

## Disability inclusion in the Work Bank Safeguard Policies

### *Submission for the World Bank Consultation of Safeguard Policies*

Submitted by: Shivani Gupta, Member, Disabled People's International (DPI) INDIA  
[secretariat.dpi@gmail.com](mailto:secretariat.dpi@gmail.com)

---

According to Census 2011, there are 1.2 billion people in the country. Based on the world bank- WHO world report **15% of the world population experience some form of disability and 3-5 % severe restriction of participation due to disability which for India would mean 180 and 60 million people respectively.**

Besides direct discrimination either in laws or in custom, unintentional exclusion of disabled people because of non-recognition of basic requirements enabling their inclusion such as accessibility, provision for reasonable accommodation etc. in development programmes is known. Some examples to illustrate some gaps in projects financed by World Bank in India that not necessarily end-up ensuring rights of persons with disabilities include:

- World Bank money was used to support the development of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Delhi. When the project was implemented there was high buzz about it being accessible to disabled people but on the ground it have not benefited as intended due to inaccessibility.
- The Bank has initiated a Panchayat Strengthening Project in Bihar<sup>1</sup> with five components that include construction of about 300 Panchayat Sarkar Bhawans (buildings for offices of the Panchayat); Capacity building of Pachayat Raj institutions; Awards good Panchayats from the Panchayat Performance Grant

Ensuring inclusion and equal participation of all persons with disabilities at all levels of this project is important. This may require the construction of offices to be accessible; ensuring capacity building activities include disabled people; evaluating Panchayat performance on criteria involving inclusion and participation of disabled people etc.

Some thoughts on the issues safeguards must address are given below:

#### *CRPD used as a model*

Historically the Bank has focused on social protection and security for disability. Attention only of these would not promote rights of disabled people. **The Bank must take a more cross cutting and a rights based approach in addressing all projects.**

**The CRPD must be used as a model in the modification and development**

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/P102627/india-bihar-panchayat-strengthening-project?lang=en>

**process in terms of ideology and language.**

#### *Capacity Building, Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation*

**Project feasibility study must call for an impact assessment on persons with disabilities.** Potential adverse impact on disabled people may be identified and alternative system/procedures be adopted to mitigate these adverse effects. These adverse effects may include inability of persons with disabilities to participate equally and benefit from the development project because of barriers.

**Steps must be taken to build the capacity of both the Bank staff and the implementing government counterparts** on integrating rights of persons with disabilities into Bank operations and on conforming to the safeguards.

**Performance indicator must include ways of monitoring and evaluating on the bases of disability.** These indicators may assess if the project impact is equitable for persons with disabilities.

#### *Participation of persons with disabilities*

**Safeguards must include processes for undertaking consultation with people with disabilities at all stages of project implementation.** This would entail consulting with persons with disabilities from the project designing stage until the time of project monitoring and evaluation.

#### *Public Procurement*

A significant percentage of aid money as well as a country's public money is spent through public procurement. Often country procurement systems do not address non-discrimination of persons with disabilities by mandating accessibility.

Compliance of all procurement with accessibility standards and guidelines is critical. Very often country procurement systems do not have any mention of compliance with accessibility standards and guidelines. Further a number of countries do not have national accessibility standards and guidelines. This results in inaccessibility and exclusion of persons with disabilities

**The Bank must have safeguards to ensure that all procurement in Bank funded projects complies with accessibility standards and guidelines.** This must be so irrespective of whether the country procurement system addresses accessibility for disabled persons.

**The World Bank may adopt minimum accessibility standards to be complied with in projects in countries that do not have national accessibility standards and guidelines.**

An example of a aid agency adopting accessibility guidelines is the *'Accessibility Design Guideline: Universal Design Principles for Australia's Aid Programmes'*,<sup>2</sup> guidelines that have been developed by Ausaid to support Australia's aid program to minimise barriers and become more accessible.

### *Private Sector*

Over time apart from country governments, the private sector has become a significant player. At national level basic services and facilities are being privatised and newer ways of 'public private partnership' being followed. Often in country laws the private sector is not accountable to ensure inclusion and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities. **The Bank must pioneer this through safeguards, requiring the private sector to be non-discriminatory and equitable towards disabled people in all Bank funded projects.**

### *Vulnerable Groups*

Globally several vulnerable groups have been identified such as indigenous people, people forced into resettlement, fragile and conflict affected country residents, women, children etc. People with disabilities in these groups are doubly vulnerable and disadvantaged. **The bank must ensure that the additional vulnerability because of disability is addressed to enable them to benefit from the projects on an equal basis with others.**

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/Pages/accessibility-design-guide.aspx>