

DO YOU KNOW?

What is the number of persons with disabilities in India ?

According to Census 2001, there were 2.19 Crore persons with disabilities in India who constituted 2.13 percent of the total population. Out of the total population of persons with disabilities, 1.26 Crore are male and 0.93 Cores are female. This includes persons with visual, hearing, speech, locomotor and mental disabilities. The Census data shows that 75 percent of persons with disabilities lived in rural areas, 49 percent are literate and only 34 percent are employed. Data collected in 2002 by the National Sample Survey Organization, indicated that the number of persons with disabilities was 1.85 Crore, with a disability-wise break up which was significantly different from the Census 2001 data, as given in the table below, due to difference in coverage and definitions used for collection of data. The estimated population of persons with disabilities in 2008, projected on the basis of figures of the last Census, is 2.44 Crore.

There is significant difference in the disability statistics provided by Census 2001 and the sample survey of National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in 2002. The variation is primarily due to the difference in the criteria for defining disability adopted by both the organizations. The definitions

are also at variance with those mentioned in the Persons with Disabilities Act (PwD Act) 1995. Further, all the disabilities mentioned in the PwD Act were not covered in the Census 2001. Therefore, the Census data of 2001 does not reflect the true picture of disabilities in the country.

With a view to have more credible enumeration of Persons with Disabilities in Census 2011, the matter was taken up with the Registrar General of India (RGI). The Ministry of Social Justice and empowerment proposed to include all the 7 types of disabilities mentioned in the PwD Act for enumeration in the Census, 2011 and also suggested a Household Schedule as well as simple and comprehensive definitions of various disabilities for canvassing during Census 2011. According to the in Census 2011, the following disabilities have been covered for enumeration:-

- i. In Seeing
- ii. In Speech
- iii. In Hearing
- iv. In Movement
- v. Mental Retardation
- vi. Mental Illness
- vii. Multiple Disability
- viii. Any other

What is Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) law and proposed amendments in this law?

A meeting to launch the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 1993-2002, convened by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP), was held in Beijing in December, 1992. The Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region was adopted in this meeting, to which India is a signatory. The Central Government enacted The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation Act), 1995 to implement this proclamation.

The PwD Act defines "disability" as blindness, low vision, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, mental retardation mental illness, and leprosy-cured. It defines persons with disability as those who have a minimum disability of 40%, as certified by a medical authority. It provides for education, rehabilitation, employment, non-discrimination and social security for persons with disabilities.

The PwD Act 1995 is now over 15 years old. Keeping in view the developments taking place in disability sector over the last 15 years and to harmonize the provisions of PwD Act with United Nations Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and provisions of other legislations on the subject, it was proposed to amend the present Act.