

# National Policy for Persons with Disabilities

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
Government of India  
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## Introduction

1. The Constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and implicitly mandates an inclusive society for all including persons with disabilities. In the recent years, there have been vast and positive changes in the perception of the society towards persons with disabilities. It has been realized that a majority of persons with disabilities can lead a better quality of life if they have equal opportunities and effective access to rehabilitation measures.
2. According to the Census 2001, there are 2.19 crore persons with disabilities in India who constitute 2.13 percent of the total population. This includes persons with visual, hearing, speech, locomotor and mental disabilities. Seventy five per cent of persons with disabilities live in rural areas, 49 per cent of disabled population is literate and only 34 per cent are employed. The earlier emphasis on medical rehabilitation has now been replaced by an emphasis on social rehabilitation. There has been an increasing recognition of abilities of persons with disabilities and emphasis on mainstreaming them in the society based on their capabilities. The Government of India has enacted three legislations for persons with disabilities viz. (i) Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, which provides for education, employment, creation of barrier free environment, social security, etc. (ii) National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Pa lsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999 has provisions for legal guardianship of the four categories and creation of enabling environment for as much independent living as possible. (iii) Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 deals with the development of manpower for providing rehabilitation services.
3. In addition to the legal framework, extensive infrastructure has been developed. The following seven national Institutes are working for development of manpower in different areas, namely:
  - Institute for the Physically Handicapped, New Delhi.
  - National Institute of Visually Handicapped, Dehradun
  - National Institute for Orthopaedically Handicapped, Kolkata
  - National Institute for Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad.

- National Institute for Hearing Handicapped, Mumbai
  - National Institute of Rehabilitation Training & Research, Cuttack.
  - National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities, Chennai.
4. There are five Composite Rehabilitation Centres, four Regional Rehabilitation Centres and 120 District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) providing various kinds of rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities. There are also several national institutions under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare working in the field of rehabilitation, like National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bangalore; All India Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Mumbai; All India Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysore; Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi, etc. In addition, certain State Government institutions also provide rehabilitation services. Besides, 250 private institutions conduct training courses for rehabilitation professionals.
  5. National Handicapped and Finance Development Corporation (NHFD) has been providing loans on concessional terms for undertaking self-employment ventures by the persons with disabilities through State Channelizing Agencies.
  6. Panchayati Raj Institutions at Village level, Intermediary level and District level have been entrusted with the welfare of persons with disabilities.
  7. India is a signatory to the Declaration on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asia Pacific Region. India is also a signatory to the Biwako Millennium Framework for action towards an inclusive, barrier free and rights based society. India is currently participating in the negotiations on the UN Convention on Protection and promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

## **National Policy Statement**

The National Policy recognizes that Persons with Disabilities are valuable human resource for the country and seeks to create an environment that provides them equal opportunities, protection of their rights and full participation in society. The focus of the policy shall be on the following:

### **Prevention of Disabilities**

Since disability, in a large number of cases, is preventable, there will be strong emphasis on prevention of disabilities. Programme for prevention of diseases, which result in disability and the creation of awareness regarding measures to be taken for prevention of disabilities during the period of pregnancy and thereafter will be intensified and their coverage expanded.

### **Rehabilitation Measures**

Rehabilitation measures can be classified into three distinct groups: (i) physical rehabilitation, which includes early detection and intervention, counseling & medical interventions and

provision of aids & appliances. It will also include the development of rehabilitation professionals. (ii) educational rehabilitation including vocational education and (iii) economic rehabilitation for a dignified life in society.

## **Physical Rehabilitation Strategies**

### **a. Early Detection and Intervention**

Early detection of disability and intervention through drug or non-drug therapies helps in minimization of impact of disability. Therefore, there will be emphasis on early detection and early intervention, and necessary facilities will be created towards this end.

Government will take measures to disseminate information regarding availability of such facilities to the people especially in rural areas.

### **b. Counseling & Medical Rehabilitation**

- Physical rehabilitation measures including counseling, strengthening capacities of persons with disabilities and their families, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, psychotherapy, surgical correction and intervention, vision assessment, vision stimulation, speech therapy, audiological rehabilitation and special education shall be extended to cover all the districts in the country by active involvement and participation of State Governments, local level institutions, NGOs including associations of parents and persons with disabilities.
- Currently, rehabilitation services are largely available in and around urban areas. Since seventy five percent persons with disabilities live in rural areas, the services run by professionals will be extended to cover uncovered and un-served areas. Privately owned rehabilitation service centres shall be regulated for maintenance of minimum standards which shall be laid down.
- To expand coverage in rural and unserved areas, new District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) will be set up with support from the State Government.
- The National Rural Health Mission through Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) addresses the health needs of rural population, especially the vulnerable sections of society. The ASHA inter-alia will take care of the comprehensive services to the persons with disabilities at the grass root level.

### **c. Assistive Devices**

- The Government of India has been assisting persons with disabilities in procuring durable and scientifically manufactured, modern aids and appliances of ISI standard that can promote their physical, social and psychological independence by reducing the effect of disabilities.
- Every year through National Institutes, State Governments, DDRCs and NGOs, persons with disabilities are provided with devices such as prostheses and orthoses, tricycles, wheel chair, surgical footwear and devices for activities of

daily living, learning equipments (Braille writing equipments, Dictaphone, CD player/ tape recorder), low vision aids, special mobility aids like canes for blind, hearing aids, educational kits, communication aids, assistive & alerting devices and devices suitable for the persons with mental disabilities. The availability of devices will be expanded to cover uncovered and under-serviced areas.

- Private, public and joint sector enterprises involved in the manufacture of high tech assistive devices for persons with disabilities will be provided financial support by the public sector banks.

#### **d. Development of Rehabilitation Professionals**

Human resource requirements for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities will be assessed and development plan will be prepared so that the rehabilitation strategies do not suffer from lack of manpower.

### **Education for Persons with Disabilities**

1. Education is the most effective vehicle of social and economic empowerment. In keeping with the spirit of the Article 21A of the Constitution guaranteeing education as a fundamental right and Section 26 of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995, free and compulsory education has to be provided to all children with disabilities up to the minimum age of 18 years. According to the Census, 2001, fifty-one percent persons with disabilities are illiterate. This is a very large percentage. There is a need for mainstreaming of the persons with disabilities in the general education system through Inclusive education.
2. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) launched by the Government has the goal of eight years of elementary schooling for all children including children with disabilities in the age group of 6-14 years by 2010. Children with disabilities in the age group of 15-18 years are provided free education under Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) Scheme.
3. Under SSA, a continuum of educational options, learning aids and tools, mobility assistance, support services etc. are being made available to students with disabilities. This includes education through an open learning system and open schools, alternative schooling, distance education, special schools, wherever necessary home based education, itinerant teacher model, remedial teaching, part time classes, Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) and vocational education.
4. IEDC Scheme implemented through the State Governments, Autonomous Bodies and Voluntary Organizations provides hundred percent financial assistance for various facilities like special teachers, books and stationery, uniform, transport, readers allowance for the visually handicapped, hostel allowance, equipment cost, removal/modification of architectural barriers, financial assistance for purchase/production of instructional material, training of general teachers and equipment for resource rooms.
5. There will be concerted effort on the part of the Government to improve identification of children with disabilities through regular surveys, their enrollment in appropriate schools

and their continuation till they successfully complete their education. The Government will endeavor to provide right kind of learning material and books to the children with disabilities, suitably trained and sensitized teachers and schools which are accessible and disabled friendly.

6. Government of India is providing scholarships to students with disabilities for pursuing studies at post school level. Government will continue to support the scholarships and expand its coverage.
7. Facilities for technical and vocational education designed to inculcate and bolster skill development suited to various types of productive activities by adaptation of the existing institutes or accelerated setting up of institutes in un-served/underserved areas will be encouraged. NGOs will also be encouraged to provide vocational training.
8. Persons with disabilities will be provided access to the Universities, technical institutions and other institutions of higher learning to pursue higher and professional courses.

### **Economic Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities**

Economic rehabilitation of Persons with disabilities comprise of both wage employment in organized sector and self-employment. Supporting structure of services by way of vocational rehabilitation centres and vocational training centres will be developed to ensure that disabled persons in both urban and rural areas have increased opportunities for productive and gainful employment.

Strategies for economic empowerment of persons with disabilities would be the following.

#### **i. Employment in Government Establishments**

The PWD Act, 1995 provides for 3% reservation in employment in the establishments of Government of India and Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) against identified posts. The status of reservation for Government in various Ministries/ Departments against identified posts in Group A, B, C & D is 3.07%, 4.41%, 3.76% and 3.18% respectively. In PSUs, the reservation status in Group A, B, C & D is 2.78%, 8.54%, 5.04% and 6.75%, respectively. Government will ensure reservation in identified posts in the Government sector including public sector undertakings in accordance with the provisions of the PWD Act, 1995. The list of identified posts, which was notified in 2001, will be reviewed and updated.

#### **ii. Wage employment in Private sector**

Development of appropriate skills in persons with disabilities will be encouraged for their employability in private sector. Vocational rehabilitation and training Centres engaged in developing appropriate skills amongst persons with disabilities keeping in view their potential and abilities will be encouraged to expand their services. Considering rapid growth of employment opportunities in service sector, persons with disabilities will be encouraged to undertake skill training suitable to the market requirement. Pro-active measures like incentives, awards, tax exemptions etc. will be taken to encourage the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector.

### iii. **Self-employment**

Considering slow pace of growth in employment opportunities in the organized sector, self-employment of persons with disabilities will be promoted. This will be done through vocational education and management training. Further, the existing system of providing loans at softer terms from the NHFDC will be improved to make it easily accessible with transparent and efficient procedures of processing. The Government will also encourage self-employment by providing incentives, tax concessions, exemptions from duties, preferential treatment for procurement of goods and services by the Government from the enterprises of persons with disabilities, etc. Priority in financial support will be given to Self Help Groups formed by the persons with disabilities.

### **Women with disabilities**

1. According to Census-2001, there are 93.01 lakh women with disabilities, which constitute 42.46 percent of total disabled population. Women with disabilities require protection against exploitation and abuse. Special programmes will be developed for education, employment and providing of other rehabilitation services to women with disabilities keeping in view their special needs. Special educational and vocation training facilities will be setup. Programmes will be undertaken to rehabilitate abandoned disabled women/ girls by encouraging their adoption in families, support to house them and impart them training for gainful employment skills. The Government will encourage the projects where representation of women with disabilities is ensured at least to the extent of twenty five percent of total beneficiaries.
2. Steps shall be taken to provide short duration stay homes for women with disabilities, hostels for working disabled women, and homes for aged disabled women.
3. It has been noted that women with disabilities have serious difficulty in looking after their children. The Government will take up a programme to provide financial support to women with disabilities so that they may hire services to look after their children. Such support will be limited to two children for a period not exceeding two years.

### **Children with Disabilities**

Children with disabilities are the most vulnerable group and need special attention. The Government would strive to:

1. Ensure right to care, protection and security for children with disabilities;
2. Ensure the right to development with dignity and equality creating an enabling environment where children can exercise their rights, enjoy equal opportunities and full participation in accordance with various statutes.
3. Ensure inclusion and effective access to education, health, vocational training along with specialized rehabilitation services to children with disabilities.
4. Ensure the right to development as well as recognition of special needs and of care, and protection of children with severe disabilities.

### **Barrier-free Environment**

Barrier-free environment enables people with disabilities to move about safely and freely, and use the facilities within the built environment. The goal of barrier free design is to provide an environment that supports the independent functioning of individuals so that they can participate without assistance, in every day activities. Therefore, to the maximum extent possible, buildings/ places/transportation systems for public use will be made barrier free.

## **Issue of Disability Certificates**

The Government of India has notified guidelines for evaluation of the disabilities and procedure for certification. The Government will ensure that the persons with disabilities obtain the disability certificates without any difficulty in the shortest possible time by adoption of simple, transparent and client-friendly procedures.

## **Social Security**

1. Disabled persons, their families and care givers incur substantial additional expenditure for facilitating activities of daily living, medical care, transportation, assistive devices, etc. Therefore, there is a need to provide them social security by various means. Central Government has been providing tax relief to persons with disabilities and their guardians. The State Governments/ U.T. Administrations have been providing unemployment allowance or disability pension. The State Governments will be encouraged to develop a comprehensive social security policy for persons with disabilities.
2. Parents of severely disabled persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities feel a sense of insecurity regarding the welfare of their wards after their death. The National Trust for persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities has been providing legal guardians through Local Level Committee. They are also implementing the Supported Guardianship Scheme to provide financial security to persons with the above-mentioned severe disabilities who are destitute and abandoned by supporting the cost of guardianship. This scheme, which is presently implemented in a few districts, shall be expanded to cover other areas in a phased manner.

## **Promotion of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)**

The National Policy recognizes the NGO sector as a very important institutional mechanism to provide affordable services to complement the endeavors of the Government. The NGO sector is a vibrant and growing one. It has played a significant role in the provisions of services for persons with disabilities.

Some of the NGOs are also undertaking human resource development and research activities. Government has also been actively involving them in policy formulation, planning, implementation, monitoring and has been seeking their advice on various issues relating to persons with disabilities.

Interaction with NGOs will be enhanced on various disability issues regarding planning, policy formulation and implementation. Networking, exchange of information and sharing of good

practices amongst NGOs will be encouraged and facilitated.

The following programmes will be undertaken:

- i. A Directory of NGOs working in the field of disability will be prepared properly mapping them by geographic regions along with their major activities. For NGOs supported by the Central/State Governments, their resource position, both financial and manpower will also be reported. Disabled persons organizations, family associations and advocacy groups of parents of disabled persons shall also be covered in the directory identifying them separately.
- ii. There are regional/State imbalances in the development of the NGO movement. Steps will be taken to encourage and accord preference to NGOs working in the underserved and inaccessible areas. Reputed NGOs shall also be encouraged to take up projects in such areas.
- iii. NGOs will be encouraged to develop and adopt minimum standards, codes of conduct and ethics.
- iv. NGOs will be provided opportunities for orientation and training of their human resource. Training in management skill which is already being provided, will be strengthened. Transparency, accountability, procedural simplification etc. will be guiding factors for improvement in the NGO-Government partnership.
- v. The NGOs shall be encouraged to mobilize their own resources to reduce the dependence on grants-in-aid from the Government and also to improve the availability of funds in the sector. Tapering of assistance in a schematic manner will also be considered so that the number of NGOs to be helped within the available resources could be maximized. Towards this end, NGOs will be trained in resource mobilization.

### **Collection of regular information on Persons with Disabilities**

1. There is a need for regular collection, compilation and analysis of data relating to socio-economic conditions of persons with disabilities. The National Sample Survey Organization has been collecting information on Socio-economic conditions of persons with disabilities on regular basis once in ten years since 1981. The Census has also started collection of information on persons with disabilities from the Census-2001. The National Sample Survey Organization will have to collect the information on persons with disabilities at least once in five years. The differences in the definitions adopted by the two agencies will be reconciled.
2. A comprehensive website for persons with disability will be created under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. Organizations both in public and private sector will be encouraged to make their websites accessible to the visually impaired using Screen Reading Technologies.

### **Research**

For improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities, research will be supported on their socio-economic and cultural context, cause of disabilities, early childhood education methodologies, development of user-friendly aids and appliances and all matters connected with

disabilities which will significantly alter the quality of their life and civil society's ability to respond to their concerns. Wherever persons with disabilities are subjected to research interventions, their or their family member or caregiver's consent is mandatory.

## **Sports, Recreation and Cultural life**

The contribution of sports for its therapeutic and community spirit is undeniable. Persons with disabilities have right to access sports, recreation and cultural facilities. The Government will take necessary steps to provide them opportunity for participation in various sports, recreation and cultural activities.

## **Amendments to existing Acts dealing with the Persons with Disabilities**

Ten years have passed since the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 came into operation. With the experience gained in the implementation of the Act and developments in the disability sector, certain amendments to the Act have become necessary. These amendments will be carried out in consultation with the stakeholders. RCI and National Trust Acts will also be reviewed and if necessary, required amendments would be made.

## **Principal Areas of Intervention**

### **Prevention, Early Detection and Intervention**

In order to ensure prevention and early detection of disabilities, the following action will be taken:

- i. National, regional and local programmes of immunization (for children as well as expectant mothers), public health and sanitation will be expanded.
- ii. Medical and para-medical personnel will be adequately trained and equipped for early detection of disability amongst children.
- iii. Training modules and facilities in disability prevention, early detection and intervention will be developed for medical and para medical health functionaries and Anganwadi workers.
- iv. Training programmes of postgraduate, undergraduate degree and diploma in medical education will include modules on disability prevention, early detection and interventions.
- v. Disability specific manuals for families having persons with disabilities will also be developed and provided free of cost.
- vi. Human resource development institutions will ensure that the personnel needed to provide support services such as special education, clinical psychology, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, audiology, speech pathology, vocational counseling & training and social work are available in adequate numbers.

- vii. The latest research findings in the field of genetics will be utilized appropriately to minimize congenital disability including mental illness.
- viii. Appropriate plan of action for limiting effects of disability and prevention of secondary disabilities within the existing health delivery system will be evolved.
- ix. Attention will be paid towards improving awareness of nutrition, health care and sanitation amongst adolescent girls, expectant mothers and women in the reproductive period. Awareness programmes for prevention will be built in at the school level and at the level of teacher's training courses.
- x. Programmes will be undertaken for screening of children to identify at risk cases.

## **Programmes of Rehabilitation**

Medical, educational and social rehabilitation programmes will be developed with the assistance of medical and rehabilitation professionals and with the participation of persons with disabilities and their families, legal guardians and communities. Convergence of Government programmes will be ensured and the following specific measures will be taken:

- i. State level centres for providing composite rehabilitation services including human resource development, research and long term specialized rehabilitation will be set up.
- ii. Community based Rehabilitation programmes shall be encouraged. Self help groups of persons with disabilities and their family members/ caregivers shall be effectively involved in the process of rehabilitation.
- iii. Setting up of mental health care homes for severely mental ill persons will be encouraged under district level Panchayati Raj institution with the involvement of NGOs. Alternatively, family support groups will be encouraged to setup Custodial Care Institutions for persons with mental disabilities without community and / or family support.
- iv. Measures will also be taken to setup residential rehabilitation centres for providing vocational and social skills training for persons with mental disabilities.

## **Human Resource Development**

The manpower will be developed in the following areas -

- i. Training of primary level workers both in health care and in community development comprising of Anganwadi workers, Auxiliary Nurses (Midwives) etc.
- ii. Support for training and orientation of personnel of Government and NGOs providing services.
- iii. Training and sensitization of community decision makers such as members of Panchayats, head of families etc.
- iv. Training and orientation of family members as caregivers.

Human resources will be trained to meet the requirement of education for children with disabilities under inclusive education, special education, home-based education, pre-school education etc, The following training programmes of different specialization and levels shall be developed:

- i. Training modules for teachers for inclusive education.
- ii. Diploma, degree and high level programmes in special education
- iii. Training of caregivers for home-based education and care services for disabled adults/ senior citizens etc.

Rehabilitation Council of India shall be the nodal agency for preparation of plans for training of rehabilitation personnel. The role of the National Institutes in disability specific training will be clearly spelt out and a five-year Plan of Action will be drawn up.

- iv. Education of Persons with Disabilities

It will be ensured that every child with disability has access to appropriate pre-school, primary and secondary level education by 2020. Special care will be taken to -

- i. Make schools (building, approaches, toilets, playgrounds, laboratories, libraries etc.) barrier free and accessible for all types of disability.
- ii. Medium and method of teaching will be suitably adapted to the requirements of most disability conditions.
- iii. Technical/ supplementary/ specialized system of teaching/learning will be made available within the school or at a common center easily accessible to a cluster of schools.
- iv. Teaching/learning tools and aids such as educational toys, Braille/talking books, appropriate software etc. will be made available. Incentives will be given to expand facilities for setting up of general libraries, e-libraries, Braille-libraries and talking books libraries, resource rooms etc.
- v. National Open School and distance learning programmes will be popularized and extended to other parts in the country.
- vi. Sign language, Alternative and Augmentative Communications (AAC) and other modes as a viable medium in inter personal communication will be recognized, standardized and popularized.
- vii. Schools will be located within easy traveling distance. Alternatively, viable travel arrangements will be made with the assistance of the community, State and NGOs.
- viii. Parent-Teacher counseling and grievance redressal system will be set up in the schools.
- ix. There will be separate mechanism to review annually the intake and retention of the girl child with disability at primary, secondary and higher levels of education.
- x. Many children with disabilities, who cannot join inclusive education system, would continue to get educational services from special schools. Special schools shall be appropriately re-modeled and re-oriented based on technological development. These schools will also help prepare children with disabilities to join mainstream inclusive education.
- xi. In some cases due to the nature of disability (its type and degree), personal circumstances and preferences, home-based education will be provided.
- xii. Course curriculum and evaluation system for children with various disabilities shall be developed keeping in view their capabilities. Examination system will be modified to make it disabled friendly by exemptions such as learning mathematics, learning only one language, etc. Further, facilities like extra time, use of calculators, use of Clarke's tables, scribes etc would be provided based on the requirement.

- xiii. Model Schools of Inclusive Education will be set up in each State/ U.T to promote education of persons with disabilities.
- xiv. In the era of knowledge society, computers play very important role. Efforts will be made so that every child with disability gets suitably exposed to the use of computers.
- xv. Children with disabilities upto the age of 6 years will be identified and necessary interventions made so that they are capable of joining inclusive education.
- xvi. Educational facilities will be provided in psychosocial rehabilitation centres for mentally ill persons.
- xvii. Many schools discourage enrollment of students on account of their disability due to lack of awareness about the capabilities of disabled persons. Programmes will be taken for sensitization of teachers, principals and other staff members in all schools.
- xviii. Special Schools presently being supported by the Ministry of Social Justice & empowerment will incrementally become resource centres for inclusive education. Ministry of Human Resource Development shall open new special schools depending upon the requirement.
- xix. Adult learning/ leisure centers for adults with severe learning difficulties will be promoted.
- xx. Three percent reservation for persons with disabilities in admission to higher educational institutions shall be enforced. Universities, colleges and professional institutions will be provided financial support to establish Disability Center to take care of educational needs of students with disabilities. They will also be encouraged to make classrooms, hostels, cafeterias and other facilities in the campus accessible to students with disabilities.
- xxi. Include a module in induction and in-service training programmes of teachers on issues relating to management of children with disabilities

The Ministry of Human Resource Development will be the nodal Ministry to coordinate all matters relating to the education of persons with disabilities.

## **Employment**

The following steps will be taken for employment of persons with disabilities:

- i. The government shall initiate a dialogue with private sector organizations to help persons with disabilities in getting employment.
- ii. Develop appropriate home-based income generation programmes for the persons with disabilities especially for persons with severe and multiple disabilities, who opt for such programmes. The system of coaching for employment will also be encouraged for persons with disabilities and their caregivers.
- iii. Facilitate modifications in the design of machinery, workstation and work environment necessary for the disabled persons to operate without barriers in training centres/ factories/ industry/ offices etc.
- iv. Provide assistance through appropriate agencies like Marketing Boards, District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs), private agencies and Non Governmental Organizations in marketing of goods and services produced by persons with disabilities.
- v. Coverage of persons with disabilities in poverty alleviation programmes will be improved so that they get their due share of 3 percent as provided under statutory provisions.

## **Barrier-free Environment**

For creation of barrier-free environment, the following strategies will be adopted:

- i. Public buildings (functional or recreational), transport amenities including roads, subways and pavements, railway platforms, bus stops/ terminals, ports, airports, modes of transports (bus, train, plane and waterways), playgrounds, open space etc. will be made accessible.
- ii. Use of sign language in all public functions will be encouraged.
- iii. Modification of Curriculum of Architects and Civil engineers will be undertaken to include issues relating to construction of barrier-free buildings. In service training will be provided on these issues to the government architects and engineers.
- iv. Full adoption of comprehensive building byelaws and space standards for barrier-free built environment shall be ensured. Effort will be made to ensure adoption of the byelaws and space standards by all the states, municipal bodies and Panchayati Raj institutions in the country. These authorities will ensure that all newly constructed buildings for public use are barrier-free.
- v. State Transport Undertakings will ensure disabled friendly features in their vehicles. Railways will provide barrier-free coaches in a phased manner. They will also make the platforms-buildings, toilets and other facilities barrier-free.
- vi. The Government will ensure that Industrial establishments, offices, public utilities both in public and private sector provide disabled friendly work place for their employees. Safety standards will be developed and strictly enforced.
- vii. Proactive steps will be taken to ensure disability-friendly IT environment in the country.
- viii. All the buildings, which are for public use, will be audited for its accessibility to persons with disability. There may be a need to develop professionally recognized access auditors whose services would be utilized for the purpose.
- ix. Banking system will be encouraged to meet the needs to the persons with disabilities.
- x. Communication needs of the persons with disabilities will be met by making information service and public documents accessible. Braille, tape-service, large print and other appropriate technologies will be used to provide information for the persons with visual disability.

## **Social Protection**

The following steps will be taken to provide adequate Social Security to the persons with disabilities:

- i. A system of regular review of the policies of tax relief granted to the persons with disabilities will be put in place so that necessary income tax and other tax relief remain available to persons with disabilities.
- ii. State Governments and UT Administrations will be encouraged to rationalize the amount of pension and unemployment allowance for persons with disabilities.
- iii. Life Insurance Corporation of India has been providing insurance cover to persons with specific type of disabilities. There is a need to encourage all insurance agencies to cover persons with disabilities without exception.

## **Research**

Research for developing new technologies for persons with disabilities will be encouraged with international cooperation, wherever necessary. Results of research will be widely disseminated. It will be focused on the following aspects:

- i. Socio-cultural aspects of disability, which inter alia include study of social attitude and behavioral patterns towards persons with disabilities.
- ii. Develop social indicators relating to the education of persons with disabilities so as to analyze the problems involved and take up programmes to improve access and opportunities
- iii. Generate statistics about the employment status of persons by type of disability especially for those who become disabled due to accidents and other disasters.
- iv. Study causes of different types and level of incidence of disabilities
- v. Genetic research to minimize incidence of disability under the aegis of Indian Council of Medical Research
- vi. Adaptive technology research focusing on enhanced personal mobility, verbal/non-verbal communication, design changes in articles of every day usage etc. with a view to develop cost effective, user-friendly and durable aids & appliances with the help of premier technological institutes. Ministry of Science & Technology shall set up Rehabilitation Technology Centre for coordinating and undertaking research and development, testing and certifying technologies, training etc. Appropriate hardware and software suitable for persons with disabilities to ensure access to information technologies will be developed.
- vii. Sports, Recreation and Cultural activities

The following steps will be taken to ensure equal opportunities for sports, recreation and cultural activities:

- i. Make places for recreation, cultural activities and sports, hotels, beaches, sports arenas, auditoriums, gym halls, etc. accessible.
- ii. Travel agencies, hotels, voluntary organizations and others involved in organizing recreational activities or travel opportunities should offer their services to all, taking into account the special needs of persons with disabilities.
- iii. Identification of talent amongst persons with disabilities in different sports shall be made with the assistance of local NGOs.
- iv. Formation of Sports organizations and Cultural societies for persons with disabilities will be encouraged. There will be mechanism to support the participation of persons with disabilities in national and international events.
- v. A national award for excellence in sports for persons with disabilities shall be instituted.

## **Responsibility for Implementation**

1. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment will be the nodal Ministry to coordinate all matters relating to the implementation of the Policy.
2. An inter-ministerial body to coordinate matters relating to implementation of National Policy will be formed. All stakeholders including prominent NGOs, Disabled Peoples

Organizations, advocacy groups and family associations of parents/ guardians, experts and professionals will also be represented on this body. Similar arrangements will be encouraged at the State and Districts levels. Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies will be associated in the functioning of the District Disability Rehabilitation Centres' District Level Committees to coordinate the matters relating to the implementation of the policy.

3. The Ministries of Home Affairs, Health & Family Welfare, Rural Development, Urban Development, Youth Affairs & Sports, Railways, Science & Technology, Statistics & Programme Implementation, Labour, Panchayati Raj and Departments of Elementary Education & Literacy, Secondary & Higher Education, Road Transport & Highways, Public Enterprises, Revenue, Women & Child Development, Information Technology and Personnel & Training will setup necessary mechanism for implementation of the policy. A five-year perspective Plan and annual plans setting targets and financial allocations will be prepared by each Ministry/ Department. The annual report of these Ministries/ Departments will indicate progress achieved during the year.
4. The Chief Commissioner for Disabilities at Central level and State Commissioners at the State level shall play key role in implementation of National Policy, apart from their statutory responsibilities.
5. Panchayati Raj Institutions will play a crucial role in the implementation of the National Policy to address local level issues and draw up suitable programmes, which will be integrated with the district and State plans. These institutions will include disability related components in their projects.
6. Infrastructure created during the course of implementation will be required to be maintained and effectively used for a long period. The community should take a leading role in generating resources with in themselves or through mobilization from private sector organizations to maintain the infrastructure and also to meet the running cost. This step will not only reduce the burden on state resources but will also create a greater sense of responsibility among the community and private entrepreneurs.
7. Every five years a comprehensive review will be done on the implementation of the National Policy. A document indicating status of implementation and a roadmap for five years shall be prepared based on the deliberations in a national level convention. State Governments and Union Territory administrations will be urged to take steps for drawing up State Policy and develop action plan.