

# DISABILITY ADVOCACY SUNDAY

**NOVEMBER 22**

(can also be observed on Nov. 29 & Dec. 6)

## LITURGICAL AND OTHER RESOURCES 2020



**THEME:**

**Disability as Diversity  
in the Design of God**

## **NCCI-IDEA Disability Advocacy Sunday Liturgical Resources 2020**



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## INTRODUCTION

Greetings from the secretariat of the National Council of Churches in India (NCCI) and its Disability program – the Indian Disability Ecumenical Accompaniment Program (NCCI-IDEA)

I commend my colleagues Ms. Lalremsiami, Rev. Deva Jothi Kumar and Mr. Jianthaolung Gonmei for their efforts in compiling these resources that can be used during the Disability Advocacy Sunday (November 22) and the fortnight surrounding the World Day of Persons with Disabilities (Dec 3). Therefore, Sunday the 29<sup>th</sup> of November and Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> of December can also be observed to raise awareness about concerns relating to people with disabilities – both in the church and in the society.

These resources can also be used in the Assembly prayers of our Schools, Colleges, Hostels and Hospitals. The resources will also be suitable for morning prayers in our offices. There are multiple prayers, affirmations of faith and homilies that you can use at different times.

Some of the resources are very raw and reproduced here with minimal editing to respect the angst with which the persons have written it, most of them people with disability themselves.

The guidelines of the Board of Theological Education of the Senate of Serampore College (BTESSC) circulated to all Theological colleges which has a segment on mainstreaming disability concerns in the Work Place Policies is appended for information and action.

The NCCI Guidelines on understanding and mainstreaming disability concerns in faith and practice is also appended for your information and necessary action.

Come, let us make our church/ churches models of welcoming and accessible spaces for persons with disabilities. We can contribute to the society in this regard and also learn a lot from the society which is also becoming increasingly aware of the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities amidst us.

Let us celebrate diversity in God's creation. In God there is no discrimination we are only different. Let us embrace this diversity and grow together.

Sincerely yours,



Rev. Asir Ebenezer

General Secretary, NCCI

**NCCI-IDEA Disability Advocacy Sunday  
November 22, 2020**

Theme: **Disability as Diversity in the Design of God**

**LITURGICAL RESOURCES**

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – I**

We believe in the Par Excellence Designer God,  
Who created every human being on His/Her own Design.

We believe in the first excellent Design of God, Jesus Christ.  
Who has been as a perfect being of God.  
Who has come to show His solidarity with people who are ill-treated because of their design.  
Who prioritized His mission among the others abled people.

He was born by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary to walk on the same shoe like other human beings.  
He was crucified under Pontius Pilate to emancipate all people irrespective of their design.  
He suffered for their sake; He showed His empathy by taking the cross for their sake.  
He rose again on the third day to show there will be an emancipation after every suffering.  
He ascended to heaven to intercede for others abled people.  
He will come again with All His glory to take back His loving people.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit who initiates, who participates, who gives mind to listen others, who plays as a vital force in the transformation of the world.

We believe in one Universal Church which is people's movement, which gives the space to all the people without any hesitation and which equal opportunity to all sorts of people.

We affirm one baptism that includes all people irrespective of their designs and limitations and who repent and ask for forgiveness of sins to all those who ill-treat people because of their design.

And looking forward to the liberation of the dead and new life where all the creatures will be in an Excellent Design with his/her Designer.

Amen.

- *(Written by Mr. Vishwanath Jeyaraj V, M.Th. II, Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute, Chennai)*

**AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – II**

We believe in God the Creator who created all human beings, whether abled or disabled, in His own image (Genesis 1:27).

Since all of God's creation is good, we affirm God's good design in all human beings, whether abled or disabled.

We believe that all human beings, whether abled or disabled, are fearfully and wonderfully made by God (Psalm 139:14).

We affirm that disability is the design of God. We believe in God's declaration (to Moses in Exodus 4:11) "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who made them deaf or mute? Who gave them sight or made them blind? Is it not I, the Lord.

We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering, crucified and disabled God who took on the limitations of humanity and lived among the disabled and declared that disability is not a result of sin, but to manifest the works of God in the persons with disabilities (John 9:3).

We believe in the Holy Spirit who is at work in the Church to make it an inclusive community.

We believe that without the persons with disabilities the Church is incomplete and that the Church is of all and for all.

We thus aspire to make the Church a disabled friendly Church in structure, theology and praxis. We also aspire the Church to be a fully accessible Church where the persons with disabilities are welcomed and where they can actively participate and fully involve in the Church.

- *(Written by Rev. Venkat Pratap, Calvin Institute of Theology, Hyderabad)*

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION – I**

Day to day, I was proud of my image in the Mirror as the normative perfect beautiful image. My choices were skewed with this view. I regret this prejudiced view of mine that has broken the hearts of the differently-abled. I am penitent for the pitiful looks that I had on them. I bewail for denying seeing the beauty in them. I remorse for being rigid and hesitant not seeing the wholeness and perfection in them.

**(Silence)**

My world view of considering that I am and those like me are the ones who are all abled and the differently are disabled and perceived them as objects to be pitied and objectified them with a priori that I am the only who is to share, care and love them. I grieve for this my grave objectification of the differently-abled.

**(Silence)**

God has created the world with beauty and wholeness. Wholeness is the virtue of God. I have considered that those who are mentally challenged are a flaw in God's creation. At times I have thought that it is better for them to die than to be a glaring disturbance for my faith affirmation. I have demeaned them as insignificant and reduced the purpose of their creation. With a contrite heart, I confess that I have sinned.

**(Silence)**

For acclaiming and affirming a binary that people like me are the only perfect normative being and therefore those who do not fit into these definitions are differently-abled. By doing



so, we have degraded them for our entertainment, sympathy, charity, and support. I bemoan for these misconstruing thoughts of mine.

**Absolution:** (to be read preferably by PWDs or Worship Leader)

Perfect Lord, who is perfect, is not in any means similar to our idea of perfect. Help our friends to transcend the normative singularities of our society. The God who stands by our side when we get humiliated, mocked, belittled, isolated, marginalized, pitied and objectified will definitely forgive you when we forgive you. Be in peace and love justice.

- *(Written by Rev J. John Dhayanandam, Presbyter, Diocese of Madras, CSI)*

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION – II**

Almighty and sovereign God, powerful and yet merciful, our creator and sustainer, we, your created beings come to you beseeching your ceaseless grace for our iniquitous deeds. You, with the words of your mouth, brought creation in existence. You created the plants and the rivers, the mountains and oceans, the birds of the sky and the animals of the sea and land. You said it is good. Your creativity is beyond comprehension. You made everything right and in order. Yet, we questioned your work. We failed to apprehend your inventiveness and artistry. We have looked down on your creation, called them sinful and segregated them.

We come to you, seeking mercy, for we were far from understanding disability as a designed order. Put in us a renewed heart and knowledge to appreciate the beauty that you have shown us, the diversity you have encompassed, and the opportunity you have presented to demonstrate love. As we solicit forgiveness we proclaim that God manifests shining glory in all created beings, and disabilities are designed order of God.

- *(Written by Ms. Lalremsiami, Program Assistant, NCCI-IDEA)*

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION – III**

Merciful God, we come before you today to confess in unison as we are separated from one another by ignorance and discrimination against people with disabilities.

**Forgive us O Lord.**

God of all creation, we confess that we have sinned as we do not accept our brothers and sisters who are different from us in appearance. We see them through the lens of their physical disabilities and not recognizing them as your image.

**Forgive us O Lord.**

Glorious God, we forget that when you came into this world, you showed your glory through the people whom we call disabled.

**Forgive us O Lord.**

God of just, forgive us and create in us the vision of opening our hearts, minds, and doors as wide as you accept us, so that no one is left outside. Grant us wisdom to not focus our

attention on our human limitations, but on our uniqueness as your children created in your own image.

### **Hear our prayer O Lord**

- *(Written by Ms. Neelam Gaikwad, Communications, NCCI)*

## **INTERCESSORY PRAYER**

Creator God, help us to understand the wonders of your creation that every creature (person) whether able or disable, man or woman or trans person, is your design. They carry your thought in their body.

### **Lord we plea your mercy to understand the diverse nature of your creation,**

People with disability have a purpose in their life as like every able person think and claim. May they be given due respect space and provision to function as they are like any human. Empower them as an instrument of great change in the society.

### **Lord we plea your mercy to help them in their struggle of respect.**

Person with disabilities have good leadership qualities like any able person. Moses led Israelites in to Canaan, Paul courageously transformed the gospel to Gentiles and many other in the bible displayed great leadership qualities. We pray that the church and its institution reserve employment opportunities and even to the ministry of the Altar.

### **Lord we plea your mercy to accept them as they are.**

We are grateful to the families, fellow workers, church leaders, children and spouses who turn into a welcoming community and stand with Person with disability without showing discrimination.

**Disable God, May our churches be inclusive and leave no one outside its fold. May our attitude towards person with disability turn to be empathetic then to be sympathetic. May we understand that they are your design. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.**

- *(Written by B. Rajakali Immanuel, B.D. IV, Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai)*

## **HOMILY - I**

(Readings: **John Ch. 9, Acts Ch. 3&4**)

Topic: **“The Right of Persons with Disability”**

It was in 2016 that the Government of India enacted a law which is known as ‘*The Right of Persons with Disabilities*’. But prior to that, several missional as well ministerial organizations have been advocating and asserting the right of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs). National Council of Churches in India is one of such ecumenical organization which in its 28<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Assembly had chosen a theme viz. ‘*Towards Just and Inclusive Communities*’ to theologically motivate its constituent members to encourage and facilitate Indian Churches to be inclusive and disabled friendly. It is because disabled or differently-



abled people have been God's preferential option of love and the primary focus of Jesus' holistic ministry.

As has been said by St. John that the mission and ministry of Jesus was and is aimed at giving life in its fullness to those who are denied the right to live a decent and dignified life. There are many factors in religious as well as in public places which deny the right to live a life of fullness to those PWDs. Many people are prejudiced towards PWDs and one of its examples we find in John's gospel Chapter 9. When Jesus was passing by, he saw a man blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Even today, lots of people have this kind of prejudiced perceptions towards PWDs. They often look down upon PWDs and instead of empowering them or enabling them to overcome their disability, they dishearten them with insult and taunting.

When we talk about theologically motivating Indian Churches to become inclusive and disabled friendly, we need to derive its justification and motivation from the Bible. The book of Acts chapter 3 and 4 talks about a man who was lame from his birth. He was not only lame from his birth but also in wretched situation. St. Luke who is the writer of the book of Acts says that, *'he was being carried'* most probably by his relatives who *'laid him daily at the gate of the temple to ask for alms of those who entered the temple'*. When we perceive this event from the right of PWDs, a question may arise in our heart and mind and that is that, what should have been his right as a person with disability? Was it to beg and live at the mercy of others? Surely begging or living at the mercy of other could not have been his right. Instead, to live a decent and dignified life should have been his fundamental right. And it is to enhance and advocate this fundamental right of persons with disability that the Government of India has enacted a law in 2016 and ecumenical agencies like NCCI has been advocating and motivating theologically all its constituent members to uphold and adhere the right of persons with disability.

When we critically analyse this event mentioned in the book of Acts about a person who was lame from his birth and most probably whose relatives carried him and laid him at the gate of the temple to beg from people going in and coming out of it, we see an inclusive and disabled friendly attitude of the Peter and John towards that man. St. Peter said to him, "Look at us" and he fixed his attention upon them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. And leaping up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. We praise God that NCCI-IDEA has been a facilitator of the conversations with communities both within the Church and Society at large, for advocacy of disability rights. From its inception, the NCCI-IDEA has focused on 'An Inclusive Church', through its sermons, urging the churches to move from being charitable to become an accompanier, seeking justice for, by and with PWDs. Since long time the Church has been known for its charity work. But it needs to rise above from being just a charitable organization and become an accompanier advocating and seeking justice for PWDs so that they are able to live a decent and dignified life. This is what the Apostle Peter and John did to a man who was lame from his birth. When he began to walk, they accompanied him and entered with him into the temple praising the loving and merciful God.

But most PWDs are denied access to enter into several religious as well as public places. They are often pushed at the periphery of religious as well as public places and have been made to sit at its gate to ask for alms from people going in and coming out of it. Lots of people do charity by giving them food, cloth or money. However, through the law enacted by the Government of India for the right of persons with disability and through the missional and ministerial priorities of several leading organizations, attempts should be made to accompany persons with disability granting them access to enter and move freely in religious as well as in public places without restrictions and hesitations.

But the saddest part of this event is that the authorities of the temple, instead of praising God and appreciating Peter and John for the good work they had done in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, they questioned them as to into whose name this man is healed? Authorities of the temple not only questioned them, but also prohibited them from enabling and healing disabled person in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. This should be viewed as a denial of the right of persons with disability to be healed and to live a life of decency and dignity. Such attempts made by authorities and leaders should be exposed and condemned undoubtedly.

Apostle Peter and John took a very firm stand when they were being prohibited to heal people with disabilities and to proclaim the name of Jesus. They told authorities of the temple saying, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” This was a very prophetic utterance made by the Apostle Peter and John when they were confronted with authorities of the temple. Those who are advocating inclusive and disabled friendly community must become prophetic like Peter and John. When we are confronted with such authorities and leaders who prohibit us, discourage and dishearten us, when we engage into the mission and ministry of enabling people with disabilities, we need to be affirmative and assertive like Peter and John proclaiming what we have seen and heard about the mighty works of God. We need to be firm like Peter and John who were committed to the mission mandate of Lord Jesus Christ who went about villages, towns and cities teaching, preaching and healing the PWDs and from every kind of sickness and infirmities.

Life in its fullness, that is a life of decency and dignity which should be seen as the aim of the right of PWDs. Motivating and helping persons with disability is a good thing but more important than that will be to enable persons with disability to overcome their inner struggle such as fear, prejudices about God and themselves, inferiority complex and low esteem. These attempts should be seen as fulfilment of the right of persons with disability. And of course, we cannot do it by our strength and wisdom alone, but we need God’s mighty hands to intervene and fulfil the very purpose of right of persons with disabilities. I am grateful to NCCI-IDEA for giving me this opportunity to share my views about the right of persons with disability. May God bless all of us as we motivate constituent members of NCCI and likeminded NGO’s theologically to become more inclusive and disabled friendly. Amen.

- *(Prepared by Rev. Ganesh Barve, Presbyter in Charge, St. Thomas Church, CNI, Nagpur)*

## HOMILY - II

(Readings: **Gen. 1:28; John 9ch.**)

Topic: **“I am that I am” asserting the identity – a disable perspective**

### Introduction

#### Disability Definition and Meaning

A **disability** is any condition of the body or mind (**impairment**) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions)<sup>1</sup>. A person has a '**disability**' if: 'he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on her or his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. ... In short, this definition says that **disability** is activity restricted by impairment<sup>2</sup>.

The above statements are definitions for disability made by able bodied people. Few scholars say for example **the Stoics** – Everything is programmed to turn out the way it does. You can't change it; just learn to fit in. **The Epicureans** – Everything is random. You can't do anything about it. Make yourself as comfortable as you can. **The Platonists** – The present life is just a shadow of reality. Bad things happen here but we are destined for a different world. **Tomas Pueyo** - “very quickly limit people coming in, identify the sick (Disability), immediately isolate them, use heavy protective gear to protect their health workers, track all their contacts, quarantine them...”

Of course, there are several human opinions on the disability of their own understanding and context. But the word of God the scripture is more than that and beyond the human understanding.

In the present context disability is not in physically but it is in mind. Mind mapping also comes under this category. When society or church unable to accept a disabled person into their community with equal status and standards, that shows that the community itself is a disabled community, church and family. Bringing a disabled kind of feelings into a person's mind itself is a great tragedy to that victim rather support.

When we talk practical and literally, no disabled man need manual support of anyone, rather the family, society and church must accommodate and accept them with same standards as Jesus' central teaching of 'love your neighbour as yourself'. This makes sense that they too can be normalized in the mind by which they never think they are marginalized. Here i wish to bring some insights from the gospel of John chapter 9.

#### John 9ch. – Blind man's story

As we discussed that God created everything in perfect and good, in that standard lets come into this chapter. There are so many hypothesis and assumptions regarding the sickness, but the words and attitude of godly person Jesus is totally different towards such.

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<sup>1</sup> From Google

<sup>2</sup> From Google

## **1. I am equal with other because I am created by God –**

In the beginning God created everything in his image and likeness, God saw it was good that means if it is good than it should be good forever. Here it is very important to understand the God choice for person with disability. It is the identity God wanted person with disability to cherish.

Here we can see the discussion among the disciples on the particular context, of course every context have a reason/s and vice versa. Here the context have been constructed by the Jewish society and we can understand clearly in the dialogue of disciples that the idea of sickness behind somebody's sin. The society assumes likewise. From these assumes came there were so many traditions and contexts.

But the answer by Jesus Christ something specific – 'glorification of God', in the same manner how Jesus took step and the behaviour and attitude of Jesus something interesting here, as a normal person Jesus treated this blind and invalid man. Without anybody's support he went and washed himself and stood in the midst of the society. The normal condition of the personality may not be tolerated by the small mindset of the society. I am born to glorify god like any others.

But the perspective of Jesus is different and Jesus declared that for the glorification of God." here there are several aspects and questions we may think like: glorification of God in sense – healing him? Because he is suffering for long years? Performing healing in front of many? The testimony he is going to give after healing? Excommunication from the Jewish synagogue? Etc. There are several doubts arising when we think of the glory of God and which concept Jesus is connecting to the blind man's identity is more important than anything else.

In the secular world, the equality of human status based on ancient traditions, limitation of the framework created by some fundamentalists and patriarchal system. This blind man too is never beyond those. The interesting thing is he does not know and care of all these things and he is enjoying his facilities and benefits.

## **2. "I am not worried about others" I want to talk to Jesus**

Every society or community whatever we classify have their own limitations, values and ethics. All these things should be benefited and healthy to those who are all in the same society without any discrimination. No uniform kind of lives in the society as 'all fit into one', every individual must have equality and dignity benefited by all that is what we can see the entire the scripture. In the context of John 9<sup>th</sup> chapter, there are lot of discriminations in the name of God and religion and the very plan of God for the nations has been misunderstood by traditionalist and fundamentalists. Getting the identity in such gravitation it seems to be little difficult but possible. Here the blind man has been questioned by several authorities, traditions, ancient framework and especially that is Sabbath Day. This challenges not only for disabled ones but also everyone. Some will compromise and some are growing up for identity.

Here Jesus provided the facilities to this blind man not basing on his disability but Jesus saw him invited him as he is common like others into the glorifying God community. Therefore, the blind man stood for his identity in the society, we never find that he was so upset of his

excommunication from the society but his belief in his identity was so strong. Many times, we tend to guide people with disability. We must understand they have emotions and desires.

### **3. “I am undaunted” – bold faith expressed**

Here we can see how this blind man has strong identity, in several ways he was questioned, had a strong dialogue with traditionalists and fundamentalist in different topics like: how he able to see? Who made him to see? Questioning of religious traditions (Not following the tradition of Sabbath), about the sinner, healing (caused lot of debate in between religious traditions and community), they asked about his opinion on one who healed, question of his birth, society, parents, etc. there were several questions he supposed to answer. Here the interesting thing is he never feels disappointment and whatever challenges and questions come but he answered. Finally this man came to the level of questioning their faith in God, some moment this invalid man surprised by their attitude. The identity made him stronger and stronger. When his identity was lifted up (he was excommunicated), Jesus met him for final touch up that is he started to worship on his own without any mediation (priest, sacrifice, temple etc.).

Above three things we can see how the identity emerged in the persons lives. Once experienced his identity, it makes independent from the partial help of society, community and family. He able to understand things, enjoys things, free from all.

### **Conclusion**

Present contemporary context the urgency of identity is very important. Disability can be defined not only physical but also mental, emotional, intellectual, sociological, spiritual etc. Every disable must see what are the possibilities around us what are all the things are approaching us, if we use them comprehensive mind, surely we acquire the Identity. Though there were many challenges but able overcome all disableness which is there in the heart, mind, intellect and life frame.

The conscious of Jesus finally found him, encouraged him, the blind man worshipped Jesus. God’s house will only be filled when it includes marginalized people, those who are poor, the disabled and the outsiders. It is important that we as a church make sure all are welcomed here.

Practically what can we as a part of the body of Christ do in this church to continue to help people with a disability? Why not develop this a little further by putting together a group to look at how people with various disabilities in the wider church can be included as a part of Gods family. We should not forget those who don’t come regularly to worship here or those who can’t get to other events that are organized by the church. And of course don’t forget visitors and new people to the area. This is a real and tangible way to make sure that all people in the local area can feel included and welcome in the full Christian life of this church.

Although this is disability awareness shouldn’t just be a single time. This attitude should be a celebration of our ministry in disability and it should be a time to stop and think how this service or ministry can be improved in the days to come. Jesus showed us example we need to walk in his footsteps until our last breathe. Disabled people are part of earthly families, make sure that we make them part of the family of this church and the family of God.

- *(Prepared by Mr. Jeevan Babu, B.D. IV, Bethel Bible College, Guntur)*

## HOMILY - III

(Readings: **John 9:3**)

Topic: **“Disability is to Glorify God”**

### Introduction

Who created people with disability? Do people with disability have the privilege to say that they carry the image of God? I know these are very delicate questions deliberately avoided in many daises for in-depth discussion. If we say disability is God’s choice of creation then why we denounce the People Living with Disability (PLWD) privileges in the churches. Why the church is unmindful about their presence? Even if we say that they are created in the image of God it reflects our sympathy because our theological terms affirm the concept of God as king, omnipresent, omnipotent, perfect etc. such concepts cannot speak to disabled people.

People with disability say that their being is not their choice hence they call themselves as the image of God. They imagine their God as Disabled. This definitely disturbs the imagination of the church as the church believes God is perfect hence aims to propel their members towards this perfection. A theological elucidation is essential on this topic.

The traditional attitude of the society is similar to the attitude recorded in John 9 but Jesus revolutionized that idea and added that the work of God is manifested among People with disability. To the question of his disciples on a visually disabled person on the street “whether he is born disabled due to his sins or his fore parents’ sins” Jesus emphatically replied he is born to **“glorify the Lord”**.

This text explains us the misconceptions Jewish constructed about PLWD and Jesus’s responses.

1. **Glorifying God Beyond Discrimination:** Jewish thought people with disability are curse and disgraceful and can never glorify the Lord. Jewish people also thought they are the only people on this earth who are chosen by God to glorify His name. They sourced an idea that God’s creation would be perfect and without infirmities. We have constructed our theological ideas as dominant ideas. Cultural factors like paternalistic, exclusion from participation, and uneasy feelings of the majority due to their own complex over the PWD make the situation difficult for the PWD. There are cultural and theological reasons for this phenomenon. Both these factors emphasize the importance of “perfection”, “power”, “might”, etc. Therefore, society has no place for the ‘disabled’. Cultural symbols affirm might and power. We need to re-symbolize the divine power not as dominating and controlling power but as liberating power and love. Thus, the symbols and metaphors used should resonate with disable people experiences.
2. **Glorifying God Beyond Human Assessments:** It is their fate that they are born due to their previous sins. In fact, all our thoughts and beliefs about God come from our imagination. These imaginations are exclusively prepared by dominant able-bodied people. These imaginations are justified with purified scriptures. In our imagination about God, human beings, sin and the story of salvation we made people with disability a victim of fate and curse. Jesus justified the theory of fate is untrue. Dr. Abraham reflected on the theme, “Broken God in the Midst of Broken People.” Instead of a



“success-oriented gospel”, obsessed with cure and miracles we need to give expression to the gospel of a suffering God, suffering in solidarity with others. People with disability reveal God’s diverse design of creation. hence people with disability takes the pleasure of addressing their god as ‘disable’

3. Glorifying God Beyond Visual Recognition: disabled man recognizes Jesus as Son of David. We think vision is more important to recognize but here the man who was visually impaired used his other faculties to recognize Jesus. We create facilities in our church that suite only for able people. For example, people with hearing difficulty cannot attend church services as there are no sign language is available instead churches invest hugely on audio (Dolby) system. We notice children with autism and mentally challenged worship the lord in their style. This will not meet the parameters for worship we have designed.

- *(Prepared by Rev. S.D. Deva Jothi Kumar)*

## **HOMILY - IV**

(Readings: **Isaiah 42:16; Luke 4: 16-19**)

Topic: **“Leading to Untrodden Path”**

### **Introduction**

It was during April 2016 while I had organized a tour program to visit churches with a team of Persons with Disability (PWD) that this incident occurs. As I ask for a programme in one of the Churches, the response given was shocking and painful. The Head Deacon of the Church responded saying, “It is not necessary for the Disabled to organize a programme and preach the gospel in the church, if they need money we can give some amount and send them back”. This perception toward the disabled and disability by the Church hurt and disturb me a lot. Since the people see us only begging, and as an object of charity and sympathy. It makes me to realize many things about the situation, the social and the Church’s perception of the PWDs. But not all the Churches are limited in their approach.

However, from my experiences, I perceive the people living with disabilities are a vulnerable group, but they are the designed order of God, and therefore the Christian community cannot ignore and neglected this group of individuals by any means.

Since we are observing the Disable Advocacy Sunday, I would like to entitle my sermon as “Leading to Untrodden Path” (Isaiah 42: 16)

Acknowledging to the words and deeds of our advocate Jesus Christ towards a persons with disabilities, the Church could also introspect and improvise her works and deeds in regards to the responsibility in the advocacy for the person with disability.

Is there any need for special advocate for the disabled in religious matter?

If so, what is our responsibility?

No doubt, many of the Churches are well informed in regards to the needs of a Person with disability. However, some are not much aware of it. It is sure, person with disability are

often unrecognized in the society and in the Church. I still see the spaces within the church which stand as untrodden path for a person with disability. But PWDs are a people who need to be recognized and considered for, the most in human life. They need support and care, love and affection. Humane treatment is essential first step, opening up those paths.

Therefore, the Central Government of India has also put the PWD under special consideration and even preserved them in the constitution and established the Right of Persons with Disability Acts to safeguard the PWD. Therefore let us briefly discuss about how Jesus Christ an advocate the Disabled, and how the Apostles followed the footstep of Christ, and most importantly, let us examine our present Churches, in roles in advocacy with Person with disabilities, and what is being done to lead them into the untrodden path.

### **Paradigm of Jesus's Advocacy of Person With Disabilities**

Out of many miracles performed by Jesus Christ, I would like to acknowledge one particular events from (Mt. 21: 12-17)

In this passages we see that the event of Cleansing of the Temple by Jesus Christ. By claiming that the Temple is holy and it is the house of the Lord. Where the temple is defiled economically and politically, and the profaned practices of the society led to a social discrimination where the entity of religion, politics, economics and social orders integrates with each other to perpetuate and legitimize oppression, disintegration and exclusion.

However, ironically after Cleansing the Temple Jesus claim that the Temple as "His house" and he proclaimed that he is the true owner, and open a space for integration, where, when the Person with Disability came inside the Temple and Jesus healed them and they glorify God. Here, the healing of the blind and the lame inside the temple acknowledges that Jesus integrates and opens a space for the marginalized at the holy temple.

Thus Jesus Christ show us the real model of inclusiveness and integration of people without any discrimination, by healing the blind, lame, lepers, paralyses, cure the sick and rising up the death. Therefore he could lead the marginalized people and the person with disabilities into their untrodden path that they had never experience in their life.

### **Paradigm of Apostle Advocacy of Person With Disabilities**

The Old Testament notion towards Person with Disability seems inherited in the first century during the time of apostles. The condition of the PWD in the early century was also very pathetic. Since they are regarded as the object of charity and they were also under relegated and excluded from the society and their humanity was unrecognized.

From (Acts 3:1-8) we see the incredible deeds of the Apostles John and Peter towards the Person with Disability, and the social status of the PWD could also be recognized by looking at the condition of the beggars in front of the Beautiful Gate.

This text depicted a story of a lame man from birth and reveals the ethical connotation with a persons living with disability. Here, a lame man is brought to a beautiful gate every day to beg for his livelihood to a people who come to worship at the temple. That is the only condition for him to survive. This portrays the differences between the rich and the poor, and also the socio-economic and politics and also religiously.

When the apostles John and Peter saw him begging for his livelihood, they have no gold or silver and any money to offer him. But they could offered him the most precious things, more valuable than money, gold or silver that is meant for a charity, which was everlasting joy by healing him in Jesus's name. This is the greatest and incredible gift.

After only healing him he was allow to enter into the temple to worship.

But the apostles accepted him with his disability. Here miraculously the apostles follow the footstep of Jesus in healing and making space for the accommodation of the relegated people and the PWD inside the temple. Therefore, the apostles also became the ambassador to lead the PWD into the untrodden path that they have not experience, but they dream of.

### **Paradigm of Church Advocacy of Persons With Disabilities**

No doubt, all the Churches are established to fulfill the mission of Christ and follow his footstep with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was to love his people and care for them; To embrace integrity and unity in diversity.

Hope many Churches have fulfilled the mission of Christ, but some are yet to be fulfilled. However some churches are yet to be awoken of their sleep.

Nevertheless the Church also tried her best to integrate and unite with the Persons with Disabilities and accept them in to community since realizing that they are also the design order of God. As a Church we design different types of programme to include the PWD in to our community. We talk about the integration, unity in diversity, and acceptance of PWD in every spheres of our humanitarian ground. Infrastructures and design of the Church are in tandem to accommodate and be disabled friendly. Meanwhile, we also talk about the inclusive policy which is very much appreciated. But, it is good to revise our inclusive policy. To what extend we are including them in the Church? Is it just only for the membership and worship in the church? Is it still the altar still restricted for them? Is it not our inclusive policy could be extended to the Altar and pulpit, not limit them to the pews. Participation in worship activities for PWD must not be restricted, rather to open a space for them so they may not have guilty feeling and inferiority complex and enjoy their life.

As a Church, claiming to be the true disciple of Christ and to fulfill his mission. Let us examine our self from the manifesto of Jesus Christ (Luke 4: 18-19). Jesus's manifesto was to proclaim the good news to the poor, release the captive, recovery of the sight of the blind, to let the oppress go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

For many Churches, this manifesto may be still a challenging one. But for a true disciple of Christ, it may be good news since the mission has been practiced.

Following the footstep of Christ, it is our responsibility to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. It is our duty to help the poor, and released the captive and oppress go free from their bondages, economically, socially, politically and religiously. Since all human are equal in the eyes of the Lord. And the persons with disabilities must also be accepted as they are, since they are also the designed order of God.

## Conclusion

Acknowledging the words and deeds of Jesus Christ and his disciples, the Church also has a very vital role to play in fulfilling the mission of God.

Though many objections may arise from the society or community, the Church must stand firm for the people who are in need. It is her responsibility to safeguard his member without any discrimination. In other word, persons with disabilities must also be given a special care and protection from the Church. The sensitivity towards PWD of sympathy must change to empathy and charity to opportunity.

Nevertheless, many Churches beautify their campus with materialistic decoration and ignore the most important necessities. But, Jesus Christ did not look our outward appearance rather he look the inner beauty. For me, the Churches are beautiful when the inner heart of the Church is cleansed and fill with the Holy Spirit. This can happen when all discrimination barriers are eradicated from the Church and when everyone can worship and praise God without any discrimination. when all the relegated people likely the poor, oppressed, captive and the persons with disability worship the Lord equally in the holy sanctuary.

Thus as a Church advocating the persons with disability, it is our responsibility to open a space for all the PWD who are in need. If we do so, we are opening the eyes of the blind, help the lame to walk, deaf to hear and mute to speak and curing the lepers etc.

Therefore as a Church let us not be the stumbling block for the people who are in need, particularly to the persons with disability. Rather let us be the ambassador and the pioneer for the Persons With Disability in leading them to the untrodden path that they have never experience in their life for God's glory.

- *(Prepared by Mr. Doulallem Neihzial, B.D., Mizo Synod, PCI, Manipur)*

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## APPENDIX – I

### **BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION OF SENATE OF SERAMPORE COLLEGE, BANGALORE**

#### **WORK PLACE POLICY GUIDELINES**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

BTESSC is an advisory body to the Senate of Serampore College is also a faith based academic organisation is committed to express its concern towards people who are marginalised mentally, physically, economically, politically and culturally, and even to stand and struggle with them to achieve their dignity. We believe in equal opportunities for employment to suitably qualified applicants regardless of differences in age, gender, caste, class, religion, disability, sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS infection.

This policy is formulated to help express our response to people who are affected by various stigma like people who are affected by AIDS/HIV. It is hoped that this may inspire all the member theological colleges and related institutions of BTESSC to commit themselves to address the pandemic and related concerns at different levels. The Gospel imperative of love demands us to reach out to the people who are ostracised. Our role is to protect the mental and physical health of those identifiable groups. As faith based communities, we have to respond to the emerging dangers which are threatening the basic fabric of human existence like HIV/AIDS.

#### **PREAMBLE**

We affirm as a faith based community to be inclusive of all God's creation and acknowledge the dignity of all human beings. So we commit ourselves to recognise that every one share in the divine inheritance, and all of them should be treated equally.

All God's creations are good. God was satisfied after all the creation (Gen 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). But God did not create sin, disease and suffering but the sin of the human beings opens the space for disease and suffering. Jesus Christ said, "I have come that you might have life, and have it in all its fullness" (Jn 10: 9-11). 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son'. So we are also expected to love one another. But unfortunately the present day structure, culture and values create gap between human beings and destroy the very purpose of creation. Sadly, in this age of HIV and AIDS, they are openly pronounced as God's punishment for sin and even many Christians respond to them in the same way. However, the Gospel calls for a compassionate response to those who are suffering.

Today HIV infection is identifiable, preventable and manageable, and that with current medical know-how it cannot be fatal. Any forms of denial, stigma and discrimination related to HIV is a sin and against the will of God. As such BTESSC will not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived HIV status under any circumstances. The Gospel imperative of love demands our reaching out to those who need our love and care. One of the roles of faith based communities is to promote and protect the health of those identifiable groups.

BTESSC is aware that some of the staff in theological colleges are living with HIV and that we have lost some to AIDS-related illnesses, at a time where this is preventable. There are also staff who are living with physical disability and also with different sexual orientation. The best way to normalize the environment is to make the institutions as an inclusive one by adopting a Workplace Policy which addresses concerns relating to HIV/AIDS, disability, different sexual orientation and gender.

### **SCOPE**

To create an environment in the work place to minimise the possibility of HIV infection for staff and their spouses and dependents

To give mental peace to the staff that their HIV status, disability or their sexual orientation will not reduce their dignity and influence their acceptance as staff.

To manage and to mitigate the impact of HIV on the life and work of churches

To mitigate the impact of denial, stigma and discrimination in the work place whether on the basis of real or perceived HIV status, or vulnerability to HIV infection, disability or sexual orientation.

To create a supportive work environment for staff who are affected by any stigma.

To take all safety measures and create space for every one's free movement.

To provide safe environment to women to work with full rights and freedom.

### **ON HIV/AIDS**

BTESSC recognises HIV/AIDS as a critical health issue facing the staff and strives to support initiatives for HIV/AIDS prevention and control.

BTESSC shall protect the human rights and dignity of HIV infected persons.

BTESSC shall implement non-discriminatory policies, procedures and practices in dealing with staff who are infected with HIV/AIDS.

Staff members with HIV infection will be not be treated differently from other staff because of their health and they will be given assurance to work till their retirement.

HIV status will in no way be taken into consideration for employment or placement within the institution or promotion.

HIV screening will not be required either as a condition of employment or for continuation of employment.

The staff will be under no obligation to inform the organisation of all the health information including HIV/AIDS status.



In case if the staff discloses HIV status for some reason, then the management should ensure absolute confidentiality of this information and take all steps to protect that person from stigmatization and discrimination.

Disciplinary action should be taken against the staff if he or she shows any discrimination or harassment, directly or indirectly, towards an HIV/AIDS infected employee.

Disciplinary action also will be taken against the staff who harass and use all forms of verbal or non-verbal behaviour against HIV/AIDS affected persons to dehumanise them.

No Staff will be isolated, or segregated in the institution on the grounds of being infected with HIV. they will be treated in exactly the same manner as in the case of any other disease.

If an HIV/AIDS infected employee shall find difficulty in conducting normal duties, then after seeking qualified medical opinion, alternative terms and conditions of work shall be explored with the employee.

If an employee infected with HIV/AIDS is unfit to carry out the assigned duties and there are no grounds to indicate that improvement is likely in the foreseeable future, then after seeking expert medical opinion, his/her shall be terminated. But he/she would be eligible to get the same benefits as apply to termination due to other serious illnesses.

### **ON GENDER**

Gender equality and Gender justice from the core principle of all programs and activities in BTESSC.

BTESSC shall uphold the dignity of all women, irrespective of age, caste, ethnicity, religion, class, disability, sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS infection.

All interventions initiated by BTESSC organization shall work towards maintaining healthy gender relations.

BTESSC shall create and promote a gender sensitive work environment within the organisation, free from discrimination and against harassment of women, including sexual harassment.

BTESSC shall provide suitable facilities that contribute towards the security and comfort of women at all work sites and work related travel.

### **ON SEXUAL HARRASSMENT**

Sexual harassment includes such unwelcome sexually determined behaviour whether directly or by implication, such as physical contact and advances, a demand or request for sexual favours, sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

Any abuse of authority by a senior person towards junior women colleagues, vis a vis promotion, wage increase, transfer, training opportunities, or the job itself, shall be totally unacceptable.

Any complaint of sexual harassment made by a man/woman staff male/female staff member shall be treated very seriously and the same will be referred to an appropriate Committee for suitable action.

The sexual harassment committee should be an autonomous body independent of the management headed by a woman and represented by a different category of the institution of which 75 percent of them should be women with an outside woman legal expert/advisor.

The procedural action will involve proper investigation by the Committee, providing full scope for a fair hearing to all concerned.

Reasonable time and opportunity will be provided to all concerned to put across their positions in the case of dispute.

Confidentiality will be maintained regarding any complaint and details of its hearings.

Any retaliation against a complainant will be dealt with sternly and proper procedures will be initiated in case of such an inappropriate conduct. Corrective action, including disciplinary action, will be taken immediately.

The Committee will investigate the complaint, and present its findings and recommendations for final decision by the Executive Council.

### **ON PERONS LIVING WITH DISABILITY**

Human beings are created in God's own image. Everyone irrespective of one's identity has the divine sanction to empty life. Hence, a PLWD too is entitled with dignity as others.

Stigma and discrimination of PLWDs occur in a variety of ways vis-à-vis physical, verbal, psychological actions. Such an antagonistic attitude and behaviour has the grave potential to drive the PLWD into a severe psychopathological condition and a self detrimental condition.

Proper admission and suitable employment opportunities should be put in place both in places of learning and working. Primarily, accessibility and accommodation of PLWDs into the academic and professional spheres are very vital. PLWD-friendly infrastructure and learning processes are therefore robustly encouraged.

The argument for a PLWD-friendly accessibility and accommodation is also extended to all areas of a PLWD's life not just to academics and profession. The stand is for inclusion and embrace of these persons. Equality of opportunities are to be facilitated to them in all the realms of the society to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Human beings have the intrinsic characteristic of choosing and striving for one's own "comfort zone". It demands much audacity and sacrifice for a non-PLWD to make reasonable

adjustments to encourage and sustain an inclusive community of “haves” and “have-nots”. The fulcrum of building such a community is PLWD-friendly infrastructure.

Health and Safety Responsibilities are to be created by the non-PLWD population who are intelligent, skilled and empathetic. Suitable medical care must be made available by the institution by specialized and super specialised medical personnel to PLWDs at highly subsidised and affordable rates, and medical insurance companies must be contracted to cover the whole medical expenditure (both treatment and drugs) incurred by the PLWD in question.

Education and conscientization of non-PLWD world is therefore crucial if myths, superstitions, ignorance and apathy are to be eradicated. Secondly, such enlightened populace can mushroom into advocacy and educative groups to stand in solidarity with the PLWD. Thirdly, it must be ensured that homogenous groups of PLWDs are created so that they act as “support groups”.

To help support the PLWD reference should be given in appointment and admission, and even special reservation quota should be provided.

Work load, nature of work and working time should be decided on the basis of their disability

Work atmosphere should respect their characteristic feature and they, and in no way should feel inferior.

They should be treated equal to others and their dignity should not be in any way undermined because of their disability.

Elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other adverse conduct against them should be prohibited.

Equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not should be advanced.

Good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not need to be fostered.

Safety measures should be taken to protect their health.

Disciplinary action should be taken against the staff if anyone shows any discrimination or harassment, directly or indirectly towards people with disability.

### **ON SEXUAL MINORITIES**

At the workplace, sexual minorities should be able to experience dignity and equality. An atmosphere should be provided to respect Sexual Minorities as human beings and everyone should relate and treat them with dignity, with the assurance that they should not be discriminated because of their differences.

Institutions should adopt a zero tolerance policy on the discrimination of sexual minorities.

Gender Justice can be practiced only in a context where there is mutual respect and participation. Gender justice at workplace should not be considered as a benevolence on the

part of the dominant. It should become a worldview, and the entire organization should practice it.

Freedom of expression is one of the fundamental human rights, and sexual minorities at the workplace should have the freedom to express their convictions without fear and intimidation and the Institution should be in position to hear them freely and officially.

In brief, as sexual violence and sexual abuses are very common in the workplace especially in terms of Sexual Minorities, there should be a zero tolerance policy on the same. There should be a space for open and informal discussions on sexuality to help the organization to develop a new culture of healthy man-woman relationship.

Affirmative action should be put in place, to pro-actively provide more opportunities to sexual minorities in terms of admissions and appointments with equal salary as per their qualification and portfolio or designation.

People from all sexual orientation and gender will be given equal opportunity to get into positions. Institutions should create space to declare their sex preferences openly and allow them to live as they are. A provision should be created to this effect in the administrative system.

### **CONCLUSION**

Institutions should make space for the mainstreaming of this Workplace Policy in all their manuals and rules governing the service of employees.

This policy will be subject to periodic revision and shall be committed to as such by all employees as and when it is approved by the Board. In matters of differences in opinion and perception, the decision of the Board shall be final and abiding on all employees.

Every employee at the time of approval of this policy and its subsequent revision is required to sign a declaration owing allegiance to the same.

### **DECLARATION**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Employee No. \_\_\_\_\_) do affirm the contents of the draft of the Work place policy immediately preceding this declaration, and shall wholeheartedly strive to abide by the ideals enshrined therein and commit to promote the same so that persons living with HIV/AIDS, Women, People with disability and Sexual minorities are accepted and treated as equals, not only in our work place but in every sphere and space of my living and activity

Signature (with date):

Name:

Designation:

APPENDIX - II

# **Towards Inclusive Church... Disability Inclusion Policy Guidelines - 2019**

For the Churches and related Organisations

*(Received and Adopted by the Honourable  
Executive Committee of the  
National Council of Churches in India on  
the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019)*

*Facilitation:*



**National Council of Churches in India**

***I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full'***  
**(John 10:10)**

***'In Christ, there is no difference between Jew and Greek.  
There is no difference between male and female. You are  
all the same in Christ Jesus.'*** (Gal 3:28)



## Preface

The National Council of Churches in India - Indian Disability Ecumenical Accompaniment (NCCI-IDEA) is an Ecumenical Initiative of the NCCI, accompanied by Unity and Mission. NCCI-IDEA theologically motivates ministerial interventions of its constituencies by encouraging and facilitating the Indian Churches to be inclusive and disabled friendly. Considering the significance of inclusivity, the XXVIII Quadrennial Assembly of NCCI has chosen a theme for this quadrennial as *'Towards Just and Inclusive Communities'*. Hence, the Members of NCCI would be encouraged to ensure that their ministerial interventions result in inclusivity.

Since 2009 NCCI - IDEA along with its constituent members, other ecumenical organizations, local congregations and institutions involve in: bringing the theologically trained and ordained ministers with disabilities together, networking of the church related care giving organisations, articulating disability theologies by and with the PWDs and motivating the churches to practice physical accessibility and transparent inclusion. Several member churches and care-giving organisations were benefited out of the missional and ministerial interventions of the NCCI -IDEA.

NCCI-IDEA has been a facilitator of the conversations with communities both within the Church and Society at large, for advocacy of disability rights. From its inception, the NCCI - IDEA has focused on 'An Inclusive Church', through its sermons, urging the Church, to move from being charitable, to becoming an accompanier, seeking justice 'for', 'by' and 'with' persons with disabilities.

The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, enacted by the Government of India in 2016 has become a motivating element in suggesting a policy guidelines on disability for the Indian church and society at large.

The NCCI - IDEA recommends that all Churches, Congregations and Institutions adhere to the Right of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, by customising, adapting or adopting the suggested policies, in order to practice inclusion through our missional, ministerial and diaconal interventions.

**The Policy Guidelines:** are principles adopted based on the Right of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. These policy guidelines tell us what is demanded and expected by the law enacted in 2016 with administrative, theological and ministerial motivations.

**Procedures:** These are detailed directions / suggestions developed by the NCCI - IDEA to put the policy guidelines into practice. All members and like minded organisations and institutions are encouraged either to adapt or adopt the suggestions.

### **Purpose of the Policy Guidelines:**

1. To uphold the mission, vision and goals of the XXVIII Quadrennial Theme: *"Towards Just and Inclusive Communities" of NCCI*
2. To provide the constituent members of the NCCI an opportunity to practice inclusion theologically, ministerial and diaconally on the basis of the legal requirements.
3. To ensure the access and inclusion in our worshipping and working premises.
4. To avoid or minimize situations which exclude PWD's.
5. To be accountable to the law of the land, and to the demand of the Gospel of Christ.
6. To allow the members to operate efficiently in practicing inclusion.
7. To provide the basis for a legal record.

### **Points to be Considered / Remembered:**

**Legal References:** Legal references indicate the section of the law, the amendments, etc., which are pertinent to the policy. Other laws and/or court decisions may also be applicable to a particular policy. It also explains terms and abbreviations used in the legal references.

**Theological References:** Certain policies / related laws are found as a Gospel Demand. Hence there are attempts made to theologise those laws and policies in order to spiritually motivate the Churches and Church related organisations to abide by them.

**Order of Precedence:** These policies and guidelines must be read and interpreted in the light of applicable laws, court rulings, and state regulations. Wherever inconsistencies of interpretation arise, the applicable laws, court rulings, and state regulations prevail.

### **How to Make Suggestions for Improving this Policy Manual**

The NCCI - IDEA's Policy development is a continuing process. Suggestions may be made by writing to the Staff in charge or the General Secretary of the NCCI for revisions and appropriation.

## *Disability Inclusion Policy Guidelines*

*As children of God,  
we have a new dignity and  
God calls us to fullness of life.*

### **Faith Stance:**

All of us are created in the image of God, and all are equally important and significant in the sight of God. In God, there is no distinction between female and male, Greek and Jew, bond and free – disabled and able.

We all, have privileges and responsibilities in the practice and outworking of our faith irrespective of our status. Just as there is a 'preferential option to the poor' so there is a Biblical imperative of corporate responsibility to those in the edges of societies and within the structures of our churches at large.

These policy Guidelines enshrines the biblical principle that all people can access services offered by the constituent member churches and institutions of the NCCI.

### **Preamble:**

- The Right of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 was enacted by the Government of India in 2016.
- This new law ensures protection PWDs in India from various forms of discrimination, guarantees equal access and enhances their social participation.
- We, as the Church are also required as per the law to respond to the subject of disability and this has a bearing on NCCI and its Constituent Members our Council both as a service provider and also as an employer.
- Rights of the Persons with Disability Act (2016) states that all institutions must take reasonable measures to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures enable PWD'S (lay and ordained) to have access to and fully participate in all aspects of life and work of the Church.
- This requires changes within institutions and organisations infrastructure at all levels namely constructing PWD accessible buildings, provision of loop systems for hearing aid users, and sign language for hearing impaired people etc.
- It will influence the congregations to fulfil their commitment to implement the guidelines and carry out audit at regular intervals to ensure its practice.
- What we do as a Christian community for PWD's are not voluntary concessions but, a mandate required as per the law.
- There are necessary obligations laid on us in terms of the theological and legal imperatives of the Act.
- The Law necessitates both service providers and employers to make necessary provisions so that PWD's can exercise their right to equal opportunity in employment.

## **Features of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016:**

In fact, the Disabilities Act of 2016 is in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and replaces the previous Act of 1995.

The Disabilities Act, 2016 broadens the definition of PWD's. This definition is inclusive and categorizes 21 types of disabilities as 'specific disabilities'.

This Act applies to both Government establishments, and Private establishments. Under the law, private establishments refer to a company, firm, cooperative or other society, associations, trust, agency, institution, organization, union, factory, or such other establishment specified by the government. Hence, the implications fits well with faith based organisations like churches, ecumenical organisations and their institutions too.

The Act requires all establishments including Church and Church Related Organisations to frame and publish an Equal Opportunities Policy.

All forms of discriminations and omitting, against the PWD is prohibited by the law.

Hence, we as the Church and related organisations ought to abide by the law, in ensuring inclusion, equal space and access to the PWDs in our premises, and in the 'life and work (mission)' of the Church.

### **Rights:**

The very purpose of making laws is not to punish the citizens but rather to facilitate them to adhere to the common code of ethics that defends, protects and promotes the life and Rights of all the vulnerable communities.

The spirit of the constitution is to uphold social justice and the Rights 'OF' all - Rights 'FOR' all aspect enshrined in it.

Accordingly, this implies faith pilgrims have a 'Right to Worship', 'Right to Participate' in the mission and ministries of the Church, and Right to Access the Worship places, Holy Shrines, their Scriptures, Sermons, Chanting, Prayers and above all 'Right to be ministered and Right to minister unto'

Church as a community that believes and affirms the Rights of Equality and Social Justice of each and every smallest atom in the community needs to relook at its commitment to the communities at large and particularly PWD's, that are socially, religiously, historically and culturally neglected, stigmatised, discriminated and live in the fringes of the societies.

This is not only to abide by the law of our land but it's a theological and ministerial call to affirm and practice 'God's Preferential Option'.

Therefore, NCCI - IDEA's policy guidelines encourages all its members to consider positively and re-commit ourselves and our ministries to edify and enable the theologically and ministerially neglected communities like PWDs.

**Moot Points:****a. Disability as Diversity:  
Disability is a Design of God (Exodus 3)**

Often, disability is seen as a wrath or punishment of God. Moses' experience in Exodus chapter 3 is an evidence that, God created the persons with disabilities and disability is a design and part of God's creation. If disability is a wrath of God, Moses would not have had such ministerial call to be partner in establishing the reign of God against the oppressive Pharaoh and favouring the oppressed.

The God-Moses conversations are clear in exemplifying the recognition to the PWDs by God the creator. The similar conversations have happened between God and Jeremiah too. It is evident that God of the Bible is the Creator of the People with Disability and became disabled through Son Jesus Christ on the Cross. *Therefore, the resurrected Christ is a Disabled Christ. And so Disability is a Design of God.*

**The Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12)**

*Are People with Disabilities part of Body of Christ?*

The traditional ministerial and diaconal interventions which minister to PWDs consider them as the body of Christ rather than, the (members) parts of the body with their own spiritual gifts to offer.

To accept and recognise the PWD's as fully part of the body requires a paradigm shift in our perceptions of what disability is. In deed we have developed opinions on people with differences or different from us on the basis of our pre-conceived notions.

We have been traditionally oriented with two models to handle the issue of disability:

The first one is 'Medical Model'. This model looks at people with disabilities as the problem of (with) an individual, a deviation from what is normal. This model believes that, if an individual cannot access something they shouldn't expect the same life as 'normal' people. This model makes access into a luxury to be implemented if we have enough time and money, and potential. And portrays PWD's into helpless objects who should be grateful for whatever they get. The medical model makes the society to look on PWD's as a burden or less-citizens.

The other model is known as 'Community Model' which looks at disability as an impairment. That means, the (one or many) part of the individual does not work normally and properly and those have become the restricting components for the people with disabilities for public access. However, in this model, access is about the whole community taking responsibility for making sure all are included as a matter of justice.

Church as a community believes and affirms the gospel values of social-justice and liberation should see the profound liberative aspect of this social model from the St. Paul's water mark visualization of the Body of Christ in this community model. This is a vision of the Church that affirms and recognises that all members will have an equal access and space to play their roles together with all other members as a full member of the Church. This is an inspiration that, the Church gains from Verse 22, 'the members of the body that seems to be weaker are indispensable are to be treated with honour and respect. If it does not happen, the whole body will suffer.

**b. Ministry as Accompaniment:**  
**The Biblical - Theological Imperative:**

*"Towards Just and Inclusive Communities"* is a biblical, theological and ministerial call. Realising this importance and need the NCCI XVIII Quadrennial Assembly met in Jabalpur, India on 27 - 30, April 2016 mandated all its members to work towards the theme 'Towards Just and Inclusive Communities. All programmes, ministerial and diaconal involvements are expected to aim at the theme during this quadrennial to assure and ensure that no one is left behind in our faith and societal journey. This document is one of the tools in encouraging and motivating the members and all other individuals and communities who believe, affirm and promote inclusion through their lives and works. Establishing the reign of God is nothing but building inclusive communities 'OF' all, 'BY' all, 'FOR' all and 'WITH' all. Therefore, let our ministries consciously and responsibly involve in inculcating the Gospel values of Justice, Peace, Love towards inclusion and establishment of the 'kin'dom of God.

**c. Inclusion as Attitude:**  
**Written in the Law**

The Right of the Persons with the Disabilities Act 2016 has made it illegal and offensive to discriminate, omit, avoid and neglect against anyone on the grounds of disability within India. "Failure, reject or refusal to provide an access or services that are to be offered to other people to a disabled person is discrimination is offensive."

Places of worship such as Churches and Church related service providing institutions are implied as examples of the everyday services to which people with disabilities should be able to avail access.

According to the law, the 'Reasonable accommodation' means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the access, enjoyment or exercise of rights equally with others.

According to the laws we could make 'reasonable accommodation' so that members of the congregation and visitors who have disabilities can access our churches just like any other so called "able bodied" members of the congregation.



Obviously the law should be obeyed, but as Christians and Churches do we only do what the law requires? Jesus posed his challenge to the lawyer in the Gospel of Luke (10:26) before telling the parable of the Good Samaritan, in which he suggests that our call to love our neighbour goes far beyond what the law requires. What this means for us is that as Christians, the Right of the Persons With Disabilities Act 2016, becomes a tool to enable us to further fulfil our call to love and serve our neglected neighbour. It is not just our buildings but also our attitudes.

We as Church can break down barriers that make it difficult for people with disabilities to access all that Christ offers through the church. Examining and re-looking at our attitude to our neighbour, who has a disability, costs nothing and can make all the difference between PWD's feeling rejected, not just by the church but by the God the church represents; and PWD's feeling welcomed and loved and valued as God of the Bible values them.

**d. Integration as Praxis:**

**One in Christ:** (Galatians 3:26-28)

Well, if we look for more theological and biblical reasons, and justification for adopting and accepting the 'Community Model', it can be also be seen again in Paul's letter to the Galatians. In Galatians 3:26-28, Paul triumphantly asserts that all who have been baptized are clothed with Christ and that is the only criteria that matters before God. There are no distinctions based on race or gender or indeed denomination, social background, disability or age.

This passage also rings a bell for us to be 'very' careful and cautious in the words we use towards and about other people. We know, 'Jew' or 'Greek' could be used to insult and divide as well as describe others. In the same way labelling someone as deaf and treating them as stupid or assuming someone with mental health problems as violent is insulting PWD's. Often we mean well, but still ask the carer not the person with disability, if they want sugar, or make assumptions about what someone can or can't do.

In the sight of God, we all are people first and disability should come second. So our terminology needs to reflect the fact of God's intentions. We are people with disabilities not the disabled, we are wheelchair users not wheelchair bound, we are deaf without speech not deaf and dumb, and we have learning difficulties not mental handicaps. Each of us will have our preferred way of describing ourselves.

**All are one in Christ; let our ways of thinking and speaking reflect that fact.**

*Reign of God:* Revelation 7:9-12, Luke 14:12-24

The purpose of Jesus' presence in this world was to proclaim the 'Reign of God' Mark 1: 15. The above passages will help us clearly understand what the Reign of God means for the Churches at large and the People with Disabilities.

Revelation 7:9 talks about the culmination of the histories of all nations, kinds, tribes, people, language are equal before the throne and in front of the Lamb, worshiping together.

The parable of great feast has been documented vividly in Luke 14:12-24. This parable explicitly expounds the nature of reign of God, where Jesus mentions people with disabilities in particular where they are specifically being invited to the table.

We, as church (communities), have a distinctive and unique opportunity to exhibit an 'inclusive' character of the reign of God as our faith expressions. This model of inclusiveness shall be proactively expressed through our missional, ministerial and diaconal interventions in the everyday life of our being and existence by inviting and welcoming all people irrespective of who they are.

The bottom line for the Biblical Imperative is that we all are 'One in Christ'.

These guidelines encourage the Churches at large to take a biblical, theological, ministerial and administrative application and try to become more accessible and more inclusive of people with disabilities for a variety of reasons. Indeed, at every move or stage we shall consider the skills and experiences of the people with disabilities and who work and care for the People living with disabilities to advise and meet the specific contexts and situations.

Whatever our reasons, this document attempts to outline the process for us to follow by suggesting a few practical actions that we may consider to express our desire to be accessible and inclusive whilst, our duty to care in putting into practice the recommendations of the Right of the Persons with the Disabilities Act 2016.

According to the Right of the Persons with Disability Act 2016, there are several components to be considered, committed, abided and followed. This document tries to include all of them or most of the appropriate section by facilitating the Churches and Church Related Organisations to be accessible and inclusive under three headings such as Attitude, Access and Inclusion.

**Attitude** is a feeling, opinion and how we think about the People with Disabilities, the expressions and language we use to talk to them about them and how we relate to them directly.

**Access** is a component or components to ensure a one or many to immediately think of receiving and welcoming by making reasonable adoptions or needed changes to the Church and Institutions buildings so that, regardless of all people with disabilities can enter, see, hear and participate in the very life and work of the Church. Some of these adoptions do not need more money or time however that attitude matters.

**Inclusion** means, the action(s) and enshrining the rights of persons with disabilities into the policies and laws of the Land. It is also a state of including or of being included within a group or structure without any restrictions and reservations. These actions basically promote the Church 'OF' - Church 'FOR' all. In fact, Churches have to practice transparent inclusion by moving from the idea of mere accommodation to affirmation theologically and ministerially.

This document aims that the churches would adapt very practical measures in terms of meeting every possible needs of the People with the Disabilities who might come to our premises. Churches should also be aware that, it could spot the needs as they arise and have ideas how to minister them. A PWD Conscious church will take necessary attempts to know where its shortcomings lie and how to rectify or address them for better improvement. Such process will make the presence and existence of the churches become a place of access and welcome as God's people.

### **Access:**

- The Church and Institutions shall ensure 'physical accessibility' to all who need by their structure, appearance and nature.
- Even the outward structural changes will be symbolic of the accessibility.
- The initiation of 'accessibility audit' is the ever first effort for this process.
- It is important that, the whole church or congregation or institution is made aware before one initiates and solicits their support and accompaniment in responsible implementation.
- This audit also could be at any time including a request or suggestion from the people with disabilities or any one. This also will cover the Rights and Entitlement mentioned in the Chapter 2 of the RTPWD Act - 2016 and its sections of the Rights to the Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.
- The Church / institution shall have a disability advisor or consultant, who could offer advice, if necessary visit the premises and buildings and suggest a reasonable adoption of change and improvements in the structure that could facilitate a fuller participation of the people with disabilities in the life and work of the Church.
- The Churches and the members of the congregations should be encouraged along with providing access be reasonable adoptions and to advertise and share the information with sign boards or painting and also by using other social, main media and other means of communication like house visits to the PWDs to get attention.
- Sign boards must be kept at appropriate places to ensure PWD's have complete access and are welcome to the church or institution. E.g. availability of ramp, sign interpretation or larger font worship materials or Worship materials in Braille.

### **Attitude:**

There is no financial implication for the attitudinal change. It is hard to explain but easy to understand. The congregation / institution collectively express their love, respect and acceptance for the persons with disabilities through their good and positive attitudes such as ensuring their physical entries and presence through our words and practices.

- In fact the good attitude will see person as one, created by God in God's image first not their disabilities.
- Good attitude will also facilitate the congregations to minister to the People with Disabilities by consulting them where ever is required over their needs, requirements and expectations and how they could be met both ministerially and structurally. It shall also facilitate a conversation to positively and whole heartedly engage in ministering to the PWDs. Like inviting volunteers, ushers, helpers and carers to be available at the gate to ensure the dignified and respectful entries of the PWDs onto our premises.

- The good attitude will also engage to identify and recognise the gifts of people with disabilities and facilitate their fuller participation, involvement and leadership to the very 'life', 'work', 'mission' and 'ministries' of the congregations.
- The congregations with the good attitude consult the people with disabilities before adapting the physical and structural changes, for example, the ramps and toilets will get proper scientific dimensions for accessibility to the people who use wheel chairs rather adapt them unscientifically for symbolical reasons or to fulfil the legal requirements to public access.
- Good attitude also means our sensitiveness about the language used in referring and describing PWDs with their disabilities like, disabled, handicapped, deaf, dumb, spastic, mentally abnormal and to avoid such descriptions that would hurt and eliminate the PWDs from their public access.
- The good attitude also ensures the respect, dignity and human rights of each and every member of the congregations and each is considered as an essential part of what it means to be Christian community / congregation.
- Good attitude will also involve the ability to proactively involve in attending to the needs of the people with disabilities without any instruction and formal requests and to strive immediately or sooner to attend them.
- Adopting and practicing a disability-equality and inclusion policy and making sure that it is implemented and practiced by the members whole heartedly.

### **Inclusion:**

One might ask that, is inclusion not an attitude? Of course it is but, it is to be expressed more outwardly to ensure and assure the fuller participation of the people with disabilities in the life and work of the congregations with all others. This will not involve in separate and special attention to the People with Disabilities rather it will facilitate the congregations to minister 'TO', 'WITH' and 'BY' the people with disabilities. It shall facilitate the congregation to adopt an integrated ministerial approach rather than considering it as a separate ministry.

- Inclusion is not the one that the abled 'offer' or 'give' to the People with disabilities as an act of philanthropy or charity rather as our duty and right.
- Inclusion is an 'attitude' not a 'symbolic expression' that happens outside the structures / building instead inside the buildings and hearts.
- Inclusion needs to be transparent not a token.
- Inclusion shall ensure the comfort, dignity and respect of every individual.
- Inclusion is an acceptance of everyone as they are.
- Inclusion will facilitate us to de-construct the pre-conceived notions about disabilities and help the congregations to be a part to establish the reign of God that is Just and Inclusive.
- Inclusion will facilitate all members who read and reflect the Word on issues of disabilities and differences through reading the Bible together with people with disabilities and listening to their interpretations of the passages. This will facilitate the congregations to read the bible from the eyes and the experiences of people with disabilities and practice inclusion as their faith expression.
- Inclusion will also involve in developing or translating, to making available large font worship materials for the use of people with disabilities and consciously organising sign interpretation of every act of worship as mandatory.

**Special Focus:****1. Ministering the PWDs:**

The popular pastoral ministry shall include the following in their ministry to the PWDs with the special focus:

- There shall be data base on PWDs and their families and care-giving congregations in their neighbourhood for each congregations.
- There shall be a conversation on disability among the congregation along with the PWD members.
- The pastoral ministry shall facilitate the congregation to adopt the ministry of accompaniment along with their charity approach.

**2. Doing Disability Theology:**

- Most of the Disability theologies today have been articulated by the so-called 'able' scholars and theologians.
- The people with disabilities or their siblings, or care givers shall involve in articulating authentic disability theologies.
- The faith stories of PWDs are to be documented.
- The PWDs shall be encouraged to become theological students and ordained ministries of the Church.

**3. Care-givers:**

- The role of care-giving organisations and institutions are very important in terms of ministerially and diaconally engaging the PWDs, therefore:
- Introducing and facilitating them to adapt the modern technologies and methods in serving the PWDs.
- Along with the PWDs their siblings also must be ministered through the diaconal interventions.
- The Care-givers shall be encouraged to work among the congregations and societies, not to look and consider the PWDs as objects of charity.
- The care givers shall work towards community based diaconal interventions rather isolating and displacing the PWDs from the families and societies to the hostel or residence based diaconal interventions.

**Possible Application Strategies:**

- Each Church or Organisation shall have their own policies to support the practice of the change in lives by adopting changed inclusive attitudes and becoming catalysts and promote inclusion.
- Encourage the well informed advocacy of inclusion by suggesting and practicing inclusive language in common conversations, public address and written communications.
- Initiate awareness activities to the leaders and members of the churches and organisations as service provider and employer to create physical accessibility for all and practice inclusion with all. By the awareness initiatives we respond to the theological, ministerial and legal imperatives related to the issue.

- Facilitate the members of the Churches and Institution to visit the accessible and inclusive premises and churches / organisations to get motivated and to practice and become accessible and inclusive.
- As a legal requirement and a good practice the churches and institutions are encouraged to appoint both paid persons and volunteers and appoint representations in the committees to work and contribute towards the life and work of the church / organisations.
- Organise '*suyamwarams*' (bride-match) and run marriage bureau for the PWD members as a ministry, in particular for the women with disabilities
- Proactively participate in the struggles of the PWDs to establish justice, especially in the areas of sexual abuse of PWDs, denial of education and employment opportunities based on their disabilities.
- Constitutionally reserve spaces for the PWDs to be part of the theological educations / trainings, ordain ministries of the Churches and to participate in the decision making bodies and governance by making necessary amendments in the constitutions.

### **Possible Implementation Strategy:**

The Churches / Organisations shall ensure the accessibility, changes in their building structures, attitudes and inclusion by developing and following good practices in the areas covered in this policy guidelines.

Suggested Good practice:

- Coming to the table of God for the communion at the altar is the heart of Christian worship. Therefore develop a fully 'accessible altar' by which the people with disabilities shall have an access to the altar rather than pastors serve the sacraments at the pews where the people with disabilities seated.
- Assure the physical and spiritual space for singing in the choir, serving, chalice assistants, reading lessons, leading intercessions, are all part of worship and where appropriate should be accessible to all.
- Identify and engage sign interpreter(s) to interpret the entire worship to benefit the required people.
- Make available the worship orders, song books, pew slips, news bulletin and other worship related resources in Braille and in large (font) prints.
- Ensure the inclusive language in your premises and even inform your guest speakers, ministers and visitors that your congregation is an 'inclusive congregation'.
- Ensure a space and attitude to include the people with disabilities as equals and to enable their fuller participation where possible in both ministering the Word, reading the scriptures and leading the worships as and when possible or regularly as we engage others.
- Ensuring the independent accessibility even with their wheel chairs, canes or other mobility aids to the entire premises with needed sign boards and directions.
- Where possible, the obstructive structures and steps be removed inside the church and in church premises too.

- Where possible, there should be accessible seating arrangements with needed heights, arms and size.
- All meetings, gathering and fellowships including the committee meetings should be held in fully accessible locations and buildings. And the materials use for those meetings be made available on large prints and Braille.
- The Synods, Assemblies, Councils and Dioceses, shall have their own Construction of Building Policies and a guide to 'Access Appraisal of Church Buildings as on the Government and legal guide lines.
- The help shall be sought from our own congregation members who are experts like architects, civil engineers and who too serve in the governments.

Other possible interventions of the Church as institution:

- Follow the best practice for equal opportunities in employment not only as a statutory obligation (4%) but as our faith expression including the PWDs in ordained ministries.
- A clear equal opportunities policy with access be incorporated, which ensures the work / employment requirements apply to all posts - clerics, lay, paid, casual, contract, voluntary and others.
- A social protection policy guidelines of the government be adopted and practiced.
- Job advertisements should clearly indicate the “all eligible” including people with disabilities shall apply.
- Our buildings , communications including website shall comply with 'best practice' standards for access of information.

Language:

It is mandatory to use the language that does not reinforce negative images, incorrect assumptions and stereotypes associated with the (people with) disabilities. These are few of the common usage while we address or converse. So, all are encouraged to shift to use of inclusive language in all our conversation not only during the worship, public meetings and writings.

Do Say

- Person with a disability/ who is disabled, person with reduced mobility
- Little person, little people
- Non-disabled, able-bodied
- Uses wheelchair, uses assistive device
- Birth injury, congenital disability
- Person with a physical disability
- Person who is deaf/hard of hearing
- Has a speech disability
- Person who is blind/has low vision
- Person with an intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disability
- Person living with epilepsy/seizure disability
- Person with a psychiatric disability

**Don't Say**

- The disabled, handicapped, invalid, physically challenged
- Midget, dwarf
- Normal, healthy
- Wheelchair bound, confined to wheelchair
- Birth defect, deformity, deformed
- Crippled, lame, deformed, invalid, gimp
- The deaf, hearing impaired, deaf mute
- Has a speech defect, dumb
- The blind, blind people, visually impaired
- Stupid, retard, retarded, slow, subnormal, mentally challenged
- Epileptic, has fits, spastic
- Crazy, nuts, loony

**Suggestions:**

Use "People First" terminology such as person who is blind or people with disabilities since this acknowledges them as people first rather than their disability. Avoid referring to groups of people by their condition or disability such as the blind or the deaf, or the "ADA person." Avoid sensational descriptive words when referring to a person's disability such as suffers from, is a victim of, or is afflicted with. Use disabled, disability or accessible rather than handicapped. Avoid condescending euphemisms such as differently abled, physically challenged, mentally different or handicapable."

**Accessibility Symbols:**

These symbols should be used to indicate the accessible and inclusive nature of our premises and communities:



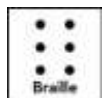
Indicates accessible facilities, paths, toilets and parking areas for people with limited mobility.



Indicates enhanced hearing devices or technology are provided.



Indicates sign language is provided.



Indicates print materials available in Braille upon request.



Signifies print in 18 point or larger



## Prayer for Inclusive Church

*God our Creator, Creator of the people with disabilities we ask your blessing on our churches.*

*May the doorways be wide enough to welcome all who need.*

*Your love and ours narrow enough to shut out evil and strife.*

*May the thresholds be smooth enough to present no stumbling blocks to children, nor barriers to those who are elderly and disabled. May the doors be strong to turn back the tempter's power but open and inviting to those who are your guests.*

*May they be doorways to your eternal kingdom.*

*We ask this through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.*

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Rev. Dr. Roger Gaikwad - NCCI  
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### **Appendix:**

- Being and Becoming  
<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2016/the-gift-of-being>
- Church 'of' All - Church 'for' All  
<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/faith-and-order/ix-other-study-processes/a-church-of-all-and-for-all-an-interim-statement>
- Asia Mission Conference - Disability Pre-assembly Communiqué  
[www.cca.org.hk/amc](http://www.cca.org.hk/amc)
- Government of India's Right of the Persons with Disabilities Act – 2016  
<http://legislative.gov.in/actsofparliamentfromtheyear/rights-persons-disabilities-act-2016>

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**DISABILITY ETIQUETTE: PROPER TERMS**

#	DO USE	DON'T USE
1	Person with disability	Disabled, Handicapped, Invalid, Deformed, Crippled, Defective, Victim
2	Wheelchair user	Wheelchair bound, confined to wheelchair
3	Congenital disability	Birth defect
4	He has Cerebral Palsy	He is a victim of Cerebral Palsy
5	Acid attack victim	Acid attack survivor
6	Person with Down Syndrome	Down's person / Mongoloid
7	Person speech disability	Dumb, tongue-tied
8	Deaf and dumb	Deaf and mute
9	Person with a mental illness, person with an emotional disorder	Mentally ill, mentally unstable, crazy, psycho, mental case, retarded
10	Has a brain injury	Brain damaged
11	Amputee	Gimp, lame, limp
12	Has chemical / environmental sensitivities	Chemophobic
13	Accessible parking	Disabled parking
14	Accessible restroom	Handicapped restroom
15	Person who is blind, visually impaired	Visually handicapped
16	Burn survivor	Burn victim
17	Polio survivor	Polio victim
18	Child with learning disability	Slow learner
19	Person with developmental disability	Slow
20	Person with intellectual disability	Retarded
21	Person with autism	Autistic, Savant
22	Person with spinal cord injury	Cripple
23	Person of short stature	Dwarf, midget
24	Disability	Handicap
25	Epilepsy	Fits, seizures