Solution Exchange for the Disaster Management Community
Consolidated Reply

Query: Addressing Disability Issues in Disaster Management - Experiences; Referrals

From Ashok Hans, Shanta Memorial Rehabilitation Centre (SMRC), Bhubaneswar

Posted 27 July 2007

Dear Members,

I have been working in the field of Disaster Management since 1999 and trying to include the issue of disability in disasters. My organization, Shanta Memorial Rehabilitation Centre (SMRC) actively works on inclusion of disabled in disaster response. SMRC has initiated an international campaign for inclusion of disables in disasters and has been involved in getting it on many agenda's and platforms, but there is still a long way to go.

In order to strengthen the capacity and scope of our advocacy work, I want to request the members of Disaster Management Community to provide:

- Successful case studies and experiences addressing disability issues during all the phases of disaster management (preparedness, mitigation and emergency response), including any actions you have taken/seen in response to needs of disabled during emergencies and while doing development work like designing buildings etc.
- Information on funding earmarked for the disabled in any development programmes and inclusion of the disabled while designing programmes for other groups like women and dalits
- Names and contact details for organizations and people working on this issue along with any manuals or other resources which address disability in disasters issues

Your responses will help us to promote inclusion and active involvement of the disabled in emergency response and create a system whereby key stakeholders (governments, UN, donors, NGOs, etc.) actively consider disability issues during disasters to assure the health, safety and other human rights of the disabled are maintained.

I look forward to your responses.

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. **Manish Mehta**, Plan International, Bangkok
2. **Nupur Arora**, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi
3. **Eilia Jafar**, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), New Delhi
4. **K. M. Parivelan**, Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre, Chennai
5. **Rahul Pandit**, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Chennai
6. **Krishna Vatsa**, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Philippines

Further contributions are welcome!

Summary of Responses
Comparative Experiences
Related Resources
Responses in Full

Summary of Responses

Responding to the query on disability issues in disaster management, members shared various experiences successfully addressing the needs of this special group during disasters. They also suggested several relevant organizations working to integrate disability issues into disaster preparedness initiatives and documentation efforts.

Broadly discussing the issue of **disability and disasters,** respondents pointed out that disasters create special hardships for people with disabilities. They laid special emphasis on children, since they felt children form the most vulnerable group in society and further if they have some form of "functional need" (disability), they suffer much more. In addition, members pointed out that many disasters lead to disabilities in the victims by causing various kinds of impairments.

Respondents shared various **experiences addressing disability issues during disasters**. For example, in **Mumbai**, after the floods of 2005 many disabled individuals united to form an organization and through continuous follow-up obtained relief and temporary shelter. In **Afghanistan**, under the "School and Clinic Program," the U.S. Agency for International Development built structures adhering to disabilities norms in school/clinic design and in the **United States of America**, the National Organization on Disability is involved with various emergency preparedness initiatives to ensure that emergency managers address disability related concerns and that people with disabilities are included in all levels of emergency preparedness.

Respondents also reflected upon the resolutions from the General Assembly of the United Nations, which has now adopted the '*Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*'. They mentioned that Article 11 of the Convention in particular focuses on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies, stating

> "States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters."

Strongly supporting this statement, members stated that it is a comprehensive human rights treaty and marks a "paradigm shift" in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities.

Discussing the issue of **special programmes for the disabled** and including them in ongoing or coming up development programmes, respondents felt that people with different kinds of disabilities are often less visible and therefore have less access to services and support. They stressed the plight of the disabled in disaster situations deserves prominent attention from all humanitarian actors and opined that in order to encourage humanitarian agencies to earmark funding for the disabled in all development programmes, the media and activists can to play a very important role in bringing to light their struggles. Further, discussants felt that all disaster preparedness and response programmes initiated by government or NGOs must have disability as an integral part. Additional research supporting this view showed a **United Kingdom** based NGO is successfully integrating disability into all of its development programmes, including developing guidelines for integrating disability measures at all levels of project formulation and implementation

Discussants also outlined various **suggestions for effectively addressing concerns** of disabled individuals in all phases of disaster management. One point mentioned was that since this group tends to have a set of 'functional needs', which essential for them to operate, a lot of importance needs to be given to make them operational immediately by either providing or replacing these 'functional needs' in an aftermath of disaster. This may include replacing essential medications, lost/damaged equipment like wheelchairs, walkers, etc. Once they become operational, they can at least come at par with the other victims.

Finally, respondents suggested various names and contact details of organizations and people working on the issue, along with manuals and other documentation, which address disability in disasters issues.

Comparative Experiences

Maharashtra

United for Rights, Mumbai *(from Krishna Vatsa, United Nations Development Programme, Philippines)*
During the 2005 Mumbai floods, people with disabilities faced huge problems in getting relief and temporary shelter. To tackle the problem, they came together to fight for their rights. Through continuous follow-up with all the concerned agencies in Mumbai they secured the necessary shelter. Through regular meetings and collective pressure on authorities, they were able to access their entitlements for relief and temporary shelter.

International

Afghanistan

School and Clinic Programme *(from Manish Mehta, Plan International, Bangkok)*
The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under their 'School and Clinic Programme' has built one story school and clinic buildings. These buildings provide easy access for disabled students and patients. Outdoor latrines adjacent to these facilities were also built with ramps to facilitate access. While designing schools and clinics, the project fairly included disadvantaged people with disabilities in the process, thus successfully addressed disability in their disaster preparedness. Read more

United States of America

Emergency Preparedness Initiative *(from Nupur Arora, UNDP, New Delhi)*
After the September 11 terrorist attack, the National Organization on Disability started the Emergency Preparedness Initiative (EPI) to ensure that emergency managers address disability concerns and to ensure people with disabilities are included in all levels of emergency preparedness- planning, response,

and recovery. Now, EPI has successfully established working partnerships amongst emergency managers, first responders as well as several disability related organizations. Read more

Integrating Disability into Development Programmes, United Kingdom *(from Nupur Arora, Research Associate)*
Save the Children, a UK based international NGO is successfully integrating disability into development programmes. Disabled people and their families are consulted in the project design, monitoring and evaluation of all the projects. The organization also brought out specific guidelines for integration measures at all levels of project formulation and implementation. Read more

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Related Resources

Recommended Documentation

From Manish Mehta, Plan International, Bangkok

Disability Access and Inclusion in USAID Programs, Projects and Activities in Afghanistan
USAID; 2004
Available at http://www.usaid.gov/about_usaid/disability/dis4responses/disane.pdf (PDF Size: 1.13 MB)
> *Report describes how needs of disabled were met in the development and implementation of USAID programs and activities including disaster management in Afghanistan in fiscal year 2004*

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
U.S. Department of Justice;United States of America; 1990
Available at http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/pubs/ada.htm
> *The act provides a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities in normal and disaster times.*

From Nupur Arora, Research Associate

Integrating Disability into Development Programmes
By Sue Stubbs; Save the Children; United Kingdom; 1993
Available at http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/31_56.htm
> *Guidelines prepared by Save the Children on integrating disabled at all levels of formulation and implementation of their development programmes in normal and disaster times.*

Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Disabilities
National Organization on Disability; United States of America
Available at http://www.nod.org/resources/PDFs/epips1disability.pdf (PDF Size: 167 KB)
> *The poster prepared by National Organization on Disability contains checklists and other resources for preparing people with disabilities for emergencies.*

Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Mobility Disabilities
By National Organization on Disability; United States of America
Available at http://www.nod.org/resources/PDFs/epips4mobility.pdf (PDF Size: 169 KB)
> *The poster prepared by National Organisation on Disability contains checklists and other resources for preparing people with mobility disabilities for emergencies.*

Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Sensory Disabilities
National Organization on Disability; United States of America
Available at http://www.nod.org/resources/PDFs/epips2sensory.pdf (PDF Size: 170 KB)
> *The poster prepared by National Organization on Disability contains checklists and other resources for preparing people with sensory disabilities for emergencies.*

Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Developmental or Cognitive Disabilities
National Organization on Disability; United States of America
Available at http://www.nod.org/resources/PDFs/epips3cognitive.pdf (PDF Size: 166 KB)
> *Information Flyer contains checklists and other resources for preparing people with development or cognitive disabilities for emergencies.*

Why and How to Include People with Disabilities in Your Emergency Planning Process?
By Mr. June Isaacson Kailes; Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions Western University of Health Sciences; California ; 2004
Available at http://www.nobodyleftbehind2.org/findings/why_and_how_to_include_all.shtml
> *Guidelines for organizations working on emergency management focusing on why and how to effectively include disables in their emergency planning process*

Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities
Americans with Disability Act, U.S. Department of Justice; United States of America
Available at http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/emergencyprep.htm
> *Americans with Disability Act Guide helps local governments for making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs accessible to People with Disabilities*

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol (*from K.M. Parivelan, Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre, Chennai*)
United Nations; New York; March 30, 2007
Available at http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/conventioninfo.htm
> *It ensures protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies, and during natural disasters*

Sangamam
Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre; Chennai; April 2007
Available at http://www.tntrc.org/news_letter/200716/April_07_English_Newsletter.pdf (PDF Size: 2 MB)
> *Newsletter focuses Social Equity Issues with special reference to the issues pertaining to disability in disasters.*

Non-Discrimination in International Law (*from Rahul Pandit, United Nations Development Programme, Chennai*)
By Mr. Kevin Kitching; The International Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights; London
Available at http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res16070701.pdf (PDF Size: 1.33 MB)
> *Handbook comprehensively deals with discrimination on various grounds including disability, it can be of use to professionals in the field of humanitarian action.*

Recommended Contacts and Experts

Mr. Manish Mehta, Plan International, Bangkok
75/24 OCEAN Tower-II, 18th Floor , Sukhumvit Soi - 19, Khlongtoey Nue, Wattana, 10110 Thailand; Tel: 66818173152; manish.mehta@plan-international.org
> *Has been working on disaster management and did the "School and Clinic Program" for USAID in Afghanistan which include disabilities norms in school and clinic building designs.*

Recommended Organizations and Programmes

United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Afghanistan *(from Manish Mehta, Plan International, Bangkok)*
6180 Kabul Place, Dulles, VA 20189-6180; Tel: 873-762-311955 ; http://www.usaid.gov/locations/asia_near_east/countries/afghanistan/; Contact Mr. Robin Phillips; Mission Director

> *USAID has taken initiatives to address needs of disables in their initiatives in Afghanistan, built disable friendly schools and clinics under one of its programmes for the disables*

From Eilia Jafar, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) , New Delhi

Center for Services and Information on Disability (CSID), Bangladesh
House # 715, Road # 10, Baitul Aman Housing Society, Adabar, Shyamoli, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh; Tel: +8802-9129727, 8125669, 8143882; Fax: +8802-9129727, 8125669, 8143882 csid@bdonline.com; http://www.csidnetwork.org/index.htm; Contact Mr. Khandaker Jahurul Alam; Executive Director;

> *Carries out research study on Disability and Development Issues and provides Community-Based Support Services for disables during normal and times of Natural Disaster*

Survey on the Pakistan Earth Quake and People with Disabilities, New Delhi
World Bank Programme, 70 Lodi Estate, New Delhi 110003; Tel: 91-11 2461 7241; Fax: 91-11-2461-9393; lastrup@worldbank.org, Click here to view site

Shanta Memorial Rehabilitation Centre (SMRC), Bhubaneswar *(from Ashok Hans)*
P-II Jaydeva Vihar 751023, Bhubaneswar Orissa; smrc_bbsr@rediffmail.com; www.smrcorissa.org

> *NGO working for disables in disaster relief for the last two decades and are carrying out various projects to prepare and support disabled before and after disasters*

National Organization on Disability, USA *(from Nupur Arora, UNDP, New Delhi)*
910 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Suite 600 Washington D.C., United States; Tel: 202-293-5960; Fax: 202-293-7999; ability@nod.org; http://www.nod.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.viewPage&pageID=11

> *Organisation carries out Emergency Preparedness Initiatives for people with disabilities and has a rich data base of resources on addressing disability issues in disasters.*

Recommended Communities and Networks

No Person Left Behind, United States of America *(from Eilia Jafar, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) , New Delhi)*
Tel: 1-239-368-6846; Fax: 1-239-368-7733 mslindacarter@comcast.net

> *Online network that educates persons with disabilities on disaster preparedness and empowers them to take control of their disaster planning.*

Disabled Peoples' International, Thailand *(from Nupur Arora, Research Associate)*
http://v1.dpi.org; Contact Ms. Saowalak Thongkuay; Assistant RDO; Tel: 66-2984-1007; saowalak@dpiap.org

> *A network of organizations or assemblies of disabled, established to promote human rights of disabled through full participation, equalization of opportunity and development.*

Recommended Portals and Information Bases

National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, New Delhi *(from Eilia Jafar, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) , New Delhi)*

A-77, South Extension Part II, New Delhi 110049; Tel: 91-11-26265647/48; Fax: 91-11-26265649
secretariat@ncpedp.org; http://www.ncpedp.org/
This site is designed to be accessible to visually impaired persons and aims to be a complete resource on issues pertaining to disability.

From Nupur Arora, UNDP, New Delhi

PrepareNow.org, abagOnline, United States of America
http://www.preparenow.org/prepare.html
> *The portal provides the tools, expertise and access to resources to assist anyone engaged in disaster planning for individuals with special needs.*

The International Center for Disability Resources on the Internet, United States of America
http://www.icdri.org/
> *A global knowledge base of quality resources and best practices on disability, provides education and training based on these core resources including disaster management*

Related Consolidated Replies

Social Equity in Disaster Management, from Rama Kashyap, United Nations Development Programme, Chennai (Experiences; Referrals). Disaster Management Community, Issued 6 July 2007. Available at http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/cr-se-drm-24050701.pdf (PDF Size: 171 KB)
> *Shares experiences and examples of tools or methodologies used to address social equity issues in disasters and provide referrals of people/organizations working on equity issues.*

Responses in Full

Manish Mehta, Plan International, Bangkok

This is really good to know that you are working on "Disabilities" it would be great if you could share your focus; what type of disabilities you are working on? Are you addressing any particular age group or all?

I am working in "Disaster Management" since 1999 and have been worked in Africa, South Asia and South East Asia region in 5 different major disasters.

I must say that you are working on really challenging issue / sector.

Disables / vulnerable [children/ women] issues are more often overlooked in disaster's situation as people who are able they could sought more and can attract more attention then any other most disadvantaged group.

I was running "School and Clinic Program" for USAID in Afghanistan and in that program we could include disabilities norms in School / clinic design.

I would be happy to share those designs if you wish.

I have read "American Disabilities Act [ADA]" and it sounds good to me if we can apply in normal as well as emergency situation.

Please feel free to communicate on manish.mehta@plan-international.org

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Nupur Arora, United Nations Development Programme, New Delhi
Thank you very much for bringing in the issue.

On one hand, disasters create special hardships for seniors and people with disabilities all over the world. Children, who as it is form the most vulnerable group of society if carry some form of functional needs (disability) suffer much more. In addition, on the other hand, Disasters lead to disabilities. They cause impairment and also leave many as disabled.

The plight of disabled in disaster situations deserves prominent attention from all humanitarian actors. People with various kinds of disabilities are often less visible and therefore have lesser access. This means, when a disasters strikes they have least chance of survival!

In order to improve the chance of survival of disabled, media and activists can to play a very important role binging in light their struggles. Further, all Disaster preparedness and response programmes should have disability as an integral part.

One specific point which I would like to mention is that there since this group of people have a set of 'functional needs' which are essential for them to operate, therefore a lot of importance should be given to make them operational immediately by either providing or replacing these functional needs in an aftermath of disaster. This may include replacing essential medications, lost / damaged equipment like wheelchairs, walkers etc. Once they become operational they can at least come at par with the other victims.

Some National and International Organizations working on the issue of Disability in Disasters and reference material are mentioned below:

1. **National Organization on Disability, USA**

The mission of the National Organization on Disability (N.O.D.) is to expand the participation and contribution of men, women and children with disabilities in all aspects of life. N.O.D. raises disability awareness through the following programs (http://www.nod.org/)

Some of the relevant documents brought out by National Organization on Disability are:

- *Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Disabilities*
  http://www.nod.org/resources/PDFs/epips1disability.pdf (Size 167 Kb)

- *Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Mobility Disabilities*
  http://www.nod.org/resources/PDFs/epips4mobility.pdf (Size: 169Kb)

- *Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Sensory Disabilities*
  http://www.nod.org/resources/PDFs/epips2sensory.pdf (Size: 170K)

- *Prepare Yourself: Disaster Readiness Tips for People with Cognitive Disabilities*
  http://www.nod.org/resources/PDFs/epips3cognitive.pdf (Size: 166K)

1. **PrepareNow.org**

This organization provides the tools, expertise and access to resources to assist anyone engaged in disaster planning for individuals with special needs.

Some of the relevant documents on the website of PrepareNow.org can be viewed at
http://www.preparenow.org/prepare.html

2. Why and How to Include People with Disabilities in Your Emergency Planning Process?
By June Isaacson Kailes, Disability Policy Consultant, Associate Director, Center for Disability Issues and the Health Professions Western University of Health Sciences, Pomona, California in 2004. To read please click: http://www.nobodyleftbehind2.org/findings/why_and_how_to_inc lude_all.shtml

3. Making Community Emergency Preparedness and Response Programs Accessible to People with Disabilities
This guide is for local governments is prepared by U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act. To read please click: http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/emergencyprep.htm

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Eilia Jafar, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), New Delhi

Congratulations for initiating this discussion.

Inclusion of the most vulnerable groups in disaster preparedness and planning is a largely discussed, but unfortunately rarely addressed issue. The minimum standards for evacuation and the early warning system seem to be lacking when it comes to the inclusion of 'all'. Further to what Nupur has written in her mail below, you may also find the following organizations and information in the field of disaster disability, relevant:

- National centre for promotion of employment for disabled people. http://www.ncpedp.org/
- Center for Services and Information on Disability (CSID), Bangladesh. http://www.csidnetwork.org/index.htm; csid@bdmail.net
- National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD), Bangladesh.. http://www.nfowd.com/Home.htm
- World bank Survey results on the Pakistan earthquake and people with disabilities http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALPRO TECTION/EXTDISABILITY/0,,contentMDK:20714310~pagePK:148956~p iPK:216618~theSitePK:282699,00.html
- Disability news and information service www.dnis.org
- No Person Left Behind, www.nopersonleftbehind.org

K. M. Parivelan, Tamil Nadu Tsunami Resource Centre, Chennai

People living with disabilities are the most vulnerable group in any disaster context. In the post-tsunami context, the Plenary of the General Assembly of the United Nations have now adopted the 'Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'. In the fourth session before and the fifth session just after the Tsunami on January 24th to February 4th of 2005 the situation of disabled persons in disaster was discussed.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and was opened for signature on 30 March 2007. There were 82 signatories to the Convention, 44 signatories to the Optional Protocol, and one ratification of the Convention. This is the highest number of signatories in history to a UN Convention on its opening day. It is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century and is the first human rights convention to be open for signature by regional integration organizations. It marks a "paradigm shift" in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities.

The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of

disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced.

Article 3 of the Convention deals with the General Principles as follows:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Accessibility;
- Equality between men and women;
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Article 11 of the convention in particular focuses on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies:

States Parties shall take, in accordance with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters.

 Some more details pertaining to disability is dealt in one of the TNTRC newsletters with the title 'Focus on Social Equity' which can be accessed at
http://www.tntrc.org/news_letter/200716/April_07_English_Newsletter.pdf

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Rahul Pandit, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Chennai

I would like to share with the members the INTERRIGHTS handbook for practitioners on 'Non-discrimination in International Law'. Chapter V section G of the handbook deals with discrimination on the grounds of disability. It has various sources of reference, which make persons with disabilities a subject of legal rights as opposed to people in need of care and welfare. Click here to read handbook:
http://www.solutionexchange-un.net.in/drm/cr/res16070701.pdf (Size: 1363KB)

The other sections of the handbook comprehensively deal with discrimination on various other grounds. It can be of use to professionals in the filed of humanitarian action.

Krishna Vatsa, United Nations Development Programme (NDUP), Philippines
The disabled are generally left out in the distribution of relief for several reasons. They are not able to register their presence when relief is being distributed. They find it difficult to compete with others in asking for relief. They are in a state of destitution with no proper record of residence or other documents. Others are not willing to share temporary shelters with the disabled. We faced this problem while distributing relief during the Mumbai floods in 2005. For the administration, it is difficult to handle these grievances, as it is difficult to reach out to them individually, and at the officials at the local level are not sensitive to the issues of disability.

It is far more practical if the disabled are organized and interact with the government and other organizations as a community. Generally, the State Government is obligated to appoint a Disabili
The disabled in Mumbai were facing a huge problem of temporary shelter following the floods, but it was their organization and continuous follow-up with all the concerned agencies in Mumbai that secured them the necessary space. We would meet the delegations of the disabled on a regular basis, and with their collective pressure, they could access their entitlements for relief and temporary shelter. NGOs and state agencies can help the disabled in organizing themselves and voicing their demands more effectively.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Disaster Management Community in India at se-drm@solutionexchange-un.net.in with the subject heading "Re: [se-drm] Query: Addressing Disability Issues in Disaster Management-. - Experiences; Referrals. Additional Reply."

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