

Critical Evaluation of Educational Policies for Pwds in Jammu and Kashmir

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Abstract

This article aims to critically analyze, evaluate and summarize the educational policies for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Kashmir. The situation of PWDs in the education sector is pathetic and vulnerable. They are considered a marginalized group of society facing tremendous socio-economic and cultural problems. The government has framed welfare policies for them but they are not fulfilling their needs in a better way. So, more welfare policies should be framed by the government for their betterment and rehabilitation.

Keywords: Disability, Marginalized group, Socioeconomic & cultural problems.

INTRODUCTION

People with Disabilities face a denial of many social, cultural, political, and economic problems. The social Stigma attached to them makes them feel isolated and escalated from mainstream society. The problematic aspects of disability from a societal viewpoint are vividly illustrated in functionalist analyses of health and sickness. As outlined by Talcott Parson (1951), Sickness is kin to social deviance, because it poses a threat to “normal” role performance and wider economic productivity and efficiency. This leads to the establishment of a sick role that grants temporary and conditional legitimacy to the sick person. It seeks to achieve a balance between acknowledging “incapacity” and preventing “motivated deviance” or malingering. Society accepts that the sick person cannot get better simply by an “act of will” and he or she is permitted to withdraw temporarily from “normal” social roles. In return, the individual must obtain medical confirmation of their condition and follow the recommended treatment, while agreeing on the importance of leaving the sick role behind as soon as possible constitutes deviance, applying the rules to particular people, and labeling them as outsiders. However, the applicability of the sick role to those with a ‘chronic illness and disability’ attracted widespread criticism, because these conditions are defined as long-term if not irreversible. One response was to construct a separate ‘disabled role’ characterized by adjustment to an extended but authorized dependency. The individual is required to cooperate with rehabilitation professionals to achieve some degree of ‘normality’. This describes a hierarchical relationship where the professional (helper) identifies the needs and capabilities of the lay (helped) person and prescribes appropriate individualized ‘solutions’ ranging from health and social care to special educational provision. Moreover, it adopts the profession’s view of the ‘ideal’ patient as someone who defers to their knowledge and authority and ignores the potential for contrary lay interests or expertise.

From a contrary theoretical perspective, symbolic interactionists stressed the social construction of what is perceived as deviance in everyday interaction: Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an ‘offender’. The deviant is one to whom the label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.

A Significant benchmark for studies of social reactions to difference was Charles Lemert’s (1951) distinction between primary and secondary deviance. Primary deviance arises when social norms or

rules are broken but there are no long-lasting consequences. In contrast, secondary deviance generates a more significant and enduring social reaction that is sufficient to produce a deviant identity and status. Generally, the attribution of deviance to people with impairments is associated with ‘ascribed’ (involuntary) rather than ‘achieved’ (purposive) rule-breaking. An associated feature of interactionist studies is their emphasis on individual coping or management strategies. Erving Goffman (1963) provides the classic study of responses to stigma, or a ‘spoiled identity’, including ‘abominations of the body’, with illustrations of those described as ‘blind’, ‘deaf’, ‘crippled’, ‘deformed’, ‘mentally ill’ and ‘stutterers’, he acknowledges that there is no necessary association between such attributes and their contemporary stereotype, but explores how the meaning of these marks of difference is negotiated through social interaction. His characterization of ‘abnormals’ resonates with other social psychological writings on ‘difference’. These highlight the ‘liminality’ of those on the margins of what society regards as ‘normal’. Goffman’s interest in ‘undesired differentness’ centers on how individuals manage their ‘spoiled identity’ in everyday social interaction- what one sociological text refers to as the ‘inevitable problems of living that confront the disabled as a result of their impairments’. Encounters between ‘normal’s’ and ‘stigmatized’ people are characterized by immediate and often acute tensions for the visibly ‘discredited’, while for the ‘discreditable’, whose stigma is not immediately apparent the dilemma is whether or not to display their ‘abnormality’. He documents a broad range of ‘passing’ (hiding the stigma) and ‘covering’ (reducing its significance) strategies to avoid embarrassment and social sanctions. These include repeated and often painful medical procedures to make an individual more normal or less likely to attract a critical public gaze. The stigma label is characterized by its potential to spread. As being in an individual place physical impairment is taken as an indication of generalized incapacity. He relies extensively on autobiographies and case studies to analyze stigmatized persons’ feelings about themselves and their relationship to ‘normal’ people.

SCENARIO OF DISABLED POPULATION IN J&K.

The proportion of the disabled population in Jammu and Kashmir is very high and has been increasing rapidly during the 2001 to 2011 census, according to the census 2011 of UT of Jammu and Kashmir, there are around 3.61 lakh people with disabilities. Among these 18.3 lakh persons with blindness, 5.1 lakhs with speech disabilities, 20.5 lakh persons with hearing disabilities, 16 lakh persons with physical disabilities, 4.6 lakhs with mental retardation, and around 4.3 lakh persons with mild to severe mental illness. Out of a total of 3.61 lakh population of persons with disabilities, 2.33 lakh belong to Kashmir province and 1.27 lakh belong to Jammu province. Further in both provinces, the percentage of males with disabilities is more than that of females with a disability. As per the Census 2011 of J&K, there are around 3.61 lakh people with disabilities. In Kashmir province, males have 55.51% of disabilities, and females have 44.49% of disabilities.

DISABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION.

Disabled people are often omitted from many social, educational, financial, and cultural opportunities and are among the underprivileged and most marginalized groups universally (Groce, 2004). Although education is exceptionally significant for all individuals despite one’s age, sex, ethnicity, financial standing as well as one’s ability, or disability, disabled persons are usually perceived as underprivileged groups in the area (Block, 1992). Therefore, they are in a situation of missing several social, financial, and financial benefits together with the right to access good and quality education (Barnes et al., 2010).

Humankind is presently fighting for open, impartial, and quality education for all, beginning with elementary education, secondary, and lastly higher education through ‘Education for all’ objectives. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in the year 1948 affirmed education as an essential right for each individual together with disabled people. The Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons, which

came into existence in 2008, recognized that disability is not merely a societal welfare issue but also a component of human rights. The Department for International Development (2012) has additionally established that Article 24 of the Convention on Education stressed that all state parties shall make sure that disabled people are not barred from education on the roots of their disability. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010, accomplishing underprivileged children with disabilities continues to be one of the critical challenges, leading to the broad exclusion of the group from quality education (Macleod, 2014). Historically, disabled people have been deprived and refuted equal participation opportunities, together with partaking in higher education. They have been illegitimately maltreated in societal institutions, typically due to pessimistic reasons such as negative approaches, narrow-mindedness, stereotypes, and stigmas (Hughes, 2005). Students with disabilities furthermore experience an insufficient infrastructure, a sharp scarcity of professionals in general and comprehensive educational schools in particular, and a dearth of and/or non-existent effectual identification and intrusions for problems faced by the majority of people with disabilities. Notwithstanding all the attempts to certify the right to education for all people together with those with disabilities, the World Health Organization (2011b) demonstrates that the majority of disabled people are deprived of access to education.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES FOR PWDs in J&K

The scenario of implementation of educational policies for PWDs in Kashmir is not satisfying the needs of these people. The policies are not being implemented effectively at grass- the root level so that PWD people can benefit from these policies. In 1974, the Government of India launched the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), the scheme was adopted by J&K but it does not have any provision for PWDs. In 1975, Project Integrated Education for PWDs was launched but again the government could not make any effort to implement it. National Policy on Education (1986) and Plan of Action (1992) advocated the policy of integrating physically and mentally challenged people with the general community as equal partners so that PWDs should have access to quality education as compared to normal people.

The J&K has its own separate Act which is Person with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation (PWD Act 1998), which provides free education, employment, creation of barrier-free- environment, social security scheme, non-discrimination to set up separate cells in J&K and district institutes of education, development, recognition of institutes for children and Person with Disabilities, allotment of government land on concessional rates for PWD's, low-interest loans, affirmative action, and nobody can establish any institution (rehabilitation, vocational and special schools) for children and Person with Disabilities without getting a proper certificate of registration from the government.

Schemes for PWDs in J&K:

1. DISABILITY PENSION SCHEME:

It is also known as the Integrated Social Security Scheme administered by the Social Welfare Department of J&K.

2. INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL DISABILITY PENSION SCHEME: State is implementing the centrally sponsored scheme known as Indira Gandhi Disability Pension Scheme which provides financial assistance to PWDs belonging to the BPL category.

3. EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP.

The state has divided into categories one is Pre-matric and Post-matric scholarship for Persons with Disabilities.

4. UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE:

This scheme has made a provision for providing unemployment allowance to all educated and unemployed people in the state which includes people with disabilities.

5. J&K SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME FOR PHYSICALLY DISABLED STUDENTS:

The main objective of the disability scheme is to encourage talented students to pursue higher education so that they can illuminate their family name and contribute to the progress of the country.

6. MERIT-BASED JAMMU KASHMIR SCHOLARSHIP FOR PHYSICALLY DISABLED STUDENTS 2020-21: The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has announced the introduction of the JK Government Scholarship Scheme specifically for students with disabilities (physically handicapped/ Divyang / Viklang). The physically handicapped (PH) Viklang/ Divyang students will be given financial assistance of Rs 100000(one Lakh rupees) by the state government in the form of a scholarship (J&K Govt. Scholarship 2021).

As Section 370 and 35 A have been removed in the state in such a situation, the government is working on several government schemes to provide maximum help and assistance to the people

CRITICAL EVALUATION:

The Government initiative covers a wide range of policy formulation, and programs. Execution of schemes and legal enactments related to persons with disabilities. The approaches towards the implementation of programs in J&K have varied from neglect to complete dependence on other organizations for providing services to PWDs. The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) has surveyed and stated that only 2% of disabled people receive education and only 1% of such populations are employed. There are 3 lakh disabled people in J&K and 2 lakh visually impaired who do not get an education and have not been employed as enshrined by the state government.

The government has not made any mention of the reservation policy for the physically challenged in professional, vocational, and training colleges like the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Indian Institute of Technologies (IIT), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), and other national institutes reserve 3% of seats taking the seats according to their disability. There is no seat reserved for PWDs in pursuing research degrees like M.Phil and Ph.D. The PWDs are merely not lacking in a single field but in multiple areas such as education, employment and rehabilitation.

Role of Social Scientist in the Implementation of Welfare Scheme:

A social scientist acts as a link between society and human behavior. Social sciences as well as social scientists help people to understand how to interact with the social world – how to frame and influence policy-making, develop networks, and increase government accountability and efficiency. This will help in building the nation stronger. Moreover, Social Scientists can create awareness among the people regarding the needs and quality standard of living. Social Scientists can create awareness among the people related to the policies, programs, rights, and privileges of these policies which are helpful for their betterment. These policies will help People with Disabilities to live their lives in a better way which will bring social integration and social cohesion to society. As they will not consider themselves the people belonging to “Out- Group” members of society

CONCLUSION:

From the above discussion, it could be said that immediate steps should be taken to uplift the PWDs in Kashmir. The government should formulate strong policies that could prove beneficial for them. Steps should be taken by the authorities to bring this group of people to mainstream society. Policies should be implemented at a grass-root level which could help them. A barrier-free environment should be created for them so that they could easily access the services as normal people do. Awareness programs should be launched so that people can take benefit from these schemes for their rehabilitation and betterment.

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