

JICA undertakes PAN India study to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

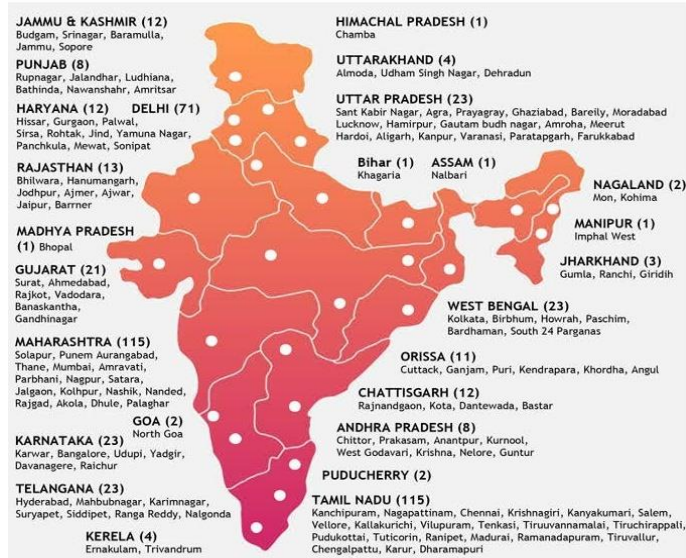
New Delhi, May 03, 2021: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and V-shesh Learning Services Private Limited have undertaken a pan-India study to comprehend the “Impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities” in India in the first quarter of the current year 2021. The focus of this study was to determine and assess the medium to long term effects of COVID-19 on the lives of Persons with Disabilities. The pandemic has put immense burden on the government delivery system, as Governments, DPOs and NGOs have encountered significant challenges to provide aid, relief materials, and assistance to Persons with Disabilities across India. These impediments were most prominent in areas pertaining to education, training, jobs, and daily living. Through the inputs from this research, JICA aims to establish appropriate development plans in response to emergency circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The study focuses on three key points, (i) Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), (ii) Response to the pandemic for PWDs by Government (Central and State) and, (iii) Recommendations for JICA’s COVID-19 response support programs specifically targeting PWDs.

Covid-19 has had many detrimental impacts on the lives of Persons with Disabilities. A total of four major impacts were identified during the study: Daily Living, Education, access to Healthcare facilities and Livelihood. In trying to maintain social distance, they often had isolate from their families which led to feelings of loneliness and confusion. People with disabilities depend majorly on caregiving support, 64.8% of the respondents reported facing severe challenges in accessing caregiving services due to fear of infection and limited transport. Accessibility to online learning proved to be another challenge due to absence of smartphone or laptop. Even when online education did take place, 70% respondents mentioned that the overall learning experience was not at all effective. Students with disabilities in higher education institutions faced incremental challenges without additional faculty time, student volunteers, scribes etc. Amidst the pandemic, Persons with Disabilities have often been unable to seek healthcare services and a shocking 47.4% of respondents were amongst those. Shortage of medical products, problems with supply chains and transportation further added to their distress and 25.85% respondents faced reduced or no access to

Key highlights

- A total of around 650 Persons with Disabilities, caregivers, thought-leaders, representatives from enabling agencies, Organisations and Governments were covered under the study



Geographical Distribution of Samples

- The study was conducted using primary, secondary research and cross sectional, mixed methods approach
- The respondents were across geographies, urban-rural areas, age-groups and socio-economic contexts. The study team was diverse both in terms of gender mix and disabilities types
- Complete Report Link: [Study on Impact of PWDs in India | India | Countries & Regions | JIC A](#)
- *The above map of India is Not to Scale & doesn't claims the actual boundaries

higher education institutions faced incremental challenges without additional faculty time, student volunteers, scribes etc. Amidst the pandemic, Persons with Disabilities have often been unable to seek healthcare services and a shocking 47.4% of respondents were amongst those. Shortage of medical products, problems with supply chains and transportation further added to their distress and 25.85% respondents faced reduced or no access to

prescribed medicines. Loss of livelihood and a steady source of income has affected many persons with disabilities, 13.4% of the respondents lost their jobs during the pandemic and among those who continued jobs 64.8% mentioned facing obstacles at work due to inaccessibility and social inclusion. A lack of digital connect affected those in rural areas far more as they lost access to skilling and training opportunities. People with lesser known disabilities faced inconveniences with access to critical care due to COVID-19 protocol.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative, JICA India said, “COVID-19 has had a detrimental effect on India's underprivileged and marginalized communities. JICA aspires to be a pillar of support in the face of adversity, such as the current pandemic. The intensity and impact of COVID-19 on the PWDs has been far more severe as compared to their non-disabled peers, especially in areas like daily living, education, health, and livelihood. JICA aims to create support programmes particularly to help and assist PWDs”

The study has helped JICA in identifying the four major sectors that could benefit from JICA support programmes. (a) Education & Daily living; (b) Skill Development, Employment & Livelihood; (c) Health & Wellbeing and (d) A Private Sector programme to address gaps across sectors through an enterprise-led approach.

Based on these findings from the report, JICA, with the help of the respective Government Implementing Agencies aims to rehabilitate the existing projects, especially those in the education, skill & livelihood, and health sector to add a disabilities component as an affirmative response to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

About JICA

Established, by a specific law, as an incorporated administrative institution under the Government of Japan, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) aims to contribute to the promotion of international cooperation, as a sole Japanese governmental agency in charge of ODA implementation. JICA is the world's largest bilateral donor agency. JICA works as a bridge between Japan and emerging countries, and provides assistance in forms of loan, grant and technical cooperation so that the emerging countries can strengthen their capabilities.

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