



Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, USA & DSM National Rehabilitation University, Lucknow

Jointly organizing
International Conference
on



Meeting Sustainable Development Goals for children Having Multiple Disabilities with Visual Impairment & Deafblindness: Needs, Challenges, and Opportunities

February 22-23, 2024 (with CRE status)

Introduction

The United Nations (UN) emphasizes on concrete action is needed to include persons with disabilities as both agents and beneficiaries of development. The UN report demonstrates that persons with disabilities are at a disadvantage regarding most sustainable development goals (SDG) and urgent actions to be taken by, for, and with persons with disabilities by 2030.

Census, 2011 shows that there were 2.1 million persons with multiple disabilities and 5 million persons with seeing disabilities in India. According to the Rehabilitation Council of India, a regulatory body, there are very few trained professionals/personnel available for persons with multiple disabilities which results in substandard quality of services for them.

As on December 31, 2022, there are 899 institutions engaged in preparing manpower in the field of disabilities and rehabilitation but only 37 institutes offer programs in multiple disabilities and only 5 institutions offer programs in deaf-blindness area. India is a country having various resources like parents/guardians, community health workers, disability rehabilitation institutes, etc. which can be helpful in providing quality educational and rehabilitation services, nutrition & health to persons with multiple disabilities in line with the SDG of the UN. The only need is to make them connect to render services to bridge the gap between the availability and requirement of trained professionals.

Parents and other stakeholders like health workers, community workers, etc. can play a vital role in achieving the UN's objective of concrete action. To discuss the issues related to proper education and rehabilitation of persons with multiple disabilities, a two-day National Conference is planned to be organized in February 2024 in association with leading organizations in India.

Organizational Capacity

DSM National Rehabilitation University, Lucknow, India was established by the Government of Uttar Pradesh in 2008 with a noble vision of imparting inclusive higher education to mainstream differently-abled students. 50% of seats in all programs are reserved for persons with disability and out of this, 50% of seats are reserved for students with visual impairment. The University offers courses under eight faculties namely Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; Law; Science; Commerce; Fine Art & Performing Arts; Para-Medical Rehabilitation Sciences and Special Education. The University received a National Award for providing the best barrier-free environment from the President of India in the year 2014.

Strive to accomplish the goals of humanitarian society through inclusive education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities is the vision and to become a global center of excellence of higher education and rehabilitation for the empowerment of persons with disabilities with their co-peers on the maxims of inclusiveness and togetherness is the mission of the University.

Perkins School for the Blind, founded in 1829, was the first school for the blind in the United States. Even 195 years ago, our founders were committed to opening the doors to education, literacy, and independence for people who are blind, visually impaired, and deafblind. With its rich legacy in specialized education, Perkins has played an important role in the history of education in the United States. Even about two centuries ago, Perkins' founders were committed to creating equal opportunities for people with visual impairments.

Perkins India sees an India where every child with multiple disabilities and vision impairment gets an early start to learning and has a clear path to a fulfilling future. Perkins India works intensely with individual children and families to bring each child through critical stages of development and learning while establishing a seamless system of identification, referral, and educational services within those communities. This replicable system brings sustainable and lasting support for the most vulnerable children toward achieving a quality education.

Statement of Need

According to a study done by Sense International India, there are more than 0.5 million people who live with Deafblindness in India and as per the Census-2011 data, 2.1 million persons are affected with multiple disabilities, and out of these 0.59 million persons are of the age 5-19 years.

There are 899 institutes that are running programs to create manpower in the field of disability and rehabilitation. Out of these very few are offering programs in multiple disabilities and deaf-blindness.

Any person not specially trained in teaching/rehabilitating persons with disabilities and not registered with the Rehabilitation Council of India cannot render his/her services. There are only 698 professionals/personnel registered with the Council to cater to various educational and rehabilitation needs of one million persons with multiple disabilities and deaf-blindness.

Such a scarcity is worsening the situation for these types of persons with disabilities which results in improper identification and management of persons with multiple disabilities with visual impairment and Deafblindness. Communication and other interventions for persons with such disabilities are also greatly impacted. Various government and non-government organizations are important stakeholders in the planning and implementation of various policies and schemes for persons with these disabilities. There is an urgent need to plan for the next five years on how adequate facilities should be provided to persons with multiple disabilities with visual impairment and Deafblindness so that they also can achieve their potential fully. The proposed conference will provide a platform to all stakeholders, parents, and persons with multiple disabilities with visual impairment, and Deafblindness to finalize the areas to work on for the next five years.

General Strategy

As stated above, 2.1 million persons with multiple disabilities are in India and out of these 0.59 million are of the age group of 5 to 19 years. Number of persons with deafblindness is also very high, which is 0.5 million. Such a large number of persons with disabilities deserve that their educational and other rehabilitation needs should be catered to through trained manpower. Data from the Rehabilitation Council of India shows that there are only 68,469 registered professionals under the category of special educators for educating and training children with disabilities. If one applies an attrition rate of 30%, this number is reduced to 47,928 and considered highly insufficient. There are only 28 organizations in the entire country working in the field of deaf-blindness and a similar even lesser number of institutes for persons with multiple disabilities. The entire northern part of India has only 3 institutes that seem to drop into the ocean.

There are several government and non-government organizations catering to the needs of persons with single disabilities and these organizations can work to provide services for persons with deafblindness and multiple disabilities but due to lack of awareness and non-availability of trained manpower, such institutes find difficulties in providing services to persons with these disabilities areas.

The proposed conference will bring different professionals from the Rehabilitation Council of India, National Institutes, Composite Regional Centres, organizations working in the field of deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities, and other single disabilities areas, parents, etc. on one platform to discuss how the availability of services for persons with deafblindness and multiple disabilities can be increased with collective efforts which will directly beneficial for persons with such disabilities.

Sub-themes of the conference:

- Provisions for sustainability in National Education Policy, 2020
- Identification and management of children with CVI.
- Communication pathways in persons with MDVI and DB
- Medical interventions for persons with MDVI and DB: Possibilities and challenges
- Educational provision and curricular adaptation for children with MDVI and DB
- Assistive technology for persons with MDVI and DB
- Parents' Journey as Stakeholders in Rehabilitation
- Role of Government and Non-Government Organizations
- Strategies for independent living and future prospects for children with MDVI and DB.
- Various syndromes responsible for MDVI and DB
- Sharing experiences by parents and persons with MDVI and DB
- Sports and recreation for PwDs

Patron: Prof. R.K.P. Singh, Vice Chancellor, DSM National Rehabilitation University, Lucknow.

Chief Advisory Committee

- Prof. (Retd.) Shree Ram Mittal**, Eminent International Expert
- Dr. J.P. Singh**, Former Member Secretary, Rehabilitation Council of India
- Dr. Bhushan Punani**, General Secretary, Blind People's Association, Ahmedabad
- Ms. Barsha Banerjee**, Managing Director, Perkins India.
- Ms. Sampada Shevde**, Director, Perkins India.

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- Mr. Neeraj Dixit**, O&M Instructor., DSMNR Univ.
- Ms. Poonam Chourasia**, Guest Faculty, DSMNR Univ.

Timeline:

Submission of paper/stories/queries: **January 15, 2024**, on mdvconference2024@gmail.com Registration: **January 30, 2024**. Registration fee: INR 1500.00.

Account No. **36510100007794**, Bank of Baroda, Mohaan Road, Lucknow. IFSC: **BARB0MOHAAN** (5th Character is zero). Account Holder: **Head, Department of Visual Impairment. Conference**

Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/nnKA7QGUQdNeZWTF9> CRR Registration link: <https://rciregistration.nic.in/rehabcouncil/crestudentreg.jsp?id=CRE-23083015321795>

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Organizing Secretary:

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Knowledge partners: Special Olympics, Bharat, NIEPMD, Chennai, NIEPVD, Dehradun, BPA, Ahmedabad, Sense India International, etc.