

DISABILITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE EASTERN & NORTH EASTERN REGION OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT: Individuals differ in physical & mental ability from each other in various aspects & may have some or other impairments under particular situations. The impairment becomes disability when it is developed to such an extent that the individual cannot fully participate in the social & vocational pursuits. Thus for the proper economic & social development of the country it is important to know how much these special needs are mainstreamed. For this we need a comparative study of socio-economy, employment, barriers, health & well being of the disabled persons. This study attempts to know these answers & understand their economic development specially in the eastern & north eastern regions of India. In an era where 'inclusive development' is being emphasised as the right path towards sustainable development, focussed initiatives for the universal design & welfare of disabled persons are essential.

KEY WORDS: Disability, Socio-Economy, Barriers, Universal Design, Inclusion

INTRODUCTION:

Impairment is referred to a loss of a body structure or function e.g., limb or a faculty denoting both medical as well as an educational term. The impairment becomes disability when it is developed to such an extent that the individual cannot fully participate in the social & vocational pursuits.

"Disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)" (WHO 2001, p. 213).

Impairment can be in terms economic development also. This may include various factors like barriers, employments, socioeconomic status, health & well being related to disabled persons. . This study attempts to understand the economic development of the disabled specially in the eastern & north eastern regions of India. In an era where 'inclusive development' is being emphasised as the right path towards sustainable development, focussed initiatives for the welfare of disabled persons are essential.

OBJECTIVES:

This critical analysis is for the objective of probable solutions in the economic outlook for the sake of present situations of the disabled in the north eastern India.

PRESENT POPULATION & ECONOMIC STATUS OF DISABILITY IN INDIA:

The following charts show the type of disabilities & the present population of India including the disabled. There are charts depicting the population of PwDs living in the rural & urban areas, the percentages & accordance to the sexes. The data comprises the information from the Census 2011.

Disabled Population by Sex and Residence, India, 2011			
Residence	Persons	Males	Females
Total	26,810,557	14,986,202	11,824,355
Rural	18,631,921	10,408,168	8,223,753
Urban	8,178,636	4,578,034	3,600,602
Percentage of Disabled to total population India, 2011			
Residence	Persons	Males	Females
Total	2.21	2.41	2.01
Rural	2.24	2.43	2.03
Urban	2.17	2.34	1.98
Disabled Population by Type of Disability India : 2011			
Type of Disability	Persons	Males	Females
Total	26,810,557	14,986,202	11,824,355
In Seeing	5,032,463	2,638,516	2,393,947
In Hearing	5,071,007	2,677,544	2,393,463
In Speech	1,998,535	1,122,896	875,639
In Movement	5,436,604	3,370,374	2,066,230
Mental Retardation	1,505,624	870,708	634,916
Mental Illness	722,826	415,732	307,094
Any Other	4,927,011	2,727,828	2,199,183
Multiple Disability	2,116,487	1,162,604	953,883

Sources: <http://censusindia.gov.in>

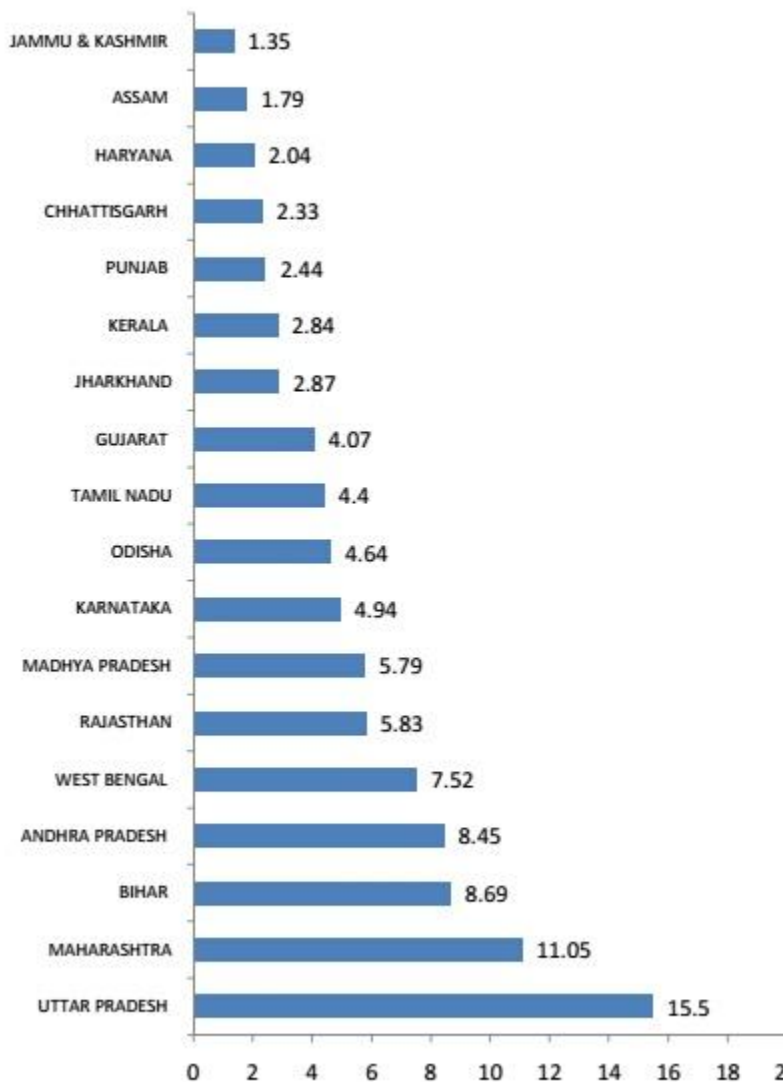
As per Census 2011, in India, out of the 121 Cr population, about 2.68 Crore Persons with Disability (PwDs) in India, which is 2.21% of the total population, 1.50 crore male & 1.18 crore female PwDs.

PRESENT STATUS OF DISABILITY IN EASTERN & NORTH EASTERN INDIA

As per Census 2011, in India, out of the 121 Cr population, percentage of Persons with Disability (PwDs) in North East India compared to total population is low, which is 1.75 – 2% of the total population. In West Bengal and Manipur it is 2-2.25%. The percentage of disabled children in disabled population of the state comprise Meghalaya 11.41%, Manipur 8.88%, Arunachal Pradesh

7.94%, Assam 7.45%. The percentage of disabled children in each state to the total disabled population of the state comprise West Bengal 6.48% & Orissa 3.97%. (Census 2011)

Fig. 4.2: Share of disabled persons in State/ UTs to the total disabled persons in the Country (%) - Census, 2011



Sources: <http://censusindia.gov.in>

**CENSUS OF INDIA 2011
PROPORTION OF DISABLED POPULATION**

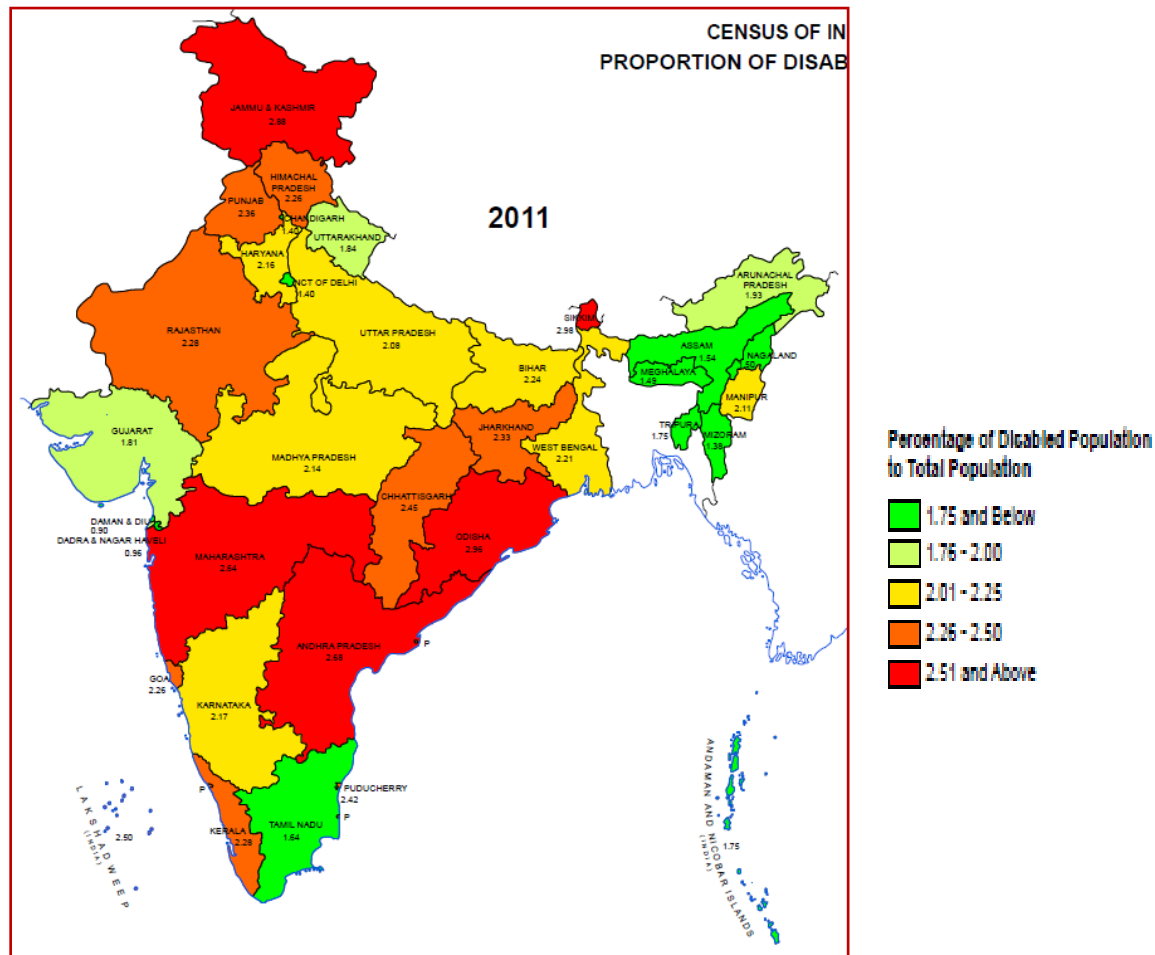


Fig.4.4: Top 10 States - Percentage of disabled children in each state to the total disabled children, Census -2011

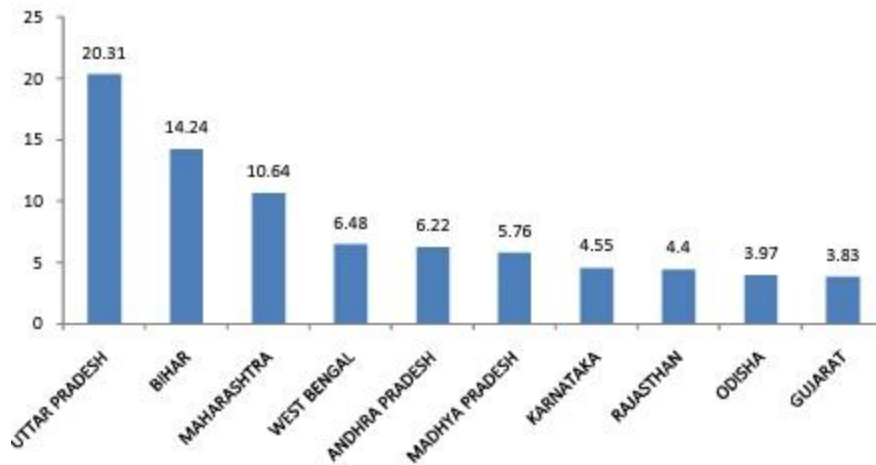
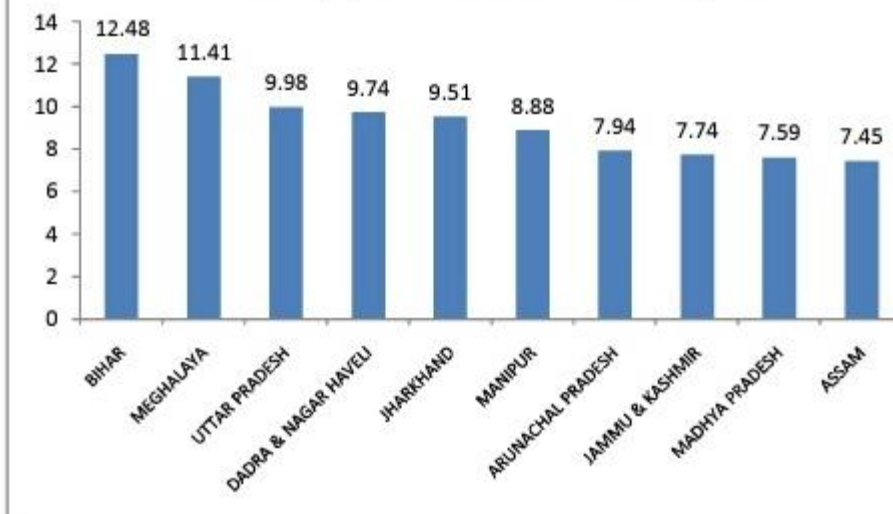


Fig. 4.3: Top 10 States -Share (in %) of disabled children in the disabled population of the State - Census, 2011



Even though, disabled people constitute a significant percentage of the population of India, though there has been implementation “Persons With Disability Act” but there is the need for their meaningful employment which is largely remains unmet. Moreover 68% of the Indian population live in rural areas (Census 2011). Thus the number of disabled persons is proportionately higher in rural areas where general conditions, health services, skills, markets etc. are significantly poor.

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES & FACTORS TO DISABILITY:

Persons with disability in India face many challenges when looking to develop employable skills & in gaining meaningful employment for the sake of economic development & mainstreaming. While in India there has been implementation of “RCI Act”(1992), “PwDs Act”(1995), “NP for PwDs”(2006), India has ratified the “United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability” (UNCRPD) (2007), yet they continue to face many socioeconomic challenges & difficulties. These economic challenges & factors are described below:

POVERTY

There has been a substantial amount of research illustrating the cycle by which poverty and disability are mutually reinforcing. Disability has bidirectional link to poverty: disability may increase the risk of poverty, and poverty may increase the risk of disability. Severity of poverty & its effects would depend on whether a disabled person is a principal income earner, as well as a policy context. The household's socioeconomic status prior to the onset of disability (Jenkins and Rigg 2003), type, severity and duration of disability are important among many factors. Thus a disability may lead to a lower standard of living and poverty.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

Earnings and expenditures impacts in an affected household, one where a family member is labelled with a disability, compared to unaffected households. There is a difference in earnings based on the gender or position (e.g. parent, child) of the family member who is labelled with disability. There is an increased burden of caring for disabled family member impact and need full-time employment. Thus there is an overall change in the economic activity of each household member and the affected household members have to alter their lifestyles.

The category of disability also is related to increase in expenditure. Where there is a disabled person in a family the family income reduces. Due to the increased expenditure for a disabled person's requirement, specific services (health care, transportation, assistive devices, personal assistance, and house adaptation), expenditure per head of the family member also reduces. If such services are not available or are not affordable, no extra cost might be incurred. The household may result in worsening of the living standard and eventually poverty, if the household cannot compensate for the lost income and has to adjust its expenditures accordingly. As a result, although income/expenditures of households with disabilities may be similar to other households, their standard of living could be lower due to additional expenditures, and hence poverty could be more prevalent (Zaidi), if a household cannot compensate for the lost income and cover additional expenditures.

EMPLOYMENT

Disability may prevent work, or constrain the kind and amount of work a person can do (Evans 1989; Gertler and Gruber 2002; Contreras et al. 2006; Meyer and Mok 2008). In other words, to use Amartya Sen's (1992; 2009) term earnings handicap, disability may restrict the ability to earn an income. It also suggests that disabled working-age population could be expected to experience lower employment rates.

Rate of Employment by Sex

Rate of Employment by Sex:

- 52.8% for men with disability
- 19.6% for women with disability,
- 64.9% for non-disabled men, and
- 29.9% for non-disabled women

Sources: sitedata.worldbank.org/socialprotection

WORKERS

Among the disabled persons who were workers, 31% were agricultural labourers is evident from the distribution of disabled Workers in India- Census, 2011. Total Cultivators (CL) Agriculture Labourers (AL) In Household Industries (HHI) & their percentages show the evidence of vivid data reflecting loss of employability with increased disability.

Table 3.3: Distribution of disabled Workers in India- Census, 2011				
Total	Cultivators (CL)	Agriculture Labourers (AL)	In Household Industries(HHI)	Others
97,44,386	22,74,322	29,77,272	4,35,053	40,57,739
%	23	31	4	42

Source: <http://mospi.gov.in>

Table 3.4: Proportion of Workers, Main workers and Marginal workers by respective age group to total disabled in India – Census, 2011

Disabled	Workers (WPR) ²	Main Workers	Marginal Workers
Total	36.3	26.0	10.3
0-14	4.1	1.8	2.3
15-59	50.5	36.9	13.6
60+	28.3	19.3	9.0
Age not stated	37.5	26.2	11.3

Source: <http://mospi.gov.in>

Proportion of Workers, Main workers and Marginal workers by respective age group to total disabled in India from Census 2011 shows while 50% of the disabled population in the age group 15 -59 years is working, moreover one in every 25 there are disabled children in the age group 0-14 year. (Census, 2011)

Table 4.1: Share (in %) of disabled workers in total disabled population

Rank	State/ UT	% of workers in the respective disabled population	Rank	State/ UT	% of workers in the respective disabled population
	INDIA	36.34			
1	NAGALAND	51.92	19	UTTAR PRADESH	34.79
2	SIKKIM	49.04	20	GUJARAT	34.79
3	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	44.69	21	RAJASTHAN	34.65
4	HIMACHAL PRADESH	44.37	22	ODISHA	34.32
5	MANIPUR	43.69	23	WEST BENGAL	33.98
6	MAHARASHTRA	42.13	24	ASSAM	33.91
7	MADHYA PRADESH	39.56	25	JAMMU & KASHMIR	33.65
8	ANDHRA PRADESH	38.61	26	TRIPURA	33.61
9	CHHATTISGARH	38.54	27	PUNJAB	33.07
10	KARNATAKA	38.05	28	ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	31.49
11	MEGHALAYA	37.74	29	CHANDIGARH	31.37
12	JHARKHAND	37.68	30	HARYANA	31.22
13	TAMIL NADU	37.46	31	PUDUCHERRY	31
14	BIHAR	37.12	32	GOA	28.79
15	MIZORAM	36.27	33	DELHI	27.92
16	DAMAN & DIU	35.25	34	KERALA	23.59
17	DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	35.19	35	LAKSHADWEEP	19.88
18	UTTARAKHAND	35.02			

EMPLOYMENT OF INFORMAL CARE GIVERS

Disability may lead to limited employment and forgone earnings of other family members to care for a disabled family member. These depends on various factors whether a disabled family member is a child or an adult, the availability and accessibility of care services outside the family, the opportunity cost of care, the existing labour market status of the family members, the household decision on how to share the care between family members and whether family members co-reside with the disabled person, and on customs and traditions. For instance, if a family member is not employed and assumes a care-provider role there will be no foregone earnings (Heitmueller 2005; Contreras et al. 2006).

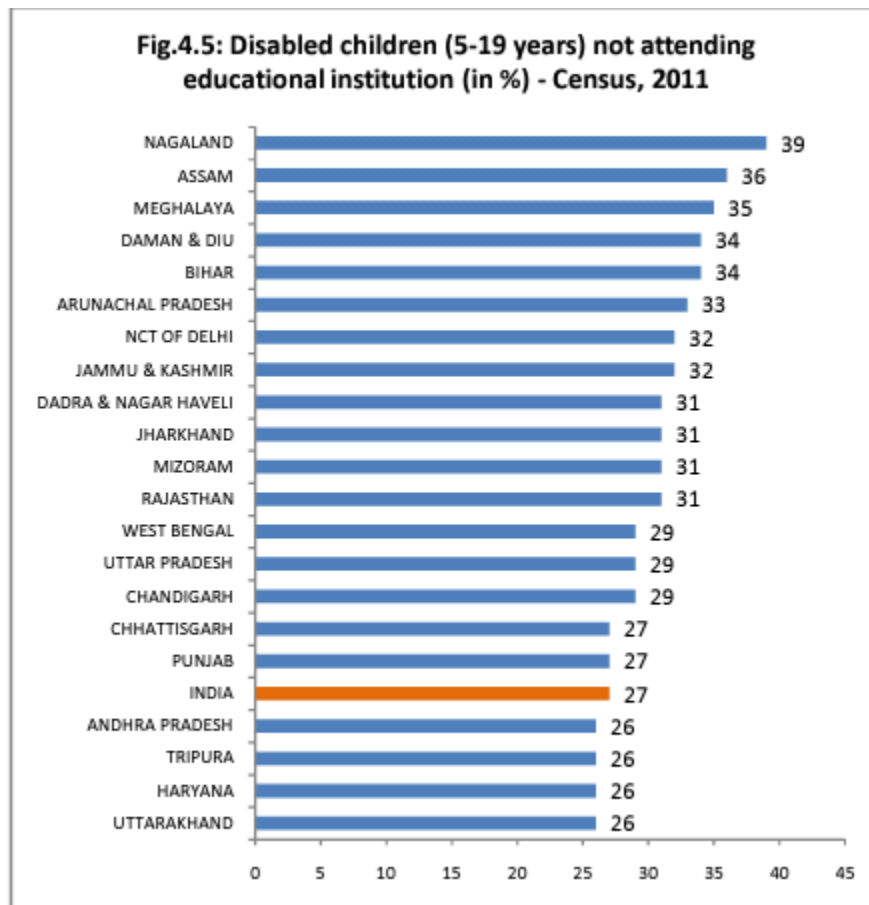
BARRIERS FOR INCLUSION

There are barriers in architecture & barriers in attitude for inclusion. The barriers in architecture includes obstacle & barriers to accessibility & shall apply to buildings, roads, transportation & other indoor & outdoor facilities, including school, housing, medical facilities, information, communications, other services like electronic & emergency services.

The barriers in attitudes include attitude towards persons with disabilities & to their schooling. The other barriers affecting the inclusion of the disabled include lack of awareness about issues related to the provisions & policies formulated for the persons with disabilities, parental resistance, lack of awareness to deal students with disabilities, lack of training.

EDUCATION BARRIERS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Economic theory suggests that adults with childhood/youth disabilities could be expected to have lower educational attainment. Even it is found that there is a large number of disabled people who have not gone to school ever in life.



Sources: <http://censusindia.gov.in>

Table 3.2: Comparison of Literacy status of disabled persons by sex and by residence in India - Census, 2011				
	Literate		Illiterate	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Person	49	67	51	33
Male	58	72	42	28
Female	37	61	63	39

INTRA-HOUSEHOLD DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES

It is possible that individuals with disabilities within the household may still suffer from poverty and deprivation, although their household may not classify as poor. This will depend on the distribution of resources within the household. The earnings and the conversion handicaps suggest that persons with disabilities and their households could be expected to be worse off as compared to persons with no disabilities and their households. Depending on the individual, his household, community and country context, some or all of the above links may be taking place, but with different intensity and impact.

RURAL AREAS

Moreover 68% of the Indian population live in rural areas (Census 2011). Thus the number of disabled persons is proportionately higher in rural areas where general conditions, health services, skills, markets etc. are significantly poor affecting their employability & thus economic development & mainstreaming.

HEALTH & WELL BEING

Lower levels of socioeconomic conditions have correlation with poor health and lower quality of life. The existence of a disability can be the result of emotional maladjustment for individuals and the families responsible for their care. Individuals with a disability and their families are at increased risk for poor health and quality-of-life.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Persons with a disability are likely to have limited opportunities to earn income and often have increased medical expenses. Disabilities among children and adults may affect the socioeconomic standing of entire families.. Some data suggest causal relationships between low SES and the development of disability in late adulthood (Coppin et al., 2006). These barriers contribute to discrepancies in wealth and socioeconomic opportunities for persons with a disability and their families.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO EXCLUSION

Lack of access to education, training, or financial resources

may be responsible for exclusion from the labour market. • As well as employers' perceptions of disability and disabled people. • In addition, social protection systems may create incentives for people with disabilities to exit employment in order to receive disability benefits. • Young people with disabilities often lack access to formal education and training to develop skills necessary to

compete in the labour market, particularly in the increasingly vital field of information technology. • Persons with disabilities also face environmental obstacles created by travel costs, physical barriers to job interviews and to work, as well as to attending social events with colleagues. 18 World Health Organization, World Report on Disability, 2011 1

Factors Contributing to Exclusion • Persons with disabilities face obstacles inhibiting access to information and technology, and funding for those interesting in self-employment, a major source of employment in some developing countries • Lenders often perceive people, particularly women, with disabilities as high risks for loans. • Those with disabilities face misconceptions about lower productivity, especially in the case of persons with mental illnesses, who account for much of the unemployed. • Different impairments are met with varying degrees of discrimination, with mental illness presenting the strongest barrier.

RESULT & CONCLUSION:

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) recognizes the right of people with disabilities: Sources: (UNCRPD-2007)

- to work,
- to have equal opportunity to choose work or
- to be accepted in the labour market and
- to participate in an open, inclusive, and accessible work environment
- The CRPD not only prohibits employment discrimination but also advocates: • vocational training,
- self-employment, and
- reasonable accommodations

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

“Universal Design” means the design of products, environments, programmes & services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design that shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

DISABILITY BENEFITS

Disability benefits in regular practice should be available for the real economic development & mainstreaming. In practice, the private or public disability insurance programs, the public & private

employment reservations, health care, transportation, assistive devices, personal assistance, house adaptation, the social assistance programs for persons with disabilities & the range of disability benefits, should be aimed to largely replace the lost earnings & extra expenditure. It has to be aimed to provide for coverage of certain disability related expenditures, such as the cost of specific rehabilitation, free assistive devices, care and attendance allowance, etc. It must be taken care so that any sort of disability might not lead to significant reductions in living standard and poverty.

EMPLOYER INCENTIVES OFFERED

Employers are frequently resistance to hiring people with disabilities. Offering incentives to the employers such as: • tax incentives, • government funding for employment accommodations, and • workplace modification support can prove successful.

THE GOAL: LABOUR MARKET IN AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

The goal most lauded today is to employ persons with the greatest disadvantage in the labour market in an inclusive environment. Supported employment, particularly for those with mental health or intellectual disabilities and brain injuries provides employment coaching, specialized job training, individualized supervision, transportation, and assistive technology has to be achieved successfully for the economic development.

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