
ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL POLICY ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES 2006

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ABSTRACT

The national policy for the persons with disabilities was introduced by the ministry of social justice and empowerment in 2006. The main object of this policy was to ensure the participation, empowerment, equality and inclusion of the persons with disabilities in the main stream of society. This article examines the key objectives, measures and challenges to the implementation of this policy. Along with this it critically analyses all aspects and gives some recommendations to facilitate its improvement. The outcome of this policy has also been discussed on the basis of secondary data. Although the policy offers a robust legislative and administrative structure, the research shows that issues still exist in the form of insufficient finance, inaccessibility in remote areas, low awareness, and poor monitoring. The article recommends more community awareness campaigns, focused rural interventions, better accessibility infrastructure, and strengthened enforcement measures. To guarantee full participation and equality for all PWDs in India, the findings highlight the necessity of bringing national strategies closer to the tenets of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

POLICY STATEMENT

"The National Policy recognizes that Persons with Disabilities are valuable human resources for the country and seeks to create an environment that provides them equal opportunities, protects their rights, and ensures full participation in society."¹

INTRODUCTION

"I don't have a dis-ability, I have a different ability" said by Robert M. Hansel. This caption means that the people with disabilities are not known by their limitations instead they are known by their unique ability and perspectives. The people with disabilities are also individuals with their own identities, views and talents and it is important to recognize that they do not require to be assigned with easy tasks instead they require to be assigned with possible tasks which they are capable of. Moreover, a person with disability requires empathy and not pity or sympathy. The Indian constitution provides and guarantees the citizens with equality, freedom and justice in its social, political and legal form. The constitution also ensures inclusive society where all the people are included in the society regardless of their abilities and different abilities. The constitution also guarantees every citizen fundamental rights mentioned under article 14, 19 and 21 including the people with disabilities. With the evolution of the society the perception of the people towards disability also changed and the people started viewing disability from a different perspective and so the issues and problems of the people with disabilities were recognized and steps were taken to mitigate their problems and accommodate them into the main stream of society.

BACKGROUND

"The national policy for persons with disabilities 2006" was introduced by the ministry of social justice and empowerment. The 2001 census discovered that around 2.13% of the total population that is approx. 2.19 crore constitute the persons with disabilities which includes various kinds such as visual, hearing, speech, locomotor etc. with the increasing awareness regarding the capabilities of the persons with disability, the government has taken several initiatives to include them in the mainstream. This includes the following –

¹ National Policy | Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) | Home | India, <https://depwd.gov.in/policy/national-policy/> (last visited Mar. 10, 2025).

1. “Rehabilitation council of India act, 1992”.
2. “The PWD (equal opportunities protection of rights and full participation) act, 1995”.
3. “National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999”.
4. “National trust act, 1999”.
5. “National policy for persons with disability, 1993”.

Along with the above legislations, the government of India has also developed infrastructure to cater to the needs of persons with disabilities and the following institutes are also working for the same –

1. “Institute for the Physically Handicapped, New Delhi”.
2. “National Institute of Visually Handicapped, Dehradun”.
3. “National Institute for Orthopaedically Handicapped, Kolkata”.
4. “National Institute for Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad”.
5. “National Institute for Hearing Handicapped, Mumbai”.
6. “National Institute of Rehabilitation Training & Research, Cuttack”.
7. “National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities, Chennai”.

In addition to these there are various central, state, and district level rehabilitation centres providing services. Institutions at local level are also entrusted with the responsibility of their welfare.

KEY FOCUS / OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES² –

1. Prevention of disability – The government aims to avoid disabilities by providing

² *National Policy for Persons with Disabilities – DisabilityIndia*, <https://www.disabilityindia.co.in/national-policy-for-persons-with-disabilities/> (last visited Oct. 19, 2025).

adequate healthcare facilities like creating awareness regarding prevention of disability during and after and controlling pregnancy and controlling the diseases leading to disability.

2. Rehabilitation and empowerment – The section of rehabilitation include three categories –
 - a. Physical rehabilitation – This requires early detection and intervention of the disability through various drugs and non-drug therapies that aim at decreasing the impact of disability. It includes capacity building, physiotherapy, psychotherapy, counselling, audiological rehabilitation, special education etc. the government aims to provide extensive services in rural areas since 75% of the disabled population live there.
 - b. Educational rehabilitation – Article 21A of the Indian constitution and section 26 of the persons with disability act 1995 provides for free and mandatory education to the disabled persons at least till the age of their adulthood. Several government initiatives like Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and integrated education for disabled children scheme also plays a crucial role in obtaining this objective as it provides free education to children in certain age group, learning aids and tools, mobility assistance, distance education, special schooling, remedial teaching, and provides financial assistance for facilities like books, stationary, transport, hostel allowance etc. which aims at an open learning system. The government also provides scholarships to the students to pursue higher education.
 - c. Economic rehabilitation – it includes increasing employment opportunity for people with disability. It involves both employment under organized sector and self-employment. It also includes vocational training. The government under the PWD act 1995 has provided reservations in posts of public sector undertakings, government of India, government ministries etc. certain initiatives have also been taken to encourage employment of PWDs in private sector like tax exemption, awards, incentives, vocational training, vocational rehabilitation etc. self-employment is also encouraged by initiatives like tax concessions, affordable loans, exemption from duty etc.
3. Women with disabilities – The government will take steps regarding employment, education, rehabilitation, vocational training of women with disabilities. Shelter shell

be provided to the women with disabilities in the forms of short term stay homes, hostels and homes. Financial assistance shall be provided to them to look after their children.

4. Children with disabilities – The government endeavour to provide –
 - a. Right to equal opportunity.
 - b. Right to care, protection and security.
 - c. Right to dignity and healthy development.
 - d. Right to inclusive environment in sectors of education, health care, vocational training and employment.
5. Ensure environment without barriers – This endeavours to provide PWDs with an accessible environment which will enable them to function independently. This includes infrastructural development in public buildings, places, transport, healthcare centres etc.
6. Ease of certification – The government will ensure that the PWDs will acquire a disability certificate easily without any complications and simple procedure in reasonable time period.
7. Social security – The government has been providing social security to PWDs by giving tax concessions to their family, giving unemployment allowances, disability pensions. People with severe disabilities are provided with legal guardianship by the government.
8. Role of non-governmental organizations – the policy has emphasized an important role of NGOs in the following ways –
 - a. Policy advice, formulation, implementation etc.
 - b. Human resource development.
 - c. Research activities.

9. Access to sports, cultural and recreational activities – The government aims to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in sports, cultural and recreational activities and will take the necessary steps to do so.
10. Research – The government promotes research on various aspects like causes of disabilities, enhance technological assistance, changing needs and requirements which aim to provide better quality of life to person with disabilities.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES³ –OUTCOMES AND CHALLENGES⁴ –

Focus Area	Policy Provisions	Impact & Statistical Data	Challenges
Prevention & Early Detection	Programs for early identification of disabilities, immunization, and intervention services.	- As per the 2011 Census, 2.21% of India's population (26.8 million people) have disabilities. - Increased focus on early intervention, but exact success rates are unclear.	- Limited awareness in rural areas. - Lack of trained professionals for early detection.
Education	Inclusive education policies, scholarships, special schools, and accessible infrastructure.	- As per the 2019-20 UDISE+ report , only 1.2% of students enrolled in schools were children with disabilities. - Increase in enrolment due to Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and	- Dropout rates among PWDs remain high. - Inadequate trained teachers and accessible facilities.

³ Unit Level Data & Report on NSS 76th Round for Schedule 26.0, July - December 2018, (Survey of Persons with Disabilities) | Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation | Government Of India, <https://www.mospi.gov.in/unit-level-data-report-nss-76th-round-schedule-260-july-december-2018-survey-persons-disabilities> (last visited Oct. 19, 2025).

⁴ Home | Department of Social Justice and Empowerment - Government of India, <https://socialjustice.gov.in/> (last visited Oct. 19, 2025).

Focus Area	Policy Provisions	Impact & Statistical Data	Challenges
		Right to Education (RTE) Act.	
Employment	Job reservations (4% quota under RPWD Act 2016), skill development programs, and self-employment support.	- 2011 Census: Workforce participation for PWDs: 36.3% (Male: 47.6%, Female: 23.3%). - Only 0.5% of jobs in the private sector are held by PWDs (ILO Report, 2019).	- Workplace discrimination. - Lack of reasonable accommodations in offices.
Accessibility	Barrier-free public transport, accessible buildings, and assistive technology promotion.	- Accessible India Campaign (2015): 1,384 government buildings were audited; only 635 became accessible . - Only 10% of public buses are PWD-friendly.	- Lack of enforcement of accessibility laws. - Poor rural infrastructure for PWDs.
Social Security & Welfare	Disability pensions, healthcare and benefits, insurance and coverage.	- Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS): 3.4 million beneficiaries in 2021. - Healthcare coverage remains low despite Ayushman Bharat schemes.	- Low pension amounts (₹300-₹500 per month in most states). - Limited awareness of benefits.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS –

The national policy for PWDs, 2006 has contributed immensely towards the recognition and development of the PWDs. It recognizes that PWDs are valuable human beings and emphasizes on the importance of their rights and their need for participation in the mainstream of society. It highlighted the need for physical, economic and educational rehabilitation which includes employment generation in public and private sectors, setting up special schools, providing financial assistance etc. Its aim to prevent, detect and intervene to prevent disability is impressive. It also aims to ease the life of PWDs by ensuring barrier free environment through different initiatives. The policy also emphasizes on the multi-sector coordination and cooperation which includes private entities, government ministries, non-state actors such as NGOs etc. Though this policy is well formulated but there is a huge gap between the intent and reality because of various challenges like inadequate funding, bureaucratic hurdles, lack of public awareness etc. this policy has its main focus on the elimination of individual impairments rather than societal barriers. Though this policy aims at inclusive development but

it lacks inclusivity in the matter of education and employment. The policy aims to provide many benefits to the PWDs but its lacks its impact in the rural areas. People in the rural areas still face many accessibility challenges and thus, the development of the PWDs in rural areas needs to be exclusively focused by the government.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THIS POLICY –

1. The government should focus on strengthening enforcement and monitoring mechanisms.
2. The government should aim to enhance accessibility for the PWDs by making barrier free environment. It can be done by promoting accessibility aids in every public institution and places so that it would be convenient for the PWDs to navigate in such places independently.⁵
3. The government should conduct comprehensive research from time to time regarding the development, challenges and areas of improvement in the life of PWDs.
4. The government should ensure that the society is made more inclusive in all sectors including education, employment, sports, recreational activities, cultural activities etc.
5. The government should run awareness and sensitization campaigns to improve the quality of life of the persons with disabilities.
6. The government should increase the budget allocation for the implementation and formulation of various schemes, welfare programmes, awareness campaigns, rehabilitation facilities etc. for the PWDs.

CONCLUSION –

The national policy for the person with disability was introduced in 2006 by the ministry of social justice and empowerment with an aim to ensure the creation of inclusive society for PWDs. Before the formulation of this policy, several other legislations also existed which includes “persons with disability act, 1995”, “the national trust act, 1999”, “rehabilitation

⁵ *Harmonized Guidelines for Standards of Accessibility | Office of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities | India*, <https://ccpd.nic.in/harmonized-guidelines-for-standards-of-accessibility/> (last visited Oct. 19, 2025).

council of India act, 1992” etc. this policy aims to initiate necessary measures to prevent, intervene and control disabilities. This policy has sought to secure rehabilitation of the persons with disability which includes physical, economic and educational rehabilitation. Moreover, one of the important goals of this policy is to enhance accessibility in every field, by providing barrier free environment. This policy has focussed on the women and children with disabilities and provides them with many facilities like hostels, short term home, financial assistant, right to care, protection and security to children etc. It also ensures that every such person to live a dignified life. Despite these impressive objectives, the policy faces many implementation challenges such as lack of allocation of funds for welfare schemes, lack of public awareness, bureaucratic hurdles and so on. The government should take several initiatives to address these challenges such as increasing budget for implementing the welfare schemes, increasing awareness through government campaigns, strengthen the monitoring and enforcement mechanism, conduct regular research to evolve the welfare schemes according to the changing circumstances and so on.