

# Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions for Empowerment of Disabled Person with the Perspective of Census of India, 2011

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## Preface

The present paper mainly focuses on the role of Panchayati raj institutions (PRI) in rural areas for the development of disabled people. Here the author tries to explain what kind of functions or services mainly provide by Panchayati raj institutions in rural areas in terms of empowering the disabled person. In first phase a short literature and article review depicts the decentralization process and life of rural people and also the formation of PRIs. The formation of PRIs mainly depends on the decentralization process. Gandhiji and other political leaders deeply focus on the problem of rural life and their self sufficiency. So they raise their voices for the development of Rural Areas. In this paper the source of data was Census of India, 2011. With the help of this data, the try to explain the proportion of disabled person in rural areas in respect of urban areas. And lastly creates a summary with which we can clearly identify the present status of disabled population in India according to 2011 census.

**Abstract:** *The approach to the Tenth Plan focuses on empowering and promoting the welfare of disabled persons. The emphasis is on effective implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995. The Government of India has various strategies, policies and programmes/schemes for incorporating persons with disabilities in education and in the economic development process. However, successful implementation of such programmes requires adequate funds, an appropriate policy framework and, above all an effective delivery mechanism. To this end, it is necessary to involve Panchayats in these programmes. The first step is to equip the Panchayats with relevant information. Article 40 of the Constitution enjoins that the States shall take necessary steps to organize village panchayats with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self- government'. During the last fifty years several attempts have been made to bring about effective decentralization, both political and economic with limited success. However, the year 1992 marks a new era in the federal democratic set up of the country. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 conferred Constitutional status on the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Consequent to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the State Governments are now evolving modalities and institutional arrangements for facilitating the involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in implementation of various programmes under 29 subjects including 'Empowerment of Disabled'. As per estimates at present 30 million children (10%) out of approximately 300 million children in the age group 0-14 year in the country suffer from some impairment/disability or the other (including sensory, locomotors or cognitive impairments - impairment ranges from mild to severe). More than half of such disabilities are preventable, if adequate and effective preventive measures are taken particularly at early stages. The Government of India has been implementing various programmes for welfare of the children with disabilities through different government and non-government organisations. These programmes provide wide ranging benefits in important fields such as education, vocational training and rehabilitation, and financial assistance for specific needs of the disabled.*

**Keywords:** empowering, disabilities, decentralization, cognitive, amendment, locomotor

## 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

### 1.1 Introduction

Disability itself is a huge term, covering multidimensional impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. "Disabled people are not only the most deprived human beings in the developing world, they also the most neglected". Roughly 10 percent of the

population in the world or 650 million people live with disability. There is a marked asymmetry in burden of disability shared by developed and developing countries with the latter accounting for almost 80 percent of the total disabled population. Asia alone constitutes at least 400 million people with disabilities. Not only people with disabilities but also their families and communities are affected by disability NSS (National Sample Survey) of 36th, 47th and 58th round has provided data on disabled population. The 36th round (1981) of NSS data has introduced the demographic status of the disabled population. The 36th round, the NSS data covered only three types of disabilities. It included visual, communication (i.e. hearing and/or speech) and locomotors, whereas in 47th round of NSS the mental disability has been included as one of the type along with the previous three. In the 47th NSSO

survey, the objective was to provide the incidence and prevalence of disability in the country. In India, the official figures provided by Census 2011 (26.8 million) and 2002 (18.5 million) indicate that around 2 percent of country's population suffers from disability. These figures account for 3.2 percent of the total disabled in the world. According to 2001 census 21 million people were disabled which has increased to 26 million in 2011 census and mostly reside in the rural areas. The number of people with disabilities is expected to increase. The reasons are complex and multifaceted and largely due to health, demographic, and development factors. A study examined the differences in employment and wages between males with and without disabilities in rural Tamil Nadu, the authors concluded that "employment gap between individuals with and without disability is not explained by differences in human capital and productivity, and may result from differential returns to characteristics and from discrimination in access to employment". Another search done disability index of education, skill development and employment, based on National Sample Survey and Burden of Disability in India (1881–2011) Census 2001 data presents a gloomy picture of the life of the disabled in India. Also there is a concern regarding the unawareness about the various facilities that are available for the disabled population. People with disabilities are the largest minority group in the world. As a group they are starved of services and facilities available to the non-disabled and, consequently, they are the least nourished, the least healthy, the least educated, and the least employed. They have a long history of neglect, isolation, segregation, poverty, deprivation, charity and even pity. The gender differences in disability may arise due to two set of factors. One set may constitute a different factor that affects males and females differently which further results in gender bias in disability. For example, comparatively a higher proportion of males, employed in more hazardous blue-collared occupations which are more prone to locomotor disability due to high probability of mechanical accidents. Another set constitutes same factors but affecting two sexes differently due to physiological and social factors and resulting in different disability rates among males and females.

So if we start to eradicate disability so firstly try to improve the living standard of the rural people. The Village Panchayat has been playing a considerable role at Village level in context of improving the living standard of the people. Their main functions are the supply of pure drinkable water, constructions and repairs of roads, provide drainage facility, facility of streetlight, education, provide funds for backward class people, etc. The income source of Village Panchayats like tax from house, fair, health, water, market etc. penalty and fees, and grants from State and Central Governments etc. Under this overall backdrop, the present article shows the different activity and strategies played by Panchayat for empowering the disabled children.

## 1.2 Background of the Formation of PRIs

Panchayati Raj Institutions in India have their roots since time immemorial. The system has evolved through the ages. Panchayati Raj Institutions are not only the means of political education but provide an important mechanism for

rural development and decentralisation of powers. Panchayati Raj System in India has come into existence through a long process of evolution. Panchayat is an old conception in India and the earlier concept of democracy in the history of civilisation. Now a day's Panchayati Raj bodies are considered as the prime mover, of societal interests as well as considered as the main instrument of the socio-economic transformation in rural area of the state. The Panchayati Raj Institutions in India are also called prime instruments of democratic decentralisation at the grass root level. They assume importance because they carry back to the people the power that really belongs to them.

Mahatma Gandhi was a firm believer of Gram Swaraj. The welfare of rural people could be achieved in terms of Panchayati Raj. Although Rajiv Gandhi made a futile attempt to infuse life in the grass root institutions yet the task was completed by Narshima Rao by introducing 73rd constitutional amendment in the parliament.

Since independence great importance has been attached to socio-economic planning policy of India for promoting an appropriate rural infra-structure and over all development of the country. In view of this the concept of Panchayati Raj was launched in late 50's to evoke popular enthusiasm, participation and involvement in the process of socio-economic progress of the nation.

Democratic training cannot be imparted from the top. It must be started from below where major chunk of our population taking shelter. It was the main intention of our nation builders to change the socio-economic set-up of our rural masses by involving them into political process who is the victims of illiteracy, poverty, ignorance and backwardness. Parliamentary democracy is meaningless to those who are ignorant of their rights and duties due to illiteracy and backwardness. Those who are lacking sense of involvement and participation in the political process the idea of democratic decentralisation is worthless for them.

So the major chunk of the population in the rural area needs to be imparted democratic training and education to make them aware of their rights and to increase their participation in the democratic process.

The Panchayati Raj system or Panchayati Raj Institutions were the only way out to complete this major task. It was Panchayati Raj system by which people's participation and involvement could be ensured in the political system. That is why it is more significant to study the working of these institutions. That is why the persons like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Jai Prakash Narayan and S.K.Dey and Rajiv Gandhi laid much emphasis on the development and significance of grass-roots institution i.e. Panchayati Raj Institutions. Even prior to independence most of the matters relating to the villages were settled by the Gram Panchayat (G.P). But with the advent of British colonial rule, the status and importance of these institutions were minimised. The higher rate of illiteracy was also one of the major hurdles in the awakening of the masses. It was only after the independence that special attention was given to improve rural life by involving the masses in the democratic process. As already mentioned that Gandhiji was convinced that

village Panchayats have enormous potentialities organisation based on grass-root democracy. He was of the opinion that 'the greater the power to panchayats, the better for the people.' Thus on attaining independence, the establishment of Panchayati Raj was accepted by nation as a whole. Since then the government is trying its best to provide a desired status to the grass root level institutions. The Directive Principles of State Policy Art.40 is a testimony to this intension of constitution makers. But this provision was not a firm commitment. This was the formal constitutional recognition of the Panchayati Raj as a unit of rural local self-government.

In India, the emergence of Panchayati Raj is considered a milestone in the history of political institutions and it is a foundation of rural democracy. It is not only a political movement but also a social and economic one Panchayati Raj is considered as the heart of Indian Politics. Realising the significance of Panchayati Raj Institutions, Mahatma Gandhi once said "Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus every village will be self-republic or a panchayat having full powers."

Mahatma Gandhi had a strong conviction about the importance of Panchayati Raj. He wanted true democracy to be established in India. He rightly said that "True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every Village." According to him, the individual is the architect of his own government. This is the core of Panchayati Raj.-This localism, Gandhi claims, will paradoxically be the guarantee of universalism, and he expresses the thought in an image that conveys with great eloquence the combined looseness and intimacy of the society he foresees:

"In this structure composed of innumerable villages —life will be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals.....The outer most circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it."

In the appreciation of Panchayati Raj importance, Gandhiji distrusted with parliamentary system. Even in Britain it seemed to him distant from the people, and to imagine several hundred million Indians electing a few hundred representatives was to him absurd. In its place he substituted a plan for indirect democracy. Each village would be ruled by its own panchayat (the traditional five men council) and would elect a representative to the district council and so on up to the highest council of the nation. There would be few duties for that highest council in an almost decentralised society. Gandhiji also formulated the policy of decentralisation of power through self-government units, or Gram Panchayat as he called it Gram Swaraj, for the development of each individual. He always insisted that the future development of the country be centred on the village. In this context he, expressed that "Every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its own affairs. It is a complete republic. It was to be self sufficient and self-

reliant community with a degree of independence, but essentially an integral part of the village, district, state and the nation."

Jawahar Lal Nehru was a late converse to the Panchayati Raj idea, after the publication of B.R.Mehta Committee Report and due to the influence of S.K.Dey, who visualised an organic linkage of Institutions from Gram Sabha to Lok Sabha. He rightly points out that "democracy would travel from Lok Sabha to Gram Sabha". Jawahar Lal Nehru became the biggest proponent of village democracy. Inaugurating independent India's first village Panchayat in Nagpur, Rajasthan, in 1959, Nehru hailed the event as "the most revolutionary and historical step in the context of New India".

He also remarked that, "democracy was not entirely new to India, for its roots could be found also in our old Panchayat system. This system came into being because the village and the people were too distant from the centre of political power. In political life everyone has a vote, in economic matters everyone has equal opportunities, and in our Panchayats also everyone should be considered equal. There should not be distinction between men and women, high and low. We have to march ahead in a spirit of unity and brotherhood."

Pt.Jawahar Lai Nehru also remarked that "India will progress only when the people living in villages become politically conscious. The progress of our country is bound up with the progress of our villages."

Jaya Prakash Narain also cherished to strengthen the Panchayati Raj system for quite long time since sarvodaya movement in 1954. He always favoured the idea of decentralisation. As he remarked that "with the village panchayats as the base, the political structure would rise story by story to the national level. The village assembly under this arrangement would be organisationally linked to the national assembly through a system of indirect election."

It is leer that looking over 35 years of Panchayati Raj in India the system of Panchayati Raj has been reasonably successful in those states only where politicians wished to foster democratic-decentralisation. The system proved a failure in those states where the ruling parties, party leaders, chief ministers, ministers and MLAs viewed the representative of PRIs as competing political power and were determined to reduce the competition.

Whatever may be the political setting the role of Panchayati Raj cannot be undermined there is a strong feeling that PRIs should act as a third tier of government. The main purpose of the PRIs is that they can play effective role in mobilising resources and people's participation in the process of rural development. The philosophy of Panchayati Raj implies that management and control of local affairs should be left to the Panchayati Raj bodies. Panchayati Raj system, if strengthened and trusted can share the main burden of State and Central Governments in the removal of tension in the rural areas creating harmony among various communities. As Mr.Ashok Bajpai opined that one of the main factors responsible for the establishment of PRIs was the fact that a

centralised administration was not physically possible in a vast country like India. However mere administrative decentralisation is not enough in welfare state. It must be accompanied by political decentralisation. In fact the practice of political decentralisation is as old as the concept of democracy. But in India before the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment the local bodies did not enjoy the constitutionally demarcated autonomy as they were the creature of the higher level of government. When community development programme was launched it was described as a "Silent revolution". Now Panchayati Raj has been hailed as the most complete "Meta Morphosis" of the programme and a most revolutionary political event of the decade.

The term "democratic decentralisation" was coined by B.R.Mehta as a means to decentralise the Democracy at all the three levels viz. Zila Parishad, Panchayat Samiti and village Panchayat. It is opposite of centralisation. Further to quote, P.Geetha Rani, "Devolution, which denotes the transfer of power and resources to sub national political entities, is decentralisation par excellence. The successful programme of decentralisation will need to include the right combination of political, fiscal—and institutional elements. The seventy third and seventy fourth Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992 have added a new dimension to fiscal federalism in India federal system."

There is no doubt that Panchayats have potential to promote and guarantee human right at their levels. But PRIs should be awarded functional, financial and administrative autonomy. The issues involved in this process are power decentralisation and establishment of democratic culture.

Late Prime Minister, Mrs.Indira Gandhi while highlighting the importance of PRIs said in the Lok Sabha in 1975. "The essence of the democratic system is the continuous participation of masses in political economic process and the existence representative institutions will facilitate this participation. The Panchayati Raj System does not work as it should. It does mean that we have to correct its functioning, remove its faults and to make changes whatever are needed."

Rajiv Gandhi, as has been said about him that he cradled and nursed the Panchayati Raj Institutions, visited many remote areas of the country which gave him first hand information about the sufferings of the poor and the problems of the rural India. He understood that a large part of the scarce resources was absorbed by the State administrative machinery, leaving very little for development what was worse that a large portion of this was squandered in the name of 'welfare measure' and vote catching programmes. Rajiv Gandhi had to say while introducing the constitution (64th amendment) Bill in the Lok Sabha on May 15, 1989. "Our Bill goes beyond merely planning for economic development. It lays upon the PRIs the even heavier responsibility of planning for social justice. It will not due to romanticise life in our villages. Life there is hard. Life there is in many ways, exploitative and oppressive."

As the 64th amendment Bill could not muster required number of votes in the Rajya Sabha, so the task was completed by P.V.Narashima Rao by introducing the

constitution 73<sup>rd</sup> amendment Bill on 5th May, 1992 said, "The objective of this amendment act was to improve the participation of the people in the process of their development. It was felt that involvement of people was lacking and they were not receiving their due. Now state governments will devolve adequate functions finances and powers to ensure better implementation of various developmental programmes."

P.V.Narashima Rao again said, through this amendment act we intend to restructure, reinforce and revitalize the Panchayati Raj bodies as on organic part of our democratic process by according them proper constitutional status and recognition. In this way we are giving back the power to people, which really belong to them. Much remains to be done and most of this has to be done by state governments. The restructuring and strengthening of these PRIs depends upon the commitment of the functionaries and change of approach. The amendment act is only a beginning and represents the sincerity and commitment of this government towards democratic decentralisation. Panchayati Raj has passed through many odour phases within its short span of life after the independence phases of ascendancy, stagnation, decline and revival. In the real sense the Panchayati Raj Institution got clear momentum with the passing of the constitution (73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment) Act, 1992 by the centre and its ratification by the states. With this legislation the Panchayati Raj Institutions has attained statutory status and almost all the states enacted legislations in conformity with the amendment. Panchayati Raj, with the 73rd Constitution amendment, has become the third tier of governance. This Act is of far reaching significance for decentralisation of Indian polity. The constitution has done its duty. It is now for the people to ensure that the spirit purposes and promises of democratic decentralisation, inserted into the 73rd amendment are delivered to the society. The essence and intent of the constitution has been embodied in the amendment Act now it is up to the actors who manned the affair and take oath to preserve and protect the laws of the Constitution.

### 1.3 Definitions of Different Kinds of Disability

Disability as defined by the Act (Persons with Disability Act, 1995) covers blindness, low vision, leprosy-cured, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation and mental illness as well as multiple disability. The Act does not cover disabilities like Autism, or learning disabilities. However, definitions/concepts of all relevant disabilities are given below:-

**(a) Blindness** - A condition where a person suffers from any of the following conditions namely:

- i) total absence of sight or
- ii) visual acuity not exceeding 6/60 or 20/200 (snellen) in the better eye with correcting lenses;or
- iii) limitation of the field vision subtending an angle of 20 degree or worse.

**(b) Person with low vision** - A person with impairment of visual functioning even after treatment or standard refractive correction but who uses or is potentially capable of using vision for the



planning or execution of a task with appropriate assistive device.

**(c) Cerebral Palsy** - A group of non-progressive conditions characterized by abnormal motor control posture resulting from brain insult or injuries occurring in the peri- natal, neo-natal or infant period of development.

**(d) Hearing impairment** - Loss of sixty decibels or more in the better ear in the conversational range of frequencies.

**(e) Leprosy cured person** - Any person who has been cured of leprosy but is suffering from- loss of sensation in hands or feet as well as loss of sensation and paresis in the eye- lid but with no manifest deformity; manifest deformity and paresis but having sufficient mobility in their hands and feet to enable them to engage in normal economic activity; extreme physical deformity as well as advanced age which prevents him from undertaking any gainful occupation.

**(f) Locomotor disability** - Disability of the bones, joint or muscles leading to substantial restriction of the movement of the limbs or a usual form of cerebral palsy. Some common conditions giving raise to locomotor disability could be poliomyelitis, cerebral palsy, amputation, injuries of spine, head, soft tissues, fractures, muscular dystrophies etc.

**(g) Mental illness** - Any mental disorder other than mental retardation

**(h) Mental retardation** - A condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind of a person which is specially characterized by sub-normality of intelligence i.e.cognitive, language, motor and social abilities

**(i) Autism** - A condition of uneven skill development primarily affecting the communication and social abilities of a person, marked by repetitive and ritualistic behaviour.

**(j) Multiple Disability** - A combination of two or more disabilities as defined in clause (i) of section 2 of the Person with disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995 namely Blindness/low vision Speech and Hearing impairment Locomotor disability including leprosy cured Mental retardation and Mental illness

**(k) Learning Disabilities (Dyslexia)** - Affect persons ability to acquire, process, and/or use either, spoken, read, written or nonverbal information( organization/planning, functional literacy skills, memory, reasoning, problem solving, perceptual skills) or in other words in short- difficulty with language in its various uses ( not always reading).

- Dyspraxia - The inability to motor plan, to make an appropriate body response.
- Dysgraphia - Difficulty with the act of writing both in the technical as well as the expressive sense. There may also be difficulty with spelling.
- Dyscalculia - Difficulty with calculations.
- Attention Deficit and - Hyperactivity, distractibility and impulsivity Hyperactivity Disorder(ADHD)

**(l) Impairment** - Missing or defective body part, an amputated limb, paralysis after polio, restricted pulmonary capacity, diabetes, nearsightedness, mental retardation, limited hearing capacity, facial disfigurement or other abnormal condition.

**(m) Disabilities** - As a result of an impairment may involve difficulties in walking, seeing, speaking, hearing, reading, writing, counting, lifting, or taking interest in and making one's surrounding.

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Overview

The Review of Literature is very necessary because it highlights the various aspects and issues regarding the topic covered by the previous research studies. Review of research literature and books are also enables researcher in finding missing research aspect of concern topic. It also helps in understanding methodological aspects of the study, which was being adopted by the previous researchers. Here I has reviewed following few related research literatures.

### 2.2 Review of Literature

**Hoshiar Singh (1993)** in his article entitled, “**Decentralization through Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act**” focuses on the conceptual aspects of the Panchayati Raj, working of Panchayati Raj and its short comings and preconditions for its success. Besides the author also discussed the features of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act its strength and weaknesses, and its scope to strengthen Panchayat Raj in the country.

**G.Dhawan (1995)** in his article entitled, “**Panchayati Raj Institutions:73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment-apprehensions and comprehension**” says that there is a need to transfer much of the allocation decisions to the local authorities as financial arrangement is the life breath of all self-governments. He observes that, the reservation of seats for women, SCs and STs need to be addressed more seriously by the States. He recommends that, for strengthening of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, it is necessary to involve the NGOs in the planning, training, implementation and evaluation of the rural development programmes, on a priority basis.

**Dr. Amita Singh (1995)** in his article entitled, “**Panchayatis – the New Regime**” made some comments on the reluctance of the State Governments in initiating the spirit of the 73rd Amendment Act. He lamented that the constitutional backing has become a hollow device of democratic decentralization. He pointed out that the increased influence of MPs and MLAs over Panchayati Raj Institutions would adversely affect their autonomy, making them vulnerable to the influence of urban cites. Calling for greater people's participation, he observes that what is needed is the strengthening of participative democracy rather than representative democracy.

**Baidyanath Misra (1996)** in his article entitled, “**Powers, Function and Finances of Panchayatis**” discussed the

recommendations made by the National Seminar organized by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, 'on financing of Panchayatis and involvement of Panchayatis in anti-poverty programmes' which was held on November 18, 1993 in New Delhi. He concludes that the problem of rural construction depends both on availability of adequate amount of funds and efficient system of management of funds.

**A.C.Jena (1997)** in his article entitled, **"Finances of Rural Local Self- Government Institutions: A study made a comparative analysis of Panchayati Raj finances in the selected States-Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Madhya-Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab, Haryana, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh"**. He concludes that the efforts to raise local resource are luke warm. He observes that, a great responsibility rests with the State Finance Commission (SFCs) to evolve principles of devolution in sharing to assignments and distribution of Grants-in-aid based on criteria of backwardness and steps to improve the resource efforts.

**K. Mohan Rao and D.R. Raju (1998)** in their scholarly article entitled, **"Provisions of the Panchayatis Act in Andhra Pradesh : Strategy for operationalisation"** made an attempt to discuss the "Provisions of Panchayatis (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996" with special reference to Scheduled Tribes of three different regions of the State. They suggested that the provisions of 1996 Act and other laws related to tribal welfare and development have to be translated into Telugu language/tribal dialects and made available to Panchayatis/Gram Sabhas for effective implementation. They further suggested that regular Orientation Training Camps have to be organized by Tribal Research Institutes for all the concerned officials'.

**C.V.Raghavulu and E.A.Narayana (1999)** in their scholarly article entitled **"Reforms in Panchayati Raj: A Comparative Analysis of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and West Bengal"** made an attempt to discuss the working of Panchayati Raj bodies in the selected states. They pointed out that the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and West Bengal were in the fore front in enacting legislation for a greater devolution of powers, functions and resources to rural local institutions. They identified some striking difference among the Panchayati Raj models of selected states. These differences relatively to the extent of power devolved to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIS) and financial administrative autonomy.

**Katar Singh (1999)** in his article entitled, **"The Role of Gram Sabha in village Development"** considers that the Gram Sabha despite being envisaged as the foundation of the Panchayati Raj system and an effective role player in village development is handicapped due to the lack of closely of its role in village development *vis-a-vis* the Gram Panchayati. He points out that none of the State Panchayati Raj Acts empowers the Gram Sabha to have a control over the Gram Panchayati and to take any final decision in matters of village development its role is only advisory.

**R. Venkata Ravi and M. Venkata Ramana (2001)** in their micro-level study in Nellore District of A.P. entitled,

**"Training for Elected Leaders in Panchayati Raj: A Study in Andhra Pradesh"** focused on the Participation of elected SC leaders of PRIs in the training programme. The study has shown the pattern in which illiterates and less educated, politically more experienced have participated in the training programme. The study has underlined the significance of capacity building among the elected SC leaders, particularly SC women leaders to enhance their participation in democratic decentralization.

**M Sarumathy (2002)** in her essay entitled **"Rural local Government in Andhra Pradesh"** elaborately discussed the pattern and structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIS). She expressed that PRIS in Andhra Pradesh are not autonomous neither functionally nor financially. She also pointed out that out of three tier Panchayatis only the Panchayatis at the district level is stronger and other two levels of Panchayatis i.e. the Mandals Parishad and the Gram Panchayats are treated as the subordinates of Zilla Parishad. It is also pointed out that the autonomy of the PRIS is limited through the mechanism of collector and DRDA in the State.

**Ranjit Singh (2002)** in his essay on **"Panchayati Raj Gross – roots of Democracy"** novelly criticized that Panchayati Raj Institutions, are "grass" without roots. He pointed out that to provide roots to the Panchayati Raj Institutions, what is needed is to deactivate the institution of Gram Sabha or village Assembly. He concludes that the acid test of the Panchayati System is in providing economic as well as social democracy and develops a sense of self reliance.

**E.A. Narayana (2003)** in his essay entitled **"Implementation of 73<sup>rd</sup> constitution Amendment Act in Andhra Pradesh: An overview"** made an attempt to examine the working of the Panchayati Raj system in Andhra Pradesh since the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution. He expressed that the new central and state legislations failed to alter the functional domain of Panchayati at various levels. He concluded that the Panchayati Raj system in the State can not function effectively unless the issue of devolution of powers functions and funds are resolved speedily.

**KanaKanti Bagchi and Tapan Kumar Ghosh (2004)** in their article of **"Finances of Panchayats in West Bengal New Areas of Resource Mobilisation"** made an attempt to review the in the existing system of collection of revenues by Panchayati Raj Institutions in West Bengal and suggests resources to rectify the loopholes. Further they also focused on some newer sources of revenue, which could possibly be utilized by the PRIs with political will.

**K.Ramanuja Rao and Manduva Narasimha Rao (2005)** in their case study on Gangadevipally Village in Geesukonda Mandal, Warangal district of Andhra Pradesh depicted and appreciated 100% participation of women in village administration. They pointed out that the unique feature of this village is that all women leaders have formed a group of committees as parallel watch bodies to the mandatory Gram Panchayati system. They further observes that the political power gave the women leaders of this village a sense of importance and of courses, a lot of

responsibility fell on their inexperienced yet accepting shoulders.

**Dr. Sumit Mukherji (2007)** in his Scholarly article entitled, **“Local Government and Civil Society, the Indian Experience”** Contents that any research for role models should be undertaken in relative rather than absolute terms, as the states differ in respect of their socio-economic conditions as well as geographical and political configuration and thus indiscriminate borrowing of the features of different system, is sure to exacerbate internal contradictions. For the purpose of ascertaining the viability and utility of the Mutual Enrichment Paradigm (MEP) he envisages a Triple Index Parameter (TIP) based on three main signifiers, a) Adaptability, b) Selectivity, c) Operationality. On the basis of Mutual Enrichment Paradigm he discussed the performance of Panchayati Raj bodies in India.

**K. Jayalakshmi (2008)** in her scholarly article entitled **“Decentralized Governance in Uttar Pradesh: Operational Issues and Suggestive Frame Work”** examines the existing position of Panchayats in Uttarakhand, in terms of their structure, devolution of function, functionaries and funds with the proposed activity and schematic and mapping at all levels and resource sharing management of key resources like water and forest. She tried to evaluate the role of Gram Sabha, kage and space sharing with Nyaya Panchayats and Van Panchayats.

**Ch. Balaramulu and D. Ravinder (2008)** in their scholarly article entitled, **“Governance of Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh: the need for Revitalization”** expressed that the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and the subsequent state wise Panchayati Raj legislations in India have brought to the fore the significance of grassroots democratic processes. He specifically examined the functioning of Gram Sabha and Village secretariat in Andhra Pradesh and highlights the instances where lack of coordination and proper perspective have rendered the whole decentralization exercise ineffective.

**Rashid Md. and Anjan Sen (2010)** paper examines the level of people's participation in panchayat activities and level of people's awareness about rural development programs. The study is done against the background of the Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act, 1992, and Bihar Panchayati Raj Act, 1993 and 2006, both of which aim to empower the rural people by strengthening the Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha happens to be the heart or the core of the panchayati raj system of local self-governance. The study is entirely based on a primary survey conducted in four villages of Atri Block in Gaya District of Bihar, which is among the least developed and most backward districts of India.

**Atulan Guha (2014)** argues that the panchayati raj institutions in Gujarat are being undermined by the state government. The failure to evolve financial devolution to fund the PRIs is making them financially dependent on the state government. Further, the Samras Gram Yojana, which encourages consensus candidates without elections plays into the hands of traditional dominant castes' power.

**Gandhi Siga (2015)** considers that Panchayat Raj Institution has brought a many socio-political changes in the rural Arunachal Pradesh. Therefore, importance and effectiveness of working of Panchayat Raj in Arunachal Pradesh is an interesting subject of study to whether these institutions are an effective mechanism for the modern grassroots democratic political participation. With this objective, the present study is intending to shed light on the democratic decentralization political institutions and empowerment of people in Arunachal Pradesh. The findings of the study reveal that the PRIs in Arunachal Pradesh have been exercising very few powers and perform very few functions. The majority of respondents observed that the intended functions were not transferred to PRIs. It is observed that the Government of Arunachal Pradesh is not willing to devolve power and transfer functions to PRIs. As Pratap Chandra Swain has rightly states that in Arunachal Pradesh, the State Government obviously preferred the *“Bureaucratic Raj to Panchayati Raj”*.

**M.R.Biju (2008)** in his essay entitled, **“Sustainable Rural Development and Panchayat Raj in the Era of Globalisation”** discussed the various aspects of rural development in the context of globalisation. He reviewed and evaluated the functional competence of Panchayat Raj institutions in different parts of the country in Gandhian terms. Through his reviews he found that except in a few states like West Bengal, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, the Panchayat Raj institutions have been rarely given a change to perform their functions on sizable scale.

**C.Siva Murugan and Dr. V. Anbumani (2008)** in his essay entitled, **“Community Participation in Rural Development”**, expressed hopes that India might have lost a few battles against poverty but now with people's participation, it will win war. They made a bird's-eye-view of community development programmes and the success and failures of these programmes. The study mainly concentrated on Bharat Nirman Programme. They consider that people's participation is a pre-condition of any development programme and now a condition of survival for the civil society.

**K. Srinivasa Rao and Pandey R.S., (2010)** considers that poverty alleviation is a key component of rural development. The present paper examines the status of rural poverty alleviation and the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in providing the services to accomplish inclusive growth as per the eleventh plan agenda. The basic foundation of the village poverty reduction program is a proper identification of the poor on a Panchayat wise basis. The identification of the poor has to be treated as a continuing process that periodically tracks the situation of the poor, without the overriding concern of dividing people into clear poor and non-poor categories.

**Md. Rashid and Dr. Anjan Sen (2010)** paper examines the level of people's participation in panchayat activities and level of people's awareness about rural development programs. The study is done against the background of the Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Act, 1992, and Bihar Panchayati Raj Act, 1993 and 2006, both of which aim to empower the rural people by strengthening the Gram



Sabha. Gram Sabha happens to be the heart or the core of the panchayati raj system of local self-governance. The study is entirely based on a primary survey conducted in four villages of Atri Block in Gaya District of Bihar, which is among the least developed and most backward districts of India.

**Mishra A.K. et.al. (2011)** considers that the overall development of country is the main objective of Indian government since its independence. Earlier the main thrust for development was laid on Agriculture, Industry, Communication, Education, Health and Allied sectors but soon it was realized that the all round development of the country is possible only through the development of rural India. Keeping this in view Panchayati Raj Institutions have been introduced under the 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution of India. Rural Development includes measures to strengthen the democratic structure of society through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). It also includes measures to improve the rural infrastructure, improve income of rural households and delivery systems pertaining to education, health & safety mechanisms. Government of India has taken many steps to develop rural India and for this Department of Rural Development has been setup under the control of Ministry of Rural Development. The department through PRIs has launched various development schemes such as Sampoorna Swachhta Abhiyan, Gram Vikas Yojna, Farmer Market & Livestock Market, Underground Drainage System Construction Scheme and so on. Through these schemes Government of India seems to accomplish its dream of rural India's development. Although some loopholes may also be seen. Without overcoming these drawbacks Government of India won't be able to foster the growth of rural India.

**Nupur Tiwari (2013)** opines that with the GDP growth rate rising to 7-8 per cent in the last four years, rural-urban divide, regional divide and rich-poor divide became glaring, which brought 'inclusive growth' high on the policy agenda. Such unequal opportunity structure weakens the positive role of growth in reducing poverty and making growth inclusive. Large amounts of public funds are spent to address these issues but their implementation and the quality of services delivered leave much to be desired. The existing mechanism for the delivery of services is not effective, efficient or economical. The decentralized local government institutions are eminently suited for service delivery as they can ensure equity and / or equitability in the provision of services (in view of their nearness to the people), inclusiveness (in view of the assured representation available to all sections of the society in the Panchayati Raj Institutions), accessibility, transparency, local participation, accountability and sustainability of services. What is therefore required is that Panchayati Raj be brought centre-stage as the principal governance reform to reinforce economic reform and for delivery of essential social services at grassroots level. Improvement of service delivery by local self governments would vitally depend upon the quality of planning undertaken by these bodies. A key instrument available to Government of India is thus to provide fiscal incentives to state governments that can encourage them to strengthen local governance, in pursuance of the national strategy. Moving from a model of central provision to that of decentralization to local governments introduces a new

relationship between national and local policy makers, while altering several existing relationships such as that between the citizens, elected politicians and the local bureaucracy. However, the problem of implementing decentralization is as important as the design of the system in influencing service delivery outcomes. When grass-roots planning processes strikes deep roots, economic empowerment is both strong and sustainable.

**Tame Ramya (2014)** made an in his paper studied the role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in rural development in general and a tribal village of a backward district in Arunachal Pradesh in particular. Overall development of country is the main objective of Indian government since its independence. In the earlier Plans the main thrust for development was laid on Agriculture, Industry, Communication, Education, Health and Allied sectors but soon it was realized that the all-round development of the country is possible only through the development of rural India. Keeping this in view, Panchayat Raj Institutions have been introduced under the 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution of India in 1992. Rural Development includes measures to strengthen the democratic structure of society through the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs). It also includes measures to improve the rural infrastructure, improve income of rural households and delivery systems pertaining to education, health & safety mechanisms. Government of India has taken many steps to develop rural India and for this, Department of Rural Development has been setup under the control of Ministry of Rural Development. The Panchayats are expected to play an important role in rural development in India, particularly after independence. Plan documents of both the central and state governments and various committees have emphasized the importance of these bodies in the polity. Five-year plans, specially the second five-year plan, laid special emphasis on the role of Panchayats in rural developments.

**Rituraj Neog (2014)** considered that the Gram Panchayat is to be an effective mechanism for the development of rural areas as well as for the upgradation of rural population. Under the study area, the Bhuyanhat Gram Panchayat of Amguri Development block provides various schemes for rural upliftment, such as Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) etc. but these schemes are still unable to uplift the village with present rate of growing population. Again at the same time, various schemes for the upliftment of rural population, such as National Rural Employment Guarantee act (NREGA), National Old Age Pension Scheme, National Family Beneficiaries scheme and Annapurna Scheme are able to cover only a small mass of population. Apart from these the study area has lack of all other supporting schemes for rural development, such as Rajiv Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana, Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment and Total sanitation scheme.

**Kausik K. Bhadra (2014)** in his study is based on two pronged approach – one examines financial and physical issues in MGNREGA across Gram Panchayats in Jhargram block during the period 2012-14 and the other is based on interviews with people knowledgeable about this programme based on their association with it. Since it is demand driven programme and demand is projected through approved



labour budget, it has become an important policy concern for the government how the fund is not being optimally utilised as this programme has continuously been experiencing underutilization of the funds since its inception in all the states. However, some explanations, based on the GPs in Jhargram, are presented on 1) incompatibility between unspent balance of 2012-13 and opening balance of 2013-14 across GPs, 2) during 2012-13, fund surplus in seven GPs was higher than unpaid labour payments, which raises a concern that why their wages was not met by such greater fund balance 3) declining employment provided to demanded ratio and 4) significant decline in per household availability of funds.

### 2.3 Critical Findings of the Review

From the above review it was clear that the formation of PRIs mainly to empower the rural society and it was also help to develop the various aspects of rural people. Rural Development includes measures to strengthen the democratic structure of society through the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs). It also includes measures to improve the rural infrastructure, improve income of rural households and delivery systems pertaining to education, health & safety mechanisms. Government of India has taken many steps to develop rural India and for this, Department of Rural Development has been setup under the control of Ministry of Rural Development. The Panchayats are expected to play an important role in rural development in India, particularly

after independence. Plan documents of both the central and state governments and various committees have emphasized the importance of these bodies in the polity. By Panchayati Raj Institutions in West Bengal and various states suggests resources to rectify the loopholes.

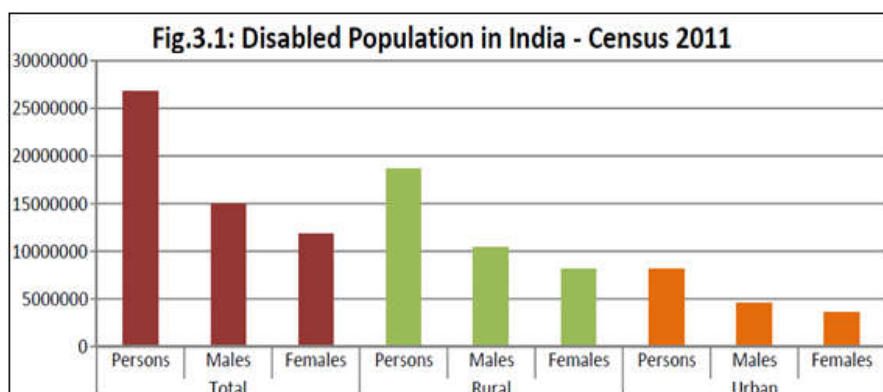
## 3. Present Status of Disable People in India (According to 2011 Census)

### 3.1 Social Group Wise Distribution of Disable Population

As per the Census 2011, In India out of the 121 Cr population, 2.68 Cr persons are 'disabled' which is 2.21% of the total population.

- Among the disabled population 56% (1.5 Cr) are males and 44% (1.18 Cr) are females. In the total population, the male and female population are 51% and 49% respectively.
- Majority (69%) of the disabled population resided in rural areas (1.86 Cr disabled persons in rural areas and 0.81 Cr in urban areas). In the case of total population also, 69% are from rural areas while the remaining 31% resided in urban areas.

Population, India 2011			Disabled persons, India 2011		
Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Male	Females
121.08 Cr	62.32 Cr	58.76 Cr	2.68 Cr	1.5 Cr	1.18 Cr

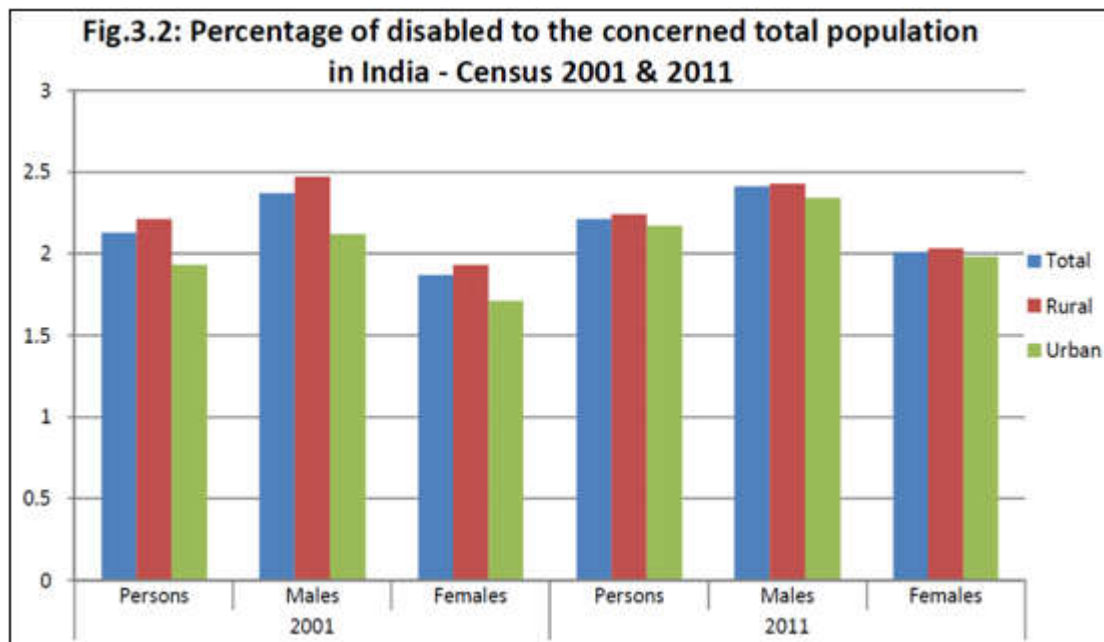


- The percentage of disabled population among males and females are 2.41% and 2.01% respectively. At all India level as well as disaggregated by various social groups, the proportion of disabled in the corresponding population is higher for males than females.

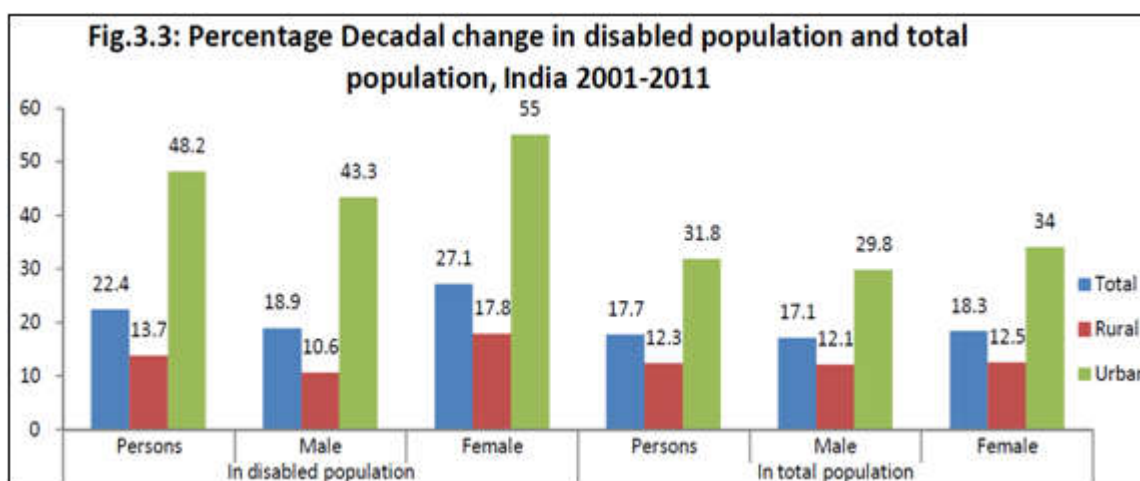
**Table 3.1:** Proportion of disabled population by Social Groups in India- Census-2011

Social Group	Persons	Male	Females
Total	2.21	2.41	2.01
SC	2.45	2.68	2.2
ST	2.05	2.18	1.92
Other than SC/ST	2.18	2.37	1.98

- During 2001 – 2011, an increase in the number of disabled persons was observed both in rural and urban areas and also among males and females. The share of disabled persons in the total population, as well as in the male and female population also increased during this period.
- The percentage of disabled to the total population increased from 2.13% in 2001 to 2.21% in 2011. In rural areas, the increase was from 2.21% in 2001 to 2.24% in 2011 whereas, in urban areas, it increased from 1.93% to 2.17% during this period. The same trend was observed among males and females during this period.



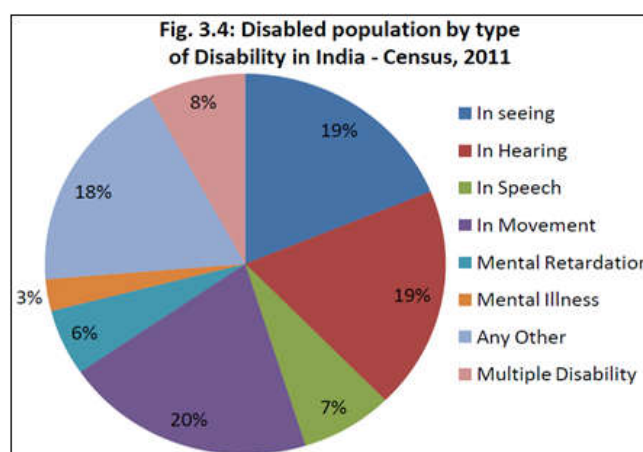
- The percentage decadal change in disabled population during 2001 -2011 is 22.4, whereas for the total population, the percentage decadal change is 17.7.



### 3.2 Types of Disability

The Census 2011 revealed that, in India, 20% of the disabled persons are having disability in movement, 19% are with

disability in seeing, and another 19 % are with disability in hearing. 8% has multiple disabilities.

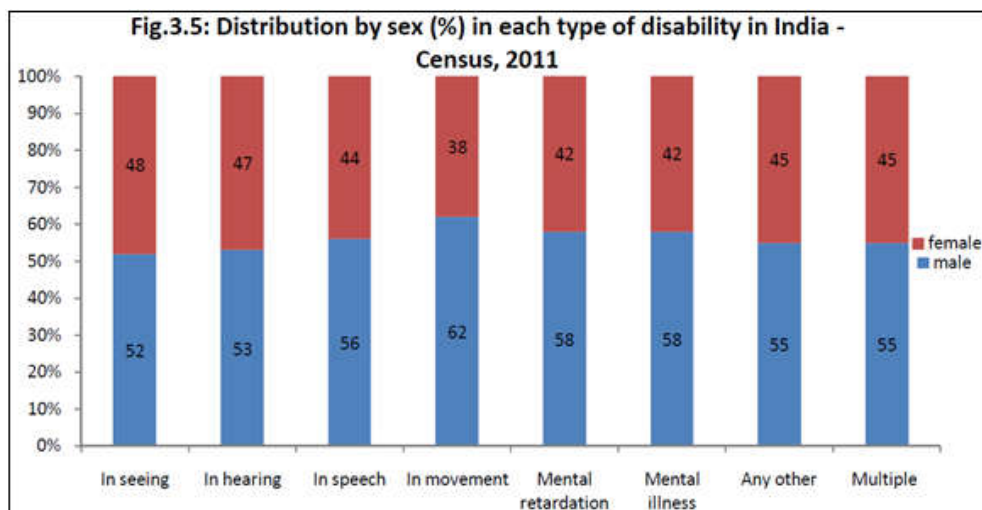


Males are more in number among the affected for all types of disability

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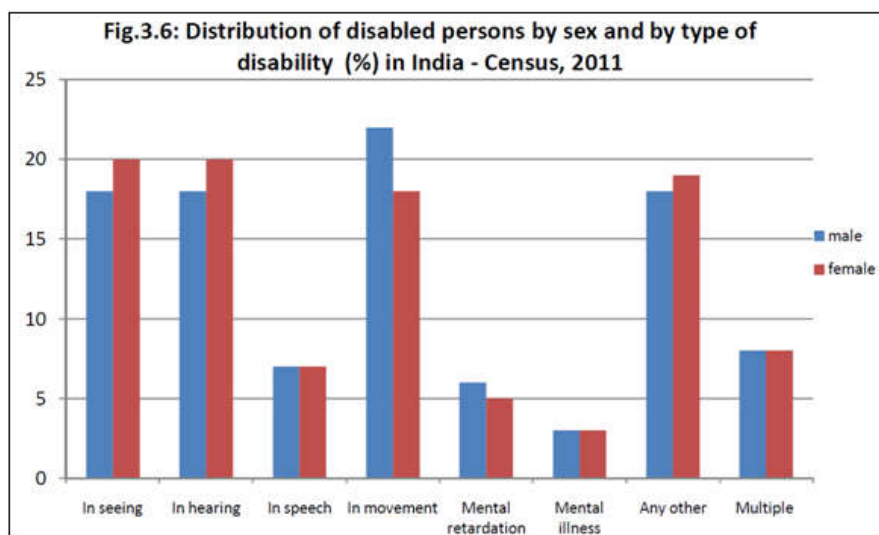
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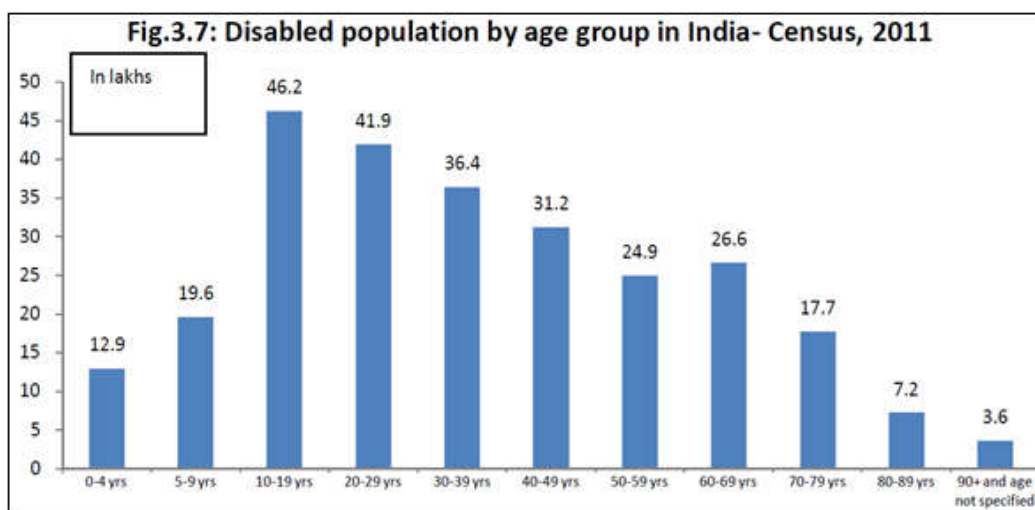
Among the male disabled, 22% are having disability in movement, 18% each has disability in seeing/ in hearing while 8% of them suffered from multiple disability. In the

case of the female disabled, 20% each has disability in seeing / in hearing, 18% has disability in movement and 8% of them are having multiple disability.



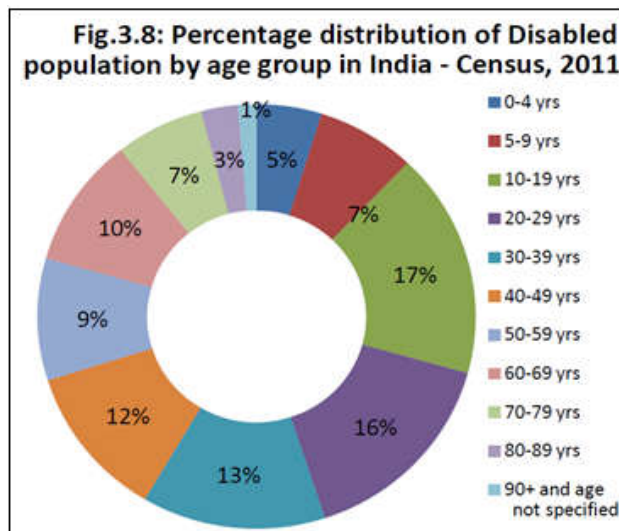
### 3.3 Disabled Population in Various Age Groups

As per Census 2011, the number of disabled persons is highest in the age group 10-19 years (46.2 lakhs).

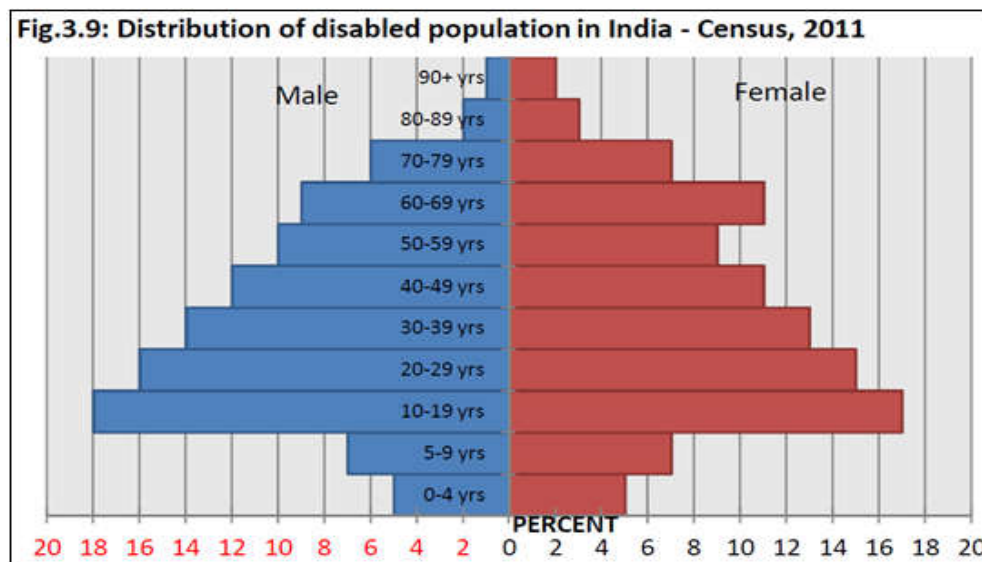


- 17% of the disabled population is in the age group 10-19 years and 16% of them are in the age group 20-29 years.

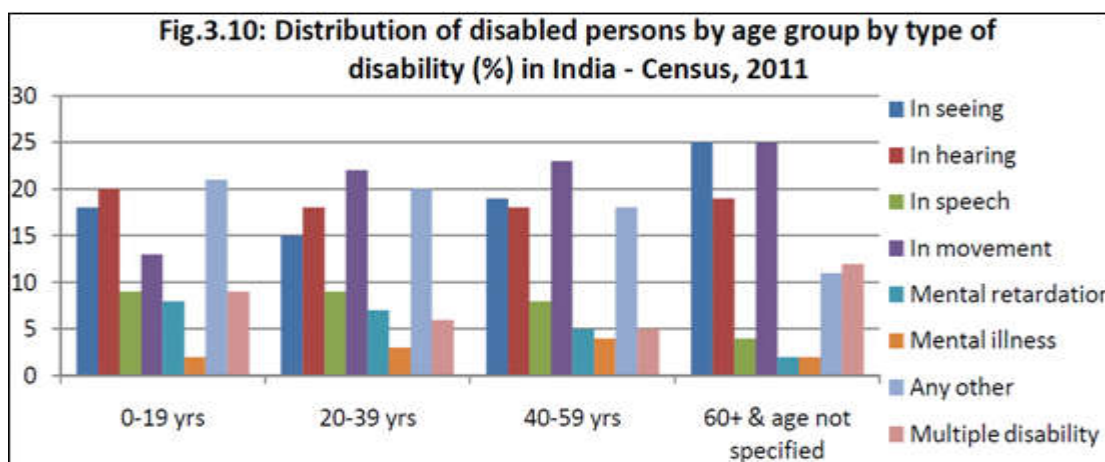
- Elderly (60+ years) disabled constituted 21% of the total disabled at all India level.



- The percentage of disabled is highest in the age group 10-19 years followed by age group 20-29 years for both the male and female disabled persons.
- Among the disabled males, 18% are elderly (above 60 years of age) whereas 23% of female disabled are elderly.

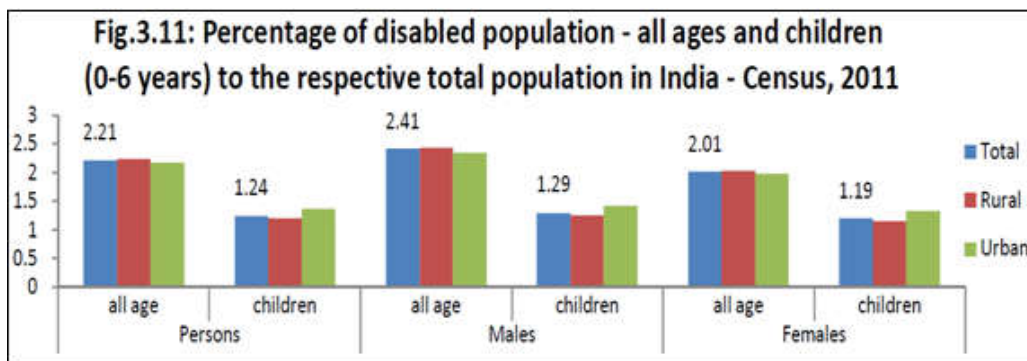


- Out of the total disabled in the age group 0-19 years, 20% are having disability in hearing followed by 18% with disability in seeing, 9% has multiple disabilities.

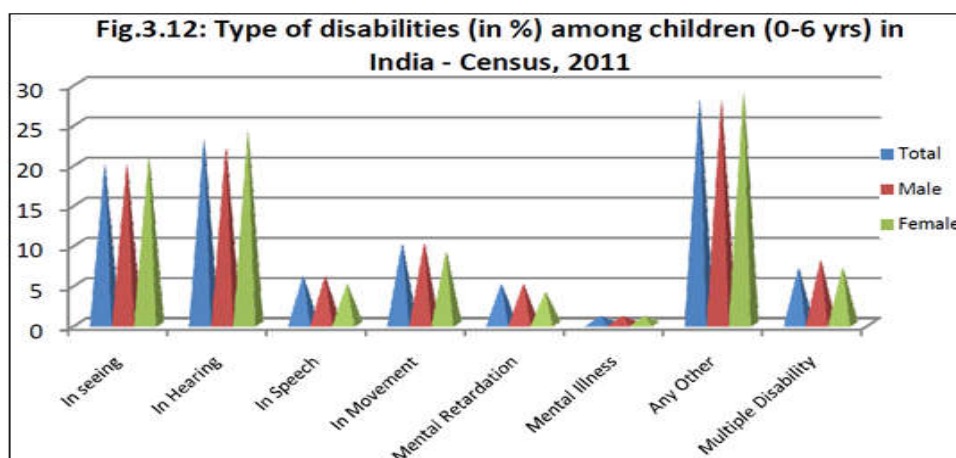




- Among the disabled in the age group 20-39 years, 22% are having disability in movement and 18% has disability in hearing. 6% has multiple disabilities.
- Among the disabled in the age group 40-59 years, 23% are having disability in movement and 19% has disability in seeing. 5% has multiple disabilities.
- Among the elderly disabled persons, the disabilities in movement (25%), in seeing (25%) and hearing (12%) are prominent. 12% has multiple disabilities.
- The disability among children is a matter of serious concern as it has wider implications. The Census 2011 showed that, in India, 20.42 lakhs children aged 0-6 years are disabled. Thus, one in every 100 children in the age group 0-6 years suffered from some type of disability.
- 1.24% of the total children (0-6 years) are disabled. The percentage of male disabled children to total male children is 1.29% and the corresponding figure for females is 1.19%.
- The proportion of disabled males to total males is higher than the corresponding proportion for females at all India and at rural and urban areas. The same pattern has been observed in the case of children (0-6) years.
- The proportion of disabled to the total population for all ages is higher in rural areas for both males and females, while for children, the same is higher in urban areas

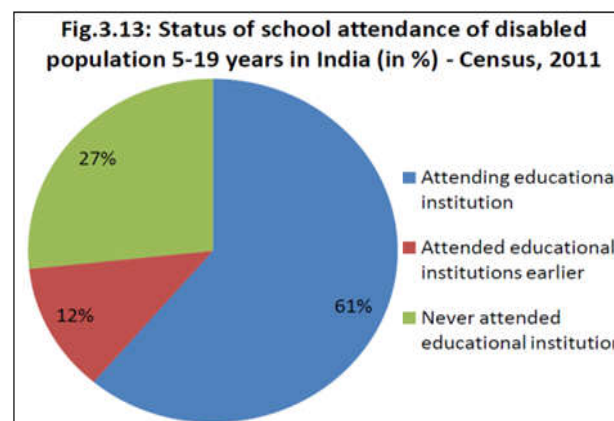


- 23% of the disabled children (0-6 years) are having disability in hearing, 30% in seeing and 10% in movement. 7% of the disabled children have multiple disabilities.

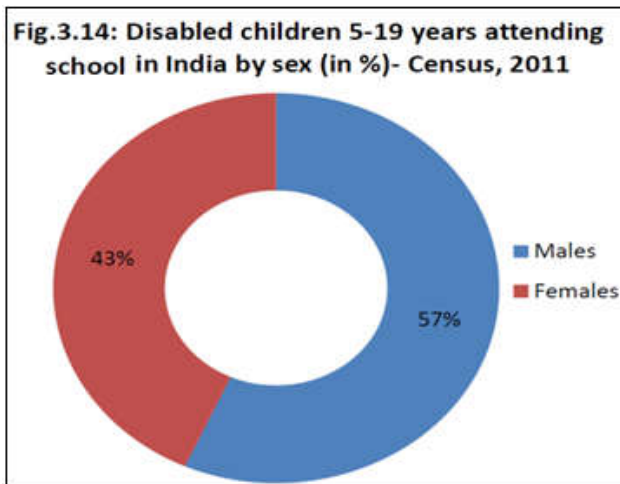


### 3.4 Attendance of Disable Children in School

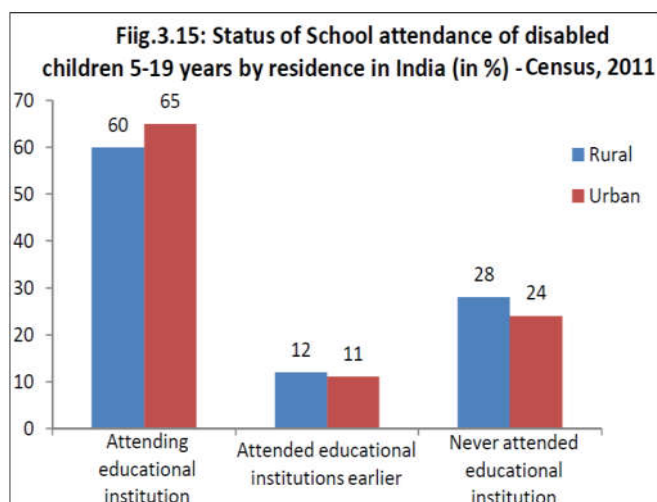
- 61% of the disabled children aged 5-19 years are attending educational institution.



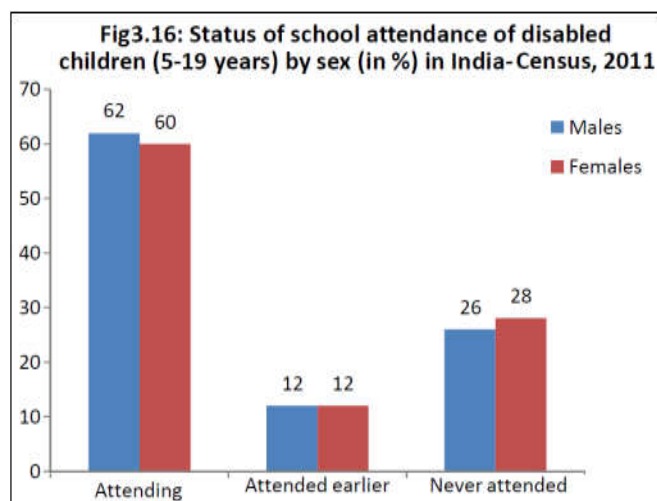
- Among the disabled children aged 5-19 years who were attending educational institutions, 57% are male children.



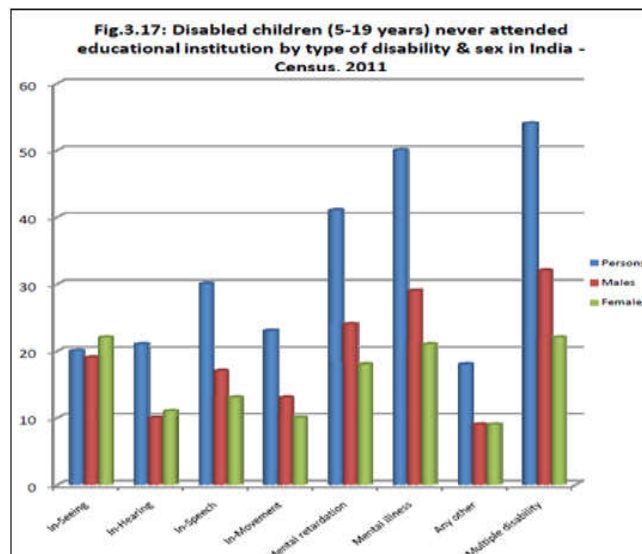
- The rate of school attendance of disabled children (5-19 years) is higher in urban areas (65%) compared to rural areas (60%).



- Among all the female disabled children (5-19 years), 60% are attending institutions, while among the male disabled children the 62% are attending educational institutions.

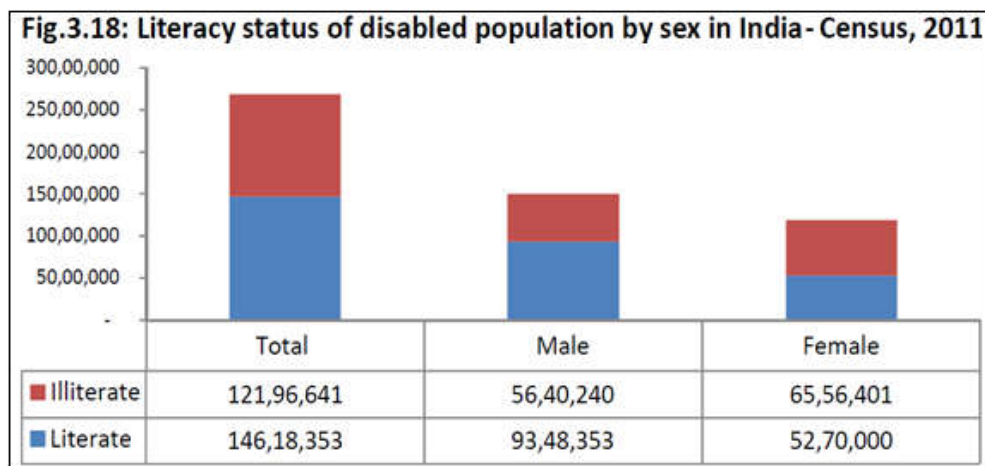


- 54% of the disabled children with multiple disabilities never attended educational institutions. Also, 50% of the children with mental illness never attended educational institution.

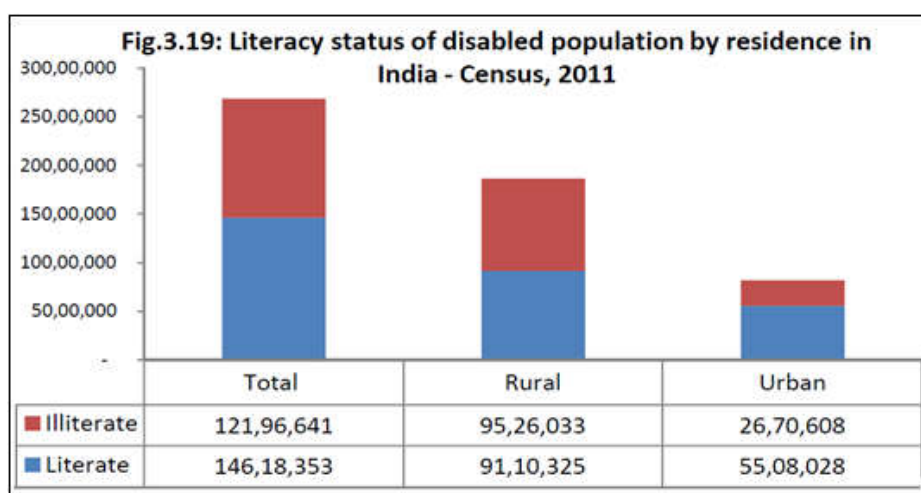


### 3.5 Place of Stay of Disabled Persons

- The Census 2011 showed that, 8.3% (207.8 lakhs) of the total households in the Country are having disabled persons of which 71% are in rural areas. Out of the total households with disabled persons, about 99.34% households are normal households, 0.42% is institutional and 0.24% is houseless households.
- Disability may act as a major impediment in formal education. However, the educational attainment of disabled persons is important in improving their living conditions. According to Census 2011,
- Of the total disabled population, nearly 55% (1.46 Cr.) are literates.
- Out of the male disabled population, 62% are literates and among the female disabled 45% are literates.

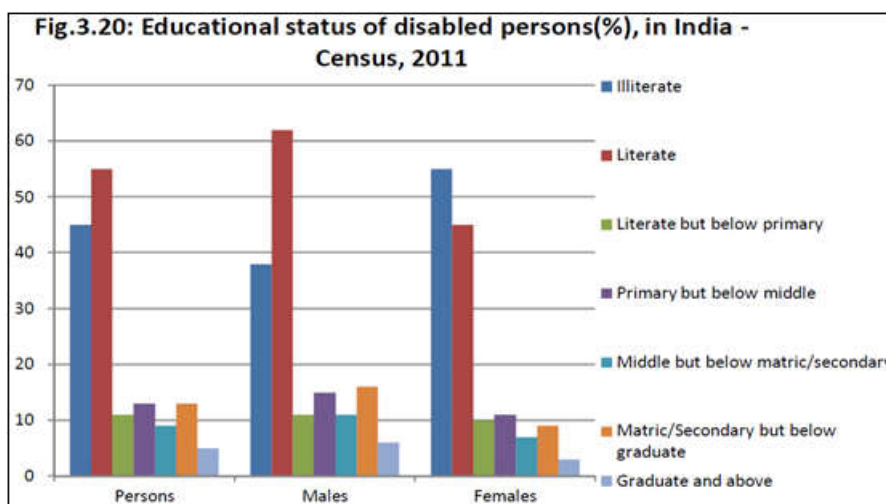


- In the rural areas, 49% of the disabled are literates while in urban areas, the percentage of literates among disabled population is 67%.



### 3.6 Literacy Status of Disable Children

- Among the total disabled persons, 45% are illiterates. 13% of the disabled population has matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and 5% are graduates and above. Nearly 8.5% among the disabled literates are graduates.
- Among the male disabled persons, 38% are illiterates. 16% of the disabled male population has matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and 6% are graduates and above. About 9% among the male disabled literates are graduates.
- Among the female disabled persons, 55% are illiterates. 9% of the disabled female population has matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and 3% are graduates and above. About 7.7% among the female disabled literates, are graduates.

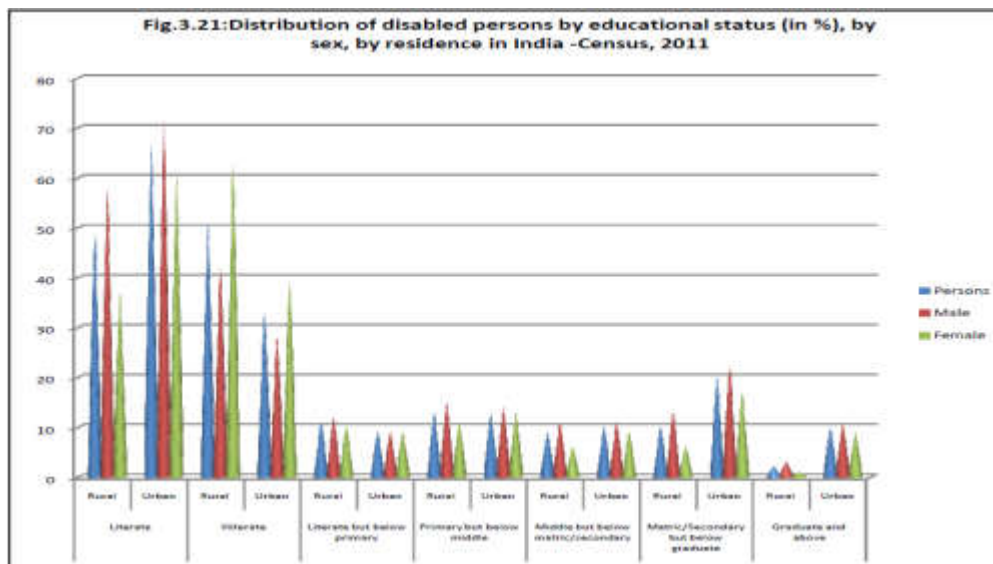


- Illiteracy was high among female disabled in rural areas.

**Table 2:** Comparison of Literacy status of disabled person by sex and by residence in India- Census, 2011

	Literate		Illiterate	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Person	49	67	51	33
Male	58	72	42	28
Female	37	61	63	39

- The educational level of disabled persons is better in urban areas compared to rural] areas, both for males and females.
- In urban areas, 67% of the total disabled persons are literate vis –a –vis 49% in rural areas. In urban areas 20% has matric/ secondary level education but below graduate and 10% are graduate and above, while in rural areas, the corresponding figures are 10% and 2% respectively.
- In urban areas, among the disabled who are literates, 15% of them are graduates, while in rural areas only 5% of them are graduates.

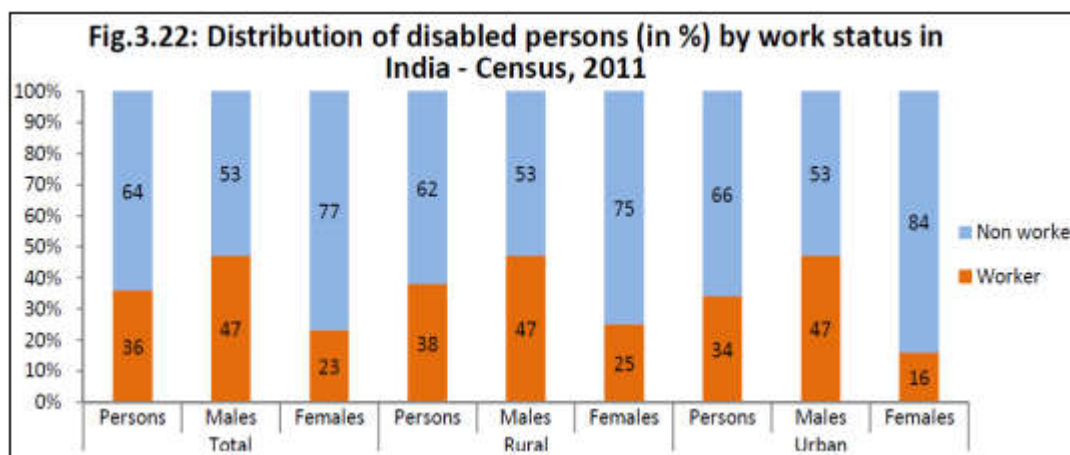


### 3.7 Employment Status of Disable Population

For the empowerment of disabled population, the attainment of education and participation in economic activity are extremely important. The work status of disabled persons, by sex, by residence and by type of disability and the attributes of disabled non-workers are discussed to throw light into the various aspects of their participation in an economic activity.

The Census 2011 highlighted that, nearly one third of the total disabled persons are working.

- At all India level, 36% of the total disabled persons are workers. Among the male disabled persons, 47% are working and among female disabled, only 23% are working.
- In rural India, 25% of the female disabled are working, while in urban India, the corresponding figure is 16%.



- Among the disabled persons who were workers, 31% were agricultural labourers.

**Table 3.3:** Distribution of disabled workers in India-Census, 2011

Total	Cultivators (CL)	Agriculture Labourers (AL)	In Household Industries (HHI)	Others
97,44,386	22,74,322	29,77,272	4,35,053	40,57,739
%	23	31	4	42

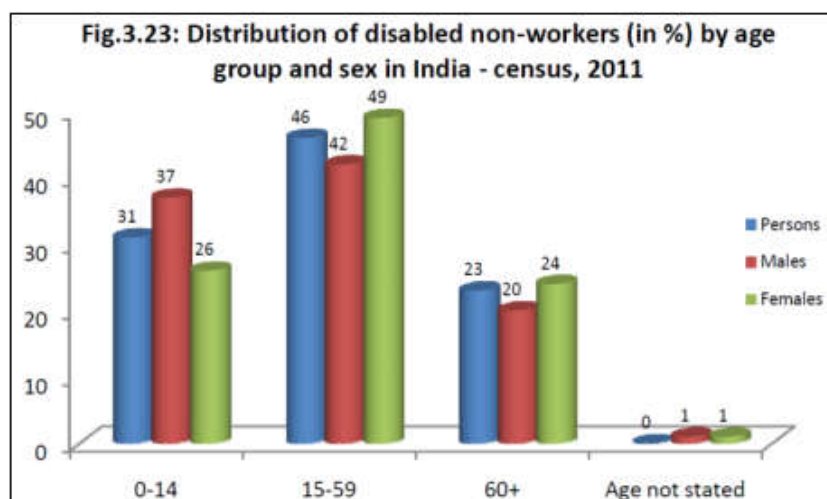


- One in every 25 disabled children in the age group 0-14 years is working, while 50% of the disabled population in the age group 15 -59 years is working.
- As per Census 2011, there are 1.7 Cr. disabled non – workers, among them 46% were males and 54% females.

**Table 3.4:** Proportion of Workers, Main workers and Marginal workers by respective age group to total disabled in India-Census, 2011

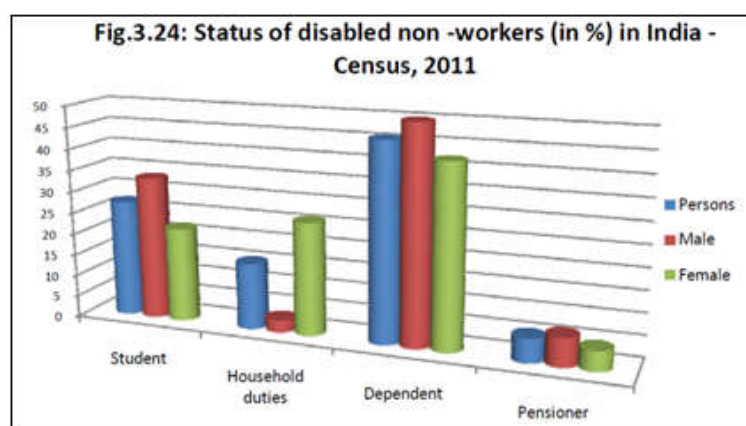
Disabled	Workers (WPR) <sup>2</sup>	Main Workers	Marginal Workers
Total	36.3	26.0	10.3
0-14	4.1	1.8	2.3
15-59	50.5	36.9	13.6
60+	28.3	19.3	9.0
Age not stated	37.5	26.2	11.3

- Among the total disabled non –workers, about 46% are in the age group 15 -59 years, 31% in the age group 0-14 years and 23% are 60+ years. Among the male disabled non – workers, 42% belonged to the age group 15-59 years, while 49% of the female disabled non-workers belonged to this age group. While the share of disabled non –workers are higher in 0-14 age group compared to 60+ years age group, for both male and female disabled non –workers, for females the difference is less.



- One in every two disabled non-workers is dependent on their respective families. Among the male disabled non – workers, nearly 33% are students, while the same among the corresponding category of females is 22%.
- Among the disabled non –workers, for all type of disability, percent of dependents are highest followed by

students and those performing household duties except for mental illness, where percent of disabled engaged in household duties is more than that of students.



- Among the disabled non –workers with disability in seeing, 42.7% are dependents and 28% are students; among those with disability in hearing 38.7% are dependents and 32.5% are students.
- In the case of disabled non –workers, with disability in speech, 33.5% are dependents while 37.2% are students, while among those with disability in movement 49.8% are dependents and 19.7% are students.

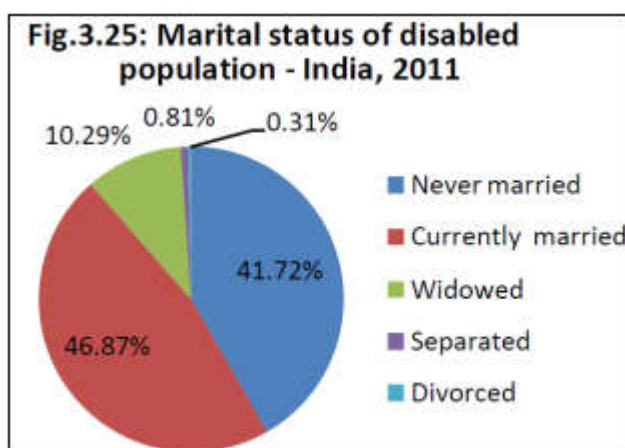
- Among disabled non-workers with mental retardation, 57.7% are dependents and 24.5% are students while those among the disabled with mental illness 66.6% are dependents and 9.3% are students. For persons with multiple disabilities in this category, 65.9% are dependents and 15% are students.

**Table 3.5: Disabled non – workers by type of disability and by major non- economic activity in India - Census, 2011**

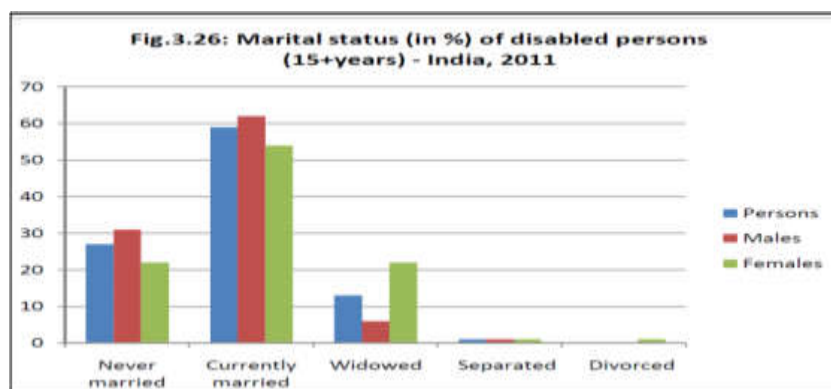
Type of Disability	Total (Millions)	Major Non-Economic Activity (%)						
		Student	Household duties	Dependent	Pensioner	Rentier	Beggar, Vagrants, etc.	Others
Total disabled non-worker	17.1	27.2	15.3	45.7	5.5	0.2	0.4	5.6
In seeing	3.1	28.0	17.3	42.7	6.7	0.2	0.4	4.7
In hearing	3.0	32.5	18.9	38.7	4.9	0.2	0.2	4.6
In speech	1.2	37.2	20.0	33.5	3.4	0.2	0.2	5.4
In movement	3.4	19.7	13.4	49.8	8.8	0.3	0.6	7.4
Mental Retardation	1.2	24.5	9.6	57.7	2.1	0.2	0.5	5.4
Mental illness	0.6	9.3	11.9	66.6	2.8	0.2	1.0	8.2
Any other	2.9	37.4	17.7	35.4	3.2	0.2	0.3	5.8
Multiple disability	1.7	15.0	7.3	65.9	6.8	0.2	0.6	4.3

According to Census 2011,

- 46.87% of the total disabled persons are currently married, whereas 41.72% are never married and 10.29% of them are widowed.



- Among the total disabled persons in the age group 15+ years, 59% are currently married and 13% are widowed. Among the male disabled, 62% are currently married and 6% are widowed while for female disabled, the corresponding figures are 54% and 13% respectively.



## 4. State Wise Distribution of Disable Population (According To 2011 Census)

### 4.1 State Wise Disable Population

As per Census 2011,

- At all India level, disabled persons constituted 2.21% of the total population. In 15 States / UTs, the prevalence of disability (proportion of disabled persons to total

population) is higher than that of the same at the all India level.

- Among the State/ UTs, Sikkim has the highest prevalence of disability. 2.98% of the total population of Sikkim has been reported as disabled. Daman & Diu (0.9%) reported the lowest prevalence of disability.
- The highest number of disabled persons is from the State of Uttar Pradesh. Nearly 50% of the disabled persons belonged to one of the five States namely Uttar Pradesh

(15.5%), Maharashtra (11.05%), Bihar (8.69%), Andhra Pradesh (8.45%), and West Bengal (7.52%).

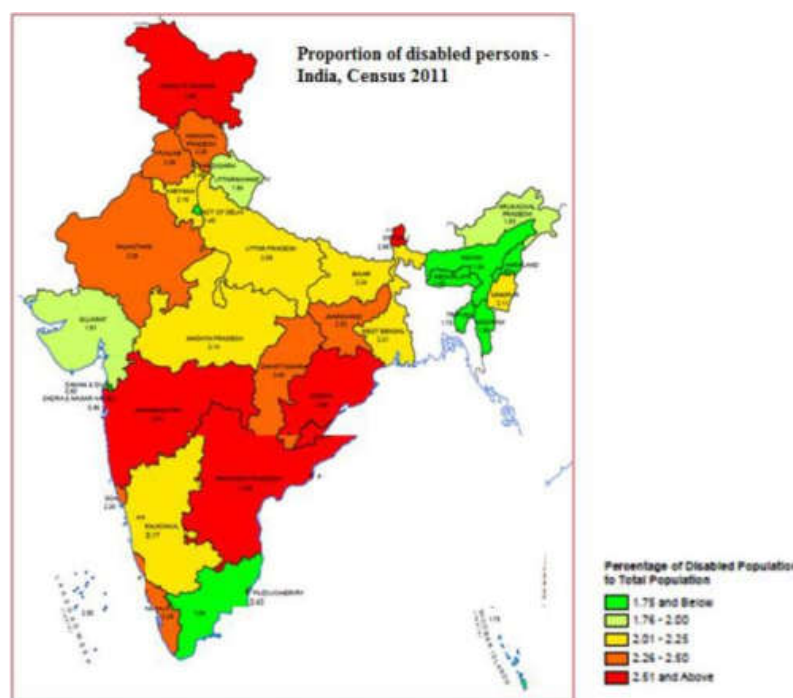
- At all India level, 7.62% of the disabled persons belonged to the age group 0-6 years. Bihar (12.48%) has the highest share of disabled children in the population of disabled persons of the State followed by Meghalaya (11.41%). In Kerala, only 3.44% of the disabled persons belonged to the age group 0-6 years, which is the lowest among the State/ UTs.
- The State of Uttar Pradesh is home for the highest number of disabled children (0-6 years). Four States namely, Uttar Pradesh (20.31%), Bihar (14.24%), Maharashtra (10.64%), and West Bengal (6.48%) together have the burden of more than 50% of the disabled children.
- At all India level, 36.34% of the total disabled population is reported as 'workers'. Among the State / UTs, Nagaland (51.92%) has the highest share of workers in the respective population of disabled persons followed by Sikkim (49.04%) and Arunachal Pradesh (44.69%). The proportion of disabled workers to the corresponding total disabled persons is lowest in Lakshadweep (19.88%), followed by Kerala (23.59%) and NCT of Delhi (27.92%).
- Among the disabled workers, the highest number of workers are from Uttar Pradesh (14.84%), followed by Maharashtra (12.81%), which have also the highest number of disabled persons.
- At all India level, 54.52% of the disabled persons are literates. Among the State /UTs, the highest literacy rate among disabled persons is in Kerala (70.79%) followed by Goa (70.31%). The lowest literacy rate among disabled persons is in Arunachal Pradesh (38.75%) followed by Rajasthan (40.16%).
- At all India level, 8.53% of the disabled literates are having educational qualification of graduate and above. Among the State /UTs, the highest share of graduates in the disabled literate population is highest in Chandigarh (19.68%) followed by Delhi (17.43%) and the lowest

share is reported from Lakshadweep (2%) followed by Meghalaya (3%).

- Under the various categories of disability like disability in seeing, in hearing, in movement, mental retardation, mental illness, any other and multiple disability, Uttar Pradesh, has the highest number while Bihar has the highest number of persons with disability in speech.
- The highest percentage of disabled children (5-19 years) presently attending educational institution has been reported from Goa & Kerala (73%) followed by Maharashtra and Lakshadweep (70%). The percentage of disabled children never attended educational institution is highest in Nagaland (39%) followed by Assam (35%).
- The percentage of never married among the total disabled persons of the State / UT is highest in Meghalaya (56%) and lowest in Rajasthan (31%) whereas the percentage of currently married among the total disabled persons of the State / UT is highest in Maharashtra (51%) and lowest in Mizoram (31%)

The Census 2011 revealed that,

- Among State/ UTs, the proportion of disabled persons to the total population is highest in Sikkim (2.98%), followed by Odisha (2.96%), Jammu & Kashmir (2.88%), Andhra Pradesh (2.68%), and Maharashtra (2.64%).
- Among State/ UTs, the proportion of disabled persons to the total population is lowest in Daman & Diu (0.9%), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (0.96%), Mizoram (1.38%), Delhi (1.4%) and Chandigarh (1.4%).



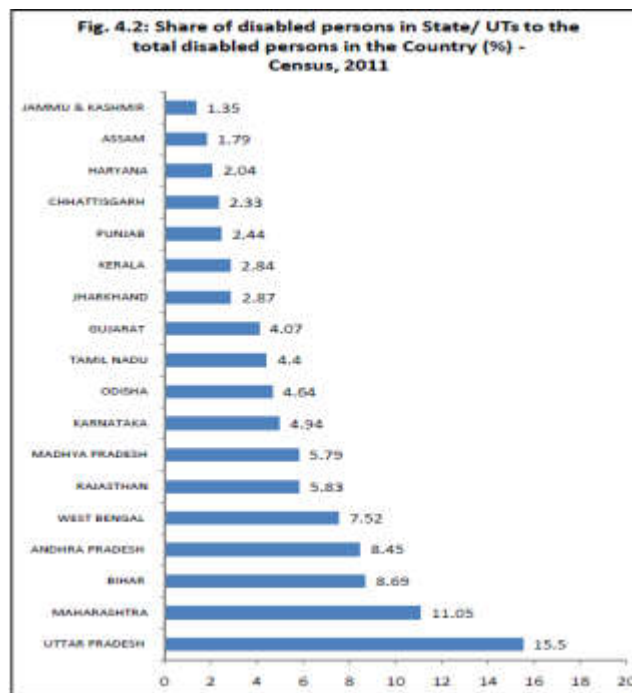
**Figure 4.1:** Proportion of disabled persons in State/UT, Census 2011

The Census 2011 showed that,

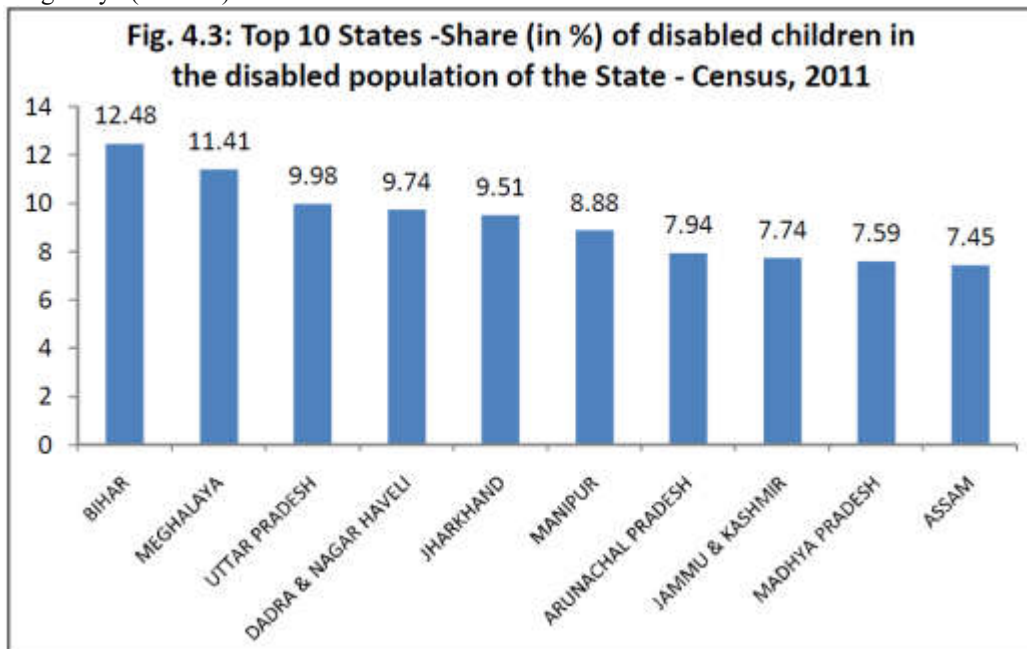
- The State of Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of disabled persons (16% of the total disabled in the Country) followed by Maharashtra (11%).

The State/ UTs which are home to more than 1% of the total disabled persons are depicted below:

- The share of the disabled persons in the remaining 17 States/ UTs to the total population of disabled persons is less than 1%.

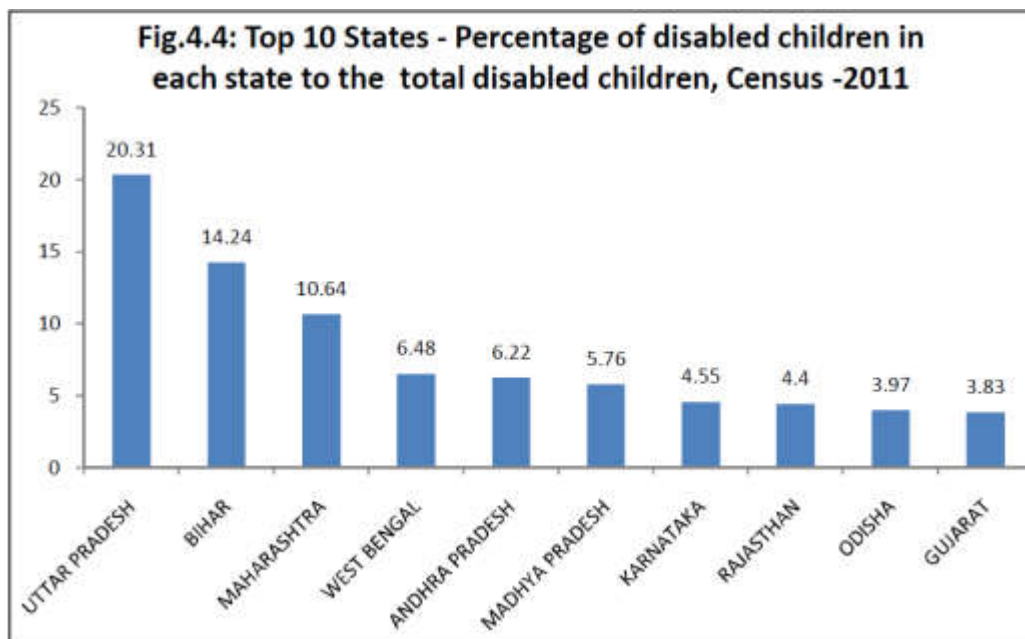


- The State of Bihar (12.48%) has the highest share of disabled children (0-6 years) in the disabled population of the State followed by Meghalaya (11.41%).



- The States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and West Bengal together contributed more than 50% of the disabled children (0-6 years) of the Country.





- The States of Nagaland and Sikkim, nearly 50% of the disabled population has been reported as 'workers'.

#### 4.2.0 STATE WISE WORKING STATUS OF DISABLED POPULATION:

A ranking of State/ UTs done on the basis of share of disabled workers to the respective disabled population is shown below:

Table 4.1: Share (in %) of disabled workers in total disabled population					
Rank	State/ UT	% of workers in the respective disabled population	Rank	State/ UT	% of workers in the respective disabled population
	INDIA	36.34			
1	NAGALAND	51.92	19	UTTAR PRADESH	34.79
2	SIKKIM	49.04	20	GUJARAT	34.79
3	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	44.69	21	RAJASTHAN	34.65
4	HIMACHAL PRADESH	44.37	22	ODISHA	34.32
5	MANIPUR	43.69	23	WEST BENGAL	33.98
6	MAHARASHTRA	42.13	24	ASSAM	33.91
7	MADHYA PRADESH	39.56	25	JAMMU & KASHMIR	33.65
8	ANDHRA PRADESH	38.61	26	TRIPURA	33.61
9	CHHATTISGARH	38.54	27	PUNJAB	33.07
10	KARNATAKA	38.05	28	ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	31.49
11	MEGHALAYA	37.74	29	CHANDIGARH	31.37
12	JHARKHAND	37.68	30	HARYANA	31.22
13	TAMIL NADU	37.46	31	PUDUCHERRY	31
14	BIHAR	37.12	32	GOA	28.79
15	MIZORAM	36.27	33	DELHI	27.92
16	DAMAN & DIU	35.25	34	KERALA	23.59
17	DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	35.19	35	LAKSHADWEEP	19.88
18	UTTARAKHAND	35.02			

#### Literacy status, educational level of disabled persons

- The States of Kerala and Goa have the highest literacy rate among the disabled persons (70%).
- The lowest literacy rate among the disabled persons is reported from Arunachal Pradesh (38.75%) followed by Rajasthan (40.16%).

#### 4.5 State Wise Literacy Pattern of Disable Population

A comparison of the literacy rate among disabled population vis -a - vis the literacy rate of the population is shown below:

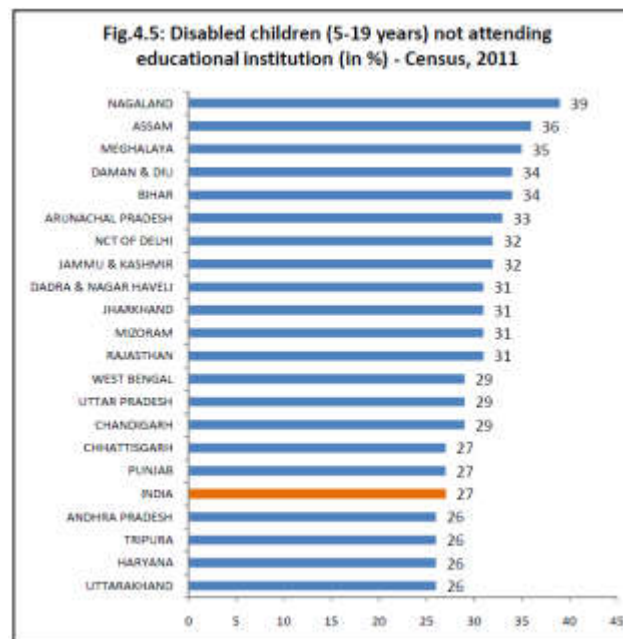
Table 4.2: Literacy rate among disabled persons vis -a -vis population literacy rate							
Rank	State / UT	% literates to total disabled	literacy rate -population	Rank	State / UT	% literates to total disabled	literacy rate -population
	INDIA	54.52	74.04				
1	KERALA	70.79	93.91	19	UTTARAKHAND	55.59	79.63
2	GOA	70.31	87.4	20	HARYANA	54.51	76.64
3	CHANDIGARH	67.66	86.43	21	ODISHA	53.17	73.45
4	MAHARASHTRA	67.64	82.91	22	MADHYA PRADESH	52.54	70.63
5	TRIPURA	66.37	87.75	23	UTTAR PRADESH	52.12	69.72
6	LAKSHADWEEP	66.25	92.28	24	DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	50.76	77.65
7	ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS	65.45	86.27	25	CHHATTISGARH	48.53	71.04
8	NCT OF DELHI	65.32	86.34	26	ANDHRA PRADESH	48.33	67.66
9	PUDUCHERRY	63.09	86.55	27	ASSAM	48.25	73.18
10	GUJARAT	62.84	79.31	28	MEGHALAYA	47.71	75.48
11	DAMAN & DIU	62.02	87.07	29	BIHAR	47.3	63.82
12	MIZORAM	61.92	91.58	30	JHARKHAND	46.93	67.63
13	TAMIL NADU	60.66	80.33	31	SIKKIM	45.51	82.2
14	KARNATAKA	59.45	75.6	32	NAGALAND	43.55	80.11
15	MANIPUR	58.64	79.85	33	JAMMU & KASHMIR	41.8	68.74
16	WEST BENGAL	57.34	77.08	34	RAJASTHAN	40.16	67.06
17	PUNJAB	56.62	76.68	35	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	38.75	66.95
18	HIMACHAL PRADESH	55.97	83.78				

- Among literates, the percentage of graduates is highest in Chandigarh (19.68%) followed by NCT of Delhi (17.43%).

#### School attendance of disabled children (5-19 years)

- The highest percentage of disabled children (5-19 years) presently attending educational institution has been reported from Goa & Kerala (73%) followed by Maharashtra and Lakshadweep (70%). The same is higher than the national level value (61%) for 19 States/ UTs. Daman & Diu reported the lowest percentage of disabled children (5-19 years) attending educational institution (45%) followed by Assam and Nagaland (51%).
- The percentage of disabled children never attended educational institution is highest in Nagaland (39%) followed by Assam (36%). The same is lowest in Maharashtra and Goa (17%) followed by Kerala (18%).

The situation in State/ UTs for the percentage of disabled children (5-19 years) not attending educational institution is presented below in the descending order (20 state/ UTs which topped the list):



## 5. Role of the Panchayati Raj Institutions For Empowering Disabilities

### 5.1 At District Level

The Panchayati Raj Institutions are the nodal point at the district level. Their role is to help plan, coordinate, monitor and wherever required regulate the implementation of various national programmes.

### **Specific role of the PRIS in 'Empowering Children with Disabilities':**

- Involve in the preparation of various schemes relating to the education and rehabilitation of children with disabilities.
- With the help of block level panchayats they should identify delivery system(s) for the education and rehabilitation of children with disabilities under various programmes.
- Ensure convergence of the various programmes which are meant to benefit the disabled.
- Evolve strategies for mobilising the community for various activities such as surveys, helping the field level functionaries, funds raising, monitoring of the programmes at the field level, etc.
- Identify special areas of assistance for different categories of the disabled, as per their needs.
- Ensure that requisite percentages of funds are allocated to various key programmes such as those catering to the prevention of disabilities and educational needs of the disabled.
- Arrange training of the public functionaries, NGOs and other social workers in handling of the problems concerning disabled persons in cooperation with various specialized centres.
- Should launch the programme of early detection of disabilities in which the village and block level panchayats along with gram sabhas are made to play an active role.
- Organize various activities so as to encourage the disabled children participate in various educational and rehabilitation programmes.
- Ensure that all the children with disabilities and their parents are aware of the various benefits and their legal rights. This can be achieved through provision of information in the form of pamphlets and small booklets.
- Develop good linkages between various agencies/departments such as health department / hospitals / education department / DIETs / voluntary organizations working in the field of disability.
- Ensure that the posts of various specialized personnel who are required for comprehensive care of the disabled are filled up immediately. These include specialists such as clinical psychologist, special educators and rehabilitation therapists.
- Arrange aids and appliances under the available programmes and ensure that they are made available to the persons identified by them in a timely fashion.
- Village panchayats should be entrusted with monitoring of usage of (through gram sabhas) these appliances and whenever necessary, they should arrange for the trained personnel(s) to demonstrate correct application.
- With the help of block level panchayat/village panchayats should arrange/locate craftsmen who can be trained to repair such appliances, where required, for their fitment.
- Oversee the functioning of services, rehabilitation centres and vocational rehabilitation centres for the disabled and promote linkages with their outreach activities.
- Identify bottlenecks in the implementation process and take corrective measures.

- Identify NGOs who demonstrate empathy and have a good track record, and are interested in taking up work for the disabled persons.
- To arrange with the help of trained professionals, preparation of rehabilitation packages and economic development schemes for the benefit of disabled persons.
- With the help of block level panchayats closely monitor the implementation as well as the impact of such schemes.
- Develop a mechanism for monitoring of the functioning of different NGOs working in an area, and promote their accountability to the community.
- Organize small groups of disabled persons for viable income generating activities with the help of block level panchayats.
- Promote required coordination and convergence for setting up of such activities.
- They should monitor the implementation and impact of these programmes, and where necessary, to introduce corrective measures. Block level panchayats can also be involved in the process.
- Panchayats at Block level in conjunction with the village level panchayats should take up the cases of discrimination against the disabled before they are referred to a competent authority under Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act.

## **6. Major Activities**

### **6.1 Role of Pris at village level**

PRIs can perform an important role by implementing the following areas of activities covered under various programmes for the disabled:

#### **Major Activities/ Programmes:**

- 1) Prevention of occurrence of disability
- 2) Identification of disability
- 3) Assessment of disability
- 4) Education programmes
- 5) Disability certificate
- 6) Facilities, concessions
- 7) Scheme of assistance to disabled persons for purchase and fitting of aids & appliances (ADIP).
- 8) Guardianship

### **6.2 Prevention of Disability**

Occurrence of disability (Primary Prevention) can be prevented to a large extent if adequate and timely preventive measures are taken. Further, a timely intervention can help to minimize the extent or effects of a disability which has already set in.

#### **Categories Require Special Attention**

- 1) Women during pregnancy
- 2) Mothers during lactation
- 3) Children below 6 years of age
- 4) Adolescent girls and boys



### Programmes and Services

- 1) Awareness programmes
- 2) Immunisation
- 3) Health check up
- 4) Prophylaxis against anaemia
- 5) Prophylaxis against night blindness
- 6) Goitre control programme
- 7) Micro-nutrient supplementation programme
- 8) Food Supplementation Programme
- 9) Health and Nutrition Education Programmes

### 6.3 Role of PRIs in Prevention of Disability

#### *Ensure that:*

- All the women during pregnancy get periodic health check ups as recommended.
- Health centre in an area is operated on a regular basis by a female health worker.
- Health check ups of women and children are done periodically.
- Regular supply and provision of services like immunization, iron tablets and vitamins is available in the health centres.
- Adequate quantity of quality food is distributed on a regular basis to the children, pregnant women and lactating mothers in anganwadi centres.
- Health and nutrition awareness programmes are organized regularly.
- Only the trained personnel should conduct deliveries.
- Awareness programmes for the prevention of disabilities are organized regularly mainly through camps, exhibitions by various health care professionals such as para-medical & medical doctors, anganwadi workers, community rehabilitation workers, social welfare workers, etc.
- PRIs (village panchayats) should provide the required space and facilities for organizing awareness and training activities.

### 6.4 Identification and Early Detection of Disabilities

Timely identification of an impairment, which is a secondary prevention measure, can reduce its impact upon the functional level of an individual and thus prevent profound disability.

#### **Who Can Identify Disabilities?**

- **At Home:** Parents
- **Outside:** Anganwadi workers, Teachers, Community Rehabilitation Workers, Health care professionals, Social Workers

#### **Role of PRIs**

- a) Ensure that all the children with disabilities are identified in a systematic manner, located in either the community, anganwadi centres, health centre or school; at least once in a year
- b) Make arrangements for training of personnel who are involved in identification and early detection of disabilities.
- c) Ensure that all the functionaries involved in identification and early detection of disabilities are adequately trained.

- d) They should contact the following in case of any problems-
  - Medical Officer PHC/CHC
  - District Education Officer
  - Child Development project officer
  - District Welfare Officer
  - Director, District Rehabilitation center.
  - Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in the State.

### 6.5 Assessment

After identification of a disability it should be fully assessed by a team of specialists in order to plan the necessary interventions.

#### **Following Specialists are Required for Initial Assessment**

- Hearing Impairment - ENT Specialist
- Visual Impairment - Ophthalmologists
- Mental Retardation - Psychologist/ Psychiatrist/ Pediatrician in clinics/ Hospitals, Special Educators.
- Loco-motor Disabilities - Orthopedic surgeon,
- Specialist in physical medicine & rehabilitation
- Learning Disabilities - Special Educators

#### **Role of PRIs in the Initial Assessment Process**

- Ensure that all of the children with disabilities in their area are assessed by appropriate specialists, who all may not be available at a single location.
- Provide guidance to the children with disabilities where else they can be assessed and refer them to hospitals, VOs, or National Institutes for assessment.
- Provide financial help to those who cannot meet the expense of travel for the purpose of disability assessment.

### 6.6 Education Programmes for Children with Special Needs

It should be one of the top priorities that all of the PRIs must strive to get every child with disability enrolled into a primary school for their comprehensive evaluation. This is done by a team consisting of a qualified physician, clinical psychologist and a special educator. This process of evaluation also determines the best setting of education as suited to each of such child. Children with mild to moderate disabilities may be integrated into normal schools. Those with severe disabilities would benefit most from the special schools. Children who drop out or have problems learning in the normal school have an option to join either an open or remedial school. There are children who only have a learning disability, they are managed in normal schools.

#### **1. Formal Schools**

The following types of children with disabilities must be integrated in the normal school system- formal as well as in non-formal schools.

- Children with locomotor handicaps (O.H.)
- Mildly and moderately hearing impaired
- Partially sighted children
- Mentally handicapped educable group (IQ 50-70)
- Children with multiple handicaps ( blind and orthopaedic, hearing impaired and orthopaedic, educable mentally



retarded and orthopaedic, visual impaired and mild hearing impaired)

## 2. Special Schools

Children with severe multiple disabilities who have a difficulty in coping with the regular schools should avail special schools. Most of these are residential schools; facilities of boarding and lodging and other services are provided free of cost. 40 per cent disability is a pre-requisite for admission into such schools.

## 3. National Open School (NOS)

It offers courses like the foundation course, notionally equivalent to class VIII level, secondary education, senior secondary course and vocational courses. The NOS also provides the programme of Open Basic Education for Universal Elementary Education (UEE), which includes programme for disabled children. It offers Open Basic Education courses through the following:

**a) Open Basic Education (OBE):** This project is for out of school children in the age group 6-14 and for adult learners. This has 3 levels Preparatory, i.e. (A) Primary i.e. (B) and elementary i.e. (C) which are equivalent to formal school standard of III, V and VIII respectively. This is for general information.

**b) Special Accredited Institutions for Education of the Disadvantaged (SAIED):** To cater to the needs of the people with physically and mentally disabilities etc. the NOS has accredited institutions for education of the disadvantaged. Academic Courses like Open Basic Education, secondary and Senior Secondary courses and vocational courses are being offered independently or in combination with academic subject through SAIED.

### Role of PRIs:

- Ensure that a team of a doctor, a psychiatrist and a special educator or a special trained teacher is visiting each school regularly, at least once in a year.
- Ensure that teachers at the block and cluster levels are being trained to manage children with disabilities in schools.
- Ensure that all of the teachers in any school are getting trained for inclusive education.
- Ensure that all children with disabilities (of any range) are getting benefits of education in a proper setting. Contact addresses should be provided to their parents.
- Encourage voluntary organizations to set up special schools in the area. These may be attached to the formal schools for preparatory classes.
- Ensure that all the children with disabilities are attending the anganwadi centres or pre-primary schools in their area.
- Ensure that adequate facilities are available in schools, and are being properly availed by the beneficiaries.
- Make arrangements for vocational training programmes of the children with disabilities at their right ages.
- Coordinate with centres of vocational training being run by various departments.
- Ensure for provision of barrier free environment in schools.

- Children with disabilities are not discriminated against and are allowed admission in appropriate schools.
- Ensure that the local schools or health centres treat children with disabilities with dignity and consideration.
- Normal students of a school should not be allowed to ill-treat or hurt students with disabilities.

## 6.7 Disability Certificate

### Persons Authorised to give Disability Certificate:

The respective Medical boards constituted at a State or a district level are the certifying authority to issue disability certificate. The board consists of a chief medical officer/ sub divisional medical officer in the District and another expert in the specified field. These examples are: an ophthalmic surgeon in case of visual handicaps either ENT surgeon or an audiologist in case of speech & hearing handicaps, an orthopaedic surgeon or a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation in case of locomotor handicaps and a psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist or a teacher in special education in case of mental handicaps. The respective disability certificate for mental retardation or other disabilities (visual, speech and hearing, and locomotor disability)

- The certificate is issued to persons with disabilities mentioned in the PWD Act, 1995. At present, disabilities like Autism and learning disabilities are not covered under this Act.
- The certificate is valid for a period five years.
- When there are no chances of variation in the degree of disability, a permanent disability certificate is given.
- In order to get a disability certificate a person requires a birth certificate and proof of residence. If a child is born at home, parents can get the birth certificate from their district magistrate.

### Identity Card:

Recently, the Government of India has issued guidelines to States/UTs for issue of identity card (IC) to the Persons with Disabilities to enable them to claim benefits/ concessions, which are made available to them by concerned States/UTs as well as the Central Ministries/ Departments.

### Role of PRIs:

- Help the families in obtaining disability certificate and/ or identity card by way of providing information and financial help to those who can not afford travel for this purpose, if required the respective centre in their district.
- Coordinate with the health department for up to date information relating to the issuance of DC/IC.

## 6.8 Facilities/ Concessions Given by the Central and State Governments for the Disabled Under Programmes

### Facilities/concessions are available for the disabled children under the following programmes.

- 1) Integrated Education for Disabled Children
- 2) Childrens Education Allowance
- 3) Communication – Postage, Telecommunication
- 4) Allotment of STD/PCO to handicapped persons
- 5) Travel-by rail, by air.
- 6) Customs concessions.

- 7) Conveyance Allowance
- 8) Award of dealerships/ agencies by Oil Companies.
- 9) Employment of handicapped through special employment exchange etc.
- 10) Reservation of Jobs and other facilities.
- 11) Economic Assistance- Public Sector Banks, Subsidy to disabled under Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), financial assistance through National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation.
- 12) Indira Awaas Yojana

The degree of disability should be at least 40% in order to be eligible for any concession/benefits. All persons with Mental Retardation are eligible for concessions/benefits. The classification of various concessions being recommended is applicable to the permanent disability only.

### **1. Scheme of Integrated Education for the Disabled Children**

The following monetary allowances are permitted for the disabled children under this scheme:

- a) Books and Stationery allowance of Rs.400/- per annum.
- b) Uniform allowance of Rs.50/-per annum.
- c) Transport allowance of Rs.50/- per month (if a disabled child admitted under the scheme resides in a hostel of the school within the school premises, no transportation charges would be admissible).
- d) Reader allowance of Rs.50/- per month in case of blind children after class-V.
- e) Escort allowance for severely handicapped children with lower extremity disabilities @ Rs.75/- per month.
- f) Actual cost of equipment subject to a maximum of Rs.2000/- per student for a period of five years.

### **2. Children's Education Allowance**

Grant of education allowance to the children & reimbursement of the tuition fee for Central Government employees will be governed by the Central Civil Services (Education Assistance) Orders, 1988. Under this order, the reimbursement of tuition fee in respect of physically handicapped and mentally retarded children of the Central government employees has been enhanced to Rs.50 p.m. (from class I to XII) in comparison to the general category where it is only Rs.20.p.m. The disabled children will, however, get other assistance under this scheme as per rates prescribed for the normal children.

### **3. Communication**

#### **A. Postage**

Payment of postage, both inland and foreign, for 'Blind Literature' packets is exempted if sent by surface mail. If packets are to be sent by air, then prescribed airmail charges are applicable. The relevant rule from the Post Office Guide is reproduced below.

#### **Exemption from Postal Fees.**

- 1) 'Blind Literature' packets are exempted from payment of the following fees besides being exempted from the payment of postage (I) registration fee, (II) fee for acknowledgement and (III) fee for the attested copy of the receipt.

- 2) Postage free 'Blind Literature' packets will be transmitted by surface route only, and if they are to be sent by air, the airmail charge as prescribed for packets has to be paid.

#### **Contents and Conditions of Posting**

Papers of any kind, periodicals and books printed in Braille or other special type for the use of blind may be transmitted by post as 'Blind Literature' packets, provided that they are posted in accordance with the below mentioned conditions. Plates bearing the characters of writing, sound records for the use of the blind, and discs, films, tapes and wires on which spoken message for the blind have been recorded, when sent by, or addressed to, an officially recognized institution for the blind, shall also be treated as 'Blind Literature'.

- a) The packets shall consist only of articles specially impressed as described above for the use of the blind, and shall not contain any communication either in writing or printed in ordinary type, except the title and table of contents of the book or periodical and any key to, or instructions for, the use of special type, or any enclosure except a level for the return of the packet.
- b) The packet shall bear on the outside the inscription 'Literature for the Blind' and the written or printed name and address of the sender.
- c) The packet shall be posted without a cover, or in a cover open at both ends, which can easily be removed for the purpose of examination.
- d) No 'Blind Literature' packet may weigh more than 7 kg.
- e) 'Blind Literature' packets are subject to the same limits of dimensions as printed papers.

### **B. Telecommunication**

#### **Concessional Telephone Connection to Blinds**

Telephone facilities to blind persons on concessional and priority basis are provided on the following terms.

*Rental Rebate* – 50% of the normal rental.

*Advance Rental* – 50% of the annual advance rental and bi-monthly rental as applicable to a private subscriber. This facility is available in Non-OYT (Special) category only.

#### **4. Preference in Allotment of STD/PCO To Handicapped Persons**

Educated unemployed persons are eligible for allotment of STD/PCOs. The educational qualification for the applicants is:

- 8<sup>th</sup> or Middle School Pass for rural areas.
- At least Matriculation or High School for urban areas.

### **5. Travel concession for the disabled**

#### **I. By Rail**

As per an order of Ministry of Railways, Government of India, the following concessions are available to the disabled persons.

#### **A. Blind Person**

A blind person traveling alone or with an escort, is required to produce a disability certificate from a government doctor or a recognized medical practitioner, so as to get the concession. Refer to the table below for details about

concessions. The concession certificate may be issued by the Station Master on collection of a filled up form and a copy of the original certificate which is duly attested by a Gazetted Officer, M.P., M.L.A. etc. may need to be produced while collecting the ticket. The blind person is not required to be present at the station for purchase of a ticket.

#### **B. Person with Orthopaedic Disabilities.**

The orthopaedically handicapped person traveling with an escort, on production of a certificate from a Government Doctor to the effect that the person concerned is orthopaedically handicapped and cannot travel without the assistance of an escort, is eligible for getting concession. All categories of Orthopaedically Handicapped persons/patients accompanied by an escort when traveling (for admission or on discharge from a hospital where the O.H. persons are treated or for consultation with a medical expert) have to produce a certificate from a government doctor/orthopaedic surgeon that the person is a bonafide O.H person and requires an escort before being allowed to avail the concession.

#### **C. Deaf & Dumb Person**

A deaf & dumb person traveling alone (both afflictions together in the same person) on production of a certificate from a government doctor is eligible for the concession.

#### **D. Person with Mental Retardation**

A mentally retarded person, accompanied by an escort, on production of a certificate in the prescribed form, from a government doctor, is eligible to get the concession.

#### **6. Custom Concessions**

The Central Government exempts goods specified in the table below, when imported into India by a handicapped or disabled person for his personal use, from the whole of the duty of customs and any additional duty subject to the condition that the importer produces to the Assistant Collector of Customs, at the time of importation, a certificate (from the Civil Surgeon of the District, Medical Officer or the Administrative Medical Officer or the Director of Health Services of the concerned State or a Specialist in the concerned speciality attached to a Government Hospital or a recognized medical college) to the effect that the importer suffers from the particular handicap or disability and that the imported goods in respect of which the exemption is claimed are essential to overcome the said handicap or disability.

Table:

- 1) Braille writers and braille writing equipment.
- 2) Hand writing equipment, braille frames, slates, writing guides styli, Braille erasers, script writing guides.
- 3) Canes, electronic aids like the sonic guide.
- 4) Optical, environmental sensors.
- 5) Arithmetic aids like taylor frame (arithmetic and algebra types), cubarythm, speaking or braille calculator.
- 6) Geometrical aids like combined graph and mathematical demonstration board, braille protractors, scales compasses and spar wheels.
- 7) Electronic measuring equipment, such as calipers, micrometers, comparators, gauges, block levels, rules rulers and yard sticks.

- 8) Drafting drawing aids, tactile displays.
- 9) Specially adapted clocks and watches.
- 10) Orthopaedic appliances
- 11) Wheel chairs.
- 12) Artificial electronic larynx and spares thereof.

#### **7. Conveyance Allowance**

Individuals who are blind or orthopaedically handicapped (with disability of upper or lower extremities) are to the granted conveyance allowance at 5% of basic pay subject to a maximum of Rs.100/-p.m., and further subject to the following conditions:

- 1) An orthopaedically handicapped employee will be eligible for conveyance allowance only if he/she has a minimum of 40% (permanent/partial) disability of either upper or lower limbs or 50% (permanent/partial) disability of both upper and lower limbs together.
- 2) Conveyance allowance will be admissible to the orthopaedically handicapped employee(s) on a recommendation by the head of orthopaedic department of a Government Civil Hospital.
- 3) In the case of a blind employee the allowance will be admissible after a recommendation by the head of ophthalmological department of a Government Civil Hospital.
- 4) Conveyance allowance is also applicable to the central government employees suffering from a spinal deformity (generally known as hunch back disability) and at the same rate as available to other physically handicapped persons.
- 5) The allowance will not be admissible during leave (except casual level), joining time or suspension.

#### **8. Employment of the Handicapped**

Assistance to the disabled persons in getting gainful employment is available either through the special cells in normal employment exchanges or through special employment exchanges for physically handicapped. Upto 100% financial assistance is provided in the case of special cells, and 80% in the case of special employment exchanges of state govt.s and union territory administrations.

#### **9. Reservation Of Jobs And Other Facilities For Disabled Persons**

##### **(i) 3% reservation in Gr 'C' and 'D' posts.**

As per the order of government of India, reservation of 3% in jobs have been made in Gr 'C' and Gr.'D' posts for the physically handicapped persons. The category of handicapped persons benefited are the blind, the deaf and the O.H. persons as given below:

Category of handicapped %age of reservation

- (1) The Blind 1%
- (2) The Deaf 1%
- (3) The O.H. 1%

For effective implementation of the reservation it has been advised to maintain a roster of vacancies arising in Gr'C' and 'D' posts on a yearly basis. In this way every 34th vacancy is earmarked for the blind. Similarly, the 67th and 100th vacancy of every successive cycle consisting of 100 vacancies is reserved for a deaf and an OH respectively.

**(ii) Definitions of disabled for the purpose of reservation.**

**Blind Person**

A blind person is one who suffers from any one of the following conditions:

- a) Total absence of sight;
- b) Visual acuity not exceeding 6/60 or 20/200 (snellen) in the better eye with correcting lenses;
- c) Limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of 20 degrees or worse.

**Deaf Person**

A deaf person is one whose sense of hearing is non-functional for ordinary purposes of life. When clinically tested understanding of even amplified speech is severely impaired. Most of such cases included in this category will have a hearing loss of more than 90 decibels in the better ear (profound impairment), or a total loss of hearing in both ears.

**Orthopaedically Handicapped Person**

An orthopaedically handicapped person is one who has a physical defect or deformity which causes an interference with the normal functioning of bones, muscles and/or joints.

**(iii) Identification of jobs :** In order to implement these reservations without loss of productivity, some posts are identified disability wise.

**(iv) Posting of handicapped candidates:** As per the decision of Government of India, disabled persons recruited for regional Gr 'C' and Gr 'D' posts may be given their posting (as far as possible) near their native place in that region subject to the administrative constraints. PH employees may be given preference in transfer near their native place.

**(v) Relaxation of ban order on recruitment to vacancies earmarked for PH persons :** As per a government order regarding ban on filling up of non-operational vacant posts, it will not be applicable for reserve vacancies to be filled up by PH persons.

**(vi) Carry forward of vacant posts under reserve category:** As per the Government order if a reserve category of person is not available and the nature of vacancy in an office is such, it may be carried forward for a period of three subsequent years.

**(vii) Appointment of VH persons as a caner in government department:** As per the decision of Government of India it has been instructed that recaning of chairs in government offices should be done by blind persons as far as possible. When the volume of work require a full time chair caner then a suitable post may be created in consultation with the finance department. For the purpose of recaning the chairs in government offices, vocational rehabilitation centres and special employment exchange for the PH persons may be contacted.

**(viii) Instruction to the appointing authority(ies) for intimating vacancies reserved for handicapped:** As per the existing instructions of the Government all the vacancies in Gr 'C' and 'D' posts irrespective of their nature and

duration are to be notified to the employment exchange and required to be filled through this agency unless they are filled through UPSC/SSC. It has also been decided that all of the appointees should send their request to Employment Exchange/Special Employment Exchange/nearest Vocational Rehabilitation Centres for P.H. for nominating suitably handicapped persons to fulfil specific opportunities.

**(ix) Grant of age concession to PH persons :** As per the government order it has been decided to extend the age concession upwards by 10 years in favour of handicapped persons. This applies to posts filled through the SSC and through Employment Exchange in Gr 'C' and Gr 'D' posts.

**(x) Relaxations in typing qualification:** As per the order, PH persons who are otherwise eligible for appointment to posts of LDC but cannot be so appointed due to their inability to satisfy the typing qualifications may be exempted from this requirement.

**(xi) Exemption of examination fee:** As per the order, PH persons recruited to Gr. 'B' and Gr. 'C' posts advertised by the UPSC and SSC will be exempted from the payment of application and examination fee as prescribed by UPSC/SSC.

## **11. Economic Assistance**

### **A. Public Sector Banks**

Under the 'Scheme of Public Sector Banks for Orphanages, Women's Home and Physically Handicapped persons', the benefits of the deferential rate of interest are available to physically handicapped persons.

#### **Eligibility**

Physically handicapped persons are eligible to take loans under this scheme, if they satisfy the following conditions:

- Should be pursuing a gainful occupation
- Family income from all sources should not exceed Rs.7200/ p.a. in urban or semiurban areas or Rs. 6400/ p.a. in rural areas
- Should not have a land holding exceeding 1 acre if irrigated and 25 acres if unirrigated
- Should not incur liability to two sources of finance at the same time
- Should work largely on their own and with such help as from another family member or a joint partner(s); and should not employ paid employees on a regular basis.

### **B. Subsidy to Disabled Under Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)**

This scheme was launched in 1999 with an aim to lift the poor families above the poverty line by providing them income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy. The list of BPL (below poverty line) households, identified through BPL census, duly approved by the Gram Sabha forms the basis for assistance to families under SGSY. This scheme covers all aspects of self-employment, which include organization of the rural poor in to self- help groups (SHG), training, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure build up, technology and marketing support. In the case of disabled persons, a SHG may consist



of a minimum of 5 persons belonging to the families below poverty line. Three percent quota is earmarked for the disabled persons under the SGSY. The subsidy limit under the scheme is Rs. 7500/- (30% subsidy) for an individual and Rs. 1.25 lakh for a group (50% subsidy). This scheme is being implemented by the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) along with the involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions, the banks, and the non-government organizations.

### **C. Financial Assistance Available To Persons With Disabilities**

The National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFD) has been incorporated by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India on 24th January 1997 under section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956 as a company not for profit. It runs several schemes to financially assist the disabled persons who are eligible for this purpose.

#### **Eligibility**

- Any Indian citizen with a 40% or more disability.
- Age between 18 and 55 years.
- Annual Income below Rs.60,000/- per annum for urban areas and Rs.55,000/- p.a. for rural areas.
- A cooperative society of disabled persons.
- A legally constituted association of disabled persons.
- A firm promoted by disabled persons.
- Each member of society/association/firm applying for loan should fulfil the disability, age and income criteria.
- Relevant background of educational / technical / vocational qualification or experience, to ensure an appropriate usage of the assistance.

### **12. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)**

It is a centrally sponsored housing scheme for providing dwelling units free of cost to the rural poor living below the poverty line at a unit cost of Rs.20,000/ in plain areas and Rs.22,000/- in the hilly/difficult areas. Three percent of its funds are reserved for the benefit of disabled persons living below the poverty line in rural areas.

#### **Role of PRIS:**

Ensure that all the children with disabilities are aware of the facilities and concessions available to them by organizing information campaigns on a regular basis .

### **5.2.7 Scheme of assistance to disabled persons for purchase/ fitting of aids & appliances (ADIP):**

#### **Eligibility of the beneficiaries:**

A person with disability(ies) would be eligible for assistance under ADIP scheme through authorized agencies, if the following conditions are fulfilled:

- 1) He/She should be an Indian citizen of any age.
- 2) Should be certified by a registered medical practitioner that he/she is disabled and fit to use the prescribed aid or appliance (refer to table at the end of the chapter).
- 3) Person who is employed/self-employed or getting a pension, and whose monthly income from all sources does not exceed Rs.8,000/- per month.

- 4) In case of dependents, the income of parents/guardians should not exceed Rs.8,000/- per month.
- 5) Person should not have received assistance from the government, local bodies and non-official organisations during the last 3 years for the same purpose. However, for children below 12 years of age this limit would be 1 year.

#### **Quantum of Assistance to the Disabled**

Only those aids or appliances which do not cost less than Rs.50/- or more than Rs.6,000/- are covered under this scheme. However, for visually, mentally, speech and hearing or multiple disabled, the upper limit would be Rs.8,000/- during their study upto XIIth standard. The limits will apply to individual items of the aid, and when more than one aid is required, the ceiling will apply separately. The actual amount of assistance will be affected by the total income, as follows:

Total Income Amount of Assistance Upto Rs.5,000/- per month Full cost of aid/appliance Rs.5,001/- to Rs.8,000/- per 50% of the cost of aid/appliance month.

Further, traveling cost would be admissible & limited to a bus fare in the ordinary class or railway by second class sleeper subject to a limit of Rs.250/- for the beneficiary irrespective of the number of visits to a medical centre. A certificate from the treating doctor or rehabilitation professional would be needed. Travel expenses subject to the same limit would be admissible for an attendant/escort accompanying the beneficiary. The beneficiary should attend the rehabilitation centre nearest to his/her place of residence, except in the north –eastern region, where he may be allowed the cost of travel outside the region upto the closest facility(ies).

Boarding and lodging expenses @ Rs.30/- per day for a maximum duration of 15 days would be admissible only for those patients whose total income is less than Rs.5,000/- per month.

#### **Aids and appliances can be obtained from the following implementing agencies:**

- 1) Registered societies/voluntary organisations working in the field of disabilities.
- 2) Registered charitable trusts.
- 3) District rural development agencies, India red cross societies and other Autonomous bodies headed by district collector/chief executive officer/district development officer of zilla parishad.
- 4) National apex institutes including ALIMCO functioning under administrative control of the ministry of social justice and empowerment/ ministry of health and family welfare.
- 5) State handicapped development corporations.
- 6) Local bodies – zilla parishad, municipalities, district autonomous development councils and panchayats.
- 7) Nehru yuvak kendras.

#### **Categories Entitled to get Aids & Appliances**

Category Mild Moderate Severe/profound Locomotor No (less than 40%) Yes (more than 40%) Yes Hearing No (less than 40%) Yes (41-50%) Yes (51% and above) Visual Yes

(20-40%) Yes (41-75%) Yes (76% and above) Mentally Retarded. Yes (IQ range:50-69) Yes (IQ range: 35-49) Yes (IQ Range 20-34: severe & <20: profound )

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage of impairment/IQ range. Maintenance cost is borne by the beneficiary.

### Role of PRIS

- Arrange applications requesting financial assistance for aids and appliances to be utilized by disabled.
- Correctly guide and/ or refer them to the concerned person(s) involved in this issue.

## 6.9 Guardianship

### Who is A Guardian?

A guardian is a person who has assumed the care and protection of another person, and is responsible for all legal decisions on behalf of that person, and his property. All parents are legal guardians of their child(ren) till the child attains 18 years of age. After that parents are no longer the legal guardians. This means that they cannot take any legal decision(s) on behalf of their child, or legally represent their child. The child is seen as having the ability to take those decisions by itself.

### The special situation of persons with. Autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities

Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities are in a special situation because even after they reach 18 years of age, they are not seen as being adequate to manage or take any legal decisions for their betterment. In case of Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Disabilities there may be need for only limited guardianship because of the availability of enabling mechanisms and /or scientific facilitation enabling persons to live with the certain disabilities. The National Trust Act, therefore, enables a person with above disabilities to have a guardian representing her/him throughout their lives. As per the Act, a parent can get legal guardianship of their son or daughter with disability and represent them even after they are 18 years of age. Parents are the Natural Guardians of their children till their child turns -18. So they do not need to apply for guardianship until then. After that the parents can apply for guardianship under the National Trust Act.

### Nature of guardianship

There are two kinds of guardianship:

- i) Guardian for the person
- ii) Guardian for the person and property

It is important to note that mental retardation is not infrequently associated with Cerebral Palsy, Autism and other multiple disabilities. Such disabilities who also have mental retardation will need legal guardians to represent them both for their person as well as their property. However, other persons with these disabilities without any mental retardation may perhaps require only a guardian for their person.

**Who else can ask for appointment of a guardian and be appointed as a guardian**

**Under the National Trust Act, apart from parents, a disabled person's relatives and registered organizations can also take the initiative to have a guardian appointed for a person with disability.**

### Procedure for Getting Guardianship

A parent or relative requires to move an application (Form-A) under Rule 16 (i) to the Local Level Committee asking for appointment of a Guardian.

The Form-A has details regarding the:

(c) Person with Disability (Name, age, nature of disability, address)

(d) The proposed Guardian (Name, age, relationship with the ward, address)

(e) Nature of Guardianship required i.e., whether it is for:

- The person or
- The person and property.

The Other requirements are:

- A disability certificate.
- 2 witnesses, who have to sign.
- Consent of the person proposed to be appointed as the guardian and the consent of the natural guardian (i.e. the parents, if available).

### Who has the authority to confer guardianship to parents or others under the nta?

A Local Level Committee formed at a district and / or state level and consisting of 3 members (district magistrate or the commissioner of a district, a representative of a registered organization and a person with disability as defined by the PWD Act), looks into the matters concerning guardianship. It is responsible for conferring the guardianship as well as monitoring the guardians.

### How Can Local Level Committees Be Set Up?

Parent associations, registered organizations etc. can approach the District magistrate or the district commissioner for setting up a local level committee in their area. Thereafter the proposal to legally constitute a committee has to be sent to the National Trust by either of the district magistrate or district commissioner or by the state government.

## 7. Summary and Conclusion

### 7.1 Summary

From the above discussion it was clearly seen that till there was a certain lack of opportunities was found in rural areas. As a result the proportion of disabled population was higher in rural areas in respect of urban areas. According to 2001 census around 2.0% people are disabled in respect of total population, in 2011 census the amount was increases and it stands about 2.68%. According to 2011 census, majority of disabled population was belongs to rural areas around 69% in respect of total disabled population. Beside this the statewide data depicts a clear picture about the increment of disable persons. The foregoing discussion reveals that the changes in the definition of disability in successive censuses

in India have a significant bearing on the disability estimates since colonial times. Although there may have been under-enumeration of disabled population in the pre-independence censuses, adoption of wider definition of disability (all types) in 2011 census explains the manifold increase in the prevalence of disability in India when compared to the pre-independence times. Furthermore, comparison of the percent distribution of the disabled by type of disability, which has by and large remained the same from British times till today, indicates that disability data provided in census have a significant comparative advantage census after census. This in turn, provides useful insights into the problem from policy viewpoint. Total disabled population have risen considerably from less than 1 million in 1881 to around 26.8 million in 2011 and the prevalence of disability populations has also increased from 369 to 2208 persons per 100000 populations across all types of disabilities during the corresponding period (1881-2011). It may safely be said that blindness which continues fluctuated from the colonial periods in India, so that, needs relatively more programmatic interventions, not to sideline the policy emphasis needed for other disabilities. Another important fact that emerges is that in general, prevalence of disability among females is lower than their male counterparts for all types of disabilities throughout the entire period studied. However, analysis of percent distribution of the disabled across disability types by sex suggests that while the concentration of females is more for vision, speech and, hearing as compared to males, the opposite holds true in the case of movement and mental disabilities, for the reasons explained above. It appears that only disability of seeing & movement rapidly falling down but other types of disability have been rising continuously. Its reveals that female are less susceptible to disabilities than males. So, the position of females in Indian society and existing social ritual stigma attached with their life. This analysis also brings out the fact that the proportion of mental disability is higher in state of Kerala and lower in Uttar Pradesh. Higher proportion of mental disability could be traced in the isolation due to the great volume of Gulf migration. All the states and districts have experienced a rising seeing disability and movement disability, but 2011 census clear that prevalence of hearing & movement disability gradually rising. This analysis also reveals that disability distribution of population, districts in India and with the predominant of disability by each state in respect to working and non-working status. There is also some variation in prevalence of disability between working and non-working population. This data reveals that North-East states like Sikkim; Nagaland & Manipur disabled population are proportionately lives disability and Anantnag, Pulwama, Gonda, kushinagar Cuttack, Bhandara and Kupwara districts are higher prone zone of any disability in India. In census 2001 developed states have shown lower work participation rate of disabled population. This scenario has also seen in the 2011 census year for male and female population. It shows highest changes occurred in Nagaland and Manipur district which has directly effect on our curvature of economic line. In recent times, the tactical importance of India has grown considerably in the international arena and gossips that India may emerge as the next global superpower are wide-mouthed. However, as mentioned above India consist 26.8 million disabled populations, which is not a healthy indicator. However, there is a need for the much

detailed investigation of the demography of disability which could provide insights into the problem and suggest the efforts that are needed to tackle the issue.

## 7.2 Conclusion

Panchayati Raj in India is on the way to have a strong rural administration, rather than the effective rural government. The three-tier system has been working in the different parts of the country for the last 40 years or so but certain glaring shortcomings were evident viz., lack of clear and scientific distribution of functions at the various levels; domination of higher structure over the subordinate structures; undue interference of the state governments and curtailment of autonomy of these institutions; lack of adequate finances; scant attention to the views and aspirations of people by the officials; parochial thinking on account of politicization of the Panchayati Raj Institutions; Zilla Parishads and the presence of the ex-officio members not in consonance with democratic principles; tight control of the government over the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Hardly the hopes of the founders of the Panchayati Raj have been realised when many unforeseen hurdles have crept in.

According to some scholars, through the Panchayati Raj Institutions have to certain extent led to the general rise of political consciousness among the rural people, at the same time it has paved the way for tensions and feuds among the rural population and still worse it had led to the concentration of power in the hands of a few. The majority of the rural people, who are poor, remained mostly isolated from the Panchayati Raj activities except for participating in periodical voting. Due to one reason or other elections to Panchayati Raj have been indefinitely postponed in several States, and such a trend would hamper the progress of democratic rural Institutions. According to many political commentators the objective of decentralization of the administration and special socio-economic development of the rural section has remained a myth. The reasons for this are that the Panchayati Raj Institution has no discretionary power but it is merely a distributing agency of the State Government and the inadequacy of finance, without which nothing functions. All these are valid criticisms on the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Infact to overcome these problems Ashok Mehta Committee had made certain recommendations like direct elections and a large-scale transfer of the present State Government functions at the district level to the Zilla Parishad. It was the Maharashtra Government which had set the pattern for powerful Zilla Parishad and it was followed in Andhra Pradesh. As a result of the recently amended Act the Zilla Parishad is bound to emerge as a powerful institution and with the introduction of direct elections to all the three tiers of the Panchayat theoretically all the three tiers may emerge as powerful structures.

The introduction of Panchayati Raj in India has created a good deal of awakening on the part of the people regarding the fair distribution of administrative and developmental benefits to all the sections of rural society. The concentration of privileges and facilities of few elites of high socio-economic category was deemed to have been given up instead an era of distributing socio-economic justice to all

segments of the Indian country side has downed. The millions of underprivileged and under developed rural people could aspire for improvement of their plight through the Panchayati Raj Institutions. In a caste-ridden society initiative on the part of the people to lead a good and free life depends largely on the various forces operating in the socio cultural milieu. The oppressed and depressed rural communities badly need a strong support for proper growth and development. A delicate and complex responsibility of providing adequate protection to weaker sections from exploitation by a handful of persons and enabling them to catch up with the higher echelons of the rural society was left primarily to the functional and organisational setup of Panchayati Raj.

For ages Scheduled Castes suffered from social prejudices and Scheduled Tribes and led a relatively isolated life and remained the most backward section of the community. The old traditional institutions of the Gram Panchayat - a strong old of a few families of higher caste and class underwent significant changes in the post independent period.

The Gram Panchayats, Panchayati Samitis and Zilla Parishads are corporate, statutory and democratic bodies. The structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions has been made quite flexible to accommodate the interests of all the sections of the village community. The acts of the various states provide that wherever persons belonging to weaker sections fail to get elected they will be co-opted in the bodies. This was necessitated to ensure the involvement and participation of all sections of the rural community in development of administration and the execution of programmes. Equitable distribution of benefits accruing from the developmental programmes would largely depend upon the proper functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, quite flexible to accommodate the interest of all the sections of the study group on the welfare of the weaker sections of the village community was noted the bias of Panchayati Raj Institutions as a whole against the weaker sections.

A critical evolution of the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions reveals that initial success soon started giving way to disappointment. Since the mid-sixties several reasons may be attributed to this development. In the first place Panchayati Raj Institutions gained political importance because of the proximity to the voters with the powers of patronage the political executives of Panchayati Raj Institutions gained considerable influence with the mass which they used to gain prominence in the higher level of leadership. It was this growing influence of the local leaders and the jealousy on the part of the higher level leaders that was partly responsible for the decline of Panchayati Raj during the last one decade. More than this, in some places the Ministers coming from the district retained their strength by supporting rival groups in Panchayati Raj. Hence this group politics has diverted the attention of the local leaders from development to politics.

Ashok Mehta Committee conceived of Panchayati Raj in very narrow terms. It reduced Panchayati Raj into mere administrative contrivance whose justification lies in terms of rural development. Panchayati Raj should have been

considered a system of government enjoying a certain measure of autonomy in the matter of its functions and existing in its own right. The Committee did not give proper recognition to the elective participative organism at the village level. Such a view makes the village too conspicuous by its absence. The Panchayat Raj Institution lacks inherent power of taxation. The Committee also failed to suggest a list of local taxes. The Committee did not suggest making Panchayati Raj a part of the organic law of the land. A constitutional base if suggested could have imparted both a sanctity and stature to the grassroot democracy. Election on party basis will pollute the rural atmosphere. The villages will become hotbeds of intrigues and animosities. But the Balwant Rai Mehta report and of Ashok Mehta report have their distinctive conceptual framework of analysis and examination. In July-August 1989, the Congress (I) Government under Rajiv Gandhi introduced a 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill with a view to revitalise and rejuvenate the Panchayati Raj Institutions. However, the Bill was defeated in the Rajya Sabha. The 64th Amendment Bill had sought to strengthen centralisation through holding Panchayati Raj Institutions' elections under the supervision of Election Commission, appointment by the Centre for Finance Commission to regulate taxes and grants-in-aid and introduction of auditing of the Panchayati Raj Institutions' accounts by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India who was to submit his report to the Governor. Thus on all matters wings of the State Governments were clipped and the rule of the Centre was perpetrated. However, the Bill was vehemently opposed by the opposition and could not be passed. In November 1989, the National Front Government soon after assuming power announced that it would grant powers to the rural democratic institutions to make them effective bodies. In two days conference of Chief Ministers held in June 1990, Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local bodies were discussed. The Government showed promptness in proposing legislation to give constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions, guaranteeing devolution of powers for developmental decision making to villages. The Chief Ministers' Conference decided that each state shall appoint its own Election Commission to supervise elections and have its own Finance Commission. The Government aimed at granting constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions, reservation of seats for women and weaker sections and the provision of safeguards to make supersession of local bodies difficult. The thrust of the reforms was to make Gram Sabha the base of rural set up. However, the fall of the government resulted in shelving the proposals of National Front Government.

However, no possible and feasible conclusion has been drawn out and implemented fully due to administrative and politically motivated problems. As a via-media to some extent the above suggestions may be adopted as a first step towards establishing a system of Local Self-Government at the village level. The development of Indian rural areas socially, economically and financially has to be achieved only by strengthening the Gram Panchayats. The solution too many political, economical and social problems of the present day India lies in democratic decentralization in a true spirit, which prepare the country to face the challenges of the 21st century.



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