

**Expert Group Meeting on Effective Data Generation
for the Incheon Strategy Indicators
Bangkok, 6-7 November 2013**

Country Brief

Country name: India

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1. On the availability of national baseline data for the Incheon Strategy Indicators as reported in the ESCAP survey

In pursuance to India's participation in the meeting to launch Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled persons 1993-2002 convened by ESCAP in Beijing in 1992 and India being a signatory to the proclamation of the said meeting, The Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was enacted in India for the purpose of empowerment of PwDs and their full participation in the society at large.

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 defines "disability" as blindness, low vision, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation mental illness, and leprosy-cured. Each of these categories of disability has been defined clearly in the Act. The Act defines persons with disabilities as those whose minimum disability is atleast 40%, as certified by a medical authority.

The PwD Act, 1995 provides for the appropriate Governments (Central and State Governments) and local authorities to take measures for education, rehabilitation, employment, non-discrimination and social security for persons with disabilities.

According to Census 2001, there were 2.19 crore persons with disabilities in India who constituted 2.13 percent of the total population. This includes persons with visual, hearing, speech, locomotor and mental disabilities. The Census data shows that 75 per cent of persons with disabilities lived in rural areas, 49 per cent are literate and only 34 per cent are employed.

2. Country practices of data collection

In India, the major sources of statistics on disability are the decadal Population Censuses and the regular large scale sample surveys on disability conducted by National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO). Besides, data is also collected by State Govts. through special survey normally conducted with the help of Anganwadi Workers.

The Census 2001, included for the first time post-independence, questions on disability for getting typologically defined disability statistics in India. Although a question on disability was canvassed at 1981, Census, 1981 being the “International Year for the Disabled”, the question on only three broad categories of physical disabilities viz “Totally Crippled” was canvassed in 1981.

NSSO conducted a survey on disabilities (58th round during July-December, 2002) and estimated the disabled population of the country as 18.5 million, who formed about 1.8% of the population. Along with the particulars of physical and mental disabilities, the socio-economic characteristics of the disabled persons such as their age, literacy, employment, vocational training etc. were collected. Governing Council (GC) of NSSO through the working groups with National Experts in different medical institutions, eminent professors, academicians and other important users including Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, finalised the questionnaire, sampling design, tabulation plan etc. for the survey.

Figures of Census, 2001 and those NSSO, 2002 differ especially in respect of estimates of persons with various types of disability and their age distribution, mainly due to differences in the concepts and definitions as also the data collection methodologies.

Census figures of 2011 are expected to be available by December 2013. Besides, Socio-Economic and Caste Census was done in 2011 and their data is under process.

3. Achievements and lessons learnt

Measures to a large extent have been taken care of in Census 2011, to rule out under enumeration and to ensure better quality.

India is signatory to the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2008. In order to fulfill the obligations under UNCRPD, the existing PwD Act is being reviewed. The new Bill proposes to add more categories of Persons with Disabilities within the ambit of specified disabilities.

The persons involved in the process of collection of data w.r.t. PwDs need to be trained and also need to be sensitized to have a fair assessment of their own while categorizing them within the ambit of any specific category of disabilities. There are financial constraints and lack of strategy to reach remote, rural and difficult terrains. There is also a need to develop affordable technology.

4. Major challenges to improve the availability and quality of data

Past Census results were said to be suffering from considerable under enumeration as the enumeration and determination of the physically handicapped and their characteristics were beyond the scope and capacity of Census Operations due to the complexity of the definition of disability and inherent reservations of the population to share this information with the enumerator.

Non availability of adequate number of disability experts, master trainers and training literature in local languages did hamper the pace of targets in schemes, programmes and projects. Inadequate budgetary allocation by state governments for disability specific programmes. As per the scheme of distribution of powers and duties under the Constitution of India, disability is a state subject.

5. National capacity-building needs

PwDs constitute a significant segment of the population but are often seen only as recipients of various schemes and not as a human resource that could contribute and participate in nation building. As a result, their talent, skill and potential mostly remain untapped or underutilized. Accordingly, 12th Plan (2012-17) document of Govt. of India has identified the following as priority areas for action in the 12th Plan:-

- Accessibility;
- Reasonable Accommodation;
- Education, Health & Housing;
- Skill Training and Economic Empowerment;
- Awareness Generation, and

- Independent living and equal participation in community life.

For addressing these needs, Government of India has the following major Programmes and Schemes:-

- National Skill Development Policy to promote inclusivity and reduce economic and social division among Indian workforce.
- Scheme of assistance to disabled persons for purchase/fitting of aids and appliances scheme (ADIP) to provide modern aids and appliances to needy persons to promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation.
- Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS) for providing education and vocational training and rehabilitation of persons with mental disabilities by creating an enabling environment and encouraging NGOs through financial assistance for undertaking projects for empowerment of disabled.
- National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC) to promote economic development activities and self-employment ventures, extend loan to PwDs for upgradation of their entrepreneurial skill and extend loan for pursuing professional/technical education.
- National Trust for the welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple-Disabilities.
- Scheme of Implementation of Persons with Disabilities (SIPDA) to support activities pursuant to implementation of the provisions of PwD Act, 1995.
- Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities to safeguard the rights and facilities made available to PwDs.
- Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) for regulating and monitoring the training of rehabilitational professionals and personnel, promoting research in special education.
- Seven National Institutes related to disability and engaged in human resources development, rehabilitation services and research & development.

Details of new Schemes proposed to be undertaken during 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017) are mentioned in the **Annexure**

6. Action plans to improve the availability and quality of disability data

During the Census of 2011, utmost care and special efforts were taken to make available latest data on disability and to improve the quality of disability data. The measures taken were,

- Inclusion of three questions to elicit correct data on disability.
- The question(s) on disability was asked for all persons in the household. The enumerator was instructed not to assume that just because someone looks 'alright' or 'normal', she/he may not have disability. Many disabilities may not be visible. Sometimes elderly/old people are not asked the question. However, it is important to ask them also. With age, a lot of people acquire disability.
- The enumerator was instructed to ask carefully/skillfully so that the feelings of the respondent and/or any other member of the household are not hurt. The enumerator was instructed to first explain that the data on disability would be useful for the following purposes of Government to plan/ policies, allocate adequate resources and provide support services for persons with disabilities and their families.
- The enumerator was instructed to use simple and non-derogatory language and not to hurt their emotions.
- The enumerator was instructed to tell the respondents that the confidentiality will be maintained.

Disability question no. 9 in Census 2011

9(a) Is the persons mentally/ physically disabled?

Yes – 1/No-2

9(b) If 'Yes" in 9 (a), give code in the box against 9(b) from the list below.

9 (c) If multiple disability (Code 8) in 9 (b), give maximum three codes in the boxes against 9 (c) from the list below.

Type of Disability

Code

1. Inactivity

1

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