



“Living with Special Needs or Disability in India”

Collective inputs from over 165,000 Citizens in circle

“Transform India with Modi”

(Current State/ Issues, Root Causes and Proposed Solutions)

November 10, 2014



Executive Summary

All of us would agree to the fact that life of people with special needs or disability is very tough in India. A lot needs to be done to bring the facilities at par with the international standards. The 165,000+ strong “Transform India with Modi” online community has come together to collectively identify the key issues, the root causes and solutions for people Living with Special Needs in India. This submission is being made to the Government Leaders and the citizen community hopes that the Government will implement the identified solutions to make life for Special Needs Citizens of India, easier and better.

Current Issues Identified:

1. Society is not ready to accept People with Special Needs
2. Admitting kids with Special Needs into schools is quite a challenge
3. Severe shortage of trained teachers in schools to take care of special kids
4. Public transportation is completely inaccessible
5. Discrimination in employing people with Special Needs in public and private sector
6. Assistance devices not easily available in India
7. Pedestrian paths are not friendly for Special Need individuals
8. School, Colleges, Government offices etc. do not have lifts
9. Lack of separate toilets for people with Special Needs
10. Shops, ATMs, are not easily accessible because of the height at which they are placed
11. No ramps or wheel chairs in any department stores, religious places etc.
12. Medical Services are tough to get and are costly
13. Severe shortage of trained medicos who are needed to define the individuals' issues
14. Very few Government Centres to take care of people with Special Needs
15. Lack of special parking areas near the buildings
16. Job prospects are few for such individuals
17. No adequate signs in public places to help people with Special Needs
18. Individuals that are Poor and have Special Needs are unable to afford right tools to help them lead normal lives
19. Mentally challenged have tougher time specifically women. They are raped, tortured as they can't defend themselves
20. Braille is still not used in all competitive exam
21. Hearing aids and many such equipment required by Special Needs individuals for basic mobility are very costly



Root Causes Identified:

1. There is no reservation for kids with Special Needs in schools or colleges
2. Government offices and public transport systems have not been designed keeping people with Special Needs in mind
3. People with Special Needs require specialised medical services which are not offered by all hospitals
4. The general presumption is that people with Special Needs are not fit for educated work profiles
5. Aid equipment for people with Special Needs are mostly imported and are hence expensive
6. Government has no counselling facility for these people
7. No consideration for people with Special Needs while designing the infrastructure, like buildings, buses, etc.
8. Policies designed by Government often neglect requirements of people with Special Needs
9. Benefits of existing schemes don't reach intended beneficiaries due to administrative inefficiencies
10. Lack of awareness among people with Special Needs regarding various Government initiatives for them
11. People with Special Needs experience low social status, thus they have lower self-esteem and lack confidence to lead a healthy life
12. Lack of awareness in the society about requirements of people with Special Needs
13. Lack of research and development in the medical field on this issue
14. Movies often portray people with disabilities as bad individuals
15. Insurance companies are not ready to grant medical insurance to specially abled
16. A legal clause allows schools to deny them their right to education by saying that if the child does not get admission in any school, then he can opt for home based education
17. Obtaining a handicapped certificate is a very tedious process and so is its renewal
18. No subsidy from the Government for the purchase of wheelchairs and prosthetics

Solutions identified:

1. Government should clarify the definition of needs of people with special needs and then draft regulations around that
2. Awareness campaigns must be conducted to change citizens' perspective on how they look at people with special needs
3. Government needs to make it compulsory for all schools to treat the children with special needs at par with normal child



4. Teaching children with special needs should be promoted as a lucrative career option, so that there is less gap in demand and supply of such services
5. Buses/trains/metros should be designed with low ramps to make it easy for people with special needs to get in
6. A person with a disability should be treated at par with a normal person when it comes to jobs in public or private sector
7. Tax/duties on imported assistance devices should be reduced
8. More initiatives should be taken in the field of research and development of assistance devices for people with special needs
9. Foot paths should be designed keeping people with special needs in mind
10. All the schools, colleges, Government buildings with more than 2 floors should have lifts
11. Separate toilets should be made where possible for people with special needs
12. Shops, ATMs should have ramps to make them accessible for people with special needs
13. Treatment of any special need child is extremely expensive and it is lifelong expense. Such problems should be handled free in Government hospitals.
14. Braille should also be used in competitive exams
15. Hearing aids and other assistive instruments should be sold at subsidised rates
16. Government should develop fully equipped day care exclusively for special children belonging to working parents
17. Government may introduce care-giver training in Government Schools and Hospitals especially for dealing with special children
18. Special scholarships for special need people (at school level and also at college level) should be introduced
19. It should be made mandatory for insurance companies to have cover plans for individuals with Special Needs
20. Corporates should be encouraged to carry out initiatives for Special Needs individuals under CSR programs.



Living with Special Needs – Citizen Posts and Comments

1. For infrastructure for people with special needs, the government must enforce laws for accessibility. There are people who follow the law that a slope should exist for accessibility. However, the incline of the slope is made so steep that a person on a wheelchair cannot go on his own and even with someone pushing the wheelchair on the ramp, it is difficult. This is true even in places like hospitals and banks, let alone residences Government offices and private sector workplaces – **Vardhan Dugar**
2. Put escalator in public transport wherever required e.g. Railway Station, Metro Stations. Also we should have some facility created for safely road crossing for special Need people. – **Avkash K**
3. It is unfortunate we are not able to take care poor people what to talk of Special need, country needs growth , education and infrastructure provide that and then people for special need will automatically be taken care off , we as country people never focus on core issue and keep going around – **Anil Nahar**
4. Let us look at the countries where people with disabilities/special needs are treated well, trained according to the needs and abilities, given needed facilities, jobs, health-care, access to government buildings and special schools, etc. and copy those that can be applied to India. It is useful to learn some good things from others. For example, a wheel chair design can just be copied and improved for Indian road/foot path conditions. If we try to start from scratch, thinking that we are too clever and know everything, it is quite likely that we will end up with a non-functional chair on wheels for displaying in the art museum. Unless some brilliant people like Dr. Kalam guides the design. I am saying this from experience – **Ranbir Sinha**
5. Let the needy people have first right of movement in the cities of India. Need to create infrastructure on project basis with timelines for Footpath, walking area, access to public transport. This requires to start from drawing board level – **Nirav Shah**
6. Autism is not physical disability rather pervasive disorder; also belong to special needs category. There is initiative happening with sap labs for building apps for teaching children with autism, in Bangalore interested people can contact me – **Balaji Rajagopalan**
7. Mentally challenged people shall have to be provided privileges like health insurance coverage and specialised hospitals to be provided. Parks for children and common/general at places near colonies to be built. Traffic jams to be controlled to make pedestrians to walk freely on foot paths. Medical facilities to be provided at reasonable cost – **Gedela Naidu**
8. There should be system to identify terminally affected and borderline cases. For terminally affected special persons, hospital, health care centers and in fact the



Government should provide special provisions so that they can get treatment, care etc. free of cost. For borderline persons proper education system should be provided in inclusive system. The education system should be such that they will have liberty to choose subjects from certain level and will finally appear board exam. It will be like what is followed in college where diff. streams are offered to students. There should be proper special educators with humanity who will provide assistance. It has often been seen that these special persons are having some special skills. There should be encouragement to develop these skills. General students should be taught or instructed or advised to treat them in a proper manner – **Goutam Paul Choudhary**

9. The Government in the centre as well as the states need to sit down and plan the requirement of the disabled/specially abled people of the requirements of their training, utilisation of their mental abilities and institutions for their treatment, so that we can use such members of our society in productive spheres of activities. Their families should also be trained regarding the handling of such people in day to day life – **Rajendra Kapoor**
10. Special needs children who fall under the Autism Spectrum require regular speech, physical and occupational therapies which are extremely expensive and available only in a few select cities. Government should set up such facilities at a lower cost in at least 4 cities in each state. Public has to be made aware through the TV and print media about the problems faced by special needs people – **Sita Krishnamurthy**