

“Empowering Women with Disabilities (WWD)”

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Abstract

Women are the powerful and priceless sources of the world. It is inevitably important to provide equal rights to women on par with men in this society. Women, being all-rounders face innumerable challenges in their day to day life. Predominantly, women with disabilities (WWD) are vulnerable to the situation where opportunities are denied entirely. Women with disabilities are also responsible to promote the development of the family, society and the country in spite of their difficulties but the troubles that they undergo are invisible and uncountable. This paper attempts to shed light on the problems faced by WWD and the strategies to overcome the same with self-assistance. WWD need to be aware that they deserve the rights to gain access for equal opportunity, live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life in an inclusive society. Various readings show that people with disabilities in general face difficulties in entering the open labour market, but seen from a gender perspective, men with disabilities are almost twice more likely to have jobs than disabled women as stated by (Reilly,2003; ILO,2007). Women with disabilities are not mostly accepted in the community to take up the career as they are regarded as incapable of overcoming the limitations. WWD possess the right to education, rehabilitation, labour protection, and health care as they are the productive members of the society too. WWD who are exposed to violence, should unlock the handcuffs in form of emotional, physical and mental disturbances by: laying emphasize on self-development, being aware of the rights of PWD, gaining the knowledge of accessible India campaign, daring to get their rights etc. to become successful in their personal and professional life.

Key Words: Women with Disabilities (WWD), Persons with Disabilities (PWD)

INTRODUCTION

Women are regarded as productive resources of the society. Empowerment of women is the need of the hour. It is imperative to be a backbone for their development, where we indirectly pave a way for the development of the country as well. But in today's world, we tend not to give more emphasis on women empowerment due to ignorance and negligence. Comparatively, women with disabilities (WWD) are in a situation to overcome incalculable hindrances in a day to day life.

WWD require an aiding and supporting environment as they have the right to claim the same. Sense of achieving attitude should be inculcated among WWD to enable them to enhance

their efficiency to defeat all the constraints that are surrounding them and curbing the development of independency and individuality. WWD need to be aware that they deserve the rights to gain access for equal opportunity, live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life in an inclusive society. There are innumerable violence in the form of emotional, physical, economic and mental disturbances that go against WWD so they should be motivated to break the barriers to quench their thirst for success in both personal and professional life. This paper attempts to shed light on the problems faced by WWD and the strategies to overcome the same with self-assistance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This paper aims at laying extreme emphasis on creating empowerment of women with disabilities in the society. Following reviews support the same.

Gender discrimination compounds the discrimination of women with disabilities as they are already discriminated against on disability basis. They live in complete deprivation with very little control over their lives and totally dependent on their families and they are treated as helpless and unable to do anything for themselves or for their families (Development Initiatives Services 2001).

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WWD lack equal access to care in rehabilitation, health, family planning and reproductive health, including HIV testing treatment and prevention (Human Rights Watch August 2010).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This descriptive research paper depends on secondary data collected using books, reports, magazines, articles, websites etc. to support the selected topic.

ANALYSING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING THE GROWTH OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

There are various reasons that come across the successful path of women with disabilities achievers. To state few: prevailing physical or mental health state, lesser socio-economic status, lack of knowledge regarding the government schemes and policies to overcome the disabilities, ignorance of the family and society members, poor self-concept of

WWD, poor health care facilities, difficulty accessing the environment, deprived knowledge about vocational guidance available in the community, gender discrimination, increased sexual harassment, lack of access to information and communication services etc.

WAYS TO END UP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Research shows that women and girls with disabilities are also at greater risk of violence, exploitation and abuse than men with disabilities or other women (INWWD 2011). WWD need to be included and get access to the transportation, information and communication services in the society. They need to be aware of the government schemes and policies that aid them in overcoming their disabilities. WWD need to be indulged in activities to fight for their rights. Educating them about the strategies to face the challenges would be beneficial. Awareness campaigns and discussions should be conducted to plan for the ways to tackle the troubles faced by WWD. Insisting them to get acquainted about their human rights would lessen the occurrence of all sorts of abuses against WWD. Counselling need to be given to overcome the mental agony WWD. They need to be imparted knowledge about the various job opportunities and facilities that are available based on their abilities.

LEGISLATIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Government of India has enacted basically three major legislations for persons with disabilities-- viz. (i) Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, which provides for education, employment, creation of barrier free environment, social security, etc. *(Now this act is replaced by

Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016); (ii) National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999 has provisions for legal guardianship of the four categories of disabilities and creation of enabling environment for as much independent living as possible. (iii) Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 deals with the development of manpower for providing rehabilitation services.

RIGHTS OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES IN INDIA

There is a lack of information and awareness about the rights of WWD prevailing in India. To make it visible, few of the basic rights are listed below:

- Right to literacy.
- Right to work and employment.
- Right to income.
- Right to adequate standard of living.
- Right to health care.
- Right to equality.
- Right to security from violence in any form (including sexual abuse and torture).
- Right to accessibility.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND POLICIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

EDUCATION

- *Scheme of National Scholarship for Persons with Disabilities* issuing authority :
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- *3% reservation in government / government aided institutes* issuing authority :
Ministry of Education

- *Comprehensive Education Scheme for Disabled Children* issuing authority:
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- *Integrated Education for the Disabled in the Secondary Stage* issuing authority:
Department of Education
- *Rajiv Gandhi Fellowship* scheme issuing authority:
Department of Disability Affairs

EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES

- 3% reservation in employment
- Roster system for reservation
- Carry forward of employment reservation
- Age relaxation for direct recruitment
- Non denial of promotion
- Identification of jobs
- Postings / Transfer of disabled employees
- Special employment exchanges
- Incentives for private employers
- Award of dealership / agency by oil companies
- Financial assistance from NHFDC

SOCIAL SECURITY, HEALTH, REHABILITATION AND RECREATION

- The Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme
- Composite Regional Centres for Persons with Disabilities (CRCs)
- District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs)
- Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase /Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP Scheme)
- The National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC)
- Scheme of Public Sector Banks for Orphanages, Women's Home and Physically Handicapped persons

- Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)
- Indira Awaas Yojana
- Scheme of National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
- Trust Fund for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities via Civil Appeals
- Technology Development Projects in Mission Mode

ACCESSIBILITY

- Guidelines for Space Standards for Barrier Free Built Environment for Disabled and Elderly Persons (1998)

FACTORS AFFECTING THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

WWD are neglected from availing job opportunities not only due to the factor of disability but also a hindering factor affects their career opportunities which is gender discrimination. They are regarded as unproductive employer and it's hard for them to get adjusted in the workplace. They can claim better employment opportunities if they possess good academic qualification and positive self-image. Employment is one of the basic rights of WWD as others irrespective of their physical and mental difficulties. People have a notion that WWD don't possess required knowledge, skills and abilities to take up the available jobs.

Government should ensure the necessary accommodations to be feasible in the workplace, such as installation of lifts and ramps and provision of accessible transportation and housing. WWD should be motivated to take up business and entrepreneurial roles.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR WWD IN INDIA

The Lok Sabha passed "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill - 2016". The noticeable feature related to employment of person with disabilities include: Reservation in vacancies in government establishments has been increased from 3% to 4% for certain persons or class of persons with benchmark disability.

The new Act will bring our law in line with the United National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), to which India is a signatory.

UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

ARTICLE 27 - WORK AND EMPLOYMENT

1. States Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realisation of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation, to, inter alia:

a) Prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment, including conditions of recruitment, hiring and employment, continuance of employment, career advancement and safe and healthy working conditions;

b) Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value,

safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances;

c) Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others;

d) Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training;

e) Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment;

f) Promote opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's own business;

g) Employ persons with disabilities in the public sector;

h) Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programmes, incentives and other measures; a. ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace;

i) Promote the acquisition by persons with disabilities of work experience in the open labour market;

j) Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities.

2. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not held in slavery or in servitude, and are protected, on an equal basis with others, from forced or compulsory labour.

FINDINGS

WWD are capable of pursuing intense education, longing to acquire the proper rehabilitation, desiring to take up the suitable career in a safe and protective environment, due to the belittling approach of the people around them, they find difficulty conquering the challenges in the world.

India has been ranked at a poor 115 by a global survey which looked into the level of economic empowerment of women in 128 countries. "Along with female feticide and infanticide, acid attacks, rape, and sexual harassment, honour killings are both the symptoms of and catalysts for women's disempowerment". (International consulting and management firm Booz and Company – 2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following recommendations would aid in the empowerment of WWD:

- Government should ensure that girls with disabilities are not deprived of basic education till 14 years at any cost.
- Strong legal actions should be taken to address harassment faced at work by WWD.
- Vocational training should be offered at school level to help them take a decision over their career right in advance based on their abilities.
- Government should formulate special schemes for training and skill development and for self-employment of WWD.
- Society should provide accessible health care facilities to WWD.
- Involvement of WWD in planning and designing of all infrastructure facilities and services are required to promote their participation in the society in all the aspects of their life.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it is inevitable to tap the potential of the “WWD” to mould them as “invincible personalities” in the world. Providing equal employment opportunities to empower the WWD is the need of the hour, as it promotes the inclusion of them in the society to the greatest extent possible. Creating ample job opportunities would enable the WWD to be independent economically and overcome the hindrances they come across in the society with negative attitude towards them. Government should take initiative to create awareness about the policies and schemes which are available to WWD through campaigns. Appropriate training programmes can be designed and implemented by the state and central governments to help the WWD to make a useful contribution to their own lives and to the lives of their families and community.

We need to join our hands together to break the barriers that curb the wholesome development of the WWD in their personal and professional life to enable them to quench their thirst of being successful women in the society.

“Let’s address the unique abilities of Women with Disabilities to help them empower themselves.”

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