

Policies and programs

Education Law for the Disabled

- The right to education is available to all citizens including the disabled. Article 29(2) of the Constitution provides that no citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on the ground of religion, race, caste or language.
- Article 45 of the Constitution directs the State to provide free and compulsory education for all children (including the disabled) until they attain the age of 14 years. No child can be denied admission into any education institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on the ground of religion, race, and caste or language.



Health Laws

- Article 47 of the constitution imposes on the Government a primary duty to raise the level of nutrition and standard of living of its people and make improvements in public health - particularly to bring about prohibition of the

consumption of intoxicating drinks and drugs which are injurious to one's health except for medicinal purposes.

- The health laws of India have many provisions for the disabled. Some of the Acts which make provision for health of the citizens including the disabled may be seen in the Mental Health Act, 1987.

Family Laws

Various laws relating to the marriage enacted by the Government for different communities apply equally to the disabled. In most of these Acts it has been provided that the following

Circumstances will disable a person from undertaking a marriage. These are:

- Where either party is an idiot or lunatic,
- Where one party is unable to give a valid consent due to unsoundness of mind or is suffering from a mental disorder of such a kind and extent as to be unfit for 'marriage for procreation of children'
- Where the parties are within the degree of prohibited relationship or are sapindas of each other unless permitted by custom or usage.
- Where either party has a living spouse

Succession Laws for the Disabled

Under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 which applies to Hindus it has been specifically provided that physical disability or physical deformity would not disentitle a person from inheriting ancestral property. Similarly, in the Indian Succession Act, 1925 which applies in the case of intestate and testamentary succession, there is no provision which deprives the disabled from inheriting an ancestral property. The position with regard to Parsis and the Muslims is the same. In fact a disabled

person can also dispose his property by writing a 'will' provided he understands the import and consequence of writing a will at the time when a will is written. For example, a person of unsound mind can make a Will during periods of sanity. Even blind persons or those who are deaf and dumb can make their Wills if they understand the import and consequence of doing it.

Labour Laws for the Disabled

The rights of the disabled have not been spelt out so well in the labour legislations but provisions which cater to the disabled in their relationship with the employer are contained in delegated legislations such as rules, regulations and standing orders.

Judicial procedures for the disabled

Under the Designs Act, 1911 which deals with the law relating to the protection of designs any person having jurisdiction in respect of the property of a disabled person (who is incapable of making any statement or doing anything required to be done under this Act) may be appointed by the Court under Section 74, to make such statement or do such thing in the name and



on behalf of the person subject to the disability. The disability may be lunacy or other disability.

Income Tax Concessions

Relief for Handicapped

- **Section 80 DD:** Section 80 DD provides for a deduction in respect of the expenditure incurred by an individual or Hindu Undivided Family resident in India on the medical treatment (including nursing) training and rehabilitation etc. of handicapped dependants. For officiating the increased cost of such maintenance, the limit of the deduction has been raised from Rs.12000/- to Rs.20000/-.
- **Section 80 V:** A new section 80V has been introduced to ensure that the parent in whose hands income of a permanently disabled minor has been clubbed under Section 64, is allowed to claim a deduction upto Rs.20000/- in terms of Section 80 V.
- **Section 88B:** This section provides for an additional rebate from the net tax payable by a resident individual who has attained the age of 65 years. It has been amended to increase the rebate from 10% to 20% in the cases where the gross total income does not exceed Rs.75000/- (as against a limit of Rs.50000/- specified earlier).



The persons with disabilities (PWD) (equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation) act, 1995

“The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995” had come into enforcement on February 7, 1996. It is a significant step which ensures equal opportunities for the people with disabilities and their full participation in the nation building. The Act provides for both the preventive and promotional aspects of rehabilitation like education, employment and vocational training, reservation, research and manpower development, creation of barrier- free environment, rehabilitation of persons with disability, unemployment allowance for the disabled, special insurance scheme for the disabled employees and establishment of homes for persons with severe disability etc.

Main Provisions of the Act

- Prevention and Early Detection of Disabilities
- Education
- Employment
- Non-Discrimination
- Affirmative Action
- Social Security
- Grievance Redressal

Prevention and early detection of disabilities

- Surveys, investigations and research shall be conducted to ascertain the cause of occurrence of disabilities.
- Various measures shall be taken to prevent disabilities. Staff at the Primary Health Centre shall be trained to assist in this work.
- All the Children shall be screened once in a year for identifying ‘at-risk’ cases.
- Awareness campaigns shall be launched and sponsored to disseminate information.

- Measures shall be taken for pre-natal, peri natal, and post-natal care of the mother and child.

Education



- Every Child with disability shall have the rights to free education till the age of 18 years in integrated schools or special schools.
- Appropriate transportation, removal of architectural barriers and restructuring of modifications in the examination system shall be ensured for the benefit of children with disabilities.
- Children with disabilities shall have the right to free books, scholarships, uniform and other learning material.
- Special Schools for children with disabilities shall be equipped with vocational training facilities.
- Non-formal education shall be promoted for children with disabilities.
- Teachers' Training Institutions shall be established to develop requisite manpower.
- Parents may move to an appropriate forum for the Redressal of grievances regarding the placement of their children with disabilities.



Employment

3% of vacancies in government employment shall be reserved for people with disabilities, 1% each for the persons suffering from:

- Blindness or Low Vision
- Hearing Impairment
- Locomotors Disabilities & Cerebral Palsy
- Suitable Scheme shall be formulated for
- The training and welfare of persons with disabilities
- The relaxation of upper age limit
- Regulating the employment
- Health and Safety measures and creation of a non-handicapping, environment in places where persons with disabilities are employed

Government Educational Institutes and other Educational Institutes receiving grant from Government shall reserve at least 3% seats for people with disabilities.

No employee can be sacked or demoted if they become disabled during service, although they can be moved to another post with the same pay and condition. No promotion can be denied because of impairment.

Affirmative Action

Aids and Appliances shall be made available to the people with disabilities.

Allotment of land shall be made at concessional rates to the



people with disabilities for:

- House
- Business
- Special Recreational Centers
- Special Schools
- Research Schools
- Factories by Entrepreneurs with Disability,

Non-Discrimination

- Public building, rail compartments, buses, ships and air-crafts will be designed to give easy access to the disabled people.
- In all public places and in waiting rooms, the toilets shall be wheel chair accessible. Braille and sound symbols are also to be provided in all elevators (lifts).
- All the places of public utility shall be made barrier- free by providing the ramps.

Social Security

- Financial assistance to non-government organizations for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.
- Insurance coverage for the benefit of the government employees with disabilities.
- Unemployment allowance to the people with disabilities who are registered with the special employment exchange for more than a year and could not find any gainful occupation

Grievance Redressal

- In case of violation of the rights as prescribed in this act, people with disabilities may move an application to the
- Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in the Centre, or Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities in the State.

The Mental Health Act, 1987

Under the Mental Health Act, 1987 mentally ill persons are entitled to the following rights:

A right to be admitted, treated and cared in a psychiatric hospital or psychiatric nursing home or convalescent home established or maintained by the Government or any other person for the treatment and care of mentally ill persons (other

than the general hospitals or nursing homes of the Government).

1. Even mentally ill prisoners and minors have a right of treatment in psychiatric hospitals or psychiatric nursing homes of the Government.
2. Minors under the age of 16 years, persons addicted to alcohol or other drugs which lead to behavioral changes, and those convicted of any offence are entitled to admission, treatment and care in separate psychiatric hospitals or nursing homes established or maintained by the Government.



3. Mentally ill persons have the right to get regulated, directed and co-ordinated mental health services from the Government. The Central Authority and the State Authorities set up under the Act have the responsibility of such regulation and issue of licenses for establishing and maintaining psychiatric hospitals and nursing homes.
4. Treatment at Government hospitals and nursing homes mentioned above can be obtained either as in patient or on an out-patients basis.

5. Mentally ill persons can seek voluntary admission in such hospitals or nursing homes and minors can seek admission through their guardians. Admission can be sought for by the relatives of the mentally ill person on behalf of the latter. Applications can also be made to the local magistrate for grants of such (reception) orders.
6. The police have an obligation to take into protective custody a wandering or neglected mentally ill person, and inform his relative, and also have to produce such a person before the local magistrate for issue of reception orders.
7. Mentally ill persons have the right to be discharged when cured and entitled to 'leave' the mental health facility in accordance with the provisions in the Act.
8. Where mentally ill persons own properties including land which they cannot themselves manage, the district court upon application has to protect and secure the management of such properties by entrusting the same to a 'Court of Wards', by appointing guardians of such mentally ill persons or appointment of managers of such property.
9. The costs of maintenance of mentally ill persons detained as in-patient in any government psychiatric hospital or nursing home shall be borne by the state government concerned unless such costs have been agreed to be borne by the relative or other person on behalf of the mentally ill person and no provision for such maintenance has been made by order of the District Court. Such costs can also be borne out of the estate of the mentally ill person.
10. Mentally ill persons undergoing treatment shall not be subjected to any indignity (whether physical or mental) or cruelty. Mentally ill persons cannot be used without their own valid consent for purposes of research, though they could receive their diagnosis and treatment.

11.A mentally ill person shall be entitled to the services of a legal practitioner by order of the magistrate or district court if he has no means to engage a legal practitioner or his circumstances so warrant in respect of proceedings under the Act.



The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992

This Act provides guarantees so as to ensure the good quality of services rendered by various rehabilitation personnel.

Following is the list of such guarantees:

1. To have the right to be served by trained and qualified rehabilitation professionals whose names are borne on the Register maintained by the Council
2. To have the guarantee of maintenance of minimum standards of education required for recognition of rehabilitation qualification by universities or institutions in India.
3. To have the guarantee of maintenance of standards of professional conduct and ethics by rehabilitation

professionals in order to protect against the penalty of disciplinary action and removal from the Register of the Council

4. To have the guarantee of regulation of the profession of rehabilitation professionals by a statutory council under the control of the central government and within the bounds prescribed by the statute

The national trust for welfare of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities act, 1999

1. The Central Government has the obligation to set up, in accordance with this Act and for the purpose of the benefit of the disabled, the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities at New Delhi.
2. The National Trust created by the Central Government has to ensure that the objects for which it has been set up as enshrined in Section 10 of this Act have to be fulfilled.
3. It is an obligation on part of the Board of Trustees of the National Trust so as to make arrangements for an adequate standard of living of any beneficiary named in any request received by it, and to provide financial assistance to the registered organizations for carrying out any approved programmed for the benefit of disabled.
4. Disabled persons have the right to be placed under guardianship appointed by the 'Local Level Committees' in accordance with the provisions of the Act. The guardians so appointed will have the obligation to be responsible for the disabled person and their property and required to be accountable for the same.
5. A disabled person has the right to have his guardian removed under certain conditions. These include an abuse or neglect of the disabled, or neglect or misappropriation of the property under care.
6. Whenever the Board of Trustees are unable to perform or have persistently made default in their performance of

duties, a registered organization for the disabled can complain to the central government to have the Board of Trustees superseded and/or reconstituted.

7. The National Trust shall be bound by the provisions of this Act regarding its accountability, monitoring finance, accounts and audit.

UN Declaration on the Rights of Mentally Retarded Persons

This declaration on the rights of mentally retarded person's calls for national and international actions so as to ensure that it will be used as a common basis and frame of reference for the protection of their rights:

1. The mentally retarded person has, to the maximum degree of feasibility, the same rights as under human beings.
2. The mentally retarded person has a right to proper medical care, physical therapy and to such education, training, rehabilitation and guidance which will enable him to further develop his ability, and reach maximum potential in life.
3. The mentally retarded person has a right of economic security and of a decent standard of living. He/she has a right to perform productive work or to participate in any other meaningful occupation to the fullest possible extent of capabilities.
4. Whenever possible, the mentally retarded person should live with his own family or with his foster parents and participate in different forms of community life. The family with which he lives should receive assistance. If an institutional care becomes necessary then it should be provided in surroundings and circumstances as much closer as possible to that of a normal lifestyle.
5. The mentally retarded person has a right to a qualified guardian when this is required in order to protect his personal well-being or interests.

6. The mentally retarded person has a right to get protection from exploitation, abuse and a degrading treatment. If prosecuted for any offence; he shall have right to the due process of law, with full recognition being given to his degree of mental responsibility.
7. Whenever mentally retarded persons are unable (because of the severity of their handicap) to exercise their rights in a meaningful way or it should become necessary to restrict or deny some or all of their rights then the procedure(s) used for that restriction or denial of rights must contain proper legal safeguards against every form of abuse. This procedure for the mentally retarded must be based on an evaluation of their social capability by qualified experts, and must be subject to periodic review and a right of appeal to the higher authorities.

