



National Policy for Persons with Disabilities 2002



Government of Pakistan
Ministry of Women Development
Social Welfare and Special Education
Islamabad



INTRODUCTION

The systematic care of persons with disabilities was brought into focus in Pakistan in the 1980s with the observance of 1981 as the United Nations International Year of Disabled Persons. The need was then felt for their education, rehabilitation and care both by government and by the private sector and a full-fledged National Policy on the subject. Efforts were made in the past to have a formal National Policy for Special Education but somehow that could not materialize. While taking many steps for the betterment of persons with disabilities we have also successfully finalized the first ever **NATIONAL POLICY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, 2002.**

2. The policy was formalized after a lengthy consultative process involving the relevant Federal Government Ministries, such as Education, Health, Labour and Manpower, Housing and Works, Science and Technology and Planning and Development, (where the subject of special education is handled) and their views were incorporated in this document. The Provincial Social Welfare and Education Departments and the prominent NGOs were also consulted in finalizing this exercise. The first draft was prepared by the Task Force on Disability created in the year 2000 and headed by a prominent social worker, Justice (rtd) Aamer Raza. The team realized the importance of the international focus on care, education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities, which demands a multi-disciplinary approach.

3. This policy document incorporates a **Vision**, its **Goal**, a **Mission Statement**, the **Guiding Principles**, the **Aim and Objectives** and the **Strategies** to achieve its objectives by way of development and empowerment of persons with disabilities as they become effective contributing members of society.

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CONTENTS

1. *Preamble*
2. *Vision*
3. *Goal*
4. *Mission Statement*
5. *Guiding Principles*
6. *Aims and Objectives*
7. *Strategies*
8. *Areas of Focus and Special Attention*
 - EARLY INTERVENTION, ASSESSMENT AND MEDICAL TREATMENT
 - EDUCATION AND TRAINING
9. *Vocational Training, Employment and Rehabilitation*
 - VOCATIONAL TRAINING
 - USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
 - ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY
 - OUTREACH PROGRAM
 - EMPLOYMENT
 - SHELTERED/SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT
 - SELF-EMPLOYMENT
 - INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYERS
10. *Research and Development*
11. *Advocacy and Mass Awareness*
12. *Sports and Recreation*
13. *Design of Buildings, Parks and Public Places*
14. *Institutional Arrangements/ Mechanism*
 - ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
 - ROLE OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS
 - ROLE OF DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS
 - ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR
(COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT)
15. *Funding*
16. *Monitoring*



PREAMBLE

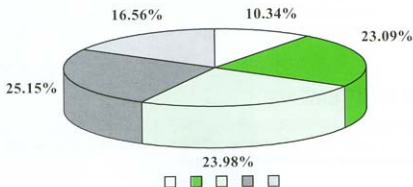
The need to make special provision for those members of the community who suffer from the effects of disabilities has long been recognized in Pakistan. Creation of special facilities for the education, training and rehabilitation of disabled persons is regarded as being of central importance concerning the rights of a significant percentage of our population.

Recent years have witnessed emergence of International movements for the empowerment of Persons with Disabilities through a number of international conventions and agreements, which make Government of Pakistan a partner in the global movement for the betterment of this segment of society.

The provision of a comprehensive range of facilities for persons with disabilities from pre-natal care through education, vocational training, employment and support during adult life cannot be a matter for a single government department or agency. The provision and growth of services of real quality will require the active co-operation of a large number of relevant organizations at federal, provincial, local and NGO level, along with involvement of family, professionals and communities at large.

The policy is formulated with a background of information about the number of disabled children and adults in Pakistan based upon the WHO estimates of 10% of the population and upon more detailed information provided by Pakistan-based studies including the National Census, 1998. The National Census Report of 1998 however indicates a low estimate of 2.49% of the total population, based on the reported cases of persons with disabilities. Grouping of the 2.49% figure into age specific groups indicates the following estimated maximum level of need:

- | | | |
|--|--------|-------------------------------------|
| ● Children under five who require some form of support, as will their families. | 10.34% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Children aged 5-14 who require some form of special education. | 23.09% | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Young people up to the age of 29 who will need further education, training and employment opportunities. | 23.98% | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ● Disabled Adults requiring other welfare support and assistance. | 25.15% | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| ● The disabled senior citizens requiring more special facilities. | 16.56% | <input type="checkbox"/> |





The distribution of different disabilities within the defined population of disabled persons, as indicated by the 1998 census, provides a useful guide for planning programmes as under:-

i)	Physically Handicapped	19%
ii)	Mentally Handicapped & Insane	14%
iii)	Multiple disability	8.21%
iv)	Visually Impaired	8.6%
v)	Hearing Impaired	7.40%
vi)	Others (Not classified but included as disability)	43.33%

The above figures include those who have mild or temporary conditions but who will require access to some form of support or assistance. Studies undertaken in Pakistan and else-where, however, indicate that a smaller group of individuals exists which have serious or severe disabling conditions, which are in need of detailed intervention and support on a long term basis. The size of this group will amount to 2% 4% of the population of the disabled persons, according to estimates.

VISION

The overall vision of the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities in keeping with our Islamic way of life, is to provide by 2025 an environment that would allow full realization of the potential of persons with disabilities through their inclusive mainstreaming and providing them full support of the government, private sector and civil society.

GOAL

Empowerment of persons with disabilities, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, gender or other consideration for the realization of their full potential in all spheres of life, specially social, economic, personal and political.

MISSION STATEMENT

Optimal development of persons with disabilities for the realization of their full potential in all walks of life, specially in the areas of health, education, social, economic and vocational needs, for the fulfillment of their present as well as future requirements.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The Constitutional guarantees and accession to international instruments on human rights, as the reiteration of the Islamic principals of justice and equality.
- Non-discrimination and gender equity at all levels.
- Holistic approach in the overall interest of Persons with Disabilities covering all aspects of their lives in the community.
- The rights-based approach rather than welfare concepts in program planning and implementation.
- Active collaboration from all stakeholders, government, private sector and civil society.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To persons with disabilities:

1. Provide access to facilities which may lead to their integration and mainstreaming in all spheres of life;
2. ensure they are involved in planning and implementing educational, training and rehabilitation programs for themselves, their families and communities;
3. ensure that they are able to enjoy their rights and opportunities as other citizens do;
4. ensure that they have equal opportunities and access to medical, education, social, psychological, vocational training, employment and rehabilitation, without any discrimination;
5. ensure that the legislation relating to employment and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities is adequately formulated and is strictly enforced;
6. expand service infrastructure which is adequate to accommodate and cover all persons with disabilities both in urban and rural areas;
7. harness modern technology, tools and skills to streamline national policy, planning, programming and service delivery for effective redressal of disabilities;
8. remove financial and technical constraints posing hindrance in the way of proper implementation of programs.

STRATEGIES

- Develop and launch advocacy campaigns to address special groups, such as policy makers, opinion leaders, youth and adolescents.



- Increase ownership of disability issues by the stakeholders and strengthen their participation in the process of service delivery and program design.
- Adopt a shift from exclusive system of education to that to inclusive education for the children with disabilities.
- Ensure the provision of quality services to all segments of age groups for Persons with Disabilities, through expansion and strengthening of service delivery infrastructure.
- Expand, coordinate and monitor a comprehensive network of services for Person with Disabilities in Pakistan.
- Build strong partnerships with concerned Line Ministries, Provincial Line Departments and the Private Sector (NGOs), by providing assistance / guidance through advocacy, training, monitoring and other means of participation and quality assurance.
- Decentralize program management and service delivery to provincial and district level.
- Ensure training and education of parents and communities to recognize special needs of persons with disabilities.

AREAS OF FOCUS AND SPECIAL ATTENTION

A. EARLY INTERVENTION, ASSESSMENT AND MEDICAL TREATMENT

- Prevention:** The prevention of disabilities, to a large extent, is the domain of the medical profession, family counselors, psychologists and social workers and has its basis in research and training within those disciplines. However, educational services have a role to play through the provision of courses of study in schools/colleges for students in the areas of health, education and child development. This would supplement information provided to the families and could improve their knowledge and skills for prevention of disabilities.
- Detection:** A reliable and accessible diagnostic system is a pre-requisite for the development of preventive and intervention strategies. Children who have been diagnosed within the first few weeks or months of life, given appropriate intervention and family support, very frequently achieve more than children whose diagnosis has been delayed and where professional intervention or family support has been uncertain.
- Intervention:** Referral to a multi-professional team at district level will be essential for those children who have moderate or severe levels of impairment. The composition of these teams will reflect a concern for children in relevant developmental and health areas.
- Counseling:** It is an area which cuts across a number of concerned disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, genetics, psychology, social work, religious instructions etc.
- Genetic Counseling:** There is need to make knowledge about genetic transference of disabilities available to the general public, in particular to parents and prospective parents. This responsibility is difficult to pin point in respect of various government agencies as it is to be shared by a number of departments such as Ministry of Health and Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education at the Federal level.



- vi. **Family Guidance:** The provision of family based guidance about children at early age level requires a combination of teaching competence and skills essential for social work. A systematic training program for the parents of children with disabilities and for the children themselves provides excellent opportunities for early learning by the child. It also provides skills and confidence for parents who may be anxious and need to develop skills for meeting the special needs of children with disabilities.

B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

i. **Education**

Starting from a scratch, Pakistan has made significant progress in all relevant areas since the establishment of Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE) and National Trust for the Disabled (NTD) at the federal level, in eighties. The provincial governments and NGOs joined the movement and initiated special projects. At the International level, the movement towards making special education an integral part of education has been gaining ground. Integration of children with disabilities in normal system of education shall therefore be promoted at all levels.

ii. **Training**

Training programs for teachers and social welfare workers and the course content at post-graduate level shall include an element of awareness training in disabilities from the perspective of that profession and its role related to persons with disabilities. The existing system of post-graduate training in special education at the university level will be further strengthened and expanded. The training institutes like National Institute of Special Education (NISE) will further strengthen their program of Teacher Training and Research, for improved service delivery.

Training of doctors, pediatricians and other related specialists in the diagnosis of disabilities will be arranged at medical colleges or at relevant departments at the university level, in order to build up a well qualified professional team.

The number of training institutions available for occupational therapy and physiotherapy will be increased along with training centers for speech therapists and other relevant professionals. Training facilities at National Institute of Handicapped (NIH) and other institutions, will be continued to be supported through the collaboration of federal government, provincial governments, district governments and international donor agencies.

iii. **Integration and mainstreaming**

Recognizing the need for affording the education facilities to a maximum number of children with disabilities, their integration shall be ensured by adopting the following measure:-

- alignment of policies between the federal government, the provincial governments and the district governments at the level of relevant ministries and departments,
- changes in curriculum in collaboration with relevant departments, agencies,
- provision of specialized aids and equipment.



C. VOCATIONAL TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT AND REHABILITATION

i. Vocational Training

Vocational training facilities at present are very limited to meet the requirements of persons with disabilities in both private and public sectors. The following measures will be adopted and promoted for further extension of these facilities to a larger segment of persons with disabilities:-

- Establishment of sheltered and integrated workshops at provincial level,
- establishment of vocational training centers at district level,
- utilization of vocational training programs administered by the federal, provincial, district governments and by private agencies,
- Linkages with relevant government and non-government establishments for the utilization of their facilities by persons with disabilities.

Existing network of over 100 training institutes, established under vocational training system, will be utilized by keeping a provision of 5% seats for persons with disabilities in each Vocational Training Unit.

ii. Use of information technology

Information technology has the potential for multifarious uses for and by persons with disabilities. For the hearing impaired, it can provide direct access to visual images and source of information and means of instant communication. With additional gadgets for sound production and braille printing, it can be at the service of the visually handicapped persons. It can be used by persons with severe physical disability and severe speech problems as means of communication. It has been used for speech training of persons with mental retardation through relevant games and exercises. Use of computers for education and training of persons with disabilities will be promoted in the federal and provincial government special education centers. Private sector will be involved in this system along with the public sector. Options open for the general public in this fast expanding field will be made available to persons with disabilities.

iii. Assistive Technology

Assistive technology plays an important role in rehabilitating persons with disabilities. By using this modern technology these persons can perform in a better way. Special attention will be given to the development of assistive technology with the involvement of relevant organisations, particularly in the area of orthotics and prosthetics, for persons with disabilities. A directory of the services available in the country in this area shall be prepared for facility of the person with disabilities and for others interested.

iv. Outreach program

The Outreach approach involves identification of children with disabilities, assessment of their special needs and training of their family members at their homes. This model will be promoted in the private sector through the provision of training facilities for staff involved in outreach programs and incentives to NGOs. Supportive agencies such as Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal and Central Zakat Administration along with local bodies will be encouraged to provide matching financial assistance for such programs.



v. Employment

Pakistan joined the select group of countries, which has not only ratified ILO Convention 159, but have also taken active legal steps to introduce legislation which lays down quota for the employment of persons with disabilities. Disabled Persons (Employment & Rehabilitation) Ordinance, 1981, reserves one percent quota for persons with disabilities. This Ordinance is in the process of being amended to increase the quota from 1% to 2%. The penalty clauses will also be amended to make its implementation more effective. It will also be ensured that the National Policy and all its future modifications adhere to the principles laid down in the relevant articles of the Convention 159, which deal with vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

vi. Sheltered/ support employment

In view of minimal opportunities for employment in the open market, alternate arrangements for gainful engagement of disabled persons will be made through the establishment of Sheltered Workshops or Supported Employment. Arrangements for establishing units of sheltered or supported employment will be made as part of larger industrial units or as independent establishments.

vii. Self-employment

Special schemes will be launched and existing programs strengthened in the area of self-employment. Persons with disabilities will be provided financial and environmental support for attaining economic independence through self-employment. Agencies like Pakistan Bait-Ul-Mal, Central Zakat Administration, Khush-Hali Bank, and national and international organisations will also be associated to provide financial support through micro-credit schemes, for such programs.

The strength inherent in the community and the families as a resource for vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities shall be utilized to the maximum to attain the goals of self employment. The programs like "Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons with Community Participation (VREDP)" shall be replicated in the urban and semi-urban areas for the benefit of persons with disabilities.

viii. Incentives to employers

Enterprises employing workers with disabilities will be given incentives, financial assistance and exclusive contracts or priority production rights, as part of the policy to promote gainful employment of persons with disabilities. Employers will be encouraged to adopt measures for the use of new technologies and the development and production of assistive devices, tools and equipment, to facilitate access for persons with disabilities to the open market to enable them to gain and maintain employment.



D. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Both academic and applied research aimed at practical outcome for the ultimate benefit for persons (children and adults) with disabilities, will be encouraged both at the federal and provincial levels. Efforts will be made to enlist the interest and support of the universities and other organizations particularly in the areas of medicine, social work, psychology, vocational training, engineering and technology. These Institutes/ Centers will function as focal points for research, central record and information.

E. ADVOCACY AND MASS AWARENESS

All possible channels at community as well as media level, will be utilized to create public awareness about the nature and types of disabilities and the need for community support for their identification as well as rehabilitation. The mosques and other places of congregation will also be utilized as part of the awareness campaign.

The public attitude plays an important role for persons with disabilities to function as fully participating members of society. This is a long process and can only be achieved through constant exposure to positive images of the persons with disabilities and by the projection of their success stories through mass media. The community as a whole must ensure that attention is given, not only to the issues of services planning, but also to the details of access to public buildings, transport and other facilities. The electronic media all over the world has played a significant role in creating awareness regarding the contribution that communities can play for the welfare of persons with disabilities. This will be given special attention by involving television and radio channels in this process through their managements, writers and producers.

National level workshops will be organized in this respect in collaboration with PTV and representatives of other sectors of media.

F. SPORTS AND RECREATION

Provision of appropriately designed sports and recreational facilities for children with disabilities and adults would be undertaken in collaboration with all public and private authorities. Such facilities would, wherever possible, be encouraged within general schemes and will not be segregated as far as possible.

Each district/local authority shall ensure that budgetary provisions exist which will enable groups of persons with disabilities to establish clubs for sports and recreation and shall provide appropriate premises free of rental and standing charges for utilities.

G. DESIGN OF BUILDINGS, PARKS AND PUBLIC PLACES

In order to ensure safe and easy access of persons with disabilities in public places / buildings, codes of practice for the design of new public buildings and for the adaptation of existing premises etc, will be prepared and issued in association with the Pakistan Council of Architects and Planners (PCATP) and Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC).



Design manuals for public buildings will be prepared by the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare & Special Education, which will provide specifications for such aspects of those buildings which are used by persons with disabilities, such as ramps, lifts, toilets etc. Accessibility to other buildings of public use also require special designing to facilitate easy approach for persons with disabilities.

H. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT/MECHANISM

i. ROLE OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The role of Federal Government is important in meeting needs of the persons with disabilities, at national level. The present level of support provided by the federal government for efforts in the field of education and rehabilitation of person with disabilities shall be enhanced. Joint effort of the concerned Ministries like Education, Health, Labour and Manpower and Culture and Sports etc in addition to the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education shall be ensured for fulfilling the objectives, laid down in this Policy.

It is essential that a workable system is developed for inter-ministerial sensitization and collaboration to extract maximum mileage for the benefit of persons with disabilities. One of the areas for collaboration is the budgetary provision and its utilization for the benefit of persons with disabilities in areas falling under the operational jurisdiction of various ministries / departments.

ii. ROLE OF PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

The role of provincial governments becomes essential in providing all the required facilities to a maximum number of persons with disabilities. Based on the needs assessment, the provincial governments will draw up action plans for public and private sector organisations. Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare & Special Education will extend all help and cooperation in education and training of qualified and competent teachers and other professionals to staff these programs. Federal Government will also provide assistance in areas of curriculum development and research.

iii. ROLE OF DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS

District governments will enhance the scope of programs for persons with disabilities. The district administrations will establish special education units/special classes in selected educational institutions of local bodies in rural areas. Through in-service training in special education, the existing teaching staff could function effectively for education of children with disabilities in their own set up.

It is planned to include the introduction of and looking after the system of integration of children with disabilities in normal schools in the area of jurisdiction of the district councils and union councils in the local bodies system.



Education, vocational training and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities will be made part of rural development programs, through local bodies and relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations, to ensure implementation of plans in these areas.

iv. ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR (COMMUNITY AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT)

Government institutions will seek community involvement by encouraging establishment of voluntary organizations. The resources of emerging groups of NGOs in the field of community social work will be tapped and channelized in the direction of projects for the welfare and uplift of persons with disabilities. The range of opportunities for volunteers to contribute will be according to need and resources of particular communities. It will include work with teachers in providing additional support to children with disabilities and work in community-based projects to enhance public awareness. Volunteers, who have professional skills relevant to the needs of children with disabilities, will be encouraged to donate time in their areas of expertise to special education programs. Efforts of the private sector shall be further strengthened by financial and technical support by the government.

The process of rehabilitation, for many persons with disabilities, is one which requires life long support. Special Education and vocational training are part of that process and are not conceptually separate from it. To be effective, rehabilitation requires the involvement of a wide variety of professionals, organizations and community at large. Involvement of "Special Friends" and voluntary support groups will be targeted.

I. FUNDING

The Planning Commission has allocated Rs. 6,282.280 millions in the 10 years Perspective Development Plan, 2001-2011 for education, training and rehabilitation of the handicapped. This allocation of funds shall be instrumental in carrying out the objectives laid down in this Policy document and would draw services through planning beyond 2012. To achieve Vision as set out in this National Policy, the estimated financial resources required would be about Rs.25 billion. In addition to government funding for achieving the objectives of the National Policy, other sources for funding such as international organizations and relevant national agencies will be tapped.

J. MONITORING

The multifarious and multidimensional nature of the services for person with disabilities requires that a system is evolved to oversee the progress in various segments and feed back to the relevant sectors. This responsibility shall be handled by the Ministry of Women Development, Social Welfare and Special Education or any other agency nominated by the Ministry / Department concerned for this purpose. A periodic review will be regular and essential part of the system.

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