

PRIMARY STAKEHOLDRE'S WORKSHOP

26HT – 29TH JULY 2010

Background

The Principal Secretary, Social Justice proposed to formulate a State Disability Policy for Persons with Disability in April 2009, for which Hon. Chief Minister extended the support and approval in December 2009. The intension is to formulate a comprehensive Disability Policy based on PwD Act and guiding principles of UNCRPD. The effort is been supported by RMoL (Rajasthan Mission on Livelihood) and UNDP. The process involved in policy formulation is research, reference of secondary data, field visits, interactions and interviews of various stakeholders. Thus, as a part of formulation of State Multi-sectoral Policy for persons with Disability consultative workshops for perspective building were organized during 26th to 29th July 2010 in Jaipur at Nehru Bhavan, O.T.S.

Participants

Young people, adults with disability (physically challenged, speech & hearing impaired visual impairment, multiple disability mentally challenged mentally ill) their parents, teachers, professionals and representatives of NGO working with PwDs and Government Officials like Principal Secretary Smt. Aditi Mehta, SJE, Shri. Preamsingh Mehra, Commissioner, SJE and Shri. Rakesh Malhotra, Project Director, RMoL, Government of Rajasthan.

Process

In order to encourage participants for discussion, the methodology adopted was as follows:

- Presenting an overview of the status of disability in the state
- Presenting Key points from each chapter and an outlook of the policy
- Clarifying doubts about concepts and terms used in the document
- Inviting responses from participants and listing to suggestions and inputs which need to be considered while finalizing the policy document.

Day – 1 (26th July 2010)

Workshop for Group – 1

First day of the workshop was reserved for group of persons with speech and hearing impairment. The day was started at 10.30 with the welcome to all participants. Smt. Aditi Mehta, Principal Secretary, Social Justice, Shri. Preamsingh Mehra, Commissioner, SJE and Shri. Rakesh Malhotra, Project Director, RMoL represented Government of Rajasthan. Shri. Samir Ghosh welcomed all guests and participants and gave brief introduction to objectives of the workshop. Smt. Aditi Mehta, Principal Secretary, Social Justice, in her inaugural speech mentioned the objective of formulating a State policy on disability and also reviewed the current scenario of the state. After her informative speech Mr. Rakesh Malhotra, Project Director, RMoL, oriented the participants about RMoL's mission. He also mentioned about various initiatives RMoL has undertaken for augmenting Livelihoods of PwDs.

The whole session was interpreted in sign language for participants by Mr. Arun Rao, (Deaf Way). Further to this Mr. Arun Rao initiated the discussion on difficulties persons with speech and hearing impaired persons face in his speech. He mentioned that these people face only problem and that is 'Communication'.

Proceeding further, the participants were divided into five groups. For group work, participants were provided with the key discussion points covering social, economical and individual aspects of PwDs. Those key indicators are as follows:

- Health care and Prevention
- Barrier free environment, transport and mobility
- Education, Sport, Culture and Creative activities
- Economic empowerment, livelihood and Social Security
- Public education, Human Resource development, and Participation in Public places

After forming five groups, each group was assigned with one topic for discussion and their input. Participants were asked to join any group as per their interest. Following are the suggestion made by the participants:

Summary Points

- The participants were very enthusiastic to understand the concept and share their views. They expressed that this workshop was the first attempt where they could put their views and it was not unheard.

- They have suggested that the process of certification of Speech and Hearing Impairment should be simplified and hearing aid should be provided free of cost.
- Electronic and print media should be actively involved in awareness campaigns and programmes organized for parents and community.
- Standardization of Indian Sign Language (ISL) is required
- All public places and government offices should have sign board and a help desk especially for disabled people along with the interpreter of ISL.
- Schools should be provided with the Teaching Learning material and required resource aids.
- Teacher student ratio should be maintained and refresher's training course for teachers should be arranged regularly.
- Special / separate transport facility or schools having their own transport vehicle should have concession on diesel prizes and provision of driver's payment from government.
- Free transport facility throughout the state of Rajasthan.
- Reservations should be provided in all government schemes of livelihood augmentation.
- Separate residential schools and colleges for girls with speech and hearing impairment. This point was raised as girls want to get higher education and their parents are quite resistant to send them in school or colleges far away.
- All government officers and service providers should have basic knowledge of sign language and there should be basic training of ISL for them. Participants mentioned that they face difficulty to communicate even with doctor when they are ill. Doctors do not pay attention and never explain them exactly what illness they are suffering from. Similar kind of experience they get in government offices and police station that they never pay attention and help them.
- State Government should contribute for life insurance scheme for speech and hearing impaired people.
- State government should provide support for organizing sports and cultural activities at division / district level.

The day was called after group presentations and discussion. All the participants were critically analyzing the components of the policy and were willing to contribute for their betterment.

Day – 2 (27th & 28th July 2010)

Workshop for Group – 2

Second day of the workshop was utilized for persons with Locomotor disability, visual impairment, low vision and women with disability. It was observed that persons with visual impairment, Locomotor disability are vocal while putting their suggestions. But women with disability need special attention for initiating discussion on their specific issues. The day was started at 10.30 with welcome to all participants by Shri. Samir Ghosh. After completing a round of introduction and brief orientation of objectives participants were divided into small groups on the basis of their disability so that they would be comfortable to discuss their unique and specific issues.

Two days were dedicated to this group from which first day was utilized to discuss the difficulties they face. On second day they were asked to suggest probable solutions for their difficulties and were asked to make presentation.

Participants

Young and adults with locomotor disability, visual impairment, low vision, representative NGOs. In group discussions following suggestions were made by the group of visually impaired group:

Summary Points:

- Effective implementation of Blindness eradication programme, prevention programme and awareness campaigns for community and parents.
- Facility of early identification and intervention at PHC, schools and Anganwadi.
- Developing guiding manual for parents
- Incorporating a module on early identification and intervention in syllabus of medicine course.
- All government offices and transport facilities should have brail signs and wherever possible talking machines especially at ATM, Railways, Buses.
- A community audit should be undertaken to ensure the accessibility and utility of all public places and government offices.
- Community, NGOs and Government machinery should be involved in rehabilitation process of PwDs.
- Teaching learning material should be made available at schools, colleges along with all possible assistance, aids and resources.
- Regular Audit of all policies and schemes of social security by community, PwDs and government machinery to ensure effective implementation.

- Reservations in political participation and right to political participation.
- Unemployment allowance should be given to PwDs up to Rs. 3000/-
- Opportunities to get higher education and scholarships should be made available and students should be encouraged for such achievements.

As this day was also reserved for the people with Locomotor disability, their group was formed separately. They were asked Given below are the suggestions made by this group:

Summary Points:

- Loan facility should be provided for generating self employment. Participants mentioned that they face maximum difficulty while earning their livelihood. They could hardly get an opportunity of skill development and further to this they could not get loans from banks for establishing their own production unit. And this leads to their unemployment.
- PwDs should be provided with a special symbol / status in census of India.
- Special housing facility should be provided to PwDs which would facilitate easy mobility
- All public place and government offices should have appropriate sanitation facility for PwDs.
- Special concessions on production cost and marketing cost.

The groups in their presentation insisted that they also should get equal opportunity to live respectful lives and community, and government should facilitate conducive environment for the same.

This policy is also making special notice of difficulties of women with disabilities on second day women were asked to make separate group to discuss their issues. During the discussions it was observed that this section is doubly deprived section of the society: being a women and being a disabled women. They have to get maximum reluctant attitude from society and from family too. This situation should be changed by creating awareness among community. Women with disability should be empowered by informing them about various schemes regarding health, employment, education etc. There should be a provision of strict rules and acts against social, verbal, physical and sexual abuse..

Overall the workshop was fruitful to bring all PwDs on a platform of discussion. They shared their ideas for augmenting not only their lives but also for creating healthy and inclusive society at large. The day was called with vote of thanks for their sincere contribution at 6 pm.

Day – 3
Workshop for Group – 3

The day was started with film screening as participants were reaching the venue. As such the proceedings began at 10.30 am. The day began with a round of introduction and thereafter the objective of the workshop was shared. Participants were asked to form small groups. Parents were asked to form separate group so was asked to professionals, special teachers. The workshop was dedicated to understand specific issues of mentally challenged, mentally ill and multiple disabilities. Thus the participants invited were their care givers, professionals and special educators. To gain the understanding they were asked to share their views on earlier mentioned areas of discussion. After having group discussion they came with the following suggestions:

- Establishing District Resource Centre with all necessary equipments and devices for early identification
- Sensitization of doctors is a must
- Resource Centre with multiple disability resource team should be made available at Gram Panchayat level.
- All appropriate facilities at school like seating arrangement, accessible wash rooms, etc. should be provided
- Specific curriculum and text books should be designed for mild and moderate mental retardation
- Tactile books for deafblind students and special books for low vision students should be designed
- A state level research centre to design learning material, aids and appliances should be established along with the state level vocational centre
- Provision of technological support for higher education and jobs to people with cerebral palsy, autism, mental retardation and deafblindness
- Awareness and refresher's training of all special educators and care givers is prime necessity
- Genetic Counseling should be must to prevent disability
- Physical, verbal, sexual – any such abuse should be punishable and should be covered under National Child Right Protection Commission.
- For identifying high risk babies doctors should be sensitized and trained
- Reservation in bus / train should be online and disability certificate should be submitted at the time of journey

- Government should encourage expanding research for stem cell therapy along with the advanced and equipped testing labs
- Establishing rehabilitation facilities in all universities
- Universalisation of curriculum for professionals should be done
- Government should provide higher pay scales to professionals working with these groups
- All equipments and devices should be made available under one roof
- Establishing child development centres in all districts at all government schools with pediatrician, special educators, therapist and standardized assessment tools.

The day came to end with a brief presentation by Shri. Samir Ghosh. It was a brief review of previous workshops with various stakeholders. And participants also shared their views about this experience at large. The day was called with vote of thanks to all participants for their enthusiastic and wholehearted participation.

The discussions held and suggestions given by the participants in these workshops would definitely facilitate a dialogue for formulating a comprehensive State Policy on Disability. This would also be helpful while presenting the current scenario of PwDs in the state and facilitate the process of strategy formulation.