Country Profile on
Disability

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST
REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

March 2002
Japan International Cooperation Agency
Planning and Evaluation Department
Country Profile on Disability
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBR</td>
<td>Community Based Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCAP</td>
<td>Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JICA</td>
<td>Japan International Cooperation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBBS</td>
<td>Bachelor of Medical and Bachelor of Surgery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORAD</td>
<td>Royal Norwegian Embassy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHIA</td>
<td>Swedish Organization of Handicapped International Aid Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSO</td>
<td>Social Service Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Basic Profile

1-1. Basic Indicators

### Public Sector Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1990-98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social welfare</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (total)</td>
<td>19.4 million</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of women</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of urban population</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy (total)</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Medical Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population/Doctor</td>
<td>2,703</td>
<td>1990-99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population/Nurse &amp; midwife</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>1992-95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

2 UNDP. Human Development Report 2001
## Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education system¹</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>5 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory education</td>
<td>9 year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult literacy rate¹</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollment ratio³</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary education (Net enrollment ratio)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary education (Gross enrollment ratio)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>109%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>110%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>108%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary education (Net enrollment ratio)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education (Gross enrollment ratio)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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³ UNESCO. Statistical Yearbook 1999
1-2. Indicators on Disability

Disability-specific Data

Figure 1: Number and Types of People with Disabilities (Estimate) 1995-1996

![Diagram showing the number and types of people with disabilities.]

Source: Survey on the Situation of Physically Disabled Persons, 1996
Survey on the Situation of Physically Disabled Children, 1996
Basic Survey on Welfare Programs for Intellectually Disabled Children (Persons), 1995
Survey on Patients, 1996

A complete statistical survey with information on the entire disabled population has not been conducted in Sri Lanka to date, despite the understanding of the urgent need for welfare planning for persons with disabilities. However, according to the information gathered by a survey team of TEAMS from related secondary sources, the following could be can be deduced:

1. The number of people with disabilities identified prior to 1998 was 71,935
2. Island-wide surveys indicate that disabled accounted for about 8% of the total population of about 900,000 in 1996. (Public Investment Plan 1996-2000, pg. 168)
3. The Ministry of Health has estimated that about 5-10% of the population suffer from mental disorders and that 2% account for severe mental disorders⁵

⁵ Ministry of Health Mental Health Services Retrieved from http://www.lk/health/DGMEN.html
Figure 2: Person with Disability Institutions Surveyed by Category of Resident

Source: TEAMS. Final report of The Study of Physically Impaired People of Sri Lanka

**Age-specific Data**
N/A

**Area-specific Data**
N/A

**Grade-specific data**
N/A

---

6 45 out of 89 institutions that have registered with the Department of Social Services answered the questionnaire conducted by JICA. The percentage was calculated by their answers.
**Cause-specific Data**

Figure 3: Causes of Disabilities 1998-1999

Source: TEAMS. The final report of The Study of Physically Impaired People of Sri Lanka

**Gender-specific Data**

N/A

---

7 45 out of 89 Institutions that have registered with the Department of Social Services answered the questionnaire conducted by JICA. The percentage was calculated by their answers.
2. Issues on Disability

2-1. Definition of Disability in Sri Lanka

Persons with disabilities are defined as follows in Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, No.28 of 1996:

“Persons with disabilities” means any person who, as a result of any deficiency in his/her physical or mental capabilities, whether congenital or not, is unable by himself/herself to ensure for himself/herself, wholly or partly, the necessities of life.

2-2. Current Situation

Sri Lanka is having difficulty coping with persons with disabilities, as there is a lack of funds, human resources, services, etc, and the population of person with disability is growing as a result of the civil war. The number of people injured and/or maimed by military service has been increasing at an alarming rate; with the ongoing war in the north and east and with the other civilian disabilities caused by accidents, diseases, and congenital problems.

Despite this, almost all public buildings are inaccessible to persons with disabilities without other peoples’ help.

The Present Situation regarding persons with disabilities is summarized as follows:

- An act to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.
- A National council to defend the rights of persons with disabilities.
- The Establishment of the National Secretariat for the implementation of the decisions of the National Council.
- The monthly maintenance grants to NGOs to run homes for persons with disabilities were increased from Rs.100 per child to Rs. 300\(^8\).
- A child protection authority has been established to protect the rights of children.
- Improvement of facilities at the six government centers for providing vocational training for the disabled youth. Approximately 500 can be trained at a time.
- Grants of Rs.40 per day per head are being paid for 12 vocational training centers run by NGOs.

\(^8\) 1Rs (Sri Lanka Rupee) = 1.396 yen (as of March 20, 2002)
• Action has been taken to establish resource centers for preschool children with disabilities, intellectual, severe and overlapping.
• Approximately 75 preschools for hearing impaired children have been established in six provincial councils (Western, North western, Southern, Uva, Central, North Central.)
• Community-based rehabilitation (CBR) undertaken in 126 Divisional Secretary areas has contributed for the benefit of about 79,000 disabled people.
• Child Welfare Officers have been assigned to Divisional Secretary areas for the implementation of child welfare programs.
• Wheelchairs, tricycles, artificial limbs, and audio/visual aids have been provided.
• Community-based care for vulnerable groups such as elders, youth, and children with disabilities is being provided.

2-3. Documentation and Surveys on Disability

Despite lack of a comprehensive survey and data on persons with disabilities, Sri Lanka has made efforts to strengthen its policies and legislation on persons with disabilities. However, such policies and legislation are based on for example the assumption that 8% of the population has a disability, that the cause of 21% of disabilities is accidental and 10% is due to other causes. But this data does not go far enough to reveal for instance what percentage has been caused by war-related accidents, nor what the needs of these persons with disabilities are; thereby leading to a mismatch between reality and policy. Other examples where confirmation is needed, is data that has led to decisions such as 1) printing Braille on paper money in 1985 and 2) placing emphasis on early childhood and child disabilities. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the needs of persons with disabilities, have gender and age-specific information, as well as utilize existing systems such as registration of person with disability to obtain comprehensive and reliable data on disabilities and then reflect this data in policy making.

National Census

As there is a shortage of data on Persons with Disabilities, action has been taken to collect necessary data at the census held in 2001. Of which unfortunately, the results have not been obtained.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Other Surveys</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Last published</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Items regarding Disability</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Council for persons with disabilities is assigned to conduct surveys on the total population of persons with disabilities and to initiate activities related with the research and surveys of persons with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Administration and Policy on Disability

3-1. Administration on Disability

Central Government

[National Social Welfare System for Persons with Disabilities]

Minister of Education

Minister of Social Services

Minister of Health

Secretary to the Minister

Add 1 Secretary

Senior Asst Secretary

Director
Dept of Social Services

Dy. Director Planning

Asst. Director Persons with Disabilities

National Level Organizations (NGOs)

Supt. V.D.C Seacer

Ketawaraleula

Wattegama

Amunkumbura

Thelambu-yaya

Works Manager

Social Service Officer (SSO)

Matron & Other staff

Commissioner of Protection & Child Care

Dy. Director Widespread Disasters

Dy. Director Administration

Asst. Director Older Persons

Director General National Institute for Social Development

Director Social Security Board

Director General National Institute for Social Development

Director

Dept of Social Services

Minister of Social Services

Minister of Education

Minister of Health

Secretar y to the Minister

Add 1 Secretary

Senior Asst Secretary

Dy. Director Planning

Dy. Director Widespread Disasters

Dy. Director Administration

Asst. Director Persons with Disabilities

Asst. Director Older Persons

Superintendent-Rehabilitation

National Level Organizations (NGOs)

Supt. V.D.C Seacer

Ketawaraleula

Wattegama

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Thelambu-yaya

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Social Service Officer (SSO)

Matron & Other staff

Director General National Institute for Social Development

Director Social Security Board

Director

Dept of Social Services

Minister of Social Services

Minister of Education

Minister of Health

Secretar y to the Minister

Add 1 Secretary

Senior Asst Secretary

Dy. Director Planning

Dy. Director Widespread Disasters

Dy. Director Administration

Asst. Director Persons with Disabilities

Asst. Director Older Persons

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Ketawaraleula

Wattegama

Amunkumbura

Thelambu-yaya

Works Manager

Social Service Officer (SSO)

Matron & Other staff
### Country Profile on Sri Lanka

#### 【Disability-related Central Governmental Organizations】

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The Ministry of Social Services | The Ministry of Social Services has implemented the following services.  
1. Provision of recognized vocational training with residential facilities.  
2. Provision of employment opportunities.  
3. Taking alternative steps to provide equal educational opportunities.  
4. Creating necessary environment for easy access.  
5. Provision of material and financial assistance according to their needs.  
6. Identification of Persons with Disabilities by conducting surveys.  
7. Reintegration of Persons with Disabilities into society.  
Provision of equal opportunities and making them partners in economic development in terms of international declarations |
| The Ministry of Health      | The Ministry of Health has created the post of Director for the improvement of health care facilities for Persons with Disabilities. |
| The Ministry of Education   | The Ministry of Education has power to establish and to appoint staff to educational institutions, and to provide equipment.                         |

#### 【Availability of national coordination committee】

Yes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The National Council for Persons with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 【Plan and implemented activities】

Related to the Act of Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities was established in 1996 under the Ministry of Social Services. There are 15 members appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Minister of Social Services. In addition to the council members, there are some invited observers. They represent various institutions and departments working for persons with disabilities. Five sub-committees have been appointed to prepare plans regarding legal and financial matters, administration, and to research mental retardation and hearing impairments.

Regulations connected with the act were gazetted and submitted to Parliament in 1999. Under the Act the registration of NGOs and following activities have been implemented:

1. CBR programs have been implemented through the Department of Social Services and Social Service Officers (SSO). Assistive devices are being provided to disadvantaged persons with disabilities. (Wheelchairs / Tricycles / Spectacles etc.)
2. Hearing Aids / Calipers / Artificial Limbs etc. have been also given under this scheme.
3. Mobile service programs have been arranged in several districts.
4. A lottery has been introduced to raise funds to needs of persons with disabilities. Self employment projects are being implemented.
5. Awareness programs regarding persons with disabilities are being conducted through electronic and print media, also through cultural and sports activities.
6. UN Standard rules have been translated into local language (Sinhalese & Tamil) and distributed to relevant organizations.
**Local Government**

**Organizational chart**

**Provincial Social Welfare System for People with Disabilities**

- Provincial Council Ministry of Social Services
- Provincial Council Secretary of Social Services
- Provincial Council Director of Social Services
- Asst. Director

- Social Officer (Field Officer)
- Administrative Officer
- Superintendent Homes for Persons with Disabilities
- Clerical & other staff

- Run by NGOs at the grassroots level

- Homes for Person with Disability
- Pre-school for Person with Disability
- Day Care Centers
- Vocational Training Centers
- Other services
- Services for Person with Disability
- Provision of appliances

**Disability-related local Governmental Organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Council Ministry of Social Services</td>
<td>Working under the Secretary to the Minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3-2. Laws and Regulations on Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, No.28 of 1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To promote advancement and protection of rights of Persons with Disabilities in Sri Lanka.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Establish a National Council for the promotion, advancement, and protection of the rights of people with disabilities in Sri Lanka. - To advise the government on the welfare of persons with disabilities. - To make links with the relevant governmental ministries and departments to promote the safeguarding, interests, and the rights of persons with disabilities. - To maintain accurate statistics relating to persons with disabilities and the services available to such people. - To identify the principal causes of disablement and promote effective measures for prevention and control.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Ranaviru Seva Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>Gazetted on 21.01.1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>- To provide care and rehabilitation of members of the armed forces and police force who have become disabled in action. - To promote the welfare of members of the armed forces and the police with disabilities, and the dependents of members of the armed forces and the police who have been killed or are missing in action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>- Provision of housing, medical care, access to basic and higher education through scholarships and other forms of assistance. - Assistance in securing gainful employment. - Setting up industrial, agricultural, and commercial ventures with a view to providing employment to the members of armed services and the police who were disabled in action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Promotion of Accessibility in the Physical Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>December 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To remove obstacles for Persons with Disabilities to their participation in the physical environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Setting standards and guidelines to ensure accessibility to various areas in society such as housing, building, public transport services, streets, and other outdoor environments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Social Security Board Act No. 17 of 1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To provide a pension and insurance benefits to Persons with Disabilities in the case of accidents and old age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>The act established a social security board for the management of social security benefits for the self-employed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Public Administration Circular No. 27/88, 18th August 1988.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To secure the job rights of Persons with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Description | When vacancies in the public service and public corporations are filled,  
1. 3% of such vacancies should be filled by disabled persons possessing requisite qualifications and whose disability would not be a hindrance to the performance of duties.  
2. Recruitment should be in accordance with the approved scheme of recruitment |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Trust Fund Act for the Rehabilitation of the Visually Handicapped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To provide protection and welfare for Persons with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Description | 1. Provision of educational and vocational training facilities for persons with visual impairment to create employment opportunities.  
2. Provision of financial assistance and guidance for the self-employed.  
3. Provision of housing facilities.  
4. Implementation of schemes for the welfare of persons with visual impairment.  
5. Provision of facilities for the marketing of products manufactured by persons with visual impairment.  
6. Actions to eliminate conditions that prevent visually impaired people from gaining equal rights and equal opportunities. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Mental Health Act of Sri Lanka</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>More than 100-years-old Act on mental illnesses. Scheduled to be revised within the current 5 year National Development Plan to cater to the needs of the day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Regulations under the Act No. 28 of 1996 (The protection of the rights of people with disabilities) of 1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To ensure the promotion, advancement, and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Country Profile on Sri Lanka

Description

1. Indicates the procedure for regulations of volunteer organizations providing services and specifies the application form for registration of such organizations.
2. Indicates the person who should submit the application of registration and the necessary documentation that should be attached to the application.
3. Describes the person who should process the application and issue the certificate of registration.
4. States the information to be gazetted following registration.
5. Secretary of the national council for persons with disabilities will inform the party concerned about whether the application was accepted or rejected within a specific period.
6. Stipulates the period in which appeals should be made against any rejections of registration and the authority for final decision.
7. Indicates the legitimacy and validity of the certificate of registration.
8. Indicates the procedure that should be adopted in the day-to-day work of the organization.
9. Describes about the management committee of the organization and its functions and responsibilities.
10. Provides the definitions of "Act", "Minister" and the "Secretary."
11. Grants powers of inspection and search of places that provide assistance to people with disabilities.

3-3. Policies on Disability

National Development Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items regarding Disability</td>
<td>Disability-related policy is included in the National Development Policy in Sri Lanka. It is one of the thrust areas in the National Development program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3-4. Measures on Disability

Prevention, Identification and Early Intervention

Current situation

Individual services, preschools, housing visits, assistance devices, parental counseling, and awareness are the services delivered in Early Childhood Development Centers for children suffering from mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, manic depressive psychosis, organic psychosis, drug-induced psychosis and acute transient psychotic disorders.

To detect at an early stage preventable diseases and health problems, improvement of the existing preventive health care programs and development of more comprehensive coordinated and focused programs is critical. Programs have been created to reduce
nutritional deficiencies among mothers and children as well as provide health care that is more accessible to the communities. The Ministry of Health has created the post of "Director " for the improvement of health care facilities for persons with disabilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[Policy/program title]</th>
<th>National Health Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Legislated year]</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description**
1. Improvement of quality of life by reducing preventable diseases, running health programs on disability, and emphasizing the positive aspects of good health and sanitary habits in preventing disabilities.
2. Early childhood development of children with disabilities in rehabilitation.

**Medical Services and Rehabilitation**

**[Current situation]**
Medical rehabilitation and provision of aids and appliances such as artificial limbs, wheelchairs, spectacles, hearing aids, white canes, crutches, etc, have been provided to Persons with Disabilities so that they can lead independent lives. This equipment is provided free of charge by the department as well as by the Provincial Council Social Services Department.

**Assistive Devices**
There are 2 factories in Jaipur which produce artificial limbs, tricycles and wheelchairs. These wheelchairs, tricycles, spectacles, artificial limbs, hearing aids and Braille equipment are distributed to disadvantaged persons with disabilities free-of-charge by the government and supplemented by NGOs and donors. The government plans on strengthening local production of assistive devices and equipping manufacturers with the new technical know-how to improve these devices.

**Education**

**[Current situation]**
Regarding integration of persons with disabilities in terms of education, the National Education Commission Report in paragraph 84 indicates that children with minor disabilities should be

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9 UN ESCAP *Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons: mid-point – country perspectives* 1999

10 Nakanishi, Yukiko *Asia no Shogaisha (PWDs in Asia) Gendaishokan*, 1996

11 See *Out on a limb* article for more information on disability and assistive devices on Sri Lanka

http://www.priu.gov.lk/News%20Update/features/20011026out_on_a_limb.htm

12 Presidential Secretariat *Analyses: Social Security* No.23 22 November 2000
integrated into normal schools. Incentives for teachers including those who teach at preschools were approved to encourage integration. Also, a survey in 1996 on the education of children with visual impairment indicates that they should be admitted to normal schools for secondary education at every possible occasion.

Hearing impaired children receive education through sign language, lip reading and sometimes with the help of speech therapy. Children with visual impairment learn through the braille system. However there are no standardized systems or methods that prevail in the Sri Lankan educational system.

The 23 educational institutions for children with special needs follow the same educational curriculum as regular schools. Approximately 2,050 children attend these schools with 573 teachers who have been trained to teach children with disabilities. Extracurricular activities such as physical fitness training, sports training, music, dance, and arts are taught.

The Department of Social Services has introduced preschool education for children with hearing impairment and intellectual disabilities. At present about 75 preschools are functioning successfully throughout the country.

The Braille Press, which gave fresh impetus for the education of persons with disabilities, was established in 1985. Twenty-one Assistant Directors of Education were approved for special education by the Cabinet of Ministers in 1989. The Department of Special Education was also established in 1989 under the National Institute of Education.

Social Service

Lack of accessible public facilities for persons with disabilities is a priority problem. Therefore the Ministry of Social Services has appointed a committee to work on this subject. Codes and standards for accessible facilities have been prepared for legalization and implementation. The Ministry of Social Services has taken action in assisting NGOs involved in sports and recreation activities. In 1998, the National Sports Festival for Persons with Disabilities was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Samurdhi, Sports, and Youth Affairs. In the same year, the National Mental Health Week 1998 was inaugurated by the Ministry of Health and Social Services. The theme was “Protect the Rights of the Mentally Ill.” An awareness workshop was
held by the National Council and the National Secretariat in 1998 for provincial officers and other relevant officers regarding this matter.

The Social Service Ministry has participated in the Presidential Peoples’ Services. These programs have been held in very remote areas, with stalls prepared by the Ministry providing assisting devices for persons with disabilities such as wheelchairs, tricycles, crutches, spectacles, etc, free of charge.

In 1985, a proposal to cancel the additional premium collected from persons with disabilities by insurance corporations was submitted to the relevant authorities. In the same year, a suggestion to print Braille letters on currency notes was submitted and approved by the Central Bank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy/program title</th>
<th>Social Security Board Act No. 17 of 1996</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Provision of pension and insurance benefits for self-employed people including Persons with Disabilities who have been in accidents or are elderly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Vocational Training and Employment Promotion Services**

**Current situation**

The Ministry of Social Service has taken action to find employment for persons with disabilities in the public and private sectors wherever possible. Thirteen vocational training centers have been started with courses relating to 33 fields of employment are conducted. Annually 500 trainees are selected for training and a set of tools supplied to those who have successfully finished the training course. The Cabinet mandated that 3% of all public sector workforces are to be made up of persons with disabilities, though it has been said that the measure is insufficient. As a result, the department and the National Secretariat started an awareness program, and held workshops for the necessary officials and NGO personnel. In addition a steering committee has been appointed to look into the matter and propose necessary actions. Proposals for the appointment of job placement officers at the district level and for the upgrading of the vocational training centers were submitted.

There are six vocational training centers directly managed by the Department of Social Services in which persons with disabilities aged 18 to 35 are trained. Residential facilities, raw materials, etc.

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13 Presidential Secretariat Analysis; Social Security No.23 22 November 2000
uniforms, a daily stipend of Rs.40 per day per head and accommodation are given to trainees free of charge in these centers. The courses offered are agriculture, carpentry, tailoring, handicrafts, industrial machinery, sewing, etc. Once the training programs are successfully completed, a tool-kit is also provided to start self-employment. The same equipment is being given to persons with disability trainees receiving services in centers run by NGOs with the financial assistance of the department.

Despite government efforts to provide vocational training opportunities, set up trusts, and provide start-up funds for trained persons with disabilities, it has yet to integrate relevant international labor standards for vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities. Efforts to date should be reevaluated and further efforts made to reach international standards in all spheres of person with disability assistance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy/program title</th>
<th>Trust Fund Act of the Rehabilitation of Visually Handicapped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implementation year</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR)**

**Current situation**

Providing services for a large population of persons with disabilities is a difficult task for a developing country like Sri Lanka. Until very recently, the rehabilitation trend was institutionalization. In this system assistance was given only to improve a specific section of the life of a disabled person, and mental hospitals and patient care was very costly. CBR strategies were adopted to reduce the cost and burden and succeeded in bringing and rehabilitating 30% of formerly institutionalized patients back into the community\(^\text{14}\). Nevertheless the concept of institutionalized rehabilitation has not been rejected and the supportive roles of institutions continue to be sought in connection with certain aspects of rehabilitation needs. In order to facilitate these activities, a committee known as the Rural Rehabilitation Committee has been established.

CBR has been implemented even in the remote villages, but lack of adequate transport facilities has restricted proper coordination in CBR in these villages.

\(^{14}\) Ministry of Health *Mental Health Services* Retrieved from [http://www.lk/health/DGMEN.html](http://www.lk/health/DGMEN.html)
CBR services planned for 1998:

1. Introducing CBR program in 15 new Divisional Secretary areas.
2. Conducting two divisional core group workshops in this connection.
3. Implementation of the program in 600 Grama Nildhari\(^{15}\) and village areas.
4. Conducting six workshops at provincial levels to sensitize 110 officials in Divisional Secretary areas where CBR is presently implemented.
5. Identification of people with new disabilities.
6. Planning rehabilitation work after ascertaining their needs.
7. Conducting 450 medical clinics.
8. Creating awareness among coordinating district officers.

**Method of Implementing the Community-based Rehabilitation**

- Disabled persons and the family
- ↓
- Community Level (villages and Grama Nildhari areas)
- ↓
- Divisional Secretary Level
- ↓
- District Level
- ↓
- Provincial Level
- ↓
- National Level

Although paramedical training courses are abundant, they are concentrated in Colombo and Kandy and have therefore lead to a disparity in the regional distribution of health personnel. At the same time, training has not caught up with recent trends including CBR. CBR workers for example require passion to work at the community level, a wide range of knowledge, and contacts to be able to implement CBR and refer those whom require institutionalized treatment to the relevant institutions and facilities. Therefore, priority must be placed on re-training, recruitment, and incentives for CBR workers who can bring the CBR agenda forward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy/program title</th>
<th>Community-based Rehabilitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislated year</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{15}\) The smallest administrative unit in Sri Lanka
**Country Profile on Sri Lanka**

### Description
Promotion of the self-reliance of persons with disabilities. Training of staff, volunteer groups, doctors, administrators, social workers, politicians, persons with disabilities. The organization of suitable rehabilitation groups to improve persons with disabilities depends on their needs. Divisional Secretariats have been targeted and 62,000 persons identified for rehabilitation.

### Communication Tools
**Current situation**
According to a survey conducted by the Japanese Federation of the Deaf, sign language was introduced in Sri Lanka around 1987 and has been widely accepted. Currently, there are laws that require sign language translators in court and the government is required to provide sign language translators at public meetings and translators are said to be available in the municipal and police offices but little sign language programs are broadcast by the local media despite an almost uniform sign language. Sign language courses provided by sign language training institutions, teacher training institutions and the national deaf association. Sign language is also studied by about 10 researchers in the country.

No information was available on other communication tools and assistive devices.

### 3-5. Experts and Workers in the Field of Disability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>Training and qualification system</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical Professionals</td>
<td>5-year professional training at Government Medical Faculties, and practical training in teaching hospitals.</td>
<td>MBBS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>3-year training at Nurses Training Schools</td>
<td>Certificate of Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Health Workers</td>
<td>1-year theoretical and practical training</td>
<td>Para-medic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiotherapists Speech Therapists</td>
<td>2-year training at the School of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>Para-medic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational Therapists</td>
<td>2-year training at the School of Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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16 Japanese Federation of the Deaf *Asia no Shuwa (Sign Language in Asia)* pp.64-66
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Training Details</th>
<th>Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orthopedic Technicians</td>
<td>18 month training in Colombo by the National Institute of Health Sciences(^{18})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Social Workers</td>
<td>On-the-job training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service Officers</td>
<td>Trained by the Department of Social Services.</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training Instructors</td>
<td>Trained by the Department of Social Services.</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Social Workers</td>
<td>Trained by National Institute of Social Development for 2 years.</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school Teachers for Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>Trained by the Department of Social Services in collaboration with National Institution of Education for 3 months. In-services training are required once a year.</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teachers</td>
<td>The National Institute of Education and the Special Education Branch of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers</td>
<td>Trained by NGOs and the government, abroad and locally.</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{18}\)Ministry of Health *Basic para-medical training courses conducted by the Department of Health Services*

4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities

4-1. Activities by Disability-related organizations

**Current State of Organizations**

Most residential care facilities for those who suffer persons with severe intellectual disability and overlapping are managed by the NGOs with financial and other assistance from provincial councils. NGOs run about 66 such homes. Public assistance including monthly allowances are paid to persons with disabilities who stay in their own community without any support from other sources. Action has also been taken by the Department of Social Services to open homes for persons with severe intellectual disability, as there is a long waiting list with NGOs reluctant to open homes of this type due to heavy expenses.

Some of these organizations have not provided information on their budgets. To these organizations, the Department of Social services contributes at the rate of Rs.300 per resident per month. Therefore, the general formula can be established as follows: (Number of residents) x 12 x Rs.300 (This figure is calculated as a basis for each of the organizations, where the actual budget is not given). They also raise funds from the public in an ad-hoc manner, which is not shown in this table because of the non-availability of data. Ad-hoc grants up to Rs.75,000 for repairs and improvements and another Rs.40,000 for equipment and clothes are being provided by the government annually. Other costs are normally supported by public contributions and fund raising activities. In special circumstances where the institutions are unable to mobilize local funds to meet costs, the government would come forward to meet the entire cost of such activities.

Sri Lanka has many persons with disabilities organizations which are led by the Sri Lanka Confederation of Organizations of the Handicapped People. The Sri Lanka Federation of Visually Handicapped, the Sri Lanka National Federation of Visually Handicapped, the Association of Physically Handicapped Technicians, the Sri Lanka Federation of the Physically Handicapped, the Association of Hearing Impaired People, the Organization of the Parents of the Disabled Persons, the Organization of Ladies with Disabilities and the Sri Lanka Sports Board of Disabled People are members of the Confederation\(^\text{19}\).
**Current Facilities on Disability**

Institutions, including residential homes, vocational training centers, daycare centers, special schools, preschools, etc, are interested in improving their capacity, economic empowerment, and vocational training programs. Other needs such as improvement of health facilities and education and recreation are not considered priorities.

**Needs of Person with Disability Institutions Surveyed by the Action Plans for Future Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>No. of facilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Activities related to improving capacity</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities related to economic empowerment of Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start new programs related to vocational training</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare Activities</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the supply of assistive devices</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund raising activities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports, arts, culture programs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the production of Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand rehabilitation programs</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enumeration of Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training of support staff/consultants</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish a resource center for Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: TEAMS Draft Final Report A Study of Physically Impaired people of Sri Lanka

The main constraint of most of the institutions face is the lack of finances for construction of buildings, recruitment of additional staff, maintenance of residents, etc. Some institutions do not have sufficient human resources and have accessibility issues.

The Deaf and Blind School at Ratmalana is providing vocational training in addition to education. The National Council for the Blind, Sri Lanka National Federation of the Visually Handicapped, Central Council for the Disabled, Nailandre Home at Ragama, Anandapura Home at Katana, Ashokapura Home at Hemmathagama, Sun Flower Institution at Mulleriyawa are also engaged in providing vocational training to Persons with Disabilities. Sumaga Institution at Mount Lavinia is involved in conducting

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19 Nakanishi, Yukiko *Asia no Shogaisha (PWDs in Asia)* Gendaishoken, 1999

20 45 out of 75 Institutions that have registered with the Department of Social Services answered the survey conducted by JICA. In cases where the numbers exceed 45, the institutions gave multiple answers.
vocational training especially for the intellectually disabled. Nawa Jeevana Society at Tangalle is also conducting vocational training courses at the community level. Rehab Lanka Organization at Khettarama, Temple Road, Maligawatta provides opportunities for persons with disabilities to enhance their vocational abilities while being engaged in occupation. Person with disability entrants to universities are being vocationally trained up to the degree level. Village-level vocational training facilities in suitable business places have been arranged on a contract basis.

The prime medical rehabilitation facility in Sri Lanka is at the Ragama Rehabilitation Hospital, which has the following functions.

1. Improvement of functional status.
2. Advising on the nature of desirable profession persons with disabilities can do and what type of professions are dangerous for them.
3. Assisting the employer in job recruitment of persons with disabilities.
4. Attending to medical complications that may develop in persons with disabilities while they work.
5. Making adaptations.
6. Advising employees with disabilities on how to prevent accidents etc.
4-2. Cooperation Projects on Disability Organized by International and Other Donors

**Assistance by Multilateral/Bilateral Organizations and International NGOs**

According to the Brochure of the Islamic Center for the Physically Handicapped, the following foreign missions and international NGOs are assisting persons with disabilities.

1. Canadian High Commission
2. New Zealand High Commission
3. Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany
4. Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
5. High Commission of Pakistan
6. Royal Norwegian Embassy and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)
7. World Vision Lanka
8. South Asia Partnership
9. Swedish Organization of Handicapped International Aid Foundation (SHIA)

SHIA has joined with the Department of Social Services in providing financial assistance related to vocational training and self employment. The maximum grant provided by the Department of Social Services was Rs. 2500 per person for life. This was increased by 100% with SHIA funds. SHIA pioneered canvassing for jobs for trained and untrained persons with disabilities.

UNICEF has actively promoted CBR. The Anti-Leprosy Campaign is assisted by the Swiss EMMAUS and Ceiba Geigy LF Foundations and NORAD through the renovation of buildings in 1996\(^\text{21}\).

**Aid Projects by Japan**

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is one of the main international donors in this area. It has taken a leading role in assisting Sri Lanka to improve its welfare services for persons with disabilities providing training in Japan. JICA funded construction of a laboratory complex of the Medical Laboratory Technologists School and provided equipment between

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1988 and 1992\textsuperscript{22}. It has also dispatched experts and volunteers to NGOs engaged in preschool education, vocational training, and health care activities.

Nine volunteers were working in vocational training centers, special schools, NGOs, and Provincial Councils in 2000.

Their activities have improved the quality of services for persons with disabilities through:
1. Improvement of services and curriculum in vocational training centers
2. Introduction of new sports
3. Training of staff in vocational training institutions and special schools

\textsuperscript{22} Ministry of Health *Education, Training & Research*

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Ministry of Health *The Anti-Leprosy Campaign (ALC)*

Ministry of Health

*Basic para-medical training courses conducted by the Department of Health Services*

Ministry of Health *Education, Training & Research*

Ministry of Health *Mental Health Services*

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