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*International Journal of Economic Perspectives*,16(5),125-132

Retrieved from <https://ijeponline.org/index.php/journal>

**Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in India: With Special Reference to Uttar Pradesh**

**Alendra Tripathi**

**Research Scholar, School. Of Humanities & Arts, Maharishi University of Information Technology, Lucknow**

**Dr. A. P. Bharti**

**Professor**

**School of Humanities and Arts, MUIT Lucknow, U.P.**

**Abstract**

Disabled persons are the most marginalized and suffer from social deviations, stigma and social exclusion and oppression. Government of India and the Government of Uttar Pradesh have launched several schemes in the last decades. The plans are well thought out and supported by financial support. The state has all the structures and processes that are necessary to implement these programs. The ultimate objective of these schemes is the upliftment and empowerment of people with disabilities. In view of the problems of differently abled persons in Uttar Pradesh and the government's concern for their empowerment and development, it is mandatory to examine the pattern of development of public spending on the development of persons with disabilities in Uttar Pradesh. Present paper attempts to review the government schemes for empowerment of PWDs in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

**Introduction:**As per Census 2011, there are 2.68 crore Persons with Disabilities in India who constitute 2.21 percent of the total population. The Constitution of India provides six Fundamental Rights to all the citizens including the persons with Disabilities. These include - Right to Equality, Right of Freedom, Right against Exploitation, Right to freedom of Religion, Cultural and Educational Rights and Right to Constitutional Remedies. Only six states have dedicated departments for disabled. The six states are Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. For the overall development, benefit and smooth operation of schemes made for inclusive growth and welfare of the persons (with disabilities) Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Department was established on 20 September, 1995 by Government of Uttar Pradesh. As per 2011 census, In Uttar Pradesh the total number of Person with various disabilities was 41.36 lakh which is

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approximately 2.08 percent of total population of the state. These include persons with Seeing, Hearing, Speech, Movement, Mental Retardation, Mental Illness, Multiple Disability and any other disabilities. The Department in-keeping with its goals has established a network of schools catering to different categories of disability and age-group/literacy levels , residential hostels for students , establishment and operationalisation of Braille Press as well as a University meant primarily to serve the differently-abled segment (challenged students) of the society. It has taken various welfare measures such as shelter houses -cum-training centers for divyang destitute, skill development centers along with provisions of grants, pensions, aids and assistive devices/artificial limbs etc

**Legal Provisions:** Adopted in 1992, the Central Government enacted the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, in the wake of the Declaration on Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Regions. India is a signatory to the proclamation. The PwD Act, 1995 provides certain benefits to persons with disabilities who have not less than 40 percent of any disability, as evidenced by the Medical Authority. Thus, persons with a disability who wish to receive benefits under the Act, have to obtain a disability certificate from the notified medical authority for this purpose. State governments are responsible for issuing disability certificates based on applications received from persons with disabilities. Recognizing the fact that a person with a disability constitutes a valuable human resource for the country and that the majority of such individuals can lead to a better quality of life if provided equal opportunities and effective access to rehabilitation measures, the government creates an environment. The National Trust is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament for the welfare of people with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and the Americans with Disabilities Act, 1999. The National Trust offers registration with voluntary organizations, persons with disabilities and associations. The new plan management system has about 500 registered organizations of National Trusts in the country.

Disability is a complex term and is defined as an activity or restriction or disability within the limits of what is considered normal for a human being, resulting mostly in impairment. Disability has been recognized as a human rights issue in the international arena, with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities focusing on the needs of persons with disabilities globally. Disability is any physical or mental condition that limits a person's activities, senses, or activities. The term disability has traditionally been used to refer to characteristics that are sufficient to interrupt or prevent day-to-day activities in general. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, "Persons with disabilities include those with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory defects, who interact with various barriers, which their full

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and effective participation in society. Disability can be permanent, temporary or episodic. They can affect people from birth, or can be acquired later in life through injury or illness. The World Bank (2007) estimated that approximately 600 million people, or 10 percent of the world's population, have a disability and 80% of these people live in developing countries. The 2011 census showed that over 21 million people in India suffer from one or the other type of disability. This is equivalent to 2.1 percent of the population. There are 12.6 million men and 9.3 million women with disabilities in the country, although there are more people with disabilities in rural and urban areas. Disability as a social concern is slowly but surely coming to attract public attention at the highest levels of government and policy-making in recent years, efforts by grassroots groups and non-governmental organizations. No small measures have been taken. The Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities has been established under Section 57 of the Persons with Disabilities (Protection of Equal Opportunities, Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 and has been mandated to take steps to protect the rights of individuals. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was published on 1 January 1996 and notified on 7 February 1996. The Persons with Disabilities Act basically lays down the facilities that various types of disabled persons will be entitled to responsibilities and obligations to the Government of India. It broadly includes the prevention and early detection of disabilities, education, employment, social security, research and manpower development, barrier-free access and the priorities and facilities that are available to such individuals and which are necessary to avoid any discrimination. The primary health care centers have been trained to detect and prevent disabilities. Treatment facilities available at the Trauma Center for the purchase of the disabled, soft shoes are being provided to all the disabled, proper treatment and rehabilitation facilities are available for the disabled after their primary screening. All children have been screened to identify risks under school health programs. Awareness programs are being conducted by 07 SHGs to create awareness on health, sanitation and hygiene. Free education for children with disabilities is available in the state. Strict instructions have been issued not to deny admission to PwDs in common schools and government aided special schools are running in the state. The Social Welfare Department is providing scholarships to students with disabilities. The State has identified 585 posts in all groups for PwDs, Notification for the implementation of minimum 3 percent vacancies under Section 33 of the Act was issued to all concerned departments for reservation in jobs identified for PWD. The scheme of preferential allocation of land to PwD at concessional rates is available for houses, businesses, establishment of special recreation centers, special schools and research centers and factories for people with disabilities. The State Commissioner for Persons with

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Disabilities has been appointed with additional charge. Grant-in-aid of Rs. 27.00 lakhs have been distributed by the state to non-governmental organizations during the year. Braille Press has been established. Loan facility for Self-Employment / Higher Education provided by Regional Rural Banks is provided through NHFDC as per the Act, "Person with Disability" means a person suffering from any disability with 40 percent from any disability. Not less as evidenced by medical authority. "Disability" as defined in clause 2(i) Act means - (i) blindness (ii) low vision (iii) leprosy (iv) hearing defect (v) locomotor disability (vi) mental retardation (vii) mental illness.

**Discussion of Results:** Budgetary allocations on welfare of persons with disabilities in India have shown an increase of 185.33 per cent during 2014-15 to 2018-19. However, growth in budgetary allocations on welfare of disabled persons in Uttar Pradesh recorded the growth rate of 93.13 per cent during the corresponding period. During 2018-19, Rs. 1070 and Rs. 871 crores were allocated by Central Government and state government respectively. Thus, the amount in terms of per capita budgetary allocations is found to be meagre. Budgetary allocations on welfare of disabled in Uttar Pradesh accounted less than one per cent in total expenditure of the state. There has been an increase of 154.67 per cent in budget allocations during the period of 2014-15 to 2017-18. Actual expenditure against budget allocations during 2017-18 constituted 97.20 per cent. During 2016-17, more than 2/5<sup>th</sup> expenditure was reported on National Programme for Welfare of PwDs while expenditure on autonomous bodies accounted for 27.26 per cent. Expenditure under umbrella programme for development of other vulnerable groups constituted 24.18 per cent during the year. Expenditure on umbrella programme for development of other vulnerable groups has increased over the period of 2016-17 to 2018-19. Out of total expenditure, about 90 per cent expenditure was reported on social services during 2016-17. However, this share is likely to decline in the coming years. During 2017-18, a budgetary allocation was reported Rs. 61302.4 lakh. Out of total budget, about 91.19 per cent budget was allocated for pension for differently abled persons while budget for leprosy pension constituted 2.94 per cent and budget for purchasing of artificial limbs accounted for 5.28 per cent. The overall financial performance was reported 97 per cent while physical performance was recorded more than physical target.

**Accessible India Campaign:** Accessibility for people with disabilities was recognized as a right in India with the passage of The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act in 1995, which mandated barrier-free access in all public places and transportation systems. Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has launched the Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan), as a nationwide flagship campaign for achieving universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities and to

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create an enabling and barrier free environment, with a focus on three verticals: built environment; public transportation and information & communication technologies.

**Swavalamban Health Insurance Scheme:** “Swavalamban Health Insurance Scheme” has been conceived with the objective of providing affordable Health Insurance to persons with blindness, low vision, leprosy-cured, hearing impairment, loco-motor Disability, mental Retardation and mental Illness. It also aims to improve the general Health condition & quality of life of persons with disabilities. Divyangjansashaktikaran is implementing the scheme under its aegis and the Uttar Pradesh Government is bearing 10 percent of the shared cost-component .

**Unique Identity Card For Divyangjan:** Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities” project is being implemented with a view of creating a National Database for PwDs, and to issue a Unique Disability Identity Card to each person with disabilities. The project will not only encourage transparency, efficiency and ease of delivering the government benefits to the person with disabilities, but also ensure uniformity.

**Assistance to PwD for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/ Appliances (ADIP):**The main objective of the Scheme is to provide grants-in-aid to the various implementing agencies (National Institutes/ Composite Regional Centres /Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India(ALIMCO)/ District Disability Rehabilitation Centres/State Handicapped Development Corporations/other local bodies/ NGOs) so that they are in a position to assist needy disabled persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances to promote physical, social and psychological rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities through reducing the effects of disabilities and at the same time enhance their economic potential.

**Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme:**The Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS) of the Department is Central Sector Scheme that includes projects for Providing education and vocational training and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The Scheme has been operational since 1999 with the objective of ensuring effective implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act (PwD), 1995, through creating an enabling environment and encouraging non-governmental organizations through financial assistance for undertaking projects for the empowerment of the Persons.

**SIPDA:**The grants-in-aid are provided under this Scheme to State Governments and various other bodies, set up by the Central and State Governments, including Autonomous Bodies and Universities, to support activities, pursuant to implementation of the provisions of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, particularly relating to rehabilitation and provision of barrier-

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free access. The District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) and Composite Rehabilitation Centres (CRCs) set up by the Department are also provided support under this scheme.

**Scheme of National Awards for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities:** Empowerment of persons with disabilities is an inter-disciplinary process, covering various aspects namely, prevention, early detection, intervention, education, vocational training, rehabilitation and social integration etc.

**Scheme of National Scholarships for Persons with Disabilities:** Under the Scheme of National Scholarships for Persons with Disabilities, every year 500 new scholarships are awarded for pursuing post matric professional and technical courses of duration more than one year. However, in respect of students with cerebral palsy, mental retardation, multiple disabilities and profound or severe hearing impairment, scholarship are awarded for pursuing studies from IX Std. onwards.

**National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities:** National Fellowship for students with Disabilities Scheme was launched during the financial year 2012-13 to increase opportunities to students with disabilities for pursuing higher education leading to degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. in any University recognized by University Grants Commission (UGC).

**Pre-Matric Scholarship and Post-Matric Scholarship for Students with Disabilities:** The objectives of the schemes are to provide financial assistance to the students with disabilities for studying in the pre-matric level (class IX and X) and post-matric level (Classes XI, XII and upto Post graduate degree/diploma level). These two schemes have been launched by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities during the Financial Year 2014-15.

**National Overseas Scholarship for students with Disabilities:** The scheme of National Overseas Scholarship for Students with Disabilities has been launched with the objectives of providing financial assistance to the students with disabilities for pursuing studies abroad at the level of Masters' Degree and Ph.D. Twenty (20) scholarships are to be awarded every year out of which six are reserved for women candidates. The scholarship amount includes Maintenance Allowance, Contingency Allowance, Tuition Fees, and Cost of Air Passage etc. Parental income ceiling is Rs.6.00 lakh per annum.

**Scholarship for Top Class Education for Students with Disabilities:** The Scheme aims at recognizing and promoting quality education amongst Students with Disabilities by providing full financial support. The scheme will cover Students with Disabilities (SwDs) for

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pursuing studies at the level of Post Graduate Degree or Diploma in any discipline. The scheme will operate in all institutions notified by the Department .Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment as institutions of excellence.

**Employment To Persons With Disabilities:** The objective of the scheme is to encourage of employment of persons with disabilities in the corporate sector. The scheme of giving incentives to employers for providing employment to persons with disabilities in the private sector was launched in the year 2008-09. Under the scheme, payment of employer's contribution towards the Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) and the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) for the first three years, is made by the Government of India, in respect of persons with disability appointed in the private sector to a post carrying monthly emoluments up to Rs.25,000/-. The administrative charges of 1.1% of the wages of the employees covered under the Employees Provident Fund & Miscellaneous Provisions (EPF&MP) Act will continue to be paid by the employer. The scheme is effective from 1st April, 2008.

**The National Action Plan (NAP) For Skill Training Of Person With Disabilities:**

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has launched the National Action Plan for skill training of persons with disabilities, in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship on 21st March, 2015.

**Conclusion:** The analysis demonstrates that there is wide variation in the public expenditure efficiency across the states. This variation could be due to the extent of good governance in the states as well as on the economic growth. It implies that higher budgetary allocations on social sector alone might not necessarily translate into an improvement in their social outcomes. The analysis clearly suggests that public policy needs to focus equally on outcomes and not just on outlay-based policies. The analysis of physical and financial performance of various programmes and schemes shows that there has been remarkable progress in empowerment of persons with disabilities; however, there is dearth of funds and inadequate coverage of various schemes. The present amount of funds under various schemes is grossly inadequate while economic norms for availing the benefits under these schemes are also tough to achieve. The large number of applications of persons with disabilities is not being timely processed and forwarded to government of India for availing benefits under various educational and social development schemes.

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