



DISABILITY, MAINSTREAMING AND DEVELOPMENT: ISSUES AND CONCERNS

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Abstract

Deprivation and marginalization emanate from the interactions of power and socio-political involvement in mainstream society. Owing to their attributes, the disabled exposed to social inequality, political marginalization, and economic deprivation. Crucial to the issue of marginalization is a rapport of difference; so, the disabled are obliged to suffer from political and economic structural hegemonies and segregations. The recently adopted 'rights-based approach' asserts that each person has equal economic, cultural and social rights. Rather than charitable trust, the emphasis is on equitable rights. Accordingly, the government and policymakers must redefine their services, resources, and programs and impose fines upon those who resist co-operating towards such practices.

Providing an accessible, equitable and quality life to the persons with various disabilities is possible with appropriate networks of support and reasonable accommodations. In this backdrop, this article will explore some of the models and approaches essential to provide equal opportunities in terms of development and main streaming to the persons with disabilities in general and more particularly the intricacies involve there in along with the international developments and contemporary debates...

Keywords: *Disability, Mainstreaming, Development, Policies, Persons with Disabilities, Special provisions, Right to Education, Poverty, Inclusion, Social Exclusion and Human Rights.*

Introduction

The phenomenon of disability is as old as human civilization. From pre-historical times through the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Greeks, Roman, and India, social perception towards persons with disabilities was characterized by diversities. Social perception ranged from kindness to cruelty. During the medieval ages, characterized by the pivotal role of the church in society, the fate of the disabled persons significantly varied. Living conditions were harsh for disabled persons. However, following the advent of the renaissance, radical changes started ushering in society. Both scientific understanding and humane treatment of persons with disabilities progressed rapidly in the early phase of the Roman Empire. Religion in India reinforced the moral and spiritual importance of compassion, charity, and mutual assistance. During the early phase of British imperialism and

in the 19th century, various voluntary organizations and individual reformers took an active part in this regard.

Amartya Sen in his *Development as Freedom*, (Amartya Sen 1999) deciphers development within the complex factors of fundamental life-sustaining resources, (Amartya Sen 1999) the ease of access to resources and services. This confers ensuring freedom and development paradigms. Unless the ensuring freedom has been free from all social subjugations and marginalization, the due social position of a person cannot be sustained, and the development of the economy will remain inadequate. This outlook pressures to fathom out the convoluted factors of awareness and exploitation. It is the same line we need to draw an analogy between the marginalized and the mainstream between disability and exclusion. The last two decades have accentuated noticeable factors within the sectors of education and job opportunity for disability. The actual integration of disability within this timeline has remained equivocal with vague factors of reality and rhetoric – the incessant debate among disability, education and employment.

While mainstream programs and policies much concentrate on the young people ignoring the requirements of those with disabilities. The most conspicuous observation is that the actions are taken for the development of disability much remain restricted to the requirements of the adult groups or children, and the functional and the emotional aspects of the young mass have been neglected. So, it can be said that such an outlook gives minimal scope to enter the life and sustenance of the young disabled people. Sometimes their self-perspectives take back seat in statistical data, and the real insight regarding their necessity becomes unnoticed. At times even the existing policies on disability are unable to achieve their marks, and most of the time, the tangible representation of the youth in the plans, policies and government agenda are vehemently missing. The research literature has also given very little space to understand the problems of the disabled youth, and it is with the same line that the formation and enforcement of policies have never become effective.

Since the 1990s, the human rights approach to development adopted by bi-lateral and multi-lateral agencies ensures that everyone has an equal right to dignity, freedom, safety and is not discriminated against. This can be possible only by empowering all people. As outlined by the 24th Special Session of the UN World Summit for Social Development and Beyond (June 2000) declared, ‘The ultimate goals of development are to improve living conditions for people and to empower them to participate fully in the economic, political and social arenas.’

Several governments and international agencies have voiced the urge to mainstream disability in development. Also, the need to establish the rights of the disabled at the grass-

root level. The invisibility of disability in development has been strongly criticized and demands for change have been made by the international disability movement since its formation in the early 1980s. However, it is only recently disability is considered a fundamental human rights issue and this cause has received considerable support from governments and international development agencies. (EDF 2002) Unfortunately, disability has remained rapt, in fulfilling the 'special needs' projects that have been identified as being the most important, related to health, education, and welfare. It has not found a home in the development policy and practices mainstream (Bill Albert 2004b).

Though disability needs to be considered by governments and agencies in developing countries as a cross-cutting issue, no national development agency has undertaken the responsibility. It is equally important to understand that disability is a socially constructed phenomenon; it needs to be seen from a human rights perspective; that the disabled needs to empower themselves actively by being actors rather than subjects; and that from policy to practice—across the entire spectrum of development work—the power relationships have remained unequal. These were very much the starting points for the movement in the 1980s (Disabled Peoples' International 1985).

The idea and outlook on disability, equally in the popular culture and society in despise have always been equivocal; and therefore by and large, the due approach of perception constantly is being questioned. The longstanding provenance of disability as subjugation or offspring of social construction, Bill Albert (2004a), not merely denigrates the people with impairments as undesirable to the mainstream society, also but also delimiting their all fundamental prospects as a human being. Disability has an explicit rapport with the accelerated economic growth, so their wholesome nexus upholds larger prospects for the amelioration of the disabled life and livelihood. (UN, 1990) The most relatable prerequisite is to galvanize the modern orientation of the society towards the understanding of disability, through a vehement elimination of the socio-cultural subjugation, and by improvising the conducive ambiance within the standard of human rights. This will not only look after the equal opportunities but also impart a new vista for the future of disability. The most considerable approach would be to strike a discrepancy between the so-called social outlook and the conceptualization of the human rights approach on disability.

In recent times, organizations and NGOs have come further to approve and exercise the human rights model, but this framework has mostly remained restricted to the practice of looking after the health and medical care of the people with disabilities. So, here reintegration of disability denotes mostly to deal with the physiological functionalities in the world of

medicine, and a course the outlook has been led by the insight of impediment or anomalies. The substance of meaningful space in the mainstream for disability remains delimited by the model of medical care. This model, even though it outlines the individualistic outlook, yet it stands apart from the necessity of sociopolitical integration. Society needs to appreciate the significance of the human rights standard for disability. At times the regular practice medication on the people sometimes leads to a more vulnerable condition of disability. Enforcing immunization to eliminate diseases at some point also not useful, and it may also cause impairments. The absence of adequate caring during the time of childbirth also leading to the condition of disability at the primal age. Such statics remains very crucial for the human rights model. Apart from health care, the perpetual social subjugation of disability has accentuated the fundamental necessity of the modern education system. Perspectives need to change in the direction of making the integration of disability into the mainstream in every possible sociopolitical development. In recent times, World Bank has given scope to open opportunities for disabled people in the development projects. Although it has not outlined the agenda of inclusive growth, it is more concern to prevent the impairment (EDF 2002).

In regular intervals, Govt. has been introducing several announcements, plans and policies to look after the improvements in the disability issue, but the effective implementation to facilitate mainstream sustenance has always remained incomplete. Conceivably the effective approach to disability has been developed by the European Disability Forum (Ibid) (*EU Delegations and Services*, 2003). The existing scholarly work has been analyzing disability from several vantage points and underscoring the roles of different organizations in this regard (*Ortiz 2004*). The organizations are carrying numerous plans forwards viz. promoting human resource model to uphold conducive environment for disability, encouraging the distribution of roles and tasks, organizing program to raise training and awareness towards disability, supporting the disable friendly associations, induce collective learning and practice, and also to regulate suitable resource allocation.

Conceivably the major barrier in the enforcement of disability inclusion is the absence of correct outlook, understanding and awareness to acquire the skill to deal with disability. As Rebecca denotes, this knowledge-based approach is applicable both in national as well as international organizations (Rebecca Yeo, 2003). The best method to structure and analyze the unconsolidated statics of disability demography can be streamlined, only when the mainstream projects join hands with DFID models. Such development interventions will explore more appropriate plans, policies and legislations for the further development of disability. A more comprehensive approach must be encouraged to find out the stumbling

blocks again the inclusion of disability in the mainstream. The predicaments need to be understood, how the adverse factors have been persisting in the education set up for the disability development process; and sometimes due to lack of conducive atmosphere, it often triggers conflicting situations.

There must be provisions for the application of the accumulated data on disability; and they should be analyzed with correct research aptitude and temperament, otherwise the research reports will never contribute towards the elimination the predicaments within disability. The most appropriate prerequisite is a strong nexus between representative organization for disabilities and the Govt. bureaucratic machinery. Such a joint venture will give several action plans, agendas and policies to work for social inclusion and will draw a promising framework for disability within the mainstream. This participation needs to be executed in every possible sphere with the mainstream so that it will nurture the effective nexus between the disabled representation and the state policy-making.

Correlation between Disability, Education and Social Exclusion

Amartya Sen deciphers that economic conditions owing to the disposition of poverty, should be examined in the line of social exclusion; so that all the policies and plans can be streamlines accordingly. Since at every point of society, social exclusion denotes its ubiquitous presence, therefore its cause, character and variations need to be analyzed. This approach will underscore new findings and intuitions towards fathoming the index of poverty and will also accentuate due social actions and policies for its mitigation (Amartya Sen 2000). The understanding of social exclusion can also be marked from India's longstanding practice of such sociopolitical subjugation at several points of history. The hegemony of the domination and subjugation are always ubiquitous - be it the potent political class, affluent economic class, the priest by the advantage of birth have always been taken the undue advantage of the dalits, minorities, people in destitution or working class, etc. in the nuance of exclusion. The minorities are segregated with severe denial of their identity, livelihood, and education and anticipated status of citizenship in the mainstream. It is in this same line; we need to place the issue of disability as an offshoot of social exclusion. This exclusion has marginalized them from the fundamental resources of sociopolitical life, and adequate integrate into the mainstream (H. Silver (1994).

Notwithstanding initiatives taken by the Govt. and Non-Governmental groups, people with disabilities are still being segregated, mortified with the denial of fundamental education, sociopolitical sharing in everyday life (H. Silver 1994). Touraine explains that this social exclusion is not about the model of upper section or the down section; rather it is about the

predicament of being in or out. It can be said that social exclusion of disability is to realize a sordid fact that people with disability have often been considered as second-grade citizens. Alain Touraine (1991),

The case for the inclusive education of children with disabilities is often framed in terms of human rights or justice. Lack of adequate education remains the key risk factor for poverty and exclusion of all children, both the disabled and non-disabled though generally higher for children with disabilities. Children with disabilities almost inevitably become an economic burden on society and their families. Most national and international development goals refer to the rights of disabled people to share educational opportunities equally with their peers (Ture Jonsson and Ronald Wiman 2001) For all practical purposes, enrollment rates and educational attainment of disabled children remain much lower than their non-disabled peers (Ann Elwan 1999). The incremental benefits of educating a child with disabilities far outweigh the incremental costs which provide the baseline information, policy perspectives and frameworks need to be analyzed to understand the status of children with disabilities in the educational sector. (Ture Jonsson and Ronald Wiman 2001).

The idea and understanding of social exclusion in India have been perceived in the line of underlining the absence of the vital resources viz. life and livelihood, food and sustenance, cloth and housing, security and health care, education and employment (*R.R Singh 2003*). In the early decades of the 1960s, Govt. of India took a step to reshape its mainstream structure owing to an inspiring model of USA. The aim was to create a conducive set up for the growth of 'Least Restrictive Environment in Education', along with which Children with Special Needs (*Jayanthi Narayana 1999*), will be benefited from the support of the UNESCO project named EFA (Education for All). This project helped the Government to streamline its existing plans and policies with special requirements in the education system.

Since the role of education induces a pivotal role in the expansion of political development, the thinkers of all ages have been acknowledged and argued for the salubrious nexus between the educational and political systems. (*Carolyn C. Wise and Stephanie Hauser 2007*) Paulo Freire observes that unless the society has been build up with a strong political acumen; it will always be oppressed by the so-called suppressor's political order. The most important necessity is a diverse educational system for uplifting the education of people with disabilities. In most of the cases, the scope of fair representation of the disabled people in the mainstream platforms have always been delimited or denied. Across the world, each phase of history and all political regimes have never been given adequate social position to a disability, preferably people with disabilities have been treated as the largest minority or

subjugated social group. This segregation and subjugation underline a long history of poverty, indignity, rejection, neglect and denial. In India, the condition of disability is also vulnerable due to ineffective understanding and support of the political plans, economic substance, and proactive mass media. In this regard, Mishra and Gupta are suggesting the Indian Govt. to adopt and implement painstaking rehabilitation and social inclusion programs, and to encourage the NGOs to work in this direction (A. K. Mishra and Ruchika Gupta (2006). Madan further denotes that Indian needs to support the equal opportunity of access, and for which it need to look after and fairly need to promote its democratic political order. (Amman Madan 2005).

The idea and understanding of disability sustain an important dimension only after the Second World War with the sensible theories of the egalitarian perspective of education, integration, social inclusion, opportunity, and normalization. These significant propositions have accentuated the increasing acknowledgment and understanding of the strength of disability by mainstream society. (Asha Sethi 2005), So the role of the State becomes more accountable in the process of rehabilitation and development of the people with disabilities notwithstanding all socioeconomic and sociopolitical circumstances (Sheilaja V.H.P. Rao (2003). As Amita Sharam (2003) observes that at the rudimentary level, the role of education explicitly reliable on the resources of opportunities, accessibility, maintenance and integration; and the strong nexus of these properties have remained crucial in the efficient development in all segments of history. Most significantly, the outlook of the modern-day school accentuates the relation between 'access and retention and achievement'.

The mainstream social exclusion of disability has been adversely inducing their crucial access to education. Minow (1990: 20) denotes that social exclusion of disability accentuates the tradition of discrimination, where the misnomer has been reconstructed, both by ignoring and accepting the tradition of difference. This whole notion needs to be problematized, to decipher how the idea of difference has been social structured. Although at one premise, the idea of difference can be encouraged as diversity, it draws attention to stimulate the social subjugation, deprivation and humiliation. This is an exclusive saga of mainstream marginalization of disability.

Conclusion

Disability is both a consequence and a cause of poverty. Abolishing global poverty is unsure of being attained unless the needs and rights of people with disabilities are accounted for and taken into consideration. As per the United Nations, one out of every 20 people has a disability. More than three out of four of these live in a developing country. Disability

inhibits accessibility to employment and education and promulgates social and economic exclusion. People living in poverty along with disabilities are surmounted in a perpetual cycle of disability and poverty, each being both a consequence and a cause of the latter. Their rights and needs cannot be completely tackled unless the original reason for poverty is corrected unless they are allowed to gain access to health services, education, and livelihood and participate fully in social life. More awareness needs to be generated about the problems associated with disability and society needs to be more vigilant, liberal and actively involved in the inclusion of the disabled within its folds, recognizing their rights and providing them with equal opportunities.

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