



## Understanding disability from South Indian Perspective and issues: A Case of Karnataka

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**Abstract :** *This paper seeks to explore what it means to encounter “disability” within the context of South India in general and Karnataka in particular. As per the NSSO – 2002 and census 2001-2011, the estimated number of persons with disabilities in India was 1.85 crores i.e. 1.85 percent of the total Indian Population. This paper attempts to data collecting from secondary source from published reports and government documents, the “disability” within a western society may not necessarily be the case in a society such as South India. For example, a person in South India who has dyslexia will find it comparative easy to obtain employment, where in a predominantly rural agrarian society, it is not a prerequisite to read to obtain work. The provision of medical intervention should be perceived as a mean to end – not as an end in itself. Furthermore, practitioners should make concerted efforts to ensure that the services they provide are of equal benefit to both men and women.*

**Keywords:** *Census, Impairment, Persons with Disabilities, Population and WHO.*

### Introduction:

The purpose of this paper is to describe how “impairment and “disability” are encountered within a South Indian context, and what implications this has for the provision of disability services. It is impossible to provide a comprehensive analysis, since India is not only a country but a sub-content, with a population approaching one billion people. Therefore, the social, political and economic complexion of India is extremely diverse, particularly in terms of its class and caste composition and the diversity of religious faiths found within that country. Between 5 and 10 percent of Indians have some impairment or disabling condition? This means that India has a huge population of disabled people. At the policy level, progressive legislation, schemes and provisions exist for them. But at the ground level, the disabled continue to be neglected and

marginalised, with the onus of care on the family rather than the community. India needs to mark a shift from the medical model of intervention to community-based rehabilitation of the disabled.

### Understanding Disability:

The concept of disability differs from society to society. Because attitudes towards disability are deeply rooted in socio-cultural values, the term 'disability' has been defined in many ways. Besides, other terms, such as 'impairment' and 'handicap' have been synonymously used for disability. The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines each term distinctly. Impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function.

Disability is any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of



ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. Handicap is a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal (depending on age, sex and social and cultural factors) for that individual.

According to the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, of the Government of India, a person with disability is a person suffering from not less than 40 percent of any disability as certified by a medical authority. The conditions included as disability are blindness, low-vision, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation, leprosy and mental illness. Autism, cerebral palsy and multiple disabilities (eg mental retardation with blindness) have been listed as disabilities in the National Trust Act of 1999.

#### **Prevalence of Disability:**

The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO 1991) estimated that approximately 100 million Indians are affected with one or more disabilities. This projected nearly 10 percent of Indians with some disabling condition. However, according to the Census 2001, approximately 5 percent of people in India are affected with impairment or disability. The main findings of the NSSO survey 58<sup>th</sup> round (July-December 2002) for all the states, union territories and India as a whole are presented by rural-urban residence. Besides providing incidence and prevalence rates of the disability in the population, the demographic and other correlates such as marital status, educational level, living

arrangements, activity status, etc., of this group of persons have been highlighted in the report.

#### **Review of literature:**

With disability as a major component of both social inclusion and inclusion in education, literature related to disability and specifically visual impairment was reviewed to gain a better understanding of the issues, factors involved, research trends and statistics.

The definitions of disability were varied, depending on the perspective and nation. The variations in the definition and descriptions; the reasons for variation were examined and understood using literature that provided detailed descriptions of the concept. (Venter, et al., 2002); (WHO, 2013). The book 'Understanding Disability: Inclusion, Access, Diversity and Civil Rights' provided an extended account of societal attitude towards disability, the issues and factors affecting people with disabilities (Jaeger & Bowman, Understanding disability : inclusion, access, diversity, and civil rights, 2005). The effects were intricately described by many studies elaborating on the relationship between poverty and disability and its implications for education, employment and general life of people with disabilities. (Mohapatra, 2004 and Gill, 2009).

#### **Objectives and data sources:**

In this paper, an attempt has been made specific objective. 1) To examine status people with disabilities in India as well as Karnataka, 2) To study government measures for eradication of disability and social security for welfare of the people. The paper mainly based on the secondary data, collected from Census



Reports, Human Development Report, government documents, journals and various reports for used in the study.

**Analysis and discussion:**

Census 2001 has revealed that over 21 million people in India as suffering from one or the other kind of disability. This is equivalent to 2.1 percent of the population. Among the total disabled in the country, 12.6 million are males and 9.3 million are females.

Although the number of disabled is more in rural and urban areas. Such proportion of the disabled by sex in rural and urban areas. Such proportion has been reported between 57-58 percent for males and 42-43 percent females. The disability rate (number of disabled per 100,000 populations) for the country as whole works out to 2130. This is 2,369 in the case of males and 1,874 in the case of females (table-1).

Table-1: Number of Disabled Population and Type of Disability in India (2001 Census):

	Population	Percentage (%)
Total population	1,028,610,328	100.0
Total disabled population	21,906,769	2.1
Disability rate ( per lakh population)	2,130	--
<b>Type of Disability</b>		
(a) In seeing	10,634,881	1.0
(b) In speech	1,640,868	0.2
(c) In hearing	1,261,722	0.1
(d) In movement	6,105,477	0.6
(e) Mental	2,263,821	0.2

*Source: Census of India 2001.*

Table- 2: Population by type of disability in India (2011 Census)

Type of Disability	Persons	Male	Female
Total	26,810,557	14,986,202	11,824,355
In Seeing	5,032,463	2,638,516	2,393,947
In Hearing	5,071,007	2,677,544	2,393,463
In Speech	1,998,535	1,122,896	875,639
In Movement	5,436,604	3,370,374	2,066,230
Mental Retardation	1,505,624	870,708	634,916
Mental Illness	722,826	415,732	307,094
Any Other	4,927,011	2,727,828	2,199,183
Multiple Disability	2,116,487	1,162,604	953,883

*Source: Census of India, 2011*



In table 2 shows Census 2011 has revealed that, 26.8 million people as suffering from different types of disability. This is equivalent 2.7 percentage of the total population. Among the total disabled in the country, 15 million are males and 11.8 million are females. The persons with in movement disability are highest as 5.4 million, 5.07 million, and 5.03 as in hearing and in seeing respectively and also census indicates that persons with mental illness disability is low as 0.7 million people. During the year 2001-2011 was increased

from 21 to 26 million persons with disability in the country.

The table 3 gives some revealing facts as well. To start with, while person with disabilities shown from 2.13 per cent during the year 2001 to increase 2.21 per cent during 2011. The disable people in rural area increase as 2.21 to 2.24 in 2001-2011 and also data revealed that person with disabilities in urban area is change as 1.93 – 2.17. It has been understand that the person with disabilities was increased drastically in the decade 2001-2011.

Table- 3: Percentage of Disabled to total Population in India, (2001-2011)

Residence	2011			2001		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Total	2.21	2.41	2.01	2.13	2.37	1.87
Rural	2.24	2.43	2.03	2.21	2.47	1.93
Urban	2.17	2.34	1.98	1.93	2.12	1.71

*Source:* C-Series, Table C-20, Census of India 2001 and 2011

**Persons with disabilities in Karnataka:**

Karnataka Govt. passed the Karnataka State Policy on Disability on 9-1-2007. This policy ensures speedy implementation of the legislations related to persons with disabilities, multisectoral co-ordination amongst Departments, promotion of Education, Employment, Rehabilitation, Non-discrimination,

besides prevention and early detection of disabilities. Karnataka is one of the Model State, which has passed a State Policy on Disabilities. Karnataka consists of 30 Districts. As per the 2001 Census, Karnataka has a total population of 5.27 Crores. There are 9.40 lakhs persons with disabilities in Karnataka as per the National Census.

**Table- 4: types of Person with Disabilities based on 2001 Census in Karnataka:**

O.H.	266559
V.I./Low Vision	440875
H.H.	140578
MR/Mental illness	92531
<b>Total</b>	<b>940643</b>

*Source:* <http://www.scd.kar.nic.in/>

Table 5 has revealed that over 13 lakh people in Karnataka as suffering

from one or the other kind of disability. Census 2011 has shows that male disable



population is highest as 7 lakh more than female (6 lakh). In the age group 20-29 as high (2.43 lakh) among the other age group, male and female has 1.33 lakh and 1.10 lakh respectively.

**Table- 5: Number of Disabled Population by Age Group in Karnataka (2011 Census)**

Age-group	Total number of disabled persons		
	Persons	Males	Females
<b>Total</b>	<b>1324205</b>	<b>726521</b>	<b>597684</b>
0-4	58602	30721	27881
5-9	93449	51342	42107
10-19	237332	130720	106612
20-29	243962	133564	110398
30-39	193941	108554	85387
40-49	157235	91900	65335
50-59	118482	67791	50691
60-69	113719	60679	53040
70-79	69151	34765	34386
80-89	28285	12345	15940
90+	8513	3298	5215
Age Not Stated	1534	842	692

*Source:* [www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/Disability.../India/C\\_20-India.xls](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/Disability.../India/C_20-India.xls)

Census 2011 has revealed that the total disabled population has 13 lakh in Karnataka suffering from disability. Among the total disabled in the state, 7.26 lakh men and 6 lakh are female

(table-6). Although the kind of disabled of person with in movement disability is high as 2.7 lakh and low is Mental Illness (20913).

**Table- 6: Disabled Population by Type of Disability in Karnataka (2011, Census)**

Type of Disability	Person	Male	Female
<b>Total number of disabled persons</b>	<b>1324205</b>	<b>726521</b>	<b>597684</b>
In seeing	264170	133909	130261
In Hearing	235691	122685	113006
In Speech	90741	49848	40893
In Movement	271982	171139	100843
Mental Retardation	93974	49501	44473
Mental Illness	20913	10828	10085
Multiple Disability	100013	55532	44481
Any Other	246721	133079	113642

*Source:* [www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/Disability.../India/C\\_20-India.xls](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/Disability.../India/C_20-India.xls)

In Karnataka an independent office of the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has been established and a fulltime Commissioner. This office takes necessary steps to implement the provisions of the various

sections of the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995. It also performs the functions of a quasi judicial authority and protects the rights of persons with disabilities. The department which implements various schemes like Education,



Training, Rehabilitation, Social security, Aids & Appliances and Grant-in-aid to NGOs working in the field of disabilities. The annual budget of this Department for the year 2010-11 is Rs. 8973.91 lakhs under plan and Rs. 36856.13 lakhs under non-plan, 7.78 lakhs Persons with Disabilities are being provided Monthly Maintenance Allowance and the annual budget for this programme is Rs.42500 lakhs. The differently abled persons with disability percentage from 40 to 74% are given maintenance allowance of Rs. 400/- per month as per G.O.No:WCD 190 PHP 2007 dtd. 27-04-2007 and those with 75% and more disability are given maintenance allowance of Rs. 1000/- per month as per G.O.No:REV/3/PHP/2008 dtd. 29-08-2008.

Karnataka is one of the leading States to provide the required benefits and facilities to persons with disabilities to join the mainstream of society. In this direction the Village Rehabilitation Scheme which has one village rehabilitation worker in each village and one multipurpose rehabilitation worker in each taluk is being implemented. The VRW has passed S.S.L.C and is being given an honorarium of Rs. 700.- per month and the MRW who is a graduate is being given an honorarium of Rs. 1800/- per month. VRWs and MRWs are differently persons.

**Legislative initiatives:**

- A concept paper on the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995 and the four types of rehabilitation was prepared and discussed with important high level officers of some of the Departments. (Additional Chief Secretary, Principal secretaries,

Secretaries, Commissioners and Directors)

- A letter addressed to the members of parliament regarding implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act 1995, problems of the differently abled persons, responsibility of local bodies and providing reservation for developmental activities of the differently abled in the funds reserved for public representatives.
- The attention was drawn regarding the subject matter of not including integrated education in the Sarva Shikshana Abhiyana scheme and necessary orders were issued.
- Participated in the public hearing conducted by the Non-Governmental Institutions at Chickballapur and Bijapur and received grievances pertaining to prevention of disability, early intervention, inclusion of differently abled persons in schools and hostels, regarding violation of rights of persons with disabilities and suitable directions were given.
- Since there is lot of employment opportunities in the private sector, the Hon'ble Labour Minister Sri Bacche Gowda was requested to take necessary action to provide reservation in employment to persons with disabilities in the private sector.
- ITBT conference was conducted in order to provide employment opportunity for persons with disabilities.
- The office of the State Commissioner for persons with disabilities has intervened in the betterment of the persons with Disabilities who are inmates of the Destitute Rehabilitation Centre, Bangalore and has seen that the rights of persons with disabilities have been violated. A Suo-motto case was registered and



instructions were issued. The quality of life of the persons with disabilities has improved.

- Held co-ordination meeting with the Chairman, Karnataka Public Service Commission regarding reservation of posts to persons with disabilities.

**Education and Employment:**

The Education Department is in the process of preparing a comprehensive education scheme for the benefit of children with disabilities with a holistic approach. The Govt. of Karnataka is providing free education for students with disabilities as follows:

providing free education for disabled children in eight Govt. residential special schools, four schools for hearing impaired children at Gulbarga, Mysore, Bellary and Belgaum. Four schools for visually impaired children at Gulbarga, Mysore, Davangere and Hubli. These schools provide free food, shelter and education to the children. In the NGO sector 129 special schools for the different categories of disabilities are functioning. Also 29 vocational training centres are functioning for PWDs in Karnataka.

Sl.No.	Institutions	No. of Institutions	No. of Children with disabilities
1	Govt. school for visually impaired children	04	178
2	Govt. school for hearing impaired children	04	374
3	State Grant-in-aid special schools	34	1400
4	Central Grant-in-aid special school	95	9651

*Source:* <http://www.scd.kar.nic.in/>

**Employment:**

The office of state commissioner for persons with disabilities has intervened in recruitments conducted by the Education Department, Karnataka Public Service Commission, and Universities etc., to ensure that adequate percentage of reservation of vacancies for persons with disabilities is adhered. Due to the intervention of the State Commissioners office the private and corporate sector has been kind enough to grant jobs to persons with disabilities. This was mainly done with the support of non-governmental organizations

**Social Security:**

Karnataka government has spend huge amount for social security; a monthly maintenance allowance of Rs. 400/p.m is given to 5.57 lakhs disabled persons who are economically backward persons with disabilities who are having more than 40% disability and Rs.1000/- p.m. is given to 1.32 lakh disabled persons who are having 75% and more disability. Totally 6.89 lakh disabled persons are availing this benefit at present. For this purpose Government of karnataka has enhanced the income limit from the present Rs.6000/- and above to Rs.12,000/- in rural areas and Rs.17,000/- in urban areas per anum.



**Conclusions:**

The government has Legislative Initiatives for development of disabled people like Karnataka Government passed the Karnataka State Policy on Disability on 9-1-2007. In the meanwhile the number of total population with disability has increased drastically during the 2001-2011. The government of India as well as Karnataka has spent lot of money over the period of time for eradicate the disabilities. The subject experts and policy makers have suggested to the government will take necessary step for the improving the livelihood through health, education and social security of persons with disability in the country.

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