

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITES

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Abstract:

Disability is a condition with which an individual cannot fully participate in the social and vocational activities. A person with disabilities has to face various altitudinal and environmental barriers. It segregates the person from the mainstream. In order to rehabilitate or empower the PWDS society has to take various steps. Both males and females suffer from disability but the condition of females with disability is more verse than that of males with disabilities. Therefore, through this article the researchers suggest and discuss the ways to improve or empower the women with disabilities.

Keywords: *disability, segregate, mainstream, rehabilitate, attitudinal, and environmental barriers*

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Introduction:

Unfortunately, disability is considered as a curse on society and if found in a woman then it became a pathetic situation. Gender discrimination is considered as one of the important reasons of societal imbalance, backwardness and other problems. Biologically, because of certain hormones females have different physical structure but in any type of disability both males and females are equally affected intellectually or physically but society always considered females weaker than males because we know our society is still male dominating. Therefore, women are always kept away from availing opportunities of education, employment etc.

According to PWD Act, 1995 every individual with disability weather male or female has equal rights to live their life as per their ability.

Before discussing about the empowerment of women with disabilities firstly we have to gaze at present pathetic situation of women with disability. It is well known that no society can outbid without women. But still women are considered as burden on society and family, it is really excruciating. In schools, homes and different socio-cultural conditions the same attitude is seen everywhere as discussed below: -

Medical Condition:

On the basis of available data it is found that a girl with disability may be identified by the family members earlier but they were never or rarely enrolled her in training centers or hospitals for medical training. As per Amartya Sen survey reports conducted at Bombay in 2001, it was found that very less data of girls with disability were registered in hospitals for treatment or in centers for training. Reports also shows that only girls with severe disability or adolescence were taken to hospitals with the aim that they will get trained to fulfill their day to day needs and are capable of being married. Moreover, parents don't want to spent much money on their girls with disability.

Nutritional Condition:

A report shows related to study done in Bombay abortion done after fetal testing that 7999 out of 8000 fetuses were of females. In this scenario, it is very ridiculous to think about the nutritional care by the family of a girl with disability when she is not contributing towards the financial conditions of the family. Further, the report of National health summary also shows that mothers used to feed their baby girl for very little period. Due to this girl with disability, they are prone to other diseases along with disability. Shockingly, many reports also indicate the condition of malnutrition along with disability even in the girls of rich family due to their negligence.

Educational Conditions:

Provision of free primary education for all children with disability is the mandate of government still, most of the parents believe that expenditure on the education of children with disability is wastage of money. The condition of girls with disability is very pathetic due to faulty attitude of parents. About 40-45% of girls with disability dropped their studies. Some of reports indicates that only 33% or less girls are able to enroll in primary schools. Some studies also shows that about 1\3rd of girls left their studies before class 2nd, 1 out of every 7 are able to reach out at secondary level of education, less than 3 out of every 100 reaches at high school. About 65% of girl's students of 14-19 years remain illiterate (source-IGNOU). Some of the reasons of backwardness of girl's education are listed below: -

- lack of special schools
- parents considered wastage of money to spent on girls with disability on education
- lack of awareness among people of society

Workarea Condition:

As per Indian ideology women are confined to household tasks such as giving birth to child and rearing & caring of their child etc. In spite of having disability, they have to fetch drinking water, taking care of their young siblings and domestic animals. They are confined to homes because of their physical weakness and safety issues. In reality, there is no field left where women with disability didn't excel. We find many examples of women where they perform dual responsibility efficiently weather it is in the field to work, to labor, to house or in the office. So, we should stop restricting women in the name of their security, physical weakness or grace. It is the matter of speculation which makes women mentally feeble.

Social Security:

As women are considered physically weaker than men, due to which they require extra safety from anti-social elements itself from their early age onwards. That's why women are restricted from various opportunities. Moreover, it is not seen only in our country but also in other countries which depicts the same picture. Being a woman and along with disability they develop inferiority in themselves. They are taught to be satisfied in whatever they get as if they have no right to demand anything. As a result, parents considered marriage of their girl child with disability as a solution of all problems.

Suggestions for Improving the Conditions of Women with Disability: Central and state government regularly tried to empower women with disabilities through their various legislatives, laws, acts and policies.

Many govt. and non-government institutions are also trying to fulfill the above so, that women with disabilities also get equal opportunities to participate in society. Apart from this contribution from parents, family members, teachers, schools etc. is also necessary to make the above happen: -

Role of Parents:

It is the duty of parents to make future of their child safe and bright without discriminating between boys and girls. In case of girls their role becomes much important. So, these are following some steps for parents which are helpful in improving the condition of girls with disability: -

- arrange appropriate medical and training programs as per the need of their girl child with disability
- by giving them more time for academic activities in comparison to household or domestic activities
- arrange them with home tutors if the girl child is not able to go to school
- make efforts to make girls with disability more self-reliant
- stop child marriage and dowry system
- give balanced and nutritional diet to girl child with disability
- make efforts to raise the moral of girls with disability high
- treat girls equally with disability like normal girls in home
- provide equal opportunities to girls with disability
- don't ignore girls with disability in front of other normal siblings

Role of Society:

We are living in a male dominating society where most of decisions are taken by the males such as what are the rights of the normal males, normal women and person with disability etc. so, if we want to change anything in society firstly there is a need to change the attitude of males of our society towards women with disability. When they consider women with disability as normal as other people and are ready to initiate different activities for their rehabilitation then we are only able to improve the contribution of women with disability in the progress of the country. By enhancing the participation of women at every stage we are able to make women with disability more independent and self-reliant. As a result of which women play significant role in building family and community.

Role of Teachers:

Teachers are the builders of nation. They not only educate children but also sensitize parents to make their child future bright. So, teachers also play an important role in changing the attitude of society towards women with disability. With the help of following steps teachers can help girls with disability: -

- by planning appropriate roles for girls with disability for every activity
- by directing same discipline for girls with disability and without disability
- encourage girls with disability more and more in class
- by giving them equal leadership opportunities in the class
- try to stop gender discrimination by involving boys too in domestic skills
- stop making gender comments

- don't be biased with girls with disability
- by telling inspirational and real stories based on courage, hard work etc.

Role of Schools:

Generally, it is observed that girls are initially enrolled in schools but after some time they are discouraged to continue. So, it is the duty of schools to investigate the reason of their discontinuation and also make efforts to stop it. In fact, there can be many reasons of their discontinuation of schools, so in order to stop it following steps can be taken: -

- attention should be given to the health and nutrition related problems of girls with disability
- - sensitization of parents and teachers about gender discrimination and rights of person with disability
- by providing equal opportunities to girls and women with disability in the development of society.

Role of Government:

Various national programs and schemes for the empowerment of women with disability are running at national, state and district level. An international document United National Convention on the Rights of the person with disability has been implemented by Indian government also. It aims at protecting the women rights and dignity of person with disability. According to Article 6 of the UNCRPD ;state parties should recognize that women and girls with disability are subject to multiple discrimination and in this regard state shall take measures to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by them. For the fulfillment of programs initiated by government following points can be considered: -

- early identification and training of women or girls with disability
- distribute free aids and free appliances
- encourage communities and families to enhance the participation of women with disability
- encourage recruitment of women with disability in the schools as the teachers
- encourage vocational base curriculum in schools for girls with disability
- promote 3% of reservation of employment for women with disability in government sector
- encourage travelling fair concessions in trains, bus fares etc.
- provide facility of loan on 0% interest for women with disability
- provide scholarships, pensions, employment benefits to the women with disability
- encourage the scheme of giving prize money of 1400-/- on marrying a woman with disability
- provision of free education for women with disability up to 18 years by the state as well as central government
- provide special books, aids, copies dress, bags etc. free of cost

Apart from all these some programs for women welfare are also organized by the government which are also very helpful for the women with disability

- to provide monthly financial help to the widows with disability
- to provide financial help of 10,000-/- for marriage of daughters of widows
- to arrange the Nari Niketan for orphan women

- to provide the pensions to women above 65 years of BPL families
- - different schemes for women like- **“Balika Samridhi Yojna, Kishori Shakti Yojna are also beneficial for the empowerment of the women”**

In the end we can say that by the efforts of various social organization and government the condition of women with disability has been improved very much. The attitude of society has been changed towards the women with disability. Currently, there is no area or sector of profession is left where women with disability have not reached. Upliftment can be seen in the standards for development of women rights and authorities; this is all the outcome of hard work done by social reforms and committees. This has also resulted in improved approach of society towards women. But unfortunately, it is confined only in metropolitan cities and in developed cities of our country. As about 70% of population of country lives in the rural areas i.e., small villages or slums so, their attitude towards women is demeaning. They still consider women as burden on society and treat with hatred. This discrimination on the basis of gender can be seen everywhere from getting even basic services like medicine, food etc. to several social and cultural levels. and if it is a woman with disability then it becomes more worse situation. Moreover, in rural areas people are still not aware of rehabilitation services. However, in case of boy the whole scenario is different as parents may be ready to approach the rehabilitation services and are ready to spent any amount on these services as boys are considered to be the important pillar of the house but show no interest for a girl with disability as they wanted to get rid of them as soon as possible.

Studies and data clearly show that lack of awareness towards disability is seen greatly towards girls with disability which is unfortunate for our country. Moreover, most of the rural families are not aware of the available facilities provided by the government. Thus, there is a great need to make efforts by government as well as social organization to improve and empower the women with disability.

Although, we are living in 21st century still most of the thoughts of people are that women are meant for household work and should remain in house and look after that. When the condition for women in our country is so miserable then you all can think for women with disability which is worse. In comparison to men women face more challenges and barriers from society. In order to change the above situation our state and central government along with some non-governmental reforms are continuously performing activities for women with disability to aware the people and provisions such as providing basic knowledge, funding their medical expenses and much more. For the accomplishment of these reforms where it is mandatory for the family members, neighbors, schools to play their respective roles. Parents should take care of their child with disability and treat them with equality as they would do with their normal children. Relatives should not abuse them and treat them with respect. Schools and institutions should provide them with their basic needs, teach them according to their capabilities & disabilities and don't discriminate them on the basis of their gender.

Conclusion:

Now it is concluded that in social levels, many steps are to be taken for improving the condition of women with disability. Along with that appropriate implementation of these policies and plans can only result in upliftment of condition of women. At last, to improve the condition of every woman and empowering women with

disability, still we need to work a lot, support our government in their policies and play our vital roles to affect their lives in a positive way. Only in this way our country can progress effectively and efficiently.

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