

## **World Disability Week Valley has 6 lakh disabled population, 1 lakh are children 'Government still quotes 2001 census figure'**

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SRINAGAR, Dec 1 :The world disability week beginning today might witness seminars and other grand functions but the people with disabilities in the state continue to be ignored lot. As per the census carried out in 2001, there were at least 3,50,000 people suffering from different types of disabilities out of whom 45000 were the children between the age group of 4 to 14. Though the government continues to quote the same old figures but NGOs and sociologists working for the welfare of the disabled maintain that the disability rate in the state has alarmingly gone up. Chairman of the 'Helpline' a non-governmental organization working for the welfare of the disabled, Javed Ahmad Tak said, " The number of children with disabilities between the age group of 4-14 was 45,000 in 2001 but this time their number is around 95,000.

Out of 95,000 hardly 9,000 have been rehabilitated, that too by the NGOs and the rest continue to be the victims of the callousness of the government."

He said that the discrimination towards the disabled children by the authorities has completely isolated them from the society.

"Though the Disability Act (DA) is in force in the state which guarantees rehabilitation and education to the children with disabilities but no successive government in the state implemented the act in letter and spirit," he said.

"In almost all the south Indian states there are special schools and the rehabilitation centers for the disabled children where they are educated and rehabilitated but here the government considers such children as useless," Tak lamented. A noted sociologist Bashir Ahmad Dabla talking to Kashmir Times said that the state government still goes by the figures of the 2001 census.

"As per my study the number of disabled population in the state has doubled since 2001 making it six lakh out of which nearly 1 lakh happen to be the children," Dabla said.

He said that government's callous and discriminatory approach towards the disabled is evident from the fact that it has not conducted any survey on the disabled population during last 10 years and still the quotes the figures of decades old census.

"Though the rate of the disabled population in the valley is much more than other Indian states but the government so far has not taken any steps for their rehabilitation," Dabla said.

He cited the armed conflict as the main reason for increase in the number of disabled population in the valley.

"Due to the armed conflict in the state the numbers of movement and mental disability cases increased

manifold particularly in the border districts but only fewer cases having political influence have been rehabilitated and the rest continues to face discrimination,” Dabla added.

He also said that though many schemes were launched at the national level for the disabled persons but in Jammu and Kashmir no such scheme was implemented properly.

<http://www.kashmirawareness.org/Article/View/8630/world-disability-week-valley-has-lakh-disabled-population-lakh-are-children-government-still-quotes-2001-census-figure>