

Situation Analysis & National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities

Executive Summary

The Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education has launched the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities – 2002 and requested the World Bank to facilitate the process for developing the country's National Plan of Action (NPA) to implement the policy.

Objective

The purpose of the study is to prepare a draft strategic National Plan of Action (NPA) based on a comprehensive and holistic situation analysis of key priority areas identified in the policy: prevention, early detection and intervention; education and training; vocational rehabilitation; medical rehabilitation; legal and physical environment; communication and media. The document would provide a basis for initiating consultations at the provincial and federal levels to finalize NPA and develop operational plans of action.

Methodology

A desk review of national and international literature on the subject was undertaken; and Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with over 100 stakeholders were held at federal and provincial levels, which included officials from Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education (MoWDSW & SE); Ministries of Health and Education; Provincial Departments of Special Education, Social Welfare, Health, Education; concerned officers of district governments; senior and mid level officials of Federal and Provincial institutions; and non-government organizations. Visits were also made to various public sector and NGO run institutes, centers and services. Meetings were held with the faculty members of the Departments of Special Education in Universities. In addition, meaningful consultations with individuals with disabilities and some of their parents were also held. Analysis was simultaneously carried out.

Key Findings

DGSE has played a pioneering role in promoting the programmes for persons with disabilities (PWDs). However, the SE nomenclature adopted by the Ministry (MoWD, SW, SE) is very narrow that limits the scope of work for holistic approach towards PWDs.

Definition, Magnitude and Causes: Definition for disability for use in Pakistan has only been described in the 1981 Ordinance for Employment of Disabled, which is vague. Therefore, the interpretation of disabled varies significantly that has also affected the collection of data and there is lack of agreement about the reported figures for the disabled persons in the country. There is also no information about the proportionate role of different causes in contributing to disability.

Institutional Arrangements: At the top level of the programme, there are five major bodies working for PWDs. i.e. DGSE, NCRDP, NTD, NIH and SE Departments in three universities, but there is minimal interaction between them. Furthermore, the institutional arrangement is such that the DGSE (nucleus of the programme) is working in isolation without formal intersectoral and interministerial linkages. Furthermore there is lack of integration of DGSE led services with the corresponding provincial line departments, and now with the district governments. Also, the organizational structure at DGSE has uneven distribution of responsibility and persons with non-related background have been posted in key decision-making positions; who lack understanding about the programme needs and its developmental requirements.

DGSE has demonstrated the consistency of approach that has helped in progressive evolution of the programme and despite several shortcomings, overtime DGSE institutions have accumulated a considerable level of knowledge and experience in SE and vocational training services. However, several specialized institutes that have been established at the federal level with broad mandates, and were to be Centers of Excellence to serve as model, have not yet been able to meet the set goals. Besides institutes at federal level, 40 Special Education Centers (SECs) have been established in provinces. Provincial governments have established 91 centers that have now been taken over by the district governments with the implementation of devolution plan in 2001. Consequently, the roles of provincial line departments have been minimized and the flow of technical support to the SECs has been slowed and weakened.

NGOs share a considerable workload of the programme and they are managing 117 SECs. However, the link between NGOs and DGSE is not optimal. Furthermore, the funding to NGOs by DGSE is limited to only a few and with very small grants. Interestingly, NGOs are in mutual competition for resources and fame and the country programme has not been successful to bring NGOs on a common platform.

Financing of Services: The financing of the public sector programme is from the government budget and the allocation in current fiscal year is 95% more than that in FY 1999-00. Currently, no donor is providing assistance, except support to small-scale projects. Zakat and Bait-ul-Mal also do not provide any direct assistance to the DGSE. Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) are raising funds through donations to support services in SECs and their role is appreciable. NGOs are raising funds both from national and international sources for managing their programmes. About 26 of them have received small grants from DGSE ranging from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 450,000 per annum, and a few from Bait-ul-mal and Zakat Funds. The SE cost per child is noticeably lower in SECs of the NGOs as compared to public sector centers.

Prevention of Disabilities: A broad-based multisectoral active collaboration is lacking for primary prevention of disabilities, such as among ministries/departments of health, information and mass media communication and works, National Highway Authority (NHA), police, law and justice and the MoWD, SW & SE. For example, several MOH programmes are carrying out activities of primary prevention of

disabilities such as IDD control and polio eradication, however, these have no link either with MoWD, SW & SE or DGSE.

No formal programmes exist in public sector at federal or provincial level for early detection. LHWs, who follow the road map of a child's development lack knowledge and skills in detecting developmental delays. However, there are few examples of early detection services in NGO and private sectors.

Education and Training: A network of about 266 SECs has been progressively established over last 23 years by the federal and provincial governments and NGOs (44 DGSE, 92 provincial governments, 3 NTD, 117 NGOs and 10 armed forces). These provide enrolment to about 22,000 children with Special Education Needs (SEN). However, the quality of services is variable and the shortcomings needs redressal. Out of the currently estimated 1.28 million population of disabled children of 5-19 years, only 1.7% of children with SEN are enrolled in SECs. The enrolment proportions in government SECs for male and female are 65% and 35% respectively. All SE centers are located in urban areas while 66% disabled population resides in rural areas, and most of the children in government and NGO SECs belong to the middle or lower middle-income groups. A variety of SE curricula of variable quality are in use throughout the country, hence the education lacks uniformity. Curricula prepared by NSECs and NISE have not been adequately disseminated. The quality of training in SECs also varies from low to high depending on several factors. PTAs are playing important role in supporting public sector SECs. This has helped the management to upgrade some of them from primary to middle, matric and intermediate level.

The government of Punjab is giving higher priority to SE than other provinces and has appointed a Minister to lead the programme.

The prospective development plan 2001-2011 of Planning Commission, GoP has clearly given direction to move from SE to Inclusive Education (IE). There is general agreement to implement inclusive education among concerned officers in MOE, DGSE, provincial departments and district government, but very minimal steps have been taken in this direction. However, a few NGOs and private sector schools have shown examples of success.

DGSE has played the lead role in establishment of master's level course in 3 universities (AIOU, Karachi University and Punjab University) for training of SE teachers. More than 2,300 have acquired the degrees and are working in public, NGO and private sector schools. The master's level training is largely theoretical and lacks practical training due to lack of facilities for hands-on experience. In 18 years, NISE has conducted 298 courses of 1-2 weeks duration for SE teachers that provided training to 6610 participants (not individuals as many have attended several courses). However, these have been conducted without any needs assessment on ad hoc basis, without medium or long term planning. No follow up has been done to assess the impact of these trainings. The general impression of the trainers, trainees and their supervisors is that the current duration of the training is not adequate.

Vocational Rehabilitation: The Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programmes and services are limited in scope and not geared to current market needs. Public sector Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is limited. Both, public and NGO sectors have introduced micro credit in their VR and CBR programmes. However, there is no evidence of availability of any specifically designed micro credit programme for disabled by major institutions like SMEDA, First Women Bank, Khushhali Bank, etc.

Medical Rehabilitation: Presently, medical rehabilitation services are available at provincial and to some extent at district headquarters level. However, the existing services generally lack appropriate specialists, equipments and funding for prosthesis, orthotics and assistive aids. The existing medical rehabilitation facilities and provision of prosthesis, orthotics and other assistive aids, both in public and private sectors, are inadequate to meet the demand.

The proportion of nuclear families and elderly population is on the rise, however, no exclusive services or programmes for the aging population have been conceived with in public, NGO or private sector.

Legal and Physical Environment: A range of laws that impact prevention of disability, rehabilitation and employment of disabled have been made, but their implementation is weak. The implementation of 1% quota system has not met with much success inspite of existence of NCRDP and PCRDP network. Only 1.1 million workers out of total 39 million labour force are covered by the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) laws and implementation of temporary and permanent disability benefits under Workmen's Compensation Act is weak.

There is no law for providing barrier free access to PWDs in built areas. Currently, building codes for provision of access to PWDs do not exist. Similarly, Town Planning codes have not been conceived. Public, private and commercial buildings and facilities do not cater to the needs of the disabled. The environment is more suitable for persons with physical strength, agility and mental alertness. It is not user friendly for PWDs, elderly people, children, expectant and nursing women, infirm and frail. Drafts prepared by development activists for seeking legislations regarding access for PWD have been ignored. However, on the initiative of MoWD, SW&SE, the cities of Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar have been declared by CDA and the respective provincial governments as "Disabled Friendly City" and measures are being taken in this direction. Furthermore, on the initiative of the Ministry, the Cabinet has recently approved 14 measures for improving physical access of PWDs in buildings, parks and public places, which will soon be notified.

Social Environment, Communications and Media: Attitudes towards disabled in families and communities are mixed, ranging from extra love and care to neglect and harsh treatment. Females suffer the "Double Disadvantage" of being disabled and female. In addition, mothers of disabled children face family and societal stigma. The media has played a mixed role and is partially responsible for portraying PWDs in need of pity and deserving charities. However, it has also shown positive images of PWDs, but not enough to help their integration into society. Associations of the disabled persons have played a very important role in advocating for opportunities, programmes and services for the PWD.

Proposed Draft National Plan of Action (NPA)

The draft NPA is a strategic plan that responds to the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2002 and is based on the findings of the situation analysis. It is based on the philosophy that access, inclusion, and equalization of opportunities for PWDs cannot be achieved by a single intervention, and the services are to be designed to provide a continuum whose goal is full inclusion. To meet the philosophical goal minor restructuring and adjustments in roles will be required, and funding will have to be mobilized through several sources. Furthermore the goal can only be met by extending the services to the rural areas (where two-third of the disabled live) that are currently neglected and unserved.

It must be noted that the NPA is a draft to initiate the dialogue and discussion at federal and provincial level to finalize an NPA for Pakistan. For translating this into provincial operational plans a consultative process should be initiated that must effectively involve all stakeholders to make it relevant to the needs of each province.

The proposed actions are directed for:

1. Enhancing the mandate of DGSE and restructuring
2. Determining the extent of disabilities and distribution of causes
3. Improving prevention of injuries, deficiencies, diseases and other factors known to cause disabilities
4. Mobilizing early detection and intervention.
5. Escalating the medical rehabilitation services.
6. Strengthening of Special Education for children with severe and moderately severe disabilities
7. Promoting Inclusive Education for children with SEN.
8. Expanding and reinforcing vocational training, employment and economic rehabilitation
9. Pursuing implementation of existing laws for PWDs
10. Creating of Barrier-free physical environment
11. Raising public acceptance and improving social integration and environment
12. Boosting capacity for production and supply of prosthetics, orthotics and assistive aids and other supporting items and facilitation in duty free imports.
13. Increasing support to the NGOs

In order to achieve the above successfully, there is a need to actively involve all stakeholders including relevant ministries, departments, district governments, associations of persons with disabilities, and NGOs working for the disabled at national, provincial and district levels.

(This Situation Analysis was conducted by Arjumand And Associates from March to May 2004 and NPA drafted. The activity was sponsored by the World Bank)