

Livelihood Promotion
for People with
Disabilities

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The Challenge:

- Biggest challenge today- how to assist large numbers of people in the developing countries to have a meaningful livelihood which sustains them and ensures they can live with dignity and hope for the future.
- A livelihood is a set of economic activities, which includes self-employment and/or wage employment, and which enables a person to meet his individual and household requirements.

- Traditional solution to poverty - increase in income levels through the generation of employment.
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- Changes in the last two decades- now the need is to promote livelihoods as a means for poverty reduction.
 - Livelihood is not only generating income, it encompasses empowerment and the dignity of people's lives.
 - Therefore, livelihood promotion is not only based on the principles of economic growth, but also on equity and human rights.

Exclusion:

- Often one nodal Ministry for disability and welfare provision
- Other ministries view disability-related issues as welfare matters with no bearing on their respective mandates and schemes.
- Many rural development projects specifically target the landless poor who are able to provide labour. Those who cannot do physical labour often can neither participate in decision-making nor reap benefits.

- The greatest obstacle to participation and equity are the attitudes of the non-disabled, whether in government, the family, the community or the voluntary sector.
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- PwD are only “used” in the hope of attracting benefits to the family/ village.
 - The impairments lead to discrimination, exclusion and further poverty.
 - The UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for People with Disabilities- endorsed by all UN member states, leading to disability legislations.
 - These legislations are not based on a disability rights approach, thus excluding disabled people and forcing dependency.

People with Disabilities are 'people' first, having similar cognitive powers, capability of being educated and like any other community have the bright and average members in equal measure.

If laws are read and interpreted for the spirit in which they are framed, then we can all be held guilty of contempt of the constitution, as the laws make it clear to us that it is our social responsibility to create an enabling environment which PwD can access and work in with reasonable comfort.



Disability & Poverty:

- More than 400 m PwD in developing countries (90 m in India)
- Poverty rate-PwD- 23% V/s Non-disabled-18 %
- If poverty lines are adjusted to reflect the fact that disability absorbs substantial amounts of both time and money, poverty rates for disabled people will be even higher. -Nobel laureate Dr. Amartya Sen
- After including extra expenses associated with being disabled- poverty rate in PwD shot up to 47.4 %
- Poor people are disproportionately disabled, and disabled people are disproportionately poor.

- **Poverty a critical issue for people with disabilities, and within the disability category, some groups of people are considerably more likely to be poor than others. For example, women with disabilities and multiply disabled like- deafblind, autistic etc. are not just more likely to be poor but also due to marginalization and exclusion, more likely to prone to extreme poverty.**
- **Mainstreaming approaches to poverty alleviation frequently marginalize or ignore the rights of people with disabilities. They remain marginalized or absent from initiatives such as the Millennium Development Goals. Such initiatives may contribute to poverty alleviation but will fail to affect those living in chronic poverty – most likely to be people with disabilities and their families.**

UN, Policy makers and Disability

- **UNCRPD- recognizes disability as a human rights issue**
- **Need to place disability firmly on the economic development agenda.**
- **Human rights framework will remain hollow if not accompanied by improvements in the economic well-being of PwD.**
- **Policy makers slow to consider disability in the context of economic development programmes and policies.**
- **Due to educational constraints and discrimination, PwD under-represented in positions of influence and power**

- **Another vicious circle of general neglect by policy makers- they do not insist that foreign aided programmes take disability explicitly into account and so foreign funders argue that “ disability is not a priority” .**

And because the issue of disability and poverty is not raised by funders, policy makers in developing countries have one less reason to include it on their agenda.

- **PWD- the largest among poorest of the poor**
- **Lack of Quality data / research on disability**
- **Disability and development has been pushed down the development agenda by other aspects that are better researched.**
- **The two-way link- Poor people more at risk of acquiring a disability due to:**
 - Lack of access to good nutrition, health care & sanitation
 - Lack of safe living and working conditions.
- **Barriers to education, employment and public services prevents their escape from poverty.**

- Few government or donor funded development projects bother to try to include the disabled.
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- Big Questions: how can we give millions of PwD in developing countries, a chance to participate in mainstream development programmes?
 - Could a livelihoods approach help undermine the entrenched prejudice that PwD are an unproductive burden on others?
 - Looking beyond welfarism, we need to question whether the livelihoods of PwD can be seriously addressed if development initiatives embrace only land-based activities.

- A report from Action on Disability and Development (ADD) looks at the vicious circle linking poverty and disability.

- The basic cause of disabled people's poverty is social, economic, and political exclusion.
- The poverty reduction aspirations of donors, governments and agencies cannot be taken seriously until they learn to work with, not just on behalf of, PwD.

The report notes that:

- Many traditional approaches towards disability are patronising, exclusive and only reach small numbers of PwD, mainly in urban areas.
- The move from sheltered employment schemes to facilitating the entry of PwD into mainstream employment is progressive. However, market-based mechanisms will not lift them out of poverty as long as prejudice remains deeply embedded in social, political and economic institutions.
- Disabled people's organisations (DPOs) are frequently dominated by urban-based disabled men.
- People with deafblindness and multiple disabilities and women with learning difficulties, sensory impairments or mental illness rarely get equal access.
- Although a high proportion of those living in most extreme poverty (e.g. street children) are disabled, they are often excluded from assistance programmes as disability is seen as a specialist issue, for others to deal with.

- The assumption that PwD are a drain on society is a self-fulfilling prophecy as long as they are excluded and denied resources to engage with society.
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- DFID's paper on 'Disability, Poverty and Development'- recognises the disproportionate level of poverty among disabled people and the widespread exclusion experienced.
 - Need a twin-track approach: PwD should be included in all areas of work, as well as having specific initiatives working with disabled people.
 - Governments, corporate, donors and NGOs need to recognise that if disability inclusion is to be achieved, active measures are needed to combat the discrimination that currently exists.

It is sad to note that:

- Almost 90 percent of disabled children in developing countries are denied any formal education and excluded from many of the day-to-day interactions that non-disabled children take for granted.
- Millions of people worldwide have preventable impairments caused by malnutrition and poor sanitation
- The ravages of skeletal fluorosis, a disability caused by consuming fluoride contaminated water, which particularly impacts the rural poor who are unable to access uncontaminated water sources.
- 70 percent of childhood blindness and 50 percent of hearing impairment in Asia and Africa are preventable or treatable.

Livelihood Options:

A variety of livelihood options must be seriously considered with PwD

- Rural disabled people could be given training in rural trades but they could also be helped to relocate to urban areas whenever alternative livelihoods options are available and people want to move.
- People in urban areas need to be involved in trades / options which are appropriate and needs based

Decision-makers and donors to:

- Identify PwD within any target group so that provision – and, where necessary, affirmative action – can be built into development plans
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- Employ them in the design and implementation of policy and give greater support for disabled self-help groups
 - Provide disability awareness training
 - Take affirmative action to reserve some white-collar government positions in order to assist PwD to use their intellectual skills
 - Provide tax concessions and training to help them start up enterprises based on information communication technologies
 - Develop and disseminate guidelines on a livelihood's approach to disability at all levels of government and commercial and civil society partners.

Good will is not enough.

A rights-based approach to disability requires:

- Meeting the specific access requirements of some PwD so that full participation is possible.

- Extensive training in disability equality issues.
- Provision of credit, vocational training and other services though important, must be combined with encouraging mainstream organisations to see PwD as equal citizens and potential customers.
- Nobody knows so much about disability and the process of exclusion than disabled people themselves. So the policies should be designed with the participation of PwD themselves otherwise they will be ineffective and also increase the very exclusion that causes disability and poverty.
- The role of self-help groups of the disabled in campaigning for a rights-based approach and organising skills training, savings and credit schemes for members.



Computer Operation



Computerised Braille Transcription



Refill & Pen Manufacturing



Greeting Cards



Stone Crushing



Cotton Separation

Food Processing



Canteen Supervisor





Screen Printing

Sweet Shop



Incense-tablets



Petty-shop Keeping



Samosa Making



Akhil Paul- AP
29th Fe



Artificial Jewelry Making

“Until the great mass
of the people shall
be filled with the
sense of
responsibility for
each other’s welfare,
social justice can
never be attained”

Dr. Helen Keller



Candle Making