

# **THAKUR COLLEGE OF SCIENCE & COMMERCE**

## **Autonomous**

### **DISABILITY – AS A FORM OF INEQUALITY**

An inability to efficiently cope up with the day-to-day activity can be referred as disability. It is impairment may it be physical, mental, cognitive, sensory or emotional restricting individual in its daily routine. Generally, disability is often replaced by the use of the term handicapped or challenged. But disability has a more affirmative connotation and does not cripple individual's acceptance in the society in terms of opportunities. There are also terms used like differently able than disabled especially in terms of mental disability.

We are broadly classifying the disabled as physical and mental disability

#### **DISABILITY**

Physically

Mentally

Visually

Auditory

Orthopedically

Physical disability- visual, auditory and orthopaedic:

A person who is unable to perform normal physical activity in the day to day life due to some impairment is called physically disabled. It is further divided into three types based on the deformity in a particular organ. Those with deformity of vision are called blind or visually disabled. Individuals with problem of speech and hearing come under the category of auditory disabled or deaf and dumb. Those with loss or deformity of limbs are called orthopedically disabled. In India, of all the disabled there are around 49% who are blind, 13% are deaf and dumb, 28% has orthopaedic disability. Malnutrition, ignorance and inefficient medical faculties are major causes for physical disability in our country.

A) Visual disability:

A person whose vision is totally or partially lost or whose vision is 6/60 or less are called blind or visually disabled. Blindness is a major disability amongst all forms in India.

Causes of blindness:

**Cataract:** In spite of mass awareness programmes conducted and easy treatment for cataract, it is one of the major reason for blindness in India. It is associated with old age and can be easily cured with a simple surgery or laser treatment.

**Glaucoma:** Pressure on the cornea leads to this kind of disease which might lead to partial or complete blindness.

Trachoma: It's a poisonous kind of conjunctivitis that is caused by bacteria. If not treated immediately can cause spread of the disease as well as loss of eyesight.

Night blindness and colour blindness: Lack of vitamin A causes night blindness that is loss of vision after sun set and lack of nutrients and genetic disorder can cause colour blindness.

Accidents: Eyes are one of the most delicate body organs. Injury of any kind to the cornea or retina can be dangerous to the eyesight.

Other diseases: Hypertension, diabetes or stroke can be the cause for partial or complete blindness.

Treatment:

Based on the causes for blindness, it can be treated accordingly. Treating the disease that has caused loss of eyesight like Hypertension, Diabetes or nutritional deficiency can be cured with medication. Timely surgery for cataract can also save the patient from blindness. Cornea transplant are also possible in case of injury or genetic disorder by birth.

B) Auditory disability:

A person who is unable to hear a sound of 30 db can be considered as deaf. The person with speech impairment and stammering are considered to be dumb. Those who are deaf by birth are dumb as well as they haven't heard the sounds required to be able to speak and converse.

Types of deafness:

Conduction deafness: Defect in the ear drum or middle ear causes this kind of deafness.

Nerve deafness: If the connecting nerves get damaged or weakened due to old age or other reasons, then nerve deafness can occur. It is caused due to damage to the basilar membrane.

Causes:

Genetic disorder or hereditary.

German Measles to pregnant woman.

Over dose of antibiotics.

Inefficient treatment in Jaundice, meningitis, viral infections can lead to deafness.

Accidents or severe injury to inner ear, ear drum or nerves joining ear and brain.

Continuous or sudden exposure to high decibel sounds near airports or a bomb blast or in industrial setup with high decibel sounds can also lead to partial or total deafness.

Infection or inflammation of ear can cause deafness.

Treatment:

Depending on the root cause for deafness, deafness can be controlled or cured in some cases or in case of total loss of hearing aids are available to enable hearing. Speech therapy in case of stammering or dumbness helps the patient where the communication can take place through the use of sign language.

Orthopedically Disabled: Inability to use one's hands or legs for motor functioning or loss of limbs can be included into orthopedically disabled. Deformity of hands, legs, spinal cord, muscles can all be included in this type of disability.

Causes:

Polio- The virus of polio damages the limbs and cause paralytic condition in the body. It affects the patient in the childhood. India to a great extent has overcome this problem with vaccination. However there are seldom instances of this disease.

Spinal Bifida- Underdeveloped spinal cord or damaged spinal cord lead to spinal bifida. Movement controlled by spinal cord becomes impossible making patient immobile and dependant.

Cerebral palsy- The part of the brain which takes care of motor able activity of a human being if affected adversely or not developed to its optimum level can lead to cerebral palsy.

Muscular dystrophy- Muscle fibres in the body gets weakened then the body gets affected with muscular dystrophy.

Accidents and injury- They can always result in loss of limbs or deformity of limbs.

Treatment:

Regular vaccination should be given for preventing polio. Physiotherapy and occupational therapy can also help patients to be self-reliant in their daily chores. Artificial limb like Jaipur foot helps in movement for those who have lost limbs.

Mental disability- Levels and types of mental disability:

When a person loses the capacity to think independently and rationally, whose intellectual levels are not developed then the person is called mentally disabled. Individuals with an intelligent quotient (IQ) of less than 70 can be considered as a mentally retarded or mentally disabled.

Levels of mental retardation:

On the basis of the IQ levels of an individual the mental retardation is analyzed at four different levels. Mild mental retardation- An individual whose IQ is between 50-70 is called mild mentally retarded. These children can complete their primary level of education comfortably but have problems of concentration and analytical ability is also very low.

Moderate mental retardation- Individual with an IQ between 35-50 is called moderate mentally retarded. They can't take up formal education and needs support of their family members to do their daily chores. They can be made independent with some basic technical skills and can be made self-reliant in their own health and safety.

Severe mental retardation- Persons with an IQ of 20-35 are severely mentally retarded. Their learning ability is very limited and need close supervision and support of a family member in their daily lives. Profound mental retardation- Individual with an IQ lower than 20 are

profound mentally retarded. They can't be kept at home and need intensive treatment at an asylum or mental hospital.

Types of mental retardation- There are several types of mental retardation or mental disability.

Down's syndrome – It is a genetic disability in which there is a problem in the 21st pair of chromosomes.

Autism- The part of the brain dealing with communication is damaged then it can lead to autism. Eye to eye contact, conversation and sometimes even basic motor abilities get affected.

Psychosis and neurosis- Split personality, hallucination, and schizophrenia are all types of this disorder.

Learning disability- Dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyscalculia are all part of learning disability. The learning capacity of an individual in this type of disability is slow and needs special methods for learning.

Treatment:

Psychological counselling, behavioural therapy, occupational therapy can all help the patient to lead a normal life. Special schools and shelter homes provide them skills in art, handicrafts or other technical skills that enable them to be self sufficient and confident. Training in social adjustment through skills for safety, security and hygiene make them more acceptable and adaptable in the family and society.

## SUMMARY

Conclusion:

Disabled may it be physical or mental should not be considered as a burden to the family or society. By just giving sympathy is not going to solve their problems. Helping them to be respectable and self-reliant members of the society should be our aim. Providing them with educational and occupational opportunities should be at the helm of all policies and programmes by the government. NGOs can play a very constructive role in prevention and cure of disability by joining hands with medical fraternity.