

EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES - ABOUT THE DIVISION

The Disability Division in the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment facilitates empowerment of the persons with disabilities, who as per Census 2001 are 2.19 crore and are 2.13 percent of the total population of the Country. These include persons with visual, hearing, speech, locomotor and mental disabilities.

For population of disabled persons,

State-wise

Disability-wise

According to the 58th round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) of 2002 External website that opens in a new window, there were 208 lakh persons with disabilities in 2002 (Report No. 485 at S.No. 88). The NSSO Survey indicates that seventy five per cent of persons with disabilities live in rural areas, 49 per cent of disabled population is literate and only 34 per cent are employed.

The Census and the NSS have different sampling design. The Census is an enumeration of the entire population of India while the NSS has a nationally representative stratified sample. In both sources, disability was self-reported. Different definitions of overall disability and disability types seem to have contributed to differences in estimates. In the next census in 2011 it is proposed to move from traditional approach of asking one about disability to one based on a functional approach consistent with the International Classification of Functioning.

The Constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and implicitly mandates an inclusive society for all including the persons with disabilities. The Constitution in the schedule of subjects lays direct responsibility of the empowerment of the persons with disabilities on the State Governments (WORD - -1) Therefore, the primary responsibility to empower the persons with disabilities rests with the State Governments.

Under Article 253 of the Constitution read with item No. 13 of the Union List (WORD - -1) , the Government of India enacted "The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995", in the effort to ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and their full participation in nation-building. The Act extends to whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has enacted "The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1998".

A multi-sectoral collaborative approach, involving all the Appropriate Governments i.e. Ministries of the Central Government, the State Governments/UTs, Central/State undertakings, local authorities and other appropriate authorities is being followed in implementation of various provisions of the Act.

India is a signatory to the Declaration on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asia Pacific Region External website that opens in a new window. India is also a signatory to the Biwako Millennium Framework for action towards an inclusive, barrier free and rights based society. India signed the UN Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities External website that opens in a new window on 30th March, 2007, the day it opened for signature. India ratifies the UN Convention on 1st October, 2008.