



CHILD PROTECTION BULLETIN

STATE CHILD
PROTECTION
SOCIETY, ASSAM

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF ACTIVITIES CONCERNING CHILD PROTECTION IN ASSAM

EDITORIAL

The term "disability" encompasses a wide range of situations, from minor disabilities, like diminished vision or hearing, to severe disabilities, such as inability to move around or brain dysfunctions. Children with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups in society. Facing daily discrimination in the form of negative attitudes, lack of adequate policies and legislation, they are effectively barred from realizing their rights to healthcare, education, and even survival.

Estimates suggest that there are at least 93 million children with disabilities in the world, but numbers could be much higher. They are often likely to be among the poorest members of the population. They are less likely to attend school, access medical services, or have their voices heard in society. Their disabilities also place them at a higher risk of physical abuse, and often exclude them from receiving proper nutrition or humanitarian assistance in emergencies.

Education is one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of discrimination and poverty that children with disabilities often face. However, children with disabilities are less likely to start school and if they do, they are unlikely to transition to secondary school. Their access to school is often limited by stigma, lack of understanding of their needs, lack of teacher training, unconvincing school environment, lack of classroom support and learning resources.

But denying children with disabilities their right to education has a lifelong impact on learning, achievement and employment opportunities, hence hindering their potential economic, social and human development.

This month's news bulletin is all about differently-abled children who require some different kind of attention and training. As they are special they also need some special kind of attention. They should be treated equally with a feeling of empathy.

Editorial Board,

State Child Protection Society, Assam

CHILDREN with DISABILITIES

According to the World Report on Disability approximately one billion people in the world are living with a disability, with at least 1 in 10 being children and 80% living in developing countries. Among marginalized groups, children with disabilities remain the most excluded, discriminated not only because of their disability but also because of lack of understanding and knowledge about its causes, implications and stigma.

Children experiencing multiple forms of discrimination, particularly girls with disabilities, face a double disadvantage, because of their disability and gender. Girls with disabilities are not only confronted with stigma but are also constrained by traditional gender roles and cultural barriers.

Children with disabilities are less likely to start school and if they do, they are unlikely to transition to secondary school. Access to school for children with disabilities is often limited by a lack of understanding about their needs, lack of teacher training, unconvincing school environment, classroom support and learning resources and facilities.

Denying children with disabilities their right to education has a lifelong impact on learning, achievement and employment opportunities, hence hindering their potential economic, social and human development.

To ensure that all children enjoy their basic human rights without discrimination, disability inclusion should be mainstreamed in all policies and plans. This applies to education systems, which need to promote inclusion by ensuring the presence, participation and achievement of all children, including children with disabilities.

National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled Peoples Disability Law Unit (DLU) - North East in Shishu Sarothi, a leading N.G.O. working for children with cerebral palsy in Assam, has tried to

figure in this report. The assessment has been done through interactions, workshops and discussions with N.G.O.s, associations of people with disabilities and key stakeholders. The Report prepared by Shishu Sarothi throws light on the lack of implementation of the disability enactments in this region.

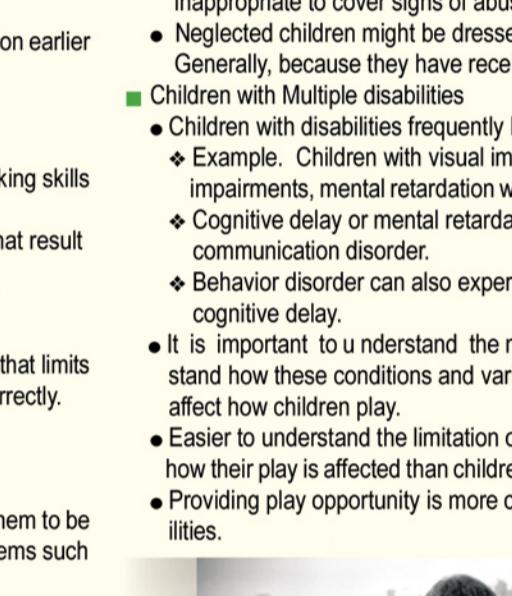
In the last twenty years, a number of statutes relating to the disability sector have been enacted. The major laws dealing with disability are The Mental Health Act, 1987, The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992, The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, and The National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999.

With the passing of these laws there are a plethora of provisions for protection, care, treatment, rehabilitation, security and empowerment for persons with different disabilities. These laws also help effect a change in the way society looks at disability.

But unfortunately, these laws are not being implemented properly in the North East region with even the awareness level remaining low, as the study reveals.

Discrepancy in Census figures

To begin with, even the Census figures regarding the disabled population in the North East region are nowhere near the actual numbers as revealed by the C.B.R. Network (N.G.O.) figures. As per the Census there are 5,30,300 disabled people in Assam, whereas C.B.R. Network (N.G.O.) figures indicate 17,79,968. In Arunachal Pradesh there are 33,315 persons with disabilities while there are 72,908 as per C.B.R. Network data. The same is the case with Manipur (28,3756 persons with disabilities - Census 2000; 1,59,608 as per C.B.R. Network data), Mizoram (16,011 persons with disabilities - Census 2000; 59,540 as per C.B.R. Network), Meghalaya (28,803 disabled persons - Census 2000; 1,54,091 as per C.B.R. Network), Nagaland (2,26,499 persons with disabilities - Census: 1,32,880 as per C.B.R. Network) and Tripura (58,940 persons with disabilities - Census 2000; 2,13,233 as per C.B.R. Network).



"If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children."

—Mahatma Gandhi, Indian political and spiritual leader

THE NATURE OF DISABILITIES

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES : Children with Physical Disabilities can have

Hearing impairment. Depending on type of malfunction to the ear or nerves, impairment may range from mild to severe; temporary or permanent.

Visual impairment. Variation in range of impairment due to premature birth, injury, or medical causes.

Motor impairment. Variations range from physical restrictions of limbs, hand, trunk control, mobility, and strength.

A. AT-RISK CHILDREN

• At-risk Children. Children's experience with **Biological** or **Environmental** factors that may result in developmental delays or disabilities.

• Biological Risk Factors

♦ Children have biological history that can result in later developmental problems

♦ Children at-risk include

a) Premature babies.

b) Children born to mothers who have German measles while pregnant or complications during labor.

c) Low birth weight babies.

d) Children who accidentally ingest toxic substance during infancy and toddler years.

• Environmental Risk Factors

♦ Can be at risk because of the environment in which they lived before and after birth.

♦ These risk factors result from the mothers living in substandard or deprived environments.

♦ Early identification of at-risk child is essential so that intervention earlier on can be provided.

B. DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS

• COGNITIVE DELAY

♦ Child with cognitive or mental retardation is unable to use thinking skills to the level that is characteristic of normal development.

♦ A child with Down Syndrome experiences cognitive delays that result in mental retardation

♦ ADHD

♦ Language Delay

♦ Difficulty in articulating or expressing language. Speech deficit that limits verbalization, such as stuttering or inability to utter sounds correctly.

♦ Immature use of language.

♦ Limited vocabulary.

C. EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS

• Exhibit deviation from age appropriate behavior that can cause them to be very aggressive or very withdrawn. Leading to behavioral problems such as:

♦ Aggression.

♦ Academic disability.

♦ Anxiety.

♦ Depression.

♦ Behavioral deviation can be caused by

♦ Psychological causes – Bereavement due to loss of a parent through divorce or death.

♦ Environmental causes – Parenting methods of child management, Teacher management strategies.

♦ Psychological causes – Genetic factors.

D. AUTISM

• Children with autism experience severe emotional disturbance. Noticeable as early as 2½ years of age.

■ More common in boys than girls and is believed to be a biological problem that occurs during prenatal stages of development.

E. BEHAVIOR EXHIBITED

• Head banging.

• Extremely delayed expressive language.

• Echolalia speech.

• Stereotypical body movements.

• Children with Autism

• Can seem to be insensitive to sound and events around them.

• Have difficulty in socially interacting with others.

• Fail to recognize that outside world is different from self.

• Often experience mental retardation as well.

F. ABUSED & NEGLECTED CHILDREN

• Children can be abused emotionally, physically, sexually, and through neglect. Frequently children who are abused experience more than one form of abuse.

• Abused children are aggressive and use inappropriate social behavior; they are equally likely to be withdrawn and passive.

• Aggressive children can be

♦ Disruptive.

♦ Antisocial.

• Children who have been sexually abused might use inappropriate sexual behavior in social interaction with peers.

• Physically abused children might wear clothing that is seasonally inappropriate to cover signs of abuse.

• Neglected children might be dressed inappropriately or in dirty clothes. Generally, because they have received minimal care and supervision.

G. CHILDREN WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

• Children with disabilities frequently have combination of conditions.

♦ Example. Children with visual impairments can also have hearing impairments, mental retardation with unusual and hearing impairments.

♦ Cognitive delay or mental retardation can have language delay or communication disorder.

♦ Behavior disorder can also experience language abnormalities or cognitive delay.

• It is important to understand the nature of disabilities in order to understand how these conditions and variations from normal development affect how children play.

• Easier to understand the limitation of children with physical disability and how their play is affected than children with behavior or mental disabilities.

• Providing play opportunity is more challenging in case of multiple disabilities.



"While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about."

—Angela Schwabt, home schooling mom

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RIGHTS OF THE DIFFERENTLY-ABLED CHILD

Disabled children are like all other children. In keeping to the Convention of the rights of the child (CRC), they are entitled to the same rights as any other child.

In addition to the right to non-discrimination which is mentioned above, it is necessary to highlight that disabled children are supposed to enjoy all rights guaranteed by the Convention as well as the rights mentioned below.

The right to proper treatment

The second paragraph of article No. 23 CRC, dedicated to children with disabilities guarantees their right to get special care and to request the granting of state assistance, adapted to the child's country and to the financial standing of his parents or his guardian.

It is obvious that children with disabilities are entitled to special treatment, but in practice, most of these children are entirely deprived of even proper medical treatment. Their chance of recovering or in the least of living with less suffering are thus reduced to zero.

Right to education

Due to the lack of infrastructure, of means, of knowledge and above all of goodwill, most of the disabled children do not receive education, not even primary education for that matter. In fact, international statistics point out that only 2% of disabled children enjoy the privilege of going to school. It is a serious violation of the CRC which guarantees the right of every child's going to school.

Right to leisure

Sometimes, being totally engrossed in the special care given to disabled children, people around them forget that they are, before anything else, children who need to enjoy themselves, who need to play, express artistically, engage in sports, etc. Yet, the right to leisure is a right included in the Convention of the Rights of the Child (art. 31 CRC) and this naturally applies to the differently-abled child as well.

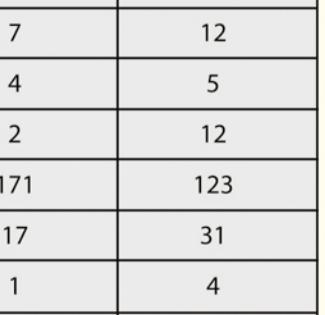
Right to participation

This is one of the fundamental needs of a disabled child, but unfortunately the

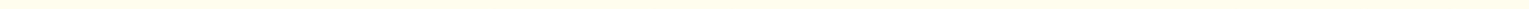
one which is most often ignored. Like in the case of any other child, the handicapped child must be given the opportunity to be heard in any proceedings affecting him according to article 12 of the CRC. His right to participation equally extends to all aspects of social life, on which subject the child, disabled or not, should be given the opportunity of expressing his opinion, of getting connected, of keeping himself informed and of taking part. Yet, because of their disabilities, one often thinks that they do not have the capacity of expressing a coherent idea, and the decision is taken without listening to their opinion. Children suffering from a disability, by their vulnerability, are particularly sensitive to the act of giving voice to their opinion, even though sometimes, communication with them would present numerous obstacles (difficulties in communicating with them, slow thinking, lack of understanding). Thus, handicapped children should be considered an integral part of decision making when it comes to issues which matter to them. Eliminating obstacles, which block their way to social integration, should be therefore identified as an immediate necessity.

A great room for improvement

The word "handicapped" often contains a pejorative connotation: a handicapped suffers from incapacities, so the temptation to treat them as incompetent is widely felt. But, a disabled child is capable of engaging himself in constructive things, and above all they are capable of progress. Unfortunately they are seldom provided with an opportunity to progress. Globally speaking, there is great room for progress in the field of the rights of the disabled child. One such progress has been their being called "differently-abled children" in place of "disabled children". In fact, what is needed to guarantee the rights of the child is the change of mentality. In addition to this, authorities all over the world should take necessary steps to introduce a judicial and an institutional structure which would assure the protection of disabled children, allowing them to come out of their dark dwellings and which would most necessarily let them enjoy proper living conditions they are worthy of and opportunities that they very well deserve.



Workshop on Reporting of Child Care Institutions under ICPS held on 23rd December 2016 at Hotel Nakshatra, Guwahati.



Capacity Building for Caregivers of Children Homes & Observation Homes held on 16th & 17th December 2016 conducted by Mind India at Alankar.....

"It's the greatest poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish."

—Mother Teresa, Roman Catholic nun

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For any feedback, write to :
Chairperson, Editorial Board,
State Child Protection Society, Assam

DSW, Government of Assam

Status Report on the functioning of the Juvenile Justice Boards and Child Welfare Committees in Assam for the month of November 2016

Sl. No.	Districts	Juvenile Justice Boards			Child Welfare Committees		
No. of cases instituted	No. of cases disposed	Total cases pending	No. of cases instituted	No. of cases disposed	Total cases pending		

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