

## People with Disability

People with disabilities are one of the most marginalized and excluded groups in the Asia Pacific region. They experience widespread discrimination and violations of their rights. Discrimination arises not as a result of the intrinsic nature of a person's disability, but rather, as a consequence of lack of understanding and knowledge of its causes and implications, fear of difference, fear of contagion or contamination, or negative religious or cultural views. It is further compounded by poverty, social isolation, humanitarian emergencies, lack of services and support and a hostile and inaccessible environment. Their exclusion and invisibility renders them uniquely vulnerable, denies them respect for their dignity, their individuality and even their right to life itself.



This Fact Sheet focuses on people with disability in Pakistan providing a snapshot of the key issues affecting the lives of persons with disabilities and an overview of the evidence currently available. It is intended to provide a starting point for approaching policies and programs that can make a difference in the lives of these groups, their families and their communities. Knowledge and understanding of the barriers and challenges faced by persons with disabilities is essential if their rights are to be realized.



### Contact

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The Asia Pacific Regional Civil Society Engagement Mechanism (RCM) promotes stronger, coordinated, and more effective civil society contribution in regional and global UN processes. It consists of 427 civil society organisations working in the Asia Pacific region within 17 different constituencies and five sub regions. It ensures stronger cross constituency coordination and that voices of all sub-regions in the Asia Pacific are heard in intergovernmental processes.

For more information please go to: <http://www.asiapacificrcem.org/>



### **In Pakistan women with disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion.**

Women with disabilities suffer a double discrimination facing not only the stigma, prejudice and inequities encountered by many persons with disabilities, but also exclusion as a consequence of gender discrimination. This makes them less likely than either boys with disabilities or girls without disabilities to obtain health care, get an education, receive vocational training, find employment or benefit from full inclusion in the social, political or economic lives of their families.

### **In Pakistan relatively little data exists on persons with disabilities.**

Poverty can be a cause of disability through poor healthcare, malnutrition, lack of access to clean water and basic sanitation, and dangerous living and working conditions. Children are not only born with impairments, but can acquire impairments later in their childhood through disease, accidents or as a result of conflict and natural disaster. The cycle of poverty is further exacerbated once a person becomes disabled through denial of basic resources. A significant proportion of persons with disabilities are denied access to basic services including education and health care. While all have an equal right to live in a family environment many persons with disabilities continue to spend much or all of their lives in other residential institutions.

### **Poverty and disability reinforce each other, contributing to increased vulnerability and exclusion.**

Persons with disabilities are disproportionately vulnerable to violence, exploitation and abuse. Cultural, legal and institutional barriers render girls and young women with disabilities the victims of two-fold discrimination: as a consequence of both their gender and their disability. Persons with disabilities are often overlooked in humanitarian action and become even more marginalized as fewer resources are available in the midst of an emergency. Finally, the greatest barriers to inclusion of persons with disabilities are stigma, prejudice, ignorance and lack of training and capacity building.

## **Development Justice and People Living with Disabilities:**

**Redistributive justice and People Living with Disabilities:** aims to redistribute resources, wealth, power and opportunities to all human beings equitably. It compels us to dismantle the existing systems that channel resources and wealth from developing countries to wealthy countries, from people to corporations and elites. It recognizes the people as sovereigns of our local and global commons.

**Economic justice and People Living with Disabilities:** Economic justice is important to build the capacity of persons with disabilities in terms of research and development. Economic Justice will be beneficial for long term planning. Its training skills in all the addressed sectors will be enhanced. It will help in initiating links with skills and employability with different industries. Moreover, its linkages with other related government agencies will also be increased such as social security institution, employee's old-age benefit institution, etc.

**Gender and Social Justice and Persons with Disabilities:** There is very limited research on the role of women with disabilities in relation to their representation on policies and their role in the disability movement. In Article 6 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) women's concerns should be taken as cross-cutting provision and be read with all other articles. The full implementation of UNCRPD would ensure that multiple discrimination against women with disabilities as an issue would be addressed. (Degener, 2011). The link between gender, social and disability is critically important to influence the global agenda through the disability constituency.

**Environmental Justice and Persons with Disabilities:** Disability as a global human rights issue must be mainstreamed within all development, health and educational programs as well as in humanitarian action intended to improve the lives of people and their families. Inclusive development requires that all groups of people contribute to creating opportunities, share the benefits of development and participate in decision-making. We focus through the constituency the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, disability national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

**Accountability to Persons with Disabilities:** The UNCRPD introduces an explicit obligation on governments to consult with persons with disabilities when developing policies and legislation that affects them. Disabled people's organizations (DPOs) and advocacy groups now exist in Pakistan, often within national umbrella organizations and associations that represent specific disability groups. Such programs, along with NGOs that focus fully or partially on disability and development issues can be important resources for those working towards the improvement of the lives of persons with disabilities. They represent local and national interests of persons with disabilities and can contribute to inclusive development efforts and other programs designed to improve the lives of persons with disabilities and their families.