India’s Disabled population

Why in news?

December 3 is recognised by UN as International day of Persons with Disabilities.

Who are disabled people & how are they identified?

- In India, men are more disabled when compared to women & disability is more prevalent in rural areas than in urban areas.
- Locomotor disability is the most common disability & more men experience it than women.

- Disabled people are identified based on questions posed in census.
- The number of disabilities in the questionnaire was expanded from 7 to 21 with the enactment of **Rights of People with Disabilities** (RPwD) in 2016.
- Hence, 2019 report includes questions to identify people with temporary loss of an ability, neurological, blood disorders and acid attack victims as disabilities.

How does statistical data about them varies?

- As per the 2011 census, 2.2% of India’s population lives with some kind of physical or mental disability.
- The latest 2019 NSO report, which used the expanded definition of disability reported a slightly higher prevalence.
- In 2019 study by the Public Health Foundation of India which used Annual Health Survey’s metrics gives a lower prevalence.
- Similarly, a group of doctors from AIIMS found that alternate questionnaires like the Rapid Assessment of Disability have resulted in a prevalence ranging from 1.6%-43.3%.

Why do we need the exact data about number of disabled people?

- In India, disabled people enjoy benefits ranging from reservation in educational institutes to concessions on railway tickets.

- To claim these benefits, they have to furnish disability certificate.
- Moreover data on the prevalence and type of disability will be useful in making allocations for welfare schemes.

- The 2021 census will have disability questions as per the RPwD Act of 2016 & department of disability affairs is in the process of creating a national database of PwDs.

Source: The Indian Express

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