 1995 and further in 2016 offers new direction by which the issues of the PWDs are addressed. The new realization was daunting even at the public policy level to involve PWDs as equal citizens of the country and to promote inclusion, equal participation and protect their rights. Besides, the government has also formulated different policies to address the issues relating to livelihood and increase their representation in the education sector.

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