

Bureau of Statistics - Guyana



IDB Seminar on Disability Data in the
Caribbean

Held at IDB Country Office Jamaica
April 14 – 15, 2005

What is Disability?

- According to the Oxford dictionary it is defined as a physical or mental condition that restricts your movements, senses, or activities.
- Disability is a social issue that is often overlooked.
- In some segments of society the disabled refer to themselves as 'differently able or physically challenged', rather than handicapped, since they do the same things but differently.

Statistics and indicators

- In Guyana statistics of persons with disabilities are inadequate.
- The only available statistics on disability is from Censuses, and therefore a limit to the quantity of data collected.
- There is need for more specialised surveys to adequately cover this topic.
- Data available from the last two censuses 1991 and 2002 would derive basic indicators.

- The data collected from the 2002 Census will be useful in deriving key indicators.
- The prevalence and percentage of the population with disability by age, sex, level of education, occupation, ethnicity, type of disability, religion, marital/ union status and place of residence.

The questions on disability were included in the individual questionnaire (section 2). A total of 4 questions were asked.

- Question 1 listed the types of disabilities and the respondent had to respond **yes** or **no** to each:

The questions are as follows

- 1 Do you have/ does (...) have any serious difficulties/problems of a permanent nature with any of the following?
 - A. Sight (despite wearing glasses)
 - B. Hearing (even with hearing aid)
 - C. Speech (talking)
 - D. Moving/mobility (walking, standing, climbing)
 - E. Body movements (reaching, crouching, kneeling)
 - F. Gripping/holding (using fingers to grip or handle objects)
 - G. Learning and understanding (mental retardation)
 - H. Mental Functioning (behavioural, psychological, emotional problems)
 - I. No sense of taste, feel or smell
 - J. Other, specify.....

Question 2:

- Was any of your ... disabilities / impairments ever diagnosed by a medical doctor?

Yes

No

Question 3:

- Due to the disability (ies) indicated above in which of the following ways are your / is (...) activities limited compared with most people your (...) age?
 - A. Self-care
 - B. Mobility
 - C. Communication
 - D. Schooling
 - E. Employment
 - F. None
 - G. Other, specify.....

Question 4

- How was this disability acquired?
 - A. Born with disability
 - B. Acquired disability by accident
 - C. Acquired disability by disease

The 1991 census only had 3 questions, the question 'How was the disability acquired?' was not asked in 1991.

- Actual statistics from 2002 census is not available. Therefore no analysis will be included in this presentation. However, data available from a survey carried out in 1981 by a PAHO consultant in six areas showed the following:
- Incidence of disability was 3.87%, being higher in one such urban area, 4.9% and 4.8% in one rural area.
- The survey also indicated that the most prevalent disabilities were visual and physical with rates of 15.1 and 14.5 per 1000 respectively.

- The purpose of the disability section in the 2002 census was to measure the incidence and type of disability and nature of the handicap experienced by members of the population.
- From this information, the need for care or provision of special facilities for the disabled can be gauged.
- Disability in the census was defined as serious difficulties/problems of a permanent nature.
- The quality of data is generally reliable, except for that on income.
- The data collected on income was poor and therefore any analysis done using this data can be misleading.

Background to National Commission on Disability (NCD)

The National Commission on Disability was launched in December 1997. It is a presidential entity, appointed by and accountable to the President of Guyana. The Commission consists of 15 members appointed by Cabinet. The Commission represents a broad and relevant range of interests including key ministries, the media, trade unions, human rights associations and organizations serving persons with disabilities in the private and public sector .

- The overall vision of NCD is encapsulated in its mission statement:
- ‘To work towards the identification and progressive enhancement of those conditions at a National level, which would serve to ensure that people with disabilities lead full and productive lives.’
- **The NCD accomplish this through:**
- Acting as a directing and coordinating body on national disability issues to ensure that persons with disabilities lead quality lives;
- Advising government on all issues relating to disabilities;
- Setting standards within which stakeholders should operate developing programmes, providing services etc in the field of disability;

- Working assiduously towards changing negative attitudes and breaking down physical barriers for persons with disabilities.
- **NCD accomplishes its objectives through:**
- Working to ensure that National Policy on Disability objectives are incorporated into a definitive legal document;
- Developing a strategic plan;
- Hosting two training workshops;
- Holding a week of activities for the International Day of Disabled Persons;
- Recognizing businesses that are disabled friendly by placing stickers on their buildings;

- Establishing a resource centre to provide inclusive, comprehensive information regarding disability issues in Guyana and internationally to persons with disabilities, their families, the people that work with them, and the general public.
- A situation analysis was done in 1993 by PAHO unfortunately due to insufficiency of data people with disabilities were all classified under the category 'multiple disability.' The main services provided by the facilities were rehabilitation, special education, specialised assessment and some medical services. Most of the facilities were located in the capital with less than one third of the total population. Georgetown has over 75% of the services.

- The main services available in the rural areas were provided through Community-Base Rehabilitation (CBR) programme.
- There are a number of agencies providing services for children with disabilities: the David Rose School provides special education for the hearing and intellectually impaired, the Ptolemy Reid Rehabilitation Centre and the Mahaica Cheshire Home cater to the needs of children with physical and developmental disabilities, and the St. Rose's Resource Unit provides education for children who are visually impaired or blind. The state supports these organisations.

- There are also some other smaller organisations.
- Services for adults are provided through Physiotherapy Services of the Ministry of Health and the Guyana society for the Blind, and organisations such as the Guyana Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities, the Parents' Association of the Mentally Retarded and the Hearing-Impaired are involved, through a limited way, in advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities.

THANK YOU

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