

### **Social and political policy and welfare**

People with disability may consider themselves as helpless, minority group and stigmatized within the social and culture structure. Unlike other minority groups in the society, disability people have no claim such as geographical territory or history (Freund et al., 2003). It was by the 1970s that the interest and attention of people turn towards the rights for disability people. Disability people despite being a minority, however, form a large number of world population. Scotch (1988) claimed that the civil rights movement of the 1960s widened the understanding of disability as more of social-political rights rather than just medical care. The rise of demanding equal opportunity and equal access led to the establishment of groups like Center for Independent Living in California and Disabled in Action. Oliver (1996) shared the experience of people with disability in the early days of Britain where they were denied the opportunity to cast electoral vote through ballot box. Most political meetings would be held in a premise unavailable for the disability people and little thought would be given to visual impaired. Besides the political rights denial, disability people faced issues about their social rights to citizenship. Marshall (1952) in a simple understanding define social rights as a whole range of right from economic to social heritage to the freedom to live a civilized life. This, Oliver (1996)

emphasized the right every human being ought to enjoy from not being poor to enjoyment of social facilities.

With the growing capitalism and industrialization, there witness a new form of political economy. Barnes et al.,(2000) narrate the history of Britain during the 1940s where the state reach out for the poor and impairment, however, were not so much in concern with their welfare body. The state was not in favor of complete financial assistance without employment which was not a friendly approach for people with disability. After the II World War, minority ethnic group, including disability people gathered demanding for their equal share of rights. The perception of 'not normal' legitimated their classification as 'special cases'. Oliver (1996) however argued that no less than two-third of disabled people live under poverty line and are not experiencing the lifestyle expectation of their contemporaries which even deny their own authority over their body and eating routine. Marshall (1952) examine civil rights not just as legal and property rights, however, includes the freedom of speech and thoughts. Oliver (1996) elaborate these civil rights into the context of disability people where they may exercise freedom however, raised question against the Act passed for disabled people whether employment or job opportunities are rightfully given to the disability people or not.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was formed in the United States of America in 1990 which enter a new platform regarding civil rights for people with disability in America. This Act protects any discrimination act towards disability people in work place. It requires working place to provide reasonable accommodation to workers and customers with disability and accessibility of transportation and public facilities. It may not be correct to assume people with disability as being ignored or deprived for their social and political rights. The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act 1944 attempt to secure employment rights for people with disability and it was Education Act 1944 which forward rights for children with disability in attending school lesson along with their peer group with no discrimination. However, this provisions retreat from active to passive and from rights-based to needs-based welfare benefit (Oliver: 1996).

The Warnock Report and the Education Act of 1981 fails to bring education and social development towards disabled children. Though it has focused on the integration, however, could not raise fund for the children with disability and fails to protect the citizenship of the children with disability. Initially, the special school could not surpass the condition of other school, slowly it decline which consequently failed to meet the provisions. The Education Act 1988 introduced a new implementation of national curriculum which ensures children with special needs an equal participation in the educational curriculum with others. However, this fails to acknowledge the existence of disability among children in the empowerment of their skills and ability. An argument point on the accusation of people with disability as need-based beneficiary as in Coote (1992) claims that people with disability are looking for a model of welfare which is not built with need but seek equal citizenship as a means of self-determination enjoyed by abled people. The implementation of Act and establishment of organization for disability people may speak on their behalf. But the question remains how far people with



disability move beyond their border of being prejudice are and characterized. The 21<sup>st</sup> century witnessed a new dawn for people with disability with political and social movement addressing their voice, as well the participation of disabled people towards their cause challenged political involvement. Disability studies today became more of political issue and social concern rather than individual battle for identity and recognition within the social sphere.

### **Disability and Health care**

The care and needs of person with disability challenged many organizations defining the manner of impairment and handicap in the social role. Health equality and care giving towards people with disability entitled the rights and liberty of a person along with every other fellow human being. The United Nation has put forward to guarantee the needs for people with disability with full freedom and enjoyment of rights. Thus, besides law and enforcement against discrimination of disabled people politically and socially, the-UN also launched convention under its agencies. People with disability require special treatment facilities in many occasions in hospital or centers which demands financial funds and equipment. As stated earlier, poverty may increase disability thus, special health provisions is required to be able to reach by every social economic class.

Rights of Person with Disabilities (RPD) Bill have ensured policies and programs considering the social security and health care. RPD focus in the provision of health care for all, from basic standards to medical services among the people with disability. The accessibility of safe drinking water, health care counseling, reproductive health, clean sanitation, safe housing is all ensured by RPD Bill. RPD Bill makes provisions for free health care in remote areas and depending upon the family income, medical expenses are not charged. Under this Bill, it is brought forward that no person with disability should be discriminate on account of claiming medical insurance scheme and prevents discriminatory of denial of medical access on the basis of disability.

Besides medical facilities and discriminatory prevention, under this Bill, person with disability are given with measures and promotion of health care. For instance, there is constant health awareness campaign and regular screening of health issues which might prevent disability such as vision impairment or hearing impairment. Health awareness campaign, especially in rural areas is one objective that could reduce the population of disability. Television, radio, newspaper and other media communication are utilized for such cases. The RPD Bill has given great importance on the sexual and reproductive health of women, especially with woman with disability. This enhances further prevention of both the mother and child health welfare. Though, heath care and medical aid are given to the people with disability, in many cases the policies and programs implemented failed to bring up the plans and touch down the needs and requirement of people with disabilities. The cost of rehabilitation tend to occur which could not be reachable for every disabled person. The question lies towards understanding and advocating the well-being of

**people with disability, seeing their needs and requirement of health care through their identity and not just base on policies and programs implemented.**

## Conclusion

The experience of pain, discomfort and suffering are linked with the socio-economic, cultural factors. Disability also is greatly affected by the attitude and behavior of the society. To understand disability, it is first important the clear definition of what is disability? Adlakha (2013) explained that it is both equally important to understand disability as impairment and impairment which disable individuals. The two could help recognizing the pain and discomfort of disability as well as understanding the social institution that contributes into discrimination and exclusion from the society. A sociological approach of studying and understanding disability provides theory and empirical study attempting to identify the power, rights, policy and welfare of people with disability. Thus, re-evaluating the medical model from social model of disability would bring more development in understanding the condition of disability which is an important contemporary debate in academic and in the study of sociology discourse. The study and movement for the rights of disability could not simply be achieved through implementation of Act or policy. Social and political organization may have contributed a deep influence in the inclusion and protection of people with disability. However, what matter most is the participation of people with disability. Activist and participation among the disabled group could bring out the actual identity and self-representation, analyzing discriminatory and segregation from socio-political and cultural limelight.