



DISABLED CHILDREN IN INDIA; THE CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

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Introduction:

India is the largest democracy in the world. According to census 2011 data on disability has not been announced yet. United Nation observes that 10% of the population has disability and there about 120 million people with disabilities in India. The terms Handicapped and disability are often interchangeably: however, they have distinctly different meanings, particularly when used by the medical community. Disability describes the mental or physical limitation a person has, and handicapped refers to the disadvantage she experience because of it. In the legal sense, disability is the more commonly used term, with a definition that often differs from the one used by medical professionals.

Medical Definition of Disability and Handicap

The medical community tends to define disability and handicap differently than the legal community. According to the World Health Organization, whose definitions are most widely used among medical professionals, disability is defined as a restriction or inability to perform an activity in manner or within a range considered normal for a human being. this lack of function is caused by an impairment, which the WHO defines as an abnormality or loss of body function that is mental or physical in nature and can be temporary or permanent. An example of a disability would be a child's inability to stand or walk due to a form of cerebral palsy that stiffens and tightens his legs. Handicap, on the other hand, is defined as a disadvantage that limits or prevents someone from fulfilling a role considered normal based on such factors as sex, age, culture and society. For example in the case of the child with cerebral palsy, as he gets older, his handicap will be an inability to participate in certain sports and activities considered normal for children of similar age.

Disability is something that is difficult to overcome. It may be a result of a congenital disease or an accident. On the other hand, handicap may be a shortcoming because of educational or occupational drawback and can be removed. While the terms disabled and handicapped reflect the same shortcomings, people with disabilities dislike when referred to as handicapped as handicap is apolitically incorrect word and hurts the feelings of

individuals. The people prefer to be called people with disabilities than being referred to as disabled or handicapped.

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN;

Children who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, deaf-blind, multi-handicapped or as having specific learning disabilities, who because of those impairments need special education and related services.

--from Education of the Handicapped Act

we might define an exceptional deviant or handicapped child as one who differs so much from his peer group average in respect of physical, mental or social characteristics that he is unable to develop his fullest potential under normal conditions in the ordinary class and for whom some special organization has to be created either within or without the normal school.

Classification of Handicapped

Mentally handicapped: One of the largest group of handicapped children in the community is the mentally handicapped the various categories of which are given below

a) Idiots (I.Q. Range 0 to 25 Approximately). These children are so grossly retarded intellectually that require nursing, care and protection all their lives and are therefore the concern of health and welfare rather than educational authorities.

b) The Severely mentally handicapped (IQ range 25-50approximately) this group of children although they are indeucable in the sence that they cannot benefit from the kind of educational provision available in ordinary schools, nevertheless are trainable in the social and emotional sence, and under optimum conditions a proportion are capable of undertaking productive work. Whether this group of children should be the concern of education authorities or health authorities is still being debate. There are, however, many advantages in having schools or training units for such children within the regular school system, not the least of these being the case of transfer from one educational unit to another.

c) The Mentally Handicapped. (I.Q. range 50-70 approximately). These children forming some two per cent of the child population are educable in the usual sense of the term if special provision is made for them within the normal school system. though they can learn the basic skills up to the functional level required for occupational placement, they normally fail to do so if left in ordinary classes, and may in addition suffer emotionally through unfair competition with brighter youngsters.

d) The Dull. (I.Q. range 70-85 approximately). The mentally-handicapped together with the dull are usually referred to as slow-learners. (In some texts we find that the term slow learner is applied to the dull only).

These children present a problem in the ordinary school mainly because their rate of cognitive development is considerably less than that of ordinary children , and consequently they learn at a much slower pace. The dull group (IQ. range 70 to 85) comprises some 14 per cent of the school population. The total slow-learning group therefore, comprises some 10% of children of school age.

Socially and Emotionally Handicapped

It is estimated that at some point in their school career between 2 and 5 per cent of children become so disturbed emotionally or mal-adjusted that they fail to learn in school or to adjust to the demands of society in acceptable ways, unless they are given special help and guidance, either through psychological services or by placement in special units for maladjusted children.

Objectives of Education of the of the Handicapped ;

The Education of handicapped children has to be organized not merely on humanitarian grounds. but also on grounds of utility . proper education generally enables a handicapped child to overcome largely his (or her) handicap, and makes him into a useful citizen.

Thoms E. Jordan has given the following aim of education of the handicapped;

- 1) To reach the maximum level of effectiveness in school subject.
- 2) To pursue those curricular matters that strategically determine effective living for specific type of handicapped school children.
- 3) To develop rational patterns in the handicapped that will produce achievement in school and out of school.
- 4) To Consider the mental as well as the physical hygiene of handicapped school children.
- 5) To produce in the handicapped a desire to participate in the activities of non -handicapped persons.
- 6) To develop a realistic self-concept in handicapped children.

Size of problem;

Determination of the size of the handicapped population has eluded educators, planners and social workers not only in this country but also many of economically advanced countries. For instance ,even the US does not have a reliable estimate of the number of handicapped

children. From the available evidence, it appears, however that the total population in the following categories is about 2.5 million in our country.

1. The Blind. A recent survey undertaken under the auspices of the ministry of health has , however , suggested that the number of blind persons might be of the order of four million. This is also the estimate of the royal commonwealth Society for the blind , London. The number of children of school age estimated at 400000.

2. The Deaf. No National survey of the incidence of deafness has been undertaken . Estimates based on a few sample surveys would seem to indicate that the number of deaf persons in the country may be anywhere between 1 and 1.5 million. The number of children of school- going age is believed to about 300000.

3. The Orthopedically Handicapped . No national survey of this category of handicapped. No national survey of this category of handicapped persons has yet been undertaken. Again, based on a few sample surveys, it would appear that the number of orthopedically handicapped children in the country is about the same as that of the blind.

4. The Mentally Retarded. Mental retardation is a complex concept influenced to a large extent by cultural factors and its determination involves the administration of sophisticated psychological tests. It is , therefore, difficult to estimate the number of such children in the country. Here again, estimate based on some what inadequate, sample surveys seem to suggest that the country may have between 1.4 to 1.8 million mentally retarded children.

Briefly, the position is summed up below;

| Category | Estimated number of Children |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| The Blind | 400000 |
| The Deaf | 300000 |
| The Orthopedically Handicapped | 400000 |
| The Mentally Retarded | 1400000 |
| Total | 2,500000 |

Handicapped children: A Challenge

Most handicapped children live in a sterile environment. like all other children, however, they need cultural stimulation to help build up their awareness of there own " ego" and to facilitate and enrich their contact with other people. This is especially important for those who feel different and isolated. Reading will always increase one's knowledge of words and reduce the distance between the handicapped person and his surroundings. We have been accustomed to using the concept handicapped The UN has now chosen the word disabled, probably because the old notion has acquired a negative meaning and because a new world should make us think in a new way. Regardless of which world we choose, the expression itself is a relative one. It reflects our view of people and societies, and it also reflects how narrow of broad is our view of normality. It is actually wrong to use the concept "handicapped" with out defining handicapped in relation to what and in which situations. First and foremost, one is just a person. There is more that unites than separates us.

Handicapped children are, above all, children, with children's need , reactions and individual differences. There are just as wide variations within groups with the same general disorder as there are among other children. Each child is unique, with needs of his own as well as capacities, problems and possibilities. For the blind child it is natural not to see. For the deaf child it is just as natural not to hear. It is unnatural for eyes and for our ears because we are accustomed to experiencing the world around us with our senses of sight and sound. For many people a handicapped is something rare, because most of deaf, blind, mentally and physically handicapped are not in the streets.

In many economically developed countries an unfortunate segregation policy has for a long time caused handicapped children to be placed in large institutions or more or less isolated in there home surroundings. A Whole and constructive community consists of all type of people. Integration has now become a slogan. what does it mean then to integrate handicapped persons into ordinary society?. It does not mean- as most of us would like to think - that the handicapped are now allowed joining us in order to became as "normal" as possible- that is like us. Integration is something very different. It means that you are allowed to keep your own identity and become an independent part of a larger unit. Integration means that you contribute something to the unit. Ordinary schools, families and local socity need the handicapped ones just as much as the handicapped have a natural and justified claim to belong to the society into which they are born.

Common problems of the handicapped child; the problems faced by each type of obstacles may be different from each other, as well. One of the biggest problems faced by orthopedic impairment, namely the people who use wheelchairs, crutches, prostheses, and so on, is the transportation problem. Auxiliary equipment used by these people (wheelchairs, crutches, prostheses, etc.) raise their living standards, but the equipment never can take the place of a human limb. That is why an orthopedically handicapped person's mobility is more restricted according to a non- disabled person. Some of problems encountered in education with people in wheelchairs are riding / getting out of the cars and travelling with them. Another problem for handicapped child is the access problems in indoor (home, hotel, school, etc.). In particular, the width of doors, lack of the wheel chair ramps, the high thresholds of doors, lack of elevators are some biggest problems experienced. kaplan (2010) reported that indoors physical barriers restrict travel opportunities for many people with disabilities; and such places should be accessible and open to all people including persons with disabilities, and the disabled people should be considered when arranging the physical environment of these areas from planning and design stages.

The problems we encounter occasionally in enclosed spaces during the training can be solved by making the appropriate standard of toilet and bathroom, and with the construction of elevators and ramp. Most of the training was carried out in natural areas, namely outdoors. These places are very important in terms of children's learning the nature by seeing and feeling. In addition to learning, nature provides rehabilitation for human being by taking the stress. However, such areas do not have a proper road network and infrastructure like city centers. Another problem faced the hearing impaired that they cannot get instant audible warning of the dangers. The car horn, voice of dangerous animals and the warning of people are example of these problems that especially encountered in outdoors. These problems can lead to accidents and accidents can cause injury; even death.

Another potential problem for the handicapped child is that of peer relationship. To generalize, other children tend to view the handicapped child much as he views himself. When his handling at home has led him to feel that he is not really loveable and acceptable, he will both expect and elicit rejection from other youngsters. Children will quickly discover this sensitivity and will taunt him. When, however, the handicapped child has come to accept his difficulty, is secure in his relationship with his parents, his will expand, and most probably developed normal friendships with his peers. Children can accept marked handicaps in other young steers when the child himself accepts such disabilities.

Possible solution and suggestions;

- 1) Formulate and implement national policies, programmes and legislation to promote the full and equal participation of persons with handicapped children.
- 2) promote the participation of persons with handicapped children in the process of economic and social development.
- 3) Promote the self-representation of people with handicapped person in all public decision-making structures.
- 4) To enhance support services for handicapped children
- 5) Promote special measures for handicapped children
- 6) Ensure and improve access to rehabilitation, education, training, employments, sports, the cultural and physical environment.
- 7) The education system for handicapped should be flexible. it should offer a range of education provisions special schools for those who cannot be educated in general school ,special classes in general school and integrated education for the disabled of the type already in existence.
- 4) Education packages should be offered for hearing impaired children.
- 9) A lot of development is taking place in the application of technology for the benefit of the handicapped. Several technological aids are already available.
- 10) The technology and techno- aids available for meeting the special needs of the handicapped children.
- 11) Sustained researches should be undertaken to determine the needs of physically handicapped and produce technological aids capable of helping in overcoming handicaps.
- 12) The Indian institute of technology and other technological institutions in the area of higher education should be given specific responsibilities for undertaking these researches.
- 13) About 80% of the population lives in villages and all the facilities whether educational, vocational or rehabilitation is available only in urban areas. Handicapped in collaboration with National Forum for welfare of the Mentally Handicapped, rehabilitation, co-ordination India and UNICEF, at Hyderabad on 17th August.
- 14) If education of the handicapped child is to become a reality in India, the training of teacher has to become a top priority. The teacher need to be provided with intensive training to work with various disabilities .

15) The preparation of teachers will need emphasis and attention. Assuming a pupil-teacher ratio of 10:1, about 19,500 teachers only. This will necessitate a considerable increase in the capacity of existing training institutions and the establishment of new ones.

16) Vehicles such as cars, bus, and minibuses to be designed not considering the handicapped, and lack of proper embarkation - disembarkation on vehicles from the basis of the transport problem. The solution of this problem can be achieved by the elimination of these shortcomings, The problem experienced in transportation will be reduced to a minimum by selecting the proper vehicle designed for this work and acquisition of appropriate equipment to other vehicles for wheelchairs.

17) One of the major problems encountered during trainings that hearing impaired students cannot hear the warnings of trainers or officials. for example, when they approach to a river or lake edge with a dangerous distance, when they start to move away from the group, when they extend their hands to an object should not be touched, etc. these use of light or vibrating alert devices can be offered as a solution to this problem.

18) To support the development of and strengthen " Handicapped persons" organizations.

19)The society too should realize that handicapped child are part of the society; they also can contribute the same or even more in the society development if given opportunity to education and empowered work.

20)Finally, the provisions regarding the education of the handicapped child under the persons with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the RTE Act, 2009 must have effective and successful implementation.

Conclusion;

With regard to the terminology in this area, it may be noted that in America, where a considerable numbers of book have been published on special education and where interest and provision are developing rapidly, the term exceptional children is used to cover the gifted child as well as handicapped. In Western Europe, it is recognized that gifted child may need special education treatment, depending upon existing educational provision, high intellectual ability obviously cannot be seriously regarded as category of handicapped. The challenge confronting policy and law formulation to promote, protect and safeguard the rights of handicapped children with disabilities needs to be viewed in a broader context beyond a single piece of legislation. According to WHO report on disability (handicapped) which stipulates that ; lack of equitability access to resources such as education, employment, healthcare and the social and legal support system resulting in person. There is no doubt that

the realm for discrimination free and equal education for the children with handicapped may require a comprehensive change in the institutional arrangements and legal provisions but the most important change has to come in our minds, in our thinking and attitude towards the handicapped children.

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