

3

SOCIAL WORK INTERVENTIONS FOR MINIMIZING ISSUES ON SOCIAL INCLUSION OF DISABLE PERSONS

B.A. Niluka Wijebandara

*M.A (Sociology) University of Kelaniya, PG Dip. (Psychology and Counselling) University of Colombo, BA, University of Sri Jayawardenapura.
Research Officer, Social Development, Policy Research and Publications Division, National Institute of Social Development*

Kanchana Karandawala

*B.A. (Hons) Peace & Conflict Resolution, University of Kelaniya.
Research Officer, Social Development, Policy Research and Publications Division, National Institute of Social Development*

Abstract: Discussed in its every aspect in the way forward to Social Development. Though there is a considerable support from government and non-governmental organizations, there should be more positive changes towards security networks, disability allowance procedures, job stationing, inclusive dimensions for the persons with disabilities for their empowerment. The institutionalized rehabilitation and welfare of the persons with disabilities through social work interventions will be focused in this research. Objective of this research are to identify the issue of institutional programmes for disability social inclusion, to identify how such programmes impact on welfare of the persons with disabilities as well as to identify the steps to be taken in uplifting the effectiveness of such rehabilitation programmes through social work interventions. A Vocational training institute in Western Province was selected as

the study area. Total study area was 100 students. 20 students were selected according to the Purposive sampling technique. Qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were used and Focus Group Discussions, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, non-participatory observations were used as data collection tools. Study revealed that implementing practical Training under institutions and field practices for these courses and providing necessary facilities to fulfill such training through government and non-governmental organizations will be more beneficial. Further, Social Work process of problem identification, planning, intervention and evaluations will be more useful to provide solutions for the problems of social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Key words: Disability, Development, Social Work Interventions, Empowerment, Rehabilitation, Welfare

INTRODUCTION

In any society socialized attitudes have direct impact on for human and physical development. In such context positive attitudes in Sri Lankan society towards disabled should be motivated and uplifted. Comparatively Sri Lankan Society has more sympathetic approach towards the persons with disabilities other than a development approach like other countries in the world. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention on how the disability can be utilized in uplifting social, economic, political and cultural aspects of the country and how government and non-governmental organizations should plan such methods.

Disability has gained attention nationally and internationally. UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities has defined the persons with disabilities as below. "Persons with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on equal basis with others."(Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, <http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>)

When defining the disability, it can be identified by comparing the physical and psychological behaviors of an ordinary person. If a person faces difficulties in doing his/her physical and psychological behaviors as any ordinary person does that person can be identified as a person with disability.

It is clear that most research on these topics has been conducted with individuals who are in paid formal services, and there are great needs for understanding the community participation of individuals who live on their own or with their families, as well as researching social inclusion by focusing on the attitudes and experiences of community members themselves, not just individuals with disabilities and paid providers.(Amado. A.N, Stancliffe.R,J, McCarron.M, McCallion,P. 2013)

The greatest obstacles faced by disabled people are often attitudinal ones. Programs that place responsibility for rehabilitation and integration within the community can foster a better understanding of the issues. Family physicians and other professionals must work with communities to change the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of policy-makers and the public. Until significant progress is made on this front, problems of access that serve to marginalize people with disabilities will persist. (Peat.M, 1997)

In Sri Lankan social context Disability has been defined in different aspects and Sri Lankan legal frame work is also has described the disability and protecting their rights. The legal definition of disability in Sri Lanka is that described in the Protection of the Rights of Persons **with Disabilities Act. 1** A "person with disability means any person who, as a result of any deficiency in his physical or mental capabilities, whether congenital or not, is unable by himself to ensure for himself, wholly or partly, the necessities of life". ([https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/disability_policy_\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/disability_policy_(1).pdf))

In research backgrounds of Sri Lanka, over the past 30 years, published disability research in Sri Lanka has primarily focused on mental health, visual impairment and healthcare delivery. Significant gaps were apparent in evidence relating to the status and services for people with intellectual disability, policies and their impact, provider attitudes, barriers to education and employment, health workforce training and access to healthcare. While published studies provide insights on several dimensions of disability, there are important research gaps pointing to unmet needs that require attention to support the health and

wellbeing of people living with disability in Sri Lanka. To address these gaps, it is imperative that a critical mass of multi-disciplinary researchers including people living with disabilities collaborate on a strategic program of research using effective participatory approaches that engage all sectors and

communities relevant to uphold the rights of people living with disability (Peiris-John.R.J, Attanayake.S, Daskon.L, Wickramasignhe.A.R, Ameratunga.S, 2013)

Disability conditions can be aroused either in born or while living. Impact of environment and physical conditions can also make person disabled. In Sri Lankan background of the disability World Health Organizations (WHO) records indicate 10% of world population is disabled. According to 2011 Sri Lankan census and statistic reports 8.6% are persons with disabilities. According to CBR programme data of the Ministry of Social Welfare that percentage is 3% out of the total population in the country. (Sri Lanka Census of population and housing 2011, CBR Programme 2013)

If any person is disabled due to physical and psychological conditions there is a tendency of considering them as excluded group from the general community. In such social context it is important to empower the disabled persons for social inclusion, welfare and rehabilitation through empowering programmes for a better future.

Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) promotes collaboration among community leaders, people with disabilities, their families, and other concerned citizens to provide equal opportunities for all people with disabilities in the community. The CBR strategy, initiated two and a half decades ago, continues to promote the rights and participation of people with disabilities and to strengthen the role of their organizations (DPOs) in countries around the world. (CBR: A Strategy for Rehabilitation, Equalization of Opportunities, Poverty Reduction and, Social Inclusion of People With Disabilities, 2004)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A Vocational training institute in Western Province was selected as the study area. Total study area was 100 students. 20 students were selected according to the Purposive Sampling technique. Blind, Deaf, physically disabled persons, hearing disabled persons as well as students with multiple disabilities were included in the sample. All students were unmarried and were included in 16-35 age groups.

Table Number 01: Total number of students according to the courses

Index Number	Course	Total Number of Students	Number of data Donors
1	Computer Training Course	20	4
2	Electronic Training Course	10	2
3	Sewing Clothes (Female)	5	1
4	Wood work (Furniture)	10	2
5	Handcrafts	5	1
6	Shoe making and leather work	10	2
7	Institutional Job training	15	3
8	Dancing	15	3
9	Weaving	10	2
	Total	100	20

Source - Field Survey 2016

Data Collection: Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and data collection tools were

1. Focus group Discussions
2. In-depth Interview
3. Questionnaires
4. Non-Participation Observations

Secondary data was collected through Research Reports, Newspapers and Publications, Government and Non-governmental organizations as well as web details related to the research problem referred.

DATA

Disability type	Quantity	Percentage %
Semi vision impairment	2	10
speech impairment	7	35
Physical disability	6	30
audio impairment	2	10
Multiple Disabilities	3	15
Total	20	100

ANALYSIS

Data collected from study field will be analyzed through Key information about data donors as well as to analyze their common issues.

Table number 02: Disability Classification

Source – Field Survey 2016

According to the table number 02 majority of the disabled students are suffering from speech impairment. It is 35% from total sample. Physical disable students are using wheel chairs, crutches. Students with multiple Disabilities are representing one or more disabilities mentioned above. Two persons with semi vision impairment were also included in the sample as there were no fully vision impaired students.

Table Number 03: Classification of disable students according to the courses

Course Type	vision impairment	speech impairment	Physical disability	audio impairment	Multiple Disabilities
Computer Training Course		2	2		
Electronic Training Course					2
Sewing Clothes (Female)				1	

Wood work (Furniture)		1	1		
Handcrafts	1				
Shoe making and leather work			1		1
Institutional Job training		1	2		
Dancing		3			
Weaving	1			1	
Total	2	7	6	2	3

Source – Field Survey 2016

According to the above table many speech impairment students are following the above courses. Fewer students are with vision impairment and audio impairment to follow the above courses. It reveals that since students with speech impairment are not physically impaired, so that there are more tendency from them to learn these courses. Even though the stipulated time frame is 16-35 for these courses there are four (04) students exceeding the above age limits in weaving section.

Table number – 04 : Information disclosed from Supervisors

Training Type	Local	Local Percentage%	Foreign	Foreign Percentage%
Trained	6	67	1	11
Not- trained	3	33	8	89
Total Count	9	100	9	100

Source – Field Survey 2016

09 Supervisors have been taken for focus group discussions. According to study data 06 supervisors have been locally trained. It is 67% as a percentage. The significant point disclosed was that 04 supervisors from sewing and weaving section have been trained before 05 years back. One supervisor from electronic section has been participated 7 day overseas workshop. As per the study revealed since supervisors are not well trained with new knowledge and technology, making an effective change for students has become difficult for them.

Case Study 01:

“I joined this institute before 10 years. I’ve got an opportunity to participate a 07 day workshop in Korea in those days. That was 05 years back. However, there wasn’t much to learn. Moreover, it was difficult to implement what we have learnt in here. Lack of resources and technology is also a big barrier”

This statement clarifies that these supervisors are not getting adequate training as well as continuous trainings. In such scenario they are not in a position to equip the students with new technical knowledge. Moreover, the supervisors idea was though the supervisors have trained about using new equipments the physical resources are not adequate to use such knowledge in the institute. The discussion further revealed that the job satisfaction level of supervisors’ is low though they engage in their job tasks.

Table number – 05 Supervisors Job Satisfaction

Nature of the Job	Quantity	Percentage%
-------------------	----------	-------------

Satisfied	2	22
Not Satisfied	7	78
Total	9	100

Source – Field Survey 2016

According to the above table 78% supervisors are not satisfied with their job. The reasons they provided were since they employed on contract basis they will be paid considering the hours they work. In that case they are working only in stipulated timeframe and it restricts them to teach extra knowledge to students. This confirms that theoretical and practical knowledge the students get is not adequate. As per result they students pass out are not equipped with adequate knowledge to engage in jobs. Moreover, according to the supervisors they face many difficulties in attending their jobs and those difficulties refrain them from attending to the job on time. The reason was all supervisors are disabled. Below case studies confirmed that.

Case Study 02

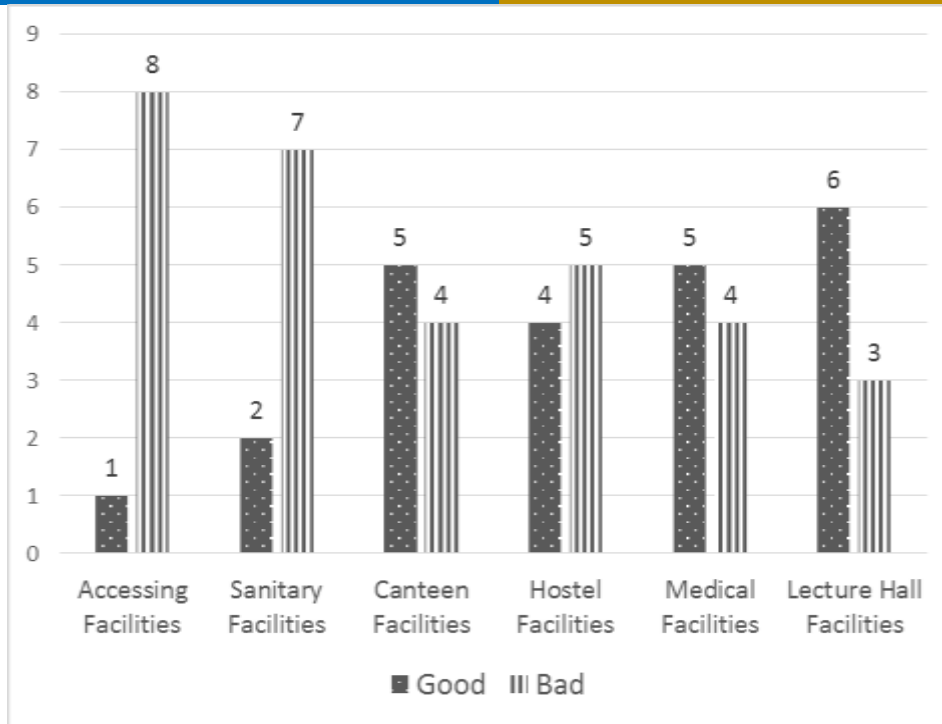
“We are also disabled. So, we face many difficulties in attending the job, especially when we travel by bus. So, we are boarded nearby. We have to pay that also. We face difficulties in residing such places due our disability. It is good if we get opportunity to reside here. Those days we had hostel facilities but due to a problem it was removed”

Moreover, focus group discussions further disclosed some courses consist of students with mental retardation as well as vision and speech impairment students the supervisors face issues in coordinating. The inadequate knowledge of supervisors about such disabilities has also become an issue as per the study data.

Information disclosed from students

Infrastructure for students was also disclosed in this study. The infrastructure details are as below.

Fig. No. 01 Nature of Infrastructure facilities for students



Source – Field Survey 2016

As per study data out of total students taken for the study 8 students stated that the accessibility to facilities is not adequate. According to the respondents, though they have the access to the small room in the premises that access is not allowed to enter the auditorium. Especially for the disabled who are using wheelchairs have to be depending on the assistance of another. Moreover, when entering to the classrooms they are not given suitable facilities are another issue.

When it was inquired about the sanitary facilities it was revealed that toilets are not built close to classrooms. Reaching to there when needed is a big problem for them and they are facing various difficulties due to that. Not cleaning toilets on time and no adequate sanitary facilities for students are major points disclosed in this study. Furthermore, available toilets are not user friendly and it is also a big difficulty for these disable persons.

When it was inquired about canteen facilities' it was disclosed that the same menu is available for everyday which discourages their appetite. This can be presented in their own expressions "There are many foods prepared, but all are the same. No taste. Always the same food is available"

Study revealed that there are no adequate hostel facilities as well. **As they stated "It is good if we receive hostel as we are from far away. But there are fewer facilities. It is difficult to stay there at night. Very hot temperature and fan is not working. It takes time to repair those things. "Study further revealed less space in rooms, fewer cupboards to keep their things and longtime taken for repairs are major issues. Moreover, no telephone facility for hostel is another issue identified here. As per data donors the inability to call home even once a week is a big issue for them. "When we come here we get no opportunity to talk to our family members. They inform us the message once a telephone call is received, but we are unable to hear even a voice of our loved ones. It is good even if we get the opportunity to answer for incoming call." That was a statement of one data donor.**

Their idea of medical facilities was when there is an illness the institute make necessary arrangements to take necessary medical treatments. 07 respondents confirmed the same. 2 respondents were stated that it would be better if we can get medical facilities in institute premises separate area. They further stated that if the assistance of medical doctor and nurse can be taken it would be more practical.

When it was inquired about lecture hall facilities it was revealed that they do not have adequate computers in computer rooms which conduct computer courses. As a result many students have to use one computer for their practical has created an issue for them. Moreover, as they do not equipped with necessary scanners, printers they are not familiar in operating such equipment.

Further, students in every course stated that though they have given library facilities it is not functioning well. Moreover, the brail facility is available with supervisors since there are not complete vision impairment students that has become in vain.

Moreover, this study revealed that these students are competent for extra-curricular activities. They have taken the membership of the "Diriya" youth society and they show colors once a month. Besides, they organize trips, sports meets and art festivals with other external vocational training Centre students. Most imports point disclosed here is two students have take in part in Para Olympic competitions.

The study further reveals that their parents are hardly aware about these courses. Therefore, the students get very less support to conduct and maintain their professions. Study further disclosed that they do not get even a short term field practicum. This is another issue in socializing such trained students.

However, at end of the courses private and nongovernmental institutes are making arrangements to refer the students for data banks. Moreover, this institute is receiving funds for the white cane donations for elders, conducting chess programs, conducting music and dancing programs,. Further, this institute is maintaining a job bank for students with vision impairments.

Table number - 05 Issues in socializing the students with disabilities

Nature of the Issue	Quantity	Percentage%
Discriminating from the societies	13	21
Teasing of the society	6	10
Not inviting for auspicious work	11	17
Hurt feelings	18	28
Not commended by the society	15	24
Total	63	100

Source - Field Survey 2016

This study revealed the issues in socializing disable people. 21% of the respondents were stated that they are discriminated from the society due to their disability. Moreover, as they explained when they professionally mingle with others they are discriminated due to the disability. Moreover, they stated that they have to face, tease and stereotype as well as **labeling from the society**. One students stated that "Once I went for a party with my mother and some people said, here that disable is coming here also. Do not know whether our party gets spoiled."

This study revealed that truth that persons with disabilities are not getting a suitable recognition from the society. They tend to be labeled as disabled and discriminated from the society. They further **revealed that this training centre is called as “madamahandiya (halfway house junction)”**. Moreover, they stated that even though they are engaged in a profession they are not getting the suitable recognition for the job. They further stated that if they are provided the opportunity to attend the schools considering them as ordinary students in ordinary society they will get the chance to live as a part of the society.

Respondents further stated that they need a good recognition and if they get opportunity to take a part in economic development of the society it would be more suitable for their future.

Social Work Interventions on Disability

As study data revealed socializing disable persons is a challenge but not an impracticable. When considering Social Work approaches for inclusion of such institutionalized disabled persons their welfare and the steps to be taken in uplifting the effectiveness of such rehabilitation programmes will be more benefitted for their engagement in course learning process, field training as well as social life as a person who runs a self employment. Further, these approaches can be utilized to overcome issues and uplift their accessibility to facilities in the institution.

In above backgrounds Social work professionals should pay their attention to utilize basic steps in social work process. Moreover, paying attention on basic principles and values of Social work and based on that such professionals should be effective to implement programmes for welfare and rehabilitation of the persons with disabilities.

According to the basic steps of Social Work process problem identification, planning, intervention and evaluations should be used to provide solutions for the problems in inclusion of persons with disabilities such as discriminating from the society, teasing of the society, not inviting for auspicious work, not commended by the society.

Moreover, training and job satisfaction of supervisors can be addressed through social work approaches. Inclusion of persons with disabilities should be done in well-planned manner. Various social work processes can be utilized for such. Communication, interviews, observations, investigations, planning, influencing and counseling can be utilized as positive change agents in such persons.

Investigating, planning and counseling will act as main techniques in addressing the issues of inclusion the persons with disabilities for their welfare and wellbeing. However, the final result should ensure that the persons with disabilities are not kept aside but actively participated in social, economic and every possible aspect in the society by ensuring their rights.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Though there are brail facilities for completely blind students there are not completely blind students and these facilities go in vain
 - Make necessary arrangements to give admissions to completely blind students

- Make more practical procedure for the guidance of positive impact on disable community in Sri Lanka. Such as identifying the necessity in providing practical training under institutions and field practice other than the theoretical knowledge.
 - Practical Training to be made compulsory for these courses and providing necessary facilities to fulfill such training through government and non-governmental organizations.
- **Lack of new knowledge, ability of using new technical equipment's and no proper training of the knowledge on sign language for supervisors.**
 - Taking necessary steps to provide proper training for supervisors locally as well as internationally.
- Lack of job satisfaction in supervisors
 - To gain a quality and effective service from supervisors there should be an intervention to solve their issues. Such as paying a good attention on their hostel facilities, transportation services, job confirmation, salary contradictions. Government attention is necessary to overcome such challenges.
- Minimum appropriate facilities for admissions, hostels, canteens, lecture halls and first aid for students.
 - Institution should intervene to provide such facilities by obtaining the assistance from government and non-governmental organizations.
- Government and non-governmental interventions should be more broaden in building job capacities of disabled, job positioning of disables, finding new inclusive approaches for disabled by going beyond of security networks and aiding procedures.
- Making suitable and appropriate procedure through social work interventions of community leaders and responsible social workers to educate parents about the training received by these disabled students from such courses and to socialize their knowledge by providing facilities for them to engage in self-employment.
- Other than the mentality of receiving aids and allowances for the sake of disability, taking necessary steps to get such disabled involve in labor market and to provide them opportunities in engage in economic development. Appropriate programs should be conducted to change the negative social attitudes regarding the persons with disabilities. Social Work interventions can immensely contribute through its practice models.

REFERENCE:

Amado.A.N, Stancliffe.R,J, McCarron.M, McCallion,P. (2013) Social Inclusion and Community Participation of Individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*: October 2013, Vol. 51, No. 5, pp. 360-375.

Activities of the Ministry of Social Welfare. (2002), Ministry of Social Welfare, Battaramulla.

Article 1 Purpose, convention on the rights of persons with disabilities: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol
<http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>

CBR: A Strategy for Rehabilitation, Equalization of Opportunities, Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion of People With Disabilities January 2004 International Labour Organization, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Health Organization, Cornell University ILR School DigitalCommons@ILR

Peat.M, Attitudes and access: advancing the rights of people with disabilities (1997)
(<http://www.cmaj.ca/content/156/5/657.short>)

Peiris-John.R.J, Attanayake.S, Daskon.L, Wickramasignhe.A.R, Ameratunga.S, 2013, Disability studies in Sri Lanka: Priorities for action. Available from:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259249773_Disability_studies_in_Sri_Lanka_Priorities_for_action

Sri Lanka Census of population and housing 2011, CBR Programme 2013

Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Sri Lanka.(2003) Scope of policy: Definition of disability and its implications: national policy on disability for srilanka, ministry of social welfare ([https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/disability_policy_\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/disability_policy_(1).pdf))