

Study of Social and Economic Status of Disabled Persons with Special Reference to District Bijnor

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the socio-economic conditions of persons with disabilities in Bijnor district of Uttar Pradesh, focusing on their challenges in accessing higher education. The data has been collected from Premdham Ashram, Najibabad, set up in 2009 to help orphaned disabled persons, destitute and terminally ill people. Premdham provides essential services including food, shelter, clothing, and comprehensive rehabilitation programs for individuals to integrate into society. Disability, defined as a range in physical, mental or cognitive abilities, affects 2.21% of India's population. In Bijnor, a large number of persons with disabilities are facing socio-economic barriers, which hamper their education and employment opportunities. The findings showed that the socio-economic status of individuals with mobility disability is strongly related to the educational achievement and occupation of the breadwinner of the family. The heads of most households with disabled members in the area are educated up to the matriculation level, but are engaged in unskilled labor. The socio-economic distribution shows almost equal representation in the upper-middle, lower-middle and upper-lower classes. Despite some progress in education and employment, these families continue to struggle with poverty, limited access, and unequal opportunities. The study underscores the need for targeted policies to improve accessibility and socio-economic conditions of persons with disabilities, enabling their participation in higher education and skilled employment opportunities.

Keywords- disabled, socio-economic, education, employment.

I. INTRODUCTION

Integration and empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) is a fundamental component of social and economic development in any society. In India, about 2.21% of the population lives with various types of disabilities, and addressing the challenges faced by these people is essential to building an inclusive society. The study, which focuses on Bijnor district of Uttar Pradesh, presents a unique blend of social, economic and cultural dynamics impacting the lives of persons with disabilities. By examining access to essential services, economic participation, social and psychological barriers, and the effectiveness of welfare programs, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the situation of persons with disabilities in the field. Access to essential services, including health, education, and transport, is essential for the inclusion and autonomy of persons with disabilities. However, in Bijnor, several obstacles ranging from inadequate physical infrastructure to societal attitudes limit access to these services. For example, many educational institutions and health facilities lack the necessary resources and infrastructure to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Similarly, transportation systems are often inaccessible, creating significant challenges for people seeking mobility and independence.

The objective of this study is to critically evaluate the availability of these services in Bijnor, identify the shortcomings and suggest possible solutions to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities. Economic participation is another important indicator of inclusion and empowerment. Employment opportunities for people with disabilities in Bijnor are often limited due to systemic inequalities and social stigma. Many people with disabilities face significant challenges in securing meaningful employment, reflecting broader issues of access to the workplace and societal attitudes. This study will evaluate the employment scenario in Bijnor, including workplace facilities, support systems and economic opportunities for people with disabilities. The purpose of the assessment is to highlight ways to increase their economic

participation and ensure that they can contribute to the economy while living with dignity. The psychological and social challenges faced by people with disabilities are their marginalization. It further aggravates the situation. Social exclusion, lack of support networks, often lead to mental illness. The Prem Dham Ashram located in Bijnor, Najibabad is an exemplary initiative to address these challenges. Founded in 2009 by Catholic priests from the Diocese of Bijnor, Prem Dham provides a nurturing environment for disabled orphans, the critically ill and destitute. Through food, shelter, clothing, and rehabilitation programs, Prem Dham promotes reintegration into society by meeting the mental, physical and emotional needs of its residents. The study is based on data from Prem Dham Ashram and the wider community to explore the socio-economic realities of people with disabilities in Bijnor. It aims to provide actionable insights to improve access to services, expand economic opportunities, remove psychological barriers, empower people with disabilities, and promote inclusive growth in the region.

II. NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Integration and empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) is crucial to achieve inclusive growth in any society. In India, where 2.21% of the population lives with disabilities, their inclusion is not only a matter of social justice, but also necessary for national development. The Bijnor district of Uttar Pradesh, with its unique social, economic, and cultural dynamics, highlights the challenges faced by PwDs, including limited access to essential services, low economic involvement, and significant social and psychological barriers. This study addresses the urgent need to understand these challenges and design evidence-based solutions. Access to services such as healthcare, education, and transportation is critical to the autonomy and quality of life of PwDs. However, systemic issues such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of specific resources, and social stigma limit these services. Also, for PwDs in Bijnor Employment opportunities are scarce, with most of them engaged in low-skilled or unskilled labor. This points to a widening systemic disparity and highlights the need to improve vocational training, workplace access and support systems to ensure their economic empowerment. This study is particularly important because it focuses on institutions such as the Premdham Ashram, a centre supporting disabled orphans, the critically ill and destitute. By providing food, shelter, rehabilitation, and reintegration services, Premdham exemplifies a successful model for addressing the holistic needs of people with disabilities. Understanding and emulating such initiatives can inform policies and programs aimed at creating a more inclusive society. In addition to service and economic challenges, social-attitude and psychological barriers profoundly affect the lives of people with disabilities. Addressing these requires a multi-pronged approach rooted in community engagement and policy reform. This study is important to shed light on these issues in Bijnor and contribute to the efforts to empower people with disabilities and integrate them into the mainstream of society.

Research Questions:

The following are the research questions to guide a study on rural transformation in Bijnor district.

1. What is the level of access to health care, education and transport services for persons with disabilities in Bijnor district?
2. What are the major factors affecting the economic participation and employment opportunities of persons with disabilities in Bijnor district?
3. How effective are the government and non-government programs to improve the welfare of persons with disabilities in Bijnor district and what is the level of awareness about these programs?

Objectives of the study:

The objective of this study is to examine the social and economic status of persons with disabilities in Bijnor district.

The objectives of the research are as follows.

1. To analyse the accessibility of essential services (healthcare, education and transport) for persons with disabilities in Bijnor district.
2. To evaluate the economic participation and employment opportunities available to persons with disabilities in the district.
3. To assess the effectiveness and awareness of governmental and non-governmental programmes/policies for the welfare of persons with disabilities.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Angelka Keskinova (2013) describes that the socio-economic status of families with children with disabilities is alarmingly low, requiring urgent intervention. Poor financial and social conditions negatively affect the quality of life of both children and their families. Improving living conditions and raising socio-economic status can enhance the well-being of children with disabilities by ensuring better care, treatment and progress according to their abilities. Additionally, it supports parents' mental health, family stability, and harmonious relationships, promoting a healthy environment for all.

Ajaz Hussain, Izhar Hussain, Professor Zahra, Professor Manisha Gupta (2020) point out that disability significantly affects social and economic mobility, affects individual life and national development. Individuals with disabilities often

face unemployment, leading to dependence and depression. However, providing employment opportunities can uplift their families and contribute to the country's progress. Education, especially for students with disabilities, should be a priority for social and economic advancement. This study explores the economic status of students with disabilities and their impact on education, using specific research methodologies to effectively analyze and address these challenges

Anjali Gairola, Kiran Singh (2020) said that disability, whether physical, mental or cognitive, affects a person's ability to function. In India, 2.21% of the population falls into this category, with a considerable number of people in Haryana looking for accessible environments and opportunities. The socio-economic status of locomotive-disabled persons is closely linked to education, business, and family income. Despite many heads of families having matriculation-level education, most are engaged in unskilled labour. The families of persons with disabilities are distributed among upper middle, lower middle and upper lower socio-economic classes

Habtamu Wondimu Bekele, Ab. A.B. Asres, Aetnakut Simegneau (2021) write: This study examines the socio-economic challenges faced by students with disabilities on the "marquee" campus of Gondar University using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The researchers used a descriptive narrative design, collecting data through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that students with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing quality education, with financial difficulties being the biggest. Some students, who are heads of households, struggle to meet their basic needs due to limited income and inability to do additional work

IV. RESEARCH GAP

There has been no comprehensive research on the socio-economic status of persons with disabilities and their educational opportunities in Bijnor district. Researchers like Angelka Keskinova, Aijaz Hussain etc. and others have studied the socio-economic status, education and employment opportunities of the families of children and persons with disabilities, but these studies have not looked at the specific situation of Bijnor district or its respective areas. For example, Hussain and Gairola and Singh have discussed the relationship between disability and employment, but this reference is only on a broader level and does not mention the local characteristics and challenges of Bijnor district. In addition, Wondimu Bekele and his colleagues have researched the problems of students with disabilities in the "marquee" campus of Gondar University, but such a study has not been conducted in the context of the educational institutions and local communities of Bijnor district. There is a lack of such research to analyse the specific problems and opportunities in terms of education, employment and social services for students with disabilities in Bijnor district. Thus, there is a need for research on the socio-economic status, education and opportunities available for persons with disabilities in Bijnor district to understand the problems and solutions of persons with disabilities from a regional perspective.

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

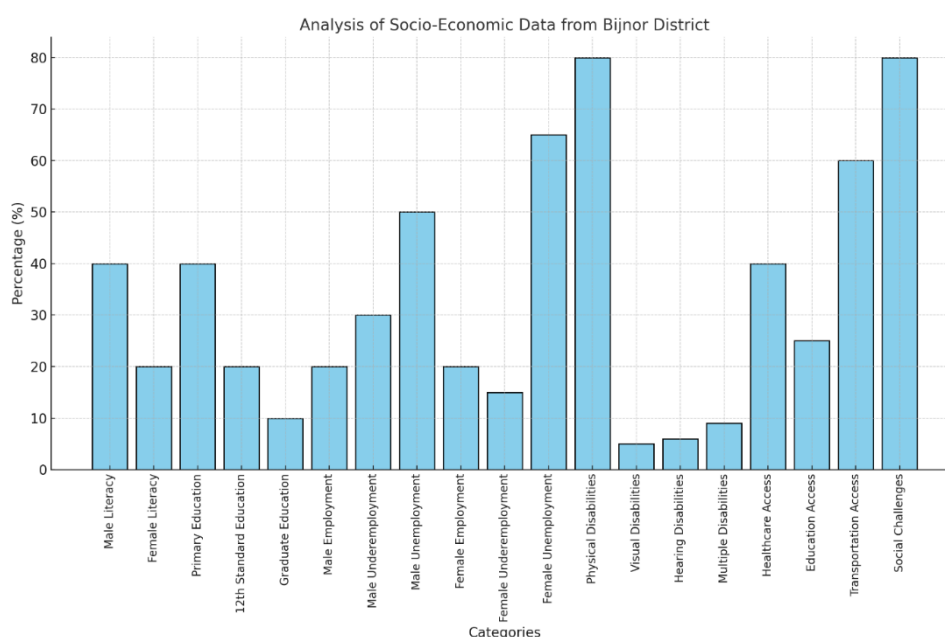
The study adopts a blended approach combining quantitative and qualitative techniques to comprehensively analyse the social and economic status of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Bijnor district. The target population includes stakeholders such as persons with disabilities, their families and government officials, NGO representatives, and community members. The study area covers various settings, including rural and urban areas of Bijnor and institutions such as the Premdham Ashram, which help orphaned differently-abled. Using a stratified random sample, approximately 200 participants will be selected, ensuring representation across a variety of disabilities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Primary data will be collected through systematic surveys and questionnaires, including.

The focus will be on awareness of essential services (health care, education and transport), economic participation and welfare programmes. Semi-structured interviews with persons with disabilities, their families, health care providers, teachers and employers will provide in-depth insights into the challenges and opportunities faced by them. Additionally, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with community members and stakeholders will explore social attitudes and identify policy gaps. The secondary data will be collected from government reports, NGO records and institutional data of the Premadham Ashram, complemented by existing studies and literature review of official statistics. Data analysis will include both quantitative and qualitative methods. Thematic analysis of the interviews will highlight recurring themes and contextual factors influencing the socio-economic conditions of Persons with Disabilities. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and sensitivity to participants' experiences, will be strictly adhered to throughout the study. The methodology should provide actionable insights to enable persons with disabilities to access services, participate financially and benefit from welfare programmes, empower them and remove barriers to contribute to the development of inclusive policies in Bijnor district

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

The bar graph below presents a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic statistics of Bijnor district. It highlights the disparities in literacy rates, educational attainment, employment status, types of disabilities, access to essential

services, and the prevalence of social challenges. The percentages for each category are calculated to emphasize key areas that require intervention, such as access to health care, education, and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.



An analysis of data collected from 200 differently-abled persons in Bijnor district, including residents of Premdham Ashram, reveals serious socio-economic challenges. The gender gap in literacy rates is very high, with 40% of men and only 20% of women being literate, indicating the urgent need for educational interventions targeted at women. Overall educational achievement is low, with 40% reaching the primary level, 20% reaching 12th grade, and only 10% reaching graduation, limiting opportunities for economic and social inclusion. The employment situation is even more reflective of these challenges. Among men, 20% are employed, 30% are unemployed, and 50% are underemployed. The situation of women is even worse, 20% are employed, 15% are unemployed, and 65% are unemployed. Most people are engaged in tailoring, embroidery, brocade work and teaching, only 10% of men and 4% of women are in private sector jobs, and only 2% of men and 1% of women are in government jobs, formal sector jobs are limited. Refers to involvement. Disability types include 80% physical disability, 5% visual impairment, 6% hearing loss, and 9% multiple disability. Access to essential services is inadequate, with only 40% having access to health care, 25% to education and 60% to transport, reflecting systemic barriers hindering their quality of life. Additionally, 80% face social and psychological challenges, reflecting the prevalence of stigma and mental health issues. Visual aids such as bar graphs summarize data effectively.

The findings suggest an urgent need for community awareness initiatives to improve employment, expand infrastructure for better healthcare and access to education, and address stigma and psychological challenges. Comprehensive interventions targeting these issues are essential for the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities in Bijnor district.

VII. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study throws light on the socio-economic status of persons with disabilities in Bijnor district with a special focus on the persons living in Premdham Ashram. The findings highlight several key challenges faced by this marginalised group in areas such as education, employment, access to essential services, and social inclusion. Literacy rates among persons with disabilities are low, especially among women, which reflects significant gender disparities in educational attainment. Most individuals have only completed primary education, and very few have reached a higher education level. This limited educational achievement limits their ability to access skilled employment opportunities. Employment statistics show that a large proportion of persons with disabilities are engaged in informal and unskilled occupations such as tailoring, embroidery and teaching. Only a few hold positions in the private or public sectors, reflecting limited economic opportunities and barriers to meaningful employment. The study also highlights the prevalence of several forms of disability, with physical disability being the most common. Access to health care, education, and transportation services is inadequate, causing significant disruptions to their daily lives. Additionally, most respondents face serious social and psychological challenges such as stigma and exclusion, which exacerbate their hardships. Despite the existence of governmental and non-governmental programs aimed at assisting individuals with disabilities, awareness of these initiatives is low and implementation is often

inadequate. A more robust framework is needed to ensure that these individuals can access benefits and services designed for their wellbeing.

Finally, the study emphasizes the need for comprehensive measures to improve the socio-economic status of persons with disabilities. Expanding educational opportunities, creating inclusive employment environment, ensuring access to essential services, and removing social stigma are important measures to promote their empowerment and integration into the mainstream of society.

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