

Work Participation among Disabilities in India

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ABSTRACT United Nations General Assembly in 1976 proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of the Disable Persons. Persons with disabilities are enthusiastic to overcome the social and economic barriers. In the present paper an attempt is made to study the work participation rates among disables in India by using Census of India 2001 data. It is observed that in India out of 1.03 billion populations about 2.1 per cent population is of disable persons. Out of these about 75 percent of population lives in rural areas. Out of total disabled about 49 per cent have the disability in seeing followed by disability in movement. Work participation among disabilities in India is about 35 per cent, males' participation being double than those of the females. The work participation among the general population is higher than that among disables. The study therefore, concludes the need to increase the work participation among disables especially among females.

INTRODUCTION

The year 1981 was proclaimed by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in 1976 as the International Year of Disabled Persons, with the keynote theme of full participation and equality. The main aim of the International Year of Disabled Persons was to draw the attention of the International community to the situation and needs of persons with disability. From the researchers and planners point of view, among the five principle objectives, encouraging study and research projects for disabled persons and promoting effective measures for the preventing of disability are important (Mehta 1983). Consequently, the study of disability is constantly and rapidly gaining momentum in a broader perspective. Researchers from diverse professions (like demography, social science, medical sciences, human rights etc.) are evincing keen interest in the study of disabilities (Desai 1990).

As attitudes to disability are deeply rooted in the social and cultural values of society, definitions of disability are problematic (Dutt et al. 2001). Scientists and researchers striving precision and clarity in the use of terminology have developed research and scientific communication. The distinction made by the World Health Organization (1980) in its definition of impairments, disability and handicap has been used widely. The definitions are as follows: impairment is any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or

function. A 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. A handicap is disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from 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.

As disability is a complex phenomena, and accurately measuring its prevalence in a national level survey present many challenges and way these definition are operationalised through questions, wording and placement influence the levels of disability estimated and characteristics of the population (Kramarow and Pamak 2004). Given these complexities, the lack of agreement about optimal measures of disability is not surprising (Altman 2001). Yet demographers or social scientist were almost exclusively on self reported measures of disability in national surveys for estimating of disability and trends in functional health (Agarwal et al. 2004). Again, measuring functional limitations and reducing work disability among the working population is an important issue on the scientific and policy agenda in many countries (Kapteyan 2004). Understanding 'why' could help in developing action to prevent more people from becoming dependent on assistance from others in daily life. Recent work on the disablement process has shown that functional limitations (to see, walk, climb stairs etc.) many be viewed as a predictive

stage of activity restriction (in personal care, work, social activity etc.) and potentially, of dependency (Cambosis et al. 1999).

Many of the studies have been well summarized by Freedman et al. (2001). They have also noted that the evidence of change in severe disability is weak. However, Cambosis et al. (1999) report in an international review of evidence that while there are significant reductions in severe disability in Germany, France and Japan, there is no change in Australia, Canada, Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Another study in Britain (Ali et al. 1999) considers disability surveys from late 1980s and late 1990s and finds increasing prevalence of disability. As per the 1981 Census, India had enumerated 1,118,948 disabled persons compared to 21,960,769 disabled persons in 2001 census. Although, the data of 1981 census on disabilities was declared under the enumerated by Census Commissioner of India in 1981 but it is felt that in India the number of disabled person has increased (Census of India 2001). The problem of disability is gaining more and more importance all over the world. The population policy and planners of India also very well understand the significance of the problem. Of course, the studies cited above differ in many aspects like definition, dataset utilized, time period; geographical areas etc., there may be variations in the age group studies and in studies refer to current or chronic difficulties (Dutt et al. 2001). Moreover, there are important differences in the measures of type of disability and work participation rates that are used.

Objective of the Study

The overall objectives of the present study the work participation among disabilities in India. Specific objectives are as follows:

To study the work participation among disables by type of disabilities, age, sex and residence

To study the age dependency among disables by type of disabilities

To study the economic dependency among disables by age, sex and residence

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data used for the present study has been taken from the Census of India 2001; Table C 23 India. The type of disability, sex and residence as

well as for the main workers, marginal workers and non-workers has given data. The number of workers have also be given by residence, type of disability and broad age groups, namely, 0-14, 15-59 and 60+. Work participation activity rates for total disability and type of disability, sex and residence have been computed. Economic dependency has been computed by dividing the non-worker disable population by type of disabilities and sex by total working population (Main + Marginal workers).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Work Participation rate is percentage of workers to total population. Work participation rate among different categories of disabled calculated from census 2001 data is given in table below. The results show that the percentage of total disable population in India is 2.1 percent out of total 1.02 billion general populations (Table 1). Out of these totals disable persons about 75 per cent of them reside in rural areas while remaining 25 per cent reside in urban areas (Table 2 and Figs. 1-2).

The majority of disabled worker are engaged in agricultural occupations either as cultivators or agriculture labourer in rural areas. Household industry, which has potentials of absorbing large number of disabled employs less than 5 percent of total employed disabled.

Table 3 shows that the highest percentage (about 49 per cent) of disable persons have disability in seeing followed by having disability in movement (about 28 per cent). Only about six

Table 1: Percentage distribution of disables in total population by sex and residence in India, 2001

Residence	General population			Disable population		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	39.3	51.9	25.7	2.1	2.4	1.9
Rural	42	52.4	31	2.2	2.5	1.9
Urban	32.2	50.9	11.6	1.9	2.1	1.7

Source: Census of India 2001; Table C 23 India.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of disables by sex and place of residence in India, 2001

Residence	Total	Male	Female
Total	100	100	100
Rural	74.8	74.7	75
Urban	25.2	25.3	25

Source: Census of India 2001; Table C 23 India.

Table 3: Percentage distribution of disables by type of disability, sex and residence in India, 2001

Disables	All disability	In seeing	In speech	In hearing	In movement	In mental
Total Persons	2.1	48.5	7.5	5.8	27.9	10.3
Males	2.4	45.5	5.9	5.3	31	10.7
Females	1.9	52.7	7.5	6.3	23.7	9.8
Rural Persons	2	48	7.6	6.2	28.4	9.7
Males	2.2	44.9	7.6	5.8	31.6	10.1
Females	1.9	52.3	7.6	6.8	24.1	9.2
Urban Persons	2.1	50	7.2	4.3	26.3	12.1
Males	2.2	47.2	7.1	3.9	29	12.7
Females	1.9	53.9	7.3	4.9	22.5	11.4

Source: Census of India 2001; Table C 23 India.



Fig. 1. Work participation Rates in India, 2001

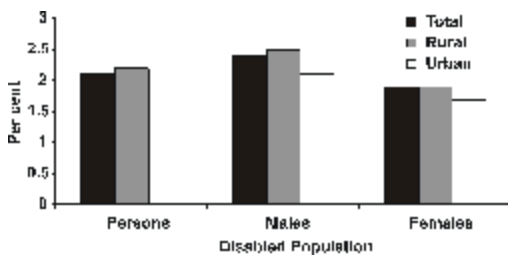


Fig. 2. Disabled population in India, 2001

per cent of the disabled population has disability in hearing. About 10 percent of total disabilities are mentally disabled (see Fig. 3). This pattern is also true when the analysis is done by sex and residence. At the same time, this proportion is quite high when compared to data collected by National Sample Survey Organization in its 42nd round in the year 1991, but very lower than estimates of World Health Organization and United Nations according to which around 10 percent of population in underdeveloped and developing countries are disabled.

Table 4 displays the work participation rates by sex and residence for the general population and disabled population by type of disability. It is observed that the work participation rates for males and females when considered by residence are much higher for the general population as

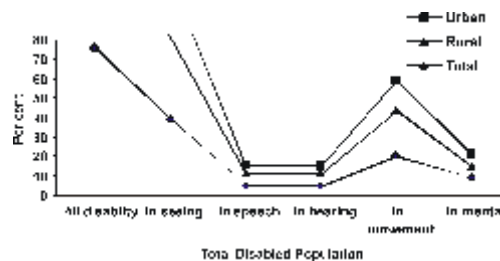


Fig. 3. Total Dependency Ratio by disabled population in India, 2001

compared to the disabled population. When we look at the work participation rates by type of disability it is observed that the work participation rates for the persons having disability in seeing are relatively higher than those for having disability in speech, in hearing, in movement and in mental. Even the work participation rates for those persons who are having disability in seeing are in the range 7 to 20 per cent. As a result of worth noting in table 4 total work participation rate among disabilities is 35 percent, 26 and 9 percent among males and females respectively. The classification of disabilities in different categories by sex shows higher rate of prevalence of disabilities among males as compared to females, especially in the case of movement and mental disabilities the proportion of male is much higher as compared to females. Work participation rate is low among females as compared to males and in urban areas as compared to rural areas.

Great extent of work participation rate in rural areas are due to the fact that agriculture, which is the main occupation in rural areas has a capacity to absorb large chunk of disabled both educated and uneducated. Lowest work participation rate is observed among urban disabilities females. One reason for this is that employment opportunities in urban area male dominated and favors educated. Low education level among females is

Table 4: Work participation rates by type of disabilities, sex and residence in India, 2001

<i>Disables persons</i>	<i>All disability</i>	<i>In seeing</i>	<i>In speech</i>	<i>In hearing</i>	<i>In movement</i>	<i>In mental</i>
Total Persons	34.5	19.4	2.4	2.2	8.2	2.2
Males	25.8	24.5	3.0	2.8	11.6	3.0
Females	8.7	12.5	1.6	1.5	3.7	1.2
Rural Persons	36.2	20.0	2.6	5.5	8.6	3.0
Males	26.1	24.2	8.3	3.2	11.9	4.0
Females	10.1	14.3	1.9	7.7	4.1	0.9
Urban Persons	29.6	17.6	1.8	1.1	7.2	1.8
Males	24.8	25.2	2.5	1.6	10.2	2.7
Females	4.8	7.1	0.7	0.6	2.3	0.6

Source: Census of India 2001; Table C 23 India.

main constraint in their employment. Among different categories of disabled persons, work participation rate is lowest among people with mental disabilities. Lack of education and employment opportunities for mentally disabled along with negative attitude of the employer to employ mentally disabled are reasons for this trend (Kishore 2006).

Table 5, 6 and 7 describe the age dependency ratio for the total, rural and urban areas for all the disabilities and also by type of disability. It is observed that age dependency ratio for the total area is about 77 per cent. It is much higher for the rural areas (about 83 per cent) as compared to the urban areas (about 59 per cent). The total age dependency ratios by type of disability show that they are much higher for the persons having disability in seeing as compared to any other type of disability. The young dependency ratio for the total disable population is about 46 per cent and is higher in rural areas (about 49 per cent) as compared to urban areas (about 37 per cent). Here again the young age dependency ratios when considered by type of disability are much higher for children having disability in seeing, ranging between 19 to 24 per cent as compared to any other type of disability (see Fig. 4-5).

The old age dependency ratios for all the disabilities taken together show that much higher for rural areas (about 34 per cent) as compared to urban areas (about 22 per cent). The economic dependency ratio depicts the true picture of the dependency in the society as it is based on the number of non-workers and workers in the society (see Fig. 6). Classification of total, young and old dependency ratios for all the disabilities by residence shows that majority of disabled are living in the rural areas. Lack of medical facilities, large family size, concentration of medical facilities in urban localities, etc. are the major reasons for this trend. The paradoxical situation here is concentration of organizations working for disabled in urban centers.

It is observed from the table 7 that the economic dependency for the total area and all disables together is about 190 per cent, which is extremely high as compared to the age dependency ratio for the same. The economic dependency ratio even is much higher in urban areas (about 237 per cent as compared to rural areas). When economic dependency is considered by the type of disability it is observed that it is highest for those who have mental disability as compared to any other type of disability (see Fig. 7).

Table 5: Total age dependency ratio by type of disability, sex and residence in India, 2001

<i>Residence</i>	<i>All disability</i>	<i>In seeing</i>	<i>In speech</i>	<i>In hearing</i>	<i>In movement</i>	<i>In mental</i>
<i>Total Age Dependency Ratio</i>						
Total	76.2	39.5	5.5	5.5	20.9	9.7
Rural	82.9	41.9	6	6.3	23	5.8
Urban	58.8	29.8	4.4	3.6	15.3	5.8
<i>Young Dependency Ratio</i>						
Total	45.8	22.7	4.5	1.7	12.5	4.3
Rural	49.1	24.1	4.9	1.9	13.8	4.3
Urban	37.1	19.1	3.6	1.1	9	4.4
<i>Old Dependency Ratio</i>						
Total	30.5	15.8	1	3.8	8.4	2.5
Rural	33.9	17.8	1.1	4.4	9.2	1.5
Urban	21.6	10.7	0.8	2.4	6.3	1.4

Table 6: Economic dependency ratio by type of disabilities, sex and residence in India, 2001

Characteristics	All disability	In seeing	In speech	In hearing	In movement	In mental
Total	189.9	150.4	209.9	156.9	238.9	365.3
Rural	56.6	140.3	140.3	72.1	231.8	313.1
Urban	238.4	184.4	305.9	282.5	263.6	263.6

Source: Census of India 2001; Table C 23 India.

Table 7: Age-Sex specific participation rates by type of disabilities and residence in India, 2001

Residence	All disability	In seeing	In speech	In hearing	In movement	In mental
Total	4.6	3.5	4.2	5.6	2.9	2.6
Rural	3.9	4.1	4.8	6.4	3.2	3.2
Urban	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.4	1.2

Source: Census of India 2001; Table C 23 India.

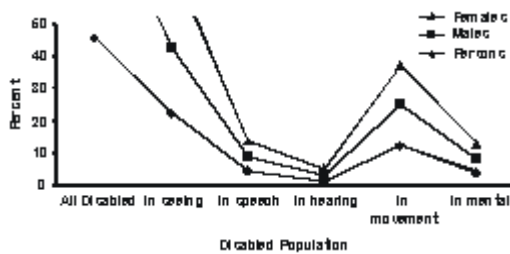


Fig. 4. Young Dependency Ratio by Disabled Population in India, 2001

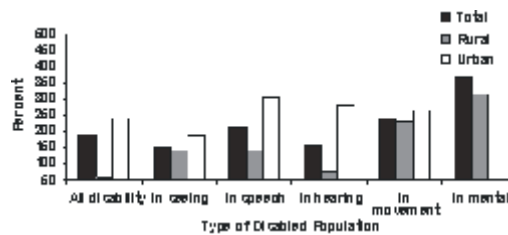


Fig. 6. Economic Dependency Ratio by Type of Disabled Population in India, 2001

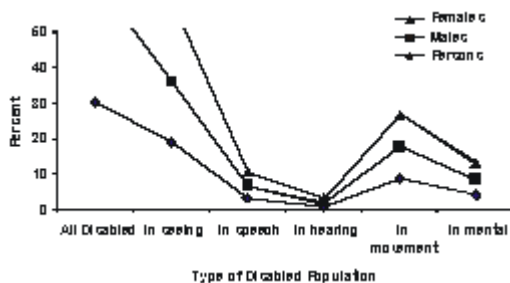


Fig. 5. Old Dependency Ratio by Type of Disabled Population in India, 2001

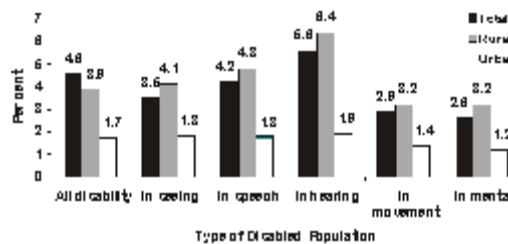


Fig. 7. Age-Sex Participation Rates by Type of Disabled Population in India, 2001

CONCLUSIONS

It is observed that in India out of 1.03 billion populations about 2.1 per cent population is of disable persons as per Census of India 2001. Out of total disabled about 49 per cent have the disability in seeing followed by disability in movement. Work participation among disables in India is about 35 per cent, males’ participation being double than those of the females. The work participation among the general population is

higher than that among disables. It is observed that the economic dependency for the total area and all disables together is about 190 per cent, which is extremely high as compared to the age dependency ratio for the same. The economic dependency ratio even is much higher in urban areas. When economic dependency is considered by the type of disability it is observed that it is highest for those who have mental disability as compared to any other type of disability. More concentration is needed in health infrastructure

and health care facilities, especially in rural areas. Classification of total disabled population by residence shows that nearly 75 percent of total disabled lives in rural areas where as most of the governmental and non-governmental organizations working for disabled are urban based. Medical, paramedical and health care facilities, being profit oriented instead of service, are also concentrated in urban areas. Because of this differences services are not reaching to all disabled. More organizations working for disabled should be there are rural areas. Private and public organizations working in urban areas are essential to expand their horizon of work to rural areas. The major barrier to employment by the people with disabilities in our society continues to be attitudinal barriers; stereotypical thinking and assumption about what people with disabilities can and can't do. The truth is that, the range of abilities of persons within any disabilities group is enormous. Further research is need to get rid of our stereotypical images and view each *individual* as just that *an individual*.

Therefore, concludes the need to increase the work participation among disables especially among females. Policy improvement based on a strengthened knowledge base has the potential to raise the level of participation in employment and other areas, to the benefit not only of disabled people but also of society as a whole.

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