



Facts on People with Disabilities in China

Background

In China, a disabled person is defined as one who suffers from abnormalities of loss of a certain organ or function, psychologically or physiologically, or in anatomical structure and has lost wholly or in part the ability to perform an activity in the way considered normal. The term disabled persons refers to those with visual, hearing, speech or physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, multiple disabilities and/or other disabilities.

Over the past two decades, a series of positive legislative and administrative action has been developed for the purpose of improving the living conditions and social status of people with disabilities in the country. The Constitution (enacted in 1982 and amended in 1988, 1993, 1999 and 2004) provides a general principle on protection of people with disabilities. The Law on the Protection of Disabled Persons (enacted in 1991 and amended in 2008) is of significant importance to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities. It addresses issues of rehabilitation, education, employment, cultural life, welfare, access, and legal liability, etc. The amendment added details about stable financial support, better medical care and rehabilitation for the disabled, along with favorable jobs and tax policies. The Employment Regulation and the Education Regulation for people with disabilities were adopted in 2007 and in 1994 respectively to promote equality, participation and sharing, as well as to prohibit discrimination.

In addition, more than 50 national laws contain specific provisions concerning people with disabilities, including the new Law on Employment Promotion. China is also advocating and supporting international standards to protect and promote the rights of people with disabilities in a comprehensive manner. The Chinese Government has ratified the ILO Convention No. 159 on Vocational Training and Employment (Disabled Persons) in 1988, and the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2008, to enable people with disabilities to secure, retain and advance in suitable employment and to further integration or reintegration into society.

The Government has established a quota system that requires all public and private employers to reserve no less than 1.5% of job opportunities for persons with disabilities, in accordance with specific regulations established by local provincial governments. Those who fail to meet the required quota must pay a fee to the Disabled Persons Employment Security Fund, which in turn supports vocational training and job-placement services for people with disabilities. The taxation authorities and disabled peoples organizations are involved in the process of monitoring. Through initiatives such as tax incentives and

financial, technical and other resource assistance, the Government supports welfare enterprises that recruit employees with disabilities and encourages people with disabilities to engage in self-employment. Poverty alleviation for people with disabilities is an important part of the National Programme on Poverty Alleviation (2001-2010). A special Poverty Alleviation Programme for disabled persons living in rural areas (2001-2010) has been worked out to mobilize all sectors to help disabled shake off poverty.

The China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF), established in 1988, is a unified organization of/for the 83 million persons with various categories of disabilities in China. It has a nationwide umbrella network reaching every part of China with about 90,000 full-time workers and 400,000 part-time workers. The CDPF performs three functions: 1) represent interests of people with disabilities in China and help protect their legitimate rights; 2) provide comprehensive and effective services to disabled people; and 3) commissioned by the Chinese government to supervise affairs relating to people with disabilities in China. The CDPF is committed to promote the humanitarianism, the human rights of people with disabilities, and the integration of people with disabilities in all aspects.

The State Council Working Committee on Disabilities has been established to steer and coordinate the disability work. It is composed of 36 ministries and social groups. The Vice Premier Hui Lanyu is the chairmen, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the Ministry of Health and CDPF are the vice-chairs of the Committee.

Key figures¹

In the light of the Second National Sampling Survey on Disability conducted in 2006,

- The total population of people with disabilities reached 82.96 million, or 6.34% of the total Chinese population, which had a 1.44% increase comparing with 1987. Among the total population, men accounted for 42.77 million or 51.55%, and women 40.19 million or 48.45%. The gender ratio is 106.42 (based on women as 100, the ratio of men to women). Comparing with the total disabled population in 1987,
- The disabled population in urban areas accounted for 20.71 million, or 24.96%; the disabled population in rural areas 62.25 million, or 75.04%.
- By different disabilities, visual disabled persons accounted for 12.33 million, or 14.86%; hearing disabled 20.04 million, or 24.16%; speaking disabled 1.27 million, or 1.53 %; physically disabled 24.12 million, or 29.07%; intellectual disabled 5.54 million, or 6.68%; mental disabled 6.14 million, or 7.4%; multiple disabled 13.52 million, or 16.30 %.
- By age composition, age 0-14 were 3.87 million, or 4.66% of the total disabled population; age 15-59 accounted for 34.93 million, or 42.10%; age 60 and above 44.16 million, or 53.24%; age 65 and above 37.55 million, or 45.26%.

¹ Sources: 1) The Second National Sampling Survey on Disability; 2) the CDPF Facts and Progress on Disability in China, 2008

- Disabled children at the age between 6-14 reached to 2.46 million, 2.96% of the total disabled population, in which visual disabled accounted for 130,000; hearing disabled 110,000; speaking disabled 170,000; physical disabled 480,000; intellectual disabled 760,000; mental disabled 60,000; and multiple disabled 750,000. 63.19% of the school-age children were receiving compulsory education at ordinary education or special education schools.
- The disabled persons with university degree (referring to college and above) were 940,000; high school level (including secondary school) 4.06 million; the middle school level 12.48 million; the primary school level 26.42 million; illiterate population at the age of 15 and above accounted for 35.91 million people, the illiteracy rate is 43.29%.
- In 2005, the income per capita in households having disabled person(s) in urban areas was 4864 yuan, in rural areas 2260 yuan; in 12.95% of rural households with disabled people, the income per capita was under 683 yuan; in 7.96% of rural households with disabled persons, the income per capita was between 684 yuan to 944 yuan.

According to the CDPF Facts and Progress on Disability in China 2008, the employment situation of the disabled is as follows:

- In 2007, the total employed disabled population reached 21.29 million, of which 4.33 million worked in urban areas, and 16.96 million in the rural areas. 1.67 million jobs were created between 2001-2005 for urban disabled people, which was 1.5 times comparing with job creation in 1995-2000. The employment rate of people with disabilities in urban and rural areas rose from less than 50% in 1987 to 80%. Among urban disabled workers, 11.9% of them were employed by welfare enterprises, 11.5% through quota scheme, and 15.8% through self-employment.
- In 2007, there were 3127 employment service agencies at different levels helping 300,000 people with disabilities annually. These agencies have received financial support from the government and local communities, and provided services ranging from practical job-oriented vocational training to employment matching and consultation for people with disabilities seeking jobs.
- In 2007, 2.607 million urban disabled persons enjoyed social insurance. 6.36 million disabled persons received minimum subsistence allowance, 3.71 million got regular subsidy, and 610,000 disabled persons were looked after in foster homes for severely disabled persons.
- In 2007, more than 19,000 rehabilitation centers for people with disabilities were established at various level, over 15million people benefited.
- In 2007, 2,677 legal aids centers were set up, handling over 20,000 cases of rights violation, including 25 centers at provincial level handling 451 cases, 282 at city level , dealing with 4 4,623 cases and 2,370 at county level dealing with 15,000 complaint cases.
- Among 30 million people in poverty in China, 80% of them are disabled persons. During 2007, 1.794 million of poor and disabled persons received support, including 1.273 million solved problems of food and clothing. The National Lottery's Welfare Fund has helped 121,800 households to renovate their house.

- In 2007, regulations and administrative decrees on accessibility were issued by 6 provinces, 76 cities and 350 counties. Access construction was carried out in a comprehensive way in 827 cities and counties. 2,762 times of special inspections on access were carried out.
- 594 athletes representing China competed in 39 international sports events such as athletics, swimming, shooting, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair tennis, sitting volleyball, cycling, and wheelchair rugby and won 339 gold, 172 silver and 147 bronze medals and broke 11 world records. These set a solid foundation for the Beijing 2008 Paralympics Games.
- Sports were also promoted for the health and fitness of disabled persons through competitions and trainings. There were 188 provincial level sports centers and 1,264 city/prefecture centers.

Challenges

People with disabilities remain a vulnerable group and many still encounter specific difficulties in a society whose economy is experiencing a tremendous market-oriented transition. The following issues should be pointed out in order to advancing opportunities for people with disabilities to obtain decent work in condition of freedom, equity, security and human dignity:

- Affected by stereotypes, disabled persons are facing bias and discrimination in the society;
- The gap of living condition between disabled persons and others is growing bigger. Poverty remains as a key obstacle in the development of disabled persons.
- People with disabilities lack of opportunities to access to employment, education, vocation training, and social security.
- Disabled persons have lower education and skills. They are disadvantaged in the labour market. The quality of employment including wage levels and conditions of work needs to be improved.
- Currently, there are more than 1 million urban unemployed disabled persons, together with the new disabled labour entrants and disabled laid-offs, the job opportunities are short in demand.
- The employment services for disabled persons are just at the initial stage. The quality of the service is insufficient to assist disabled persons in finding jobs.
- Social security system for disabled persons is underdeveloped. The financial resources to support the system are rather limited, mainly from government inputs, National Lottery's Welfare Fund, Welfare Fund and social donations.
- The enforceability of some legislative instruments has received increasing attention and needs to be strengthened.

ILO Programmes on disabilities in China

Project on Promoting the Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation: The project has been implemented in cooperation with the ILO tripartite constituents, the CDPF and universities. The objective of this project is

to enhance the capacity of government and social partners to promote, individually and collaboratively, the employability and employment or self employment of persons with disabilities through effective legislation, policies and programmes. The project had an important impact on the formulation of the Amendment of the Law on Protection of Disabled Persons, the Employment Promotion Law, and the Employment Regulation for People with Disabilities.

The project has been carried out through in the following approaches:

- Training and workshops for the tripartite constituents and the CDPF on employment promotion for people with disabilities through legislation, as a result, their own institutional strategy were developed to improve the employability and employment of people with disabilities.
- The ILO training curriculum on “*Achieving Equal Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation*” has been adapted into Chinese, training courses have been delivered to CDPF staff and other relevant stakeholders to enhance their understanding of disability-related law and policy, including consultation, implementation and enforcement aspects.
- Training for media representatives to enhance their capacity in raising public awareness of the rights and work capacity of persons with disabilities and to promote their social and economic inclusion, including targeted initiatives concerning their employability and employment.
- Research on employment situation of people with mental illness or/and intellectual disabilities, for the purpose of developing effective policies and supporting measures to ensure equal employment opportunities for people with mental illness and/or intellectual disability.
- Compiling and publishing the “Anthology of Excellence Enterprises Cases on Promotion of Employment for People with Disabilities”, to provide the guideline and references for the employers to absorb and help the disabled people, and encourage the disabled people to run their own business.

SIYB Programme: The ILO tool on entrepreneurship development has been fully utilized in China among different target groups, which has made a great contribution to the employment creation. The SIYB training manual has been adapted for disable persons to enhance their capacity to start their own businesses.

Project on Employment Equality and Non-Discrimination: The project aims at promoting non-discrimination and equal employment opportunity through improving Government officials’, social partners’, and employers’ knowledge of the concepts and issues around employment discrimination. The training materials will be developed to address discrimination based on the different grounds, such as race, colour, sex, religion, social origin, disabilities, and infectious diseases, etc.