

Inclusive Wash for Elderly with Disabilities

¹Priya S. Dev, ²Dr.J.O.Jeryda Gnanajane Eljo

¹ ICSSR Full-time Doctoral Fellow, Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Kalamalai Campus, Tiruchirappalli, priyapoojadev93@gmail.com

² Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, Bharathidasan University, Kalamalai Campus, Tiruchirappalli, jerydaanand@bdu.ac.in

Received: 10-March-2023

Revised: 19-April-2023

Accepted: 11-May-2023

Abstract

In all the countries that consider the health of their people, WASH is the primary requirement. One of the primary rights of each citizen is to acquire safe water, sanitation and hygiene measures. For the healthy life style WASH is one of the most crucial factors. Where there is poor and unhygienic access to WASH leads to the spread of various diseases.

The relevance of Inclusive approaches to WASH is helpful to promote awareness creation and appropriate involvement by all elderly with disabilities. Through this ideology inclusion is targeting on the people to participate in all the activities and services effectively. Inclusion is not just about improving access to programs or services; it is also supporting the elderly with disabilities to actively participate in all the processes and programs to ensure whether they have access to all their rights and requirements. So that, inclusion is rudimentary to efficacious WASH services, ensure WASH is reachable to the Elderly with disabilities and also it ensure a user-friendly environment.

A literature review was conducted, to understand the care and support needs of elderly with disabilities; the search of the study was conducted using four electronic data bases, reference list checks and grey literature. In this study, the researcher reviewed thirty studies and 24 from academic literature and 6 from grey literature. This paper focused specifically on Elderly with disabilities. This is due to elderly with disabilities are considered as marginalized group and they are always prone to risk. Elderly with disabilities frequently experience similar problematic situations to approach water, sanitation and hygiene in their day-to-day life. Majority of the reviews highlighted that Elderly with disabilities are always weak due to the problems associated with mobility and they always need dependency in accessing the needs of water, sanitation and hygiene and for the toilet facilities elderly with disability need assistance and shows dependence. This is due to they are having chronic illness or terminal disabilities.

Findings of the study highlighted that; inclusive WASH aims to meet everyone's needs especially elderly with disability. It does so by ensuring elderly with disabilities also to attain the services of WASH and they need to get involvement in participating the decision-making process and also in the planning process that helps to reach the services and facilities of WASH.

Keywords: WASH, Elderly, Disabilities, and Inclusion.

Introduction

Safe water, sanitation and hygiene together known as WASH. For the health and wellbeing of people WASH is a crucial factor. Globally, in the current scenario there are millions of people were exposed to large number of preventable diseases due to the lack of proper WASH services. Absence of safe and adequate WASH will negatively affect the quality of life of the people. That also weaken health systems and it leads to a massive difficulty on economic system.

The process of WASH occurs only when the elderly people with disabilities get benefits and get equal opportunities for participating programmes related to WASH. They have to be aware of the proper sanitation practices. It is also the same for the weaker sections of the society (CBM & BMZ; A Human Rights Based Approach to Disability in Development, 2012).

Inclusion of elderly with disability in WASH means, they can able to participate in all services of WASH fully (Ahmed S et al., 2011). The term inclusion is not always based on getting and accessible to services of WASH it also helps the elderly with disabilities in a wider perspective. That means, inclusion ensure that, did the rights and needs of the elderly people with disabilities relating to WASH are recognized and also, did they are aware about the conditions applied to access the needs of WASH. In case of WASH, inclusion is very fundamental to get WASH services; it also helpful for ensuring the WASH services is reachable to all the elderly with disabilities and whether it is user friendly for the elderly with disabilities. Here the inclusion process is also applicable to not only for the elderly with disabilities but also for their family members and the community they are residing (The National Strategic Plan for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene 2014-2015).

Inclusive WASH focus on meeting the requirements of all the people. That helps to the elderly people with disabilities to engage in the planning process of WASH and also the decision-making process of WASH. This leads to increase awareness about the services and facilities of WASH and they can easily access the same. While considering these facts we should also need to focus specifically on elderly, because they are the people those who are at the risk being vulnerable or excluded from WASH (The National Strategic Plan for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene 2014-2015). Elderly with disabilities often experience several problems and challenges to access water, sanitation and hygiene in their day today life (CBM & BMZ; A Human Rights Based Approach to Disability in Development, 2012). Elderly with disabilities may be weak or sometimes they have problems associated with mobility, majority of them were dependent on others for satisfying their basic needs especially, they have to dependent on others to get water, for using toilets. They were also need to be dependent on others to meet their hygiene needs; this is also similar in the case of elderly with disabilities from the age of 60 and above. WASH organizers need to take precise activities to involve these individuals and also to screen that they are in detail being involved in WASH.

It is essential to focus on elderly with disabilities and most of the elderly with disabilities may be in a vulnerable situation (Hanley C, 2011). In the case of elderly women with disabilities, they are also facing psychosocial and financial problems and also at the risk of domestic violence's and they have extra WASH necessities to take care of the elderly with disabilities (Gosling L, 2010).

1.1 The Concept of Aging and Disability

Considering the general population elderly with disabilities are of 15 percentage and economically deprived elderly with disabilities are of 20 percentages (WHO & World Bank, 2011). Due to the psycho-social and economic problems associated with elderly with disabilities resulted to be labelled as disadvantaged groups or weaker sections of the society it is because of disparate practices of re-collecting data.

Still, contributed the record of disaccord, multitudinous situations like increasing poverty level and also the unmet needs of the elderly with disabilities some union territories foresee that, this will affect nationwide rate of disability (UN ESCAP, 2002). There are so many reasons for disability among elderly in rural and urban areas. Health and malnutrition also play a pivotal role in increasing the number of elderly people with disabilities (Travis, R, 2007). The census study conducted in 2008 that says that about 6.34 of the total population are above 60 and it shows that in the upcoming decades the number of elderly populations will be tripled (National Institute of Statistics, 2012).

Elderly women outnumber men and there are 69 geriatric men for every 100 aged women. Elderly is generally allowed to be watched for by their people, and are thus altogether barred bunch in evolution (WEDC, 2013). There are numerous delicate seniors passing boundaries hooked up with the geriatric proceeding, encompassing crashing sight, reduced mobility, which affects their access to water, sanitation and hygiene. Aged women and men are threatened to both transmissible and non-communicable illness and bear to exercise periodic hygiene gets. Numerous seniors, substantially women, are immediate caregivers of their grandchildren due to the migration of grown-up children. Around 25 of senior abide below the poverty line and cannot go to compensate for water services (National Institute of Statistics, 2012). Despite this, community development sweats frequently count elderly with disabilities and their benefactions are unnoticeable (National Institute of Statistics,

2012). The disability in elderly should always need to monitor and there is a tremendous need for addressing their unmet needs (Miller C and Albert B, 2006).

Historically, Elderly with disabilities have endured demarcation (Thomas, P, 2005). In most of the WASH related activities and programmes the disadvantaged and also elderly with disabilities are not been present, this is because of unawareness or the programme is not been focusing elderly with disabilities (Handicap International, 2010). While considering the elderly women with some kinds of disability in the current society, we can see that majority of them were not even participated in any single programme of WASH and there are some problems they are facing while accessing the WASH services and benefits (Water Aid Australia, 2012).

1.2 Defining inclusive WASH for elderly with disabilities

In considering the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), it was understood that, the consideration for the elderly with disabilities are included in an indifferent avenue. It results in making huge differences in taking care of the elderly with disabilities and also elderly with disabilities in the world hold hardly aided poor advancements in reservation of water and sanitation (JMP 2012, International Development Committee 2013). The current Millennium Development Goals target the content related to “implies ignoring, deserting out, not serving, the too delicate, too gruelling, and too depressed and that the ‘last’ whose need is therefore frequently lesser. For attaining targets, we should need to consider those who are last and ensure whether they receive any basic requirements for their personal hygiene” (Chambers 2012). In these we can get a clear idea that the disabled people in the age group of sixty and above need special attention and care. The statistics shows that more than 1 billion elderlies in the world have some sort of disability (WHO/ World Bank 2011), and are more probable to be poor than the universal population (Hosseinpour et al, 2013). In 600 million people there are only 60 per cent of the elderly people progressed over and presently majority of them lack financial security (OHCHR, 2012); in the coming decades the population of elderly people with turn to be billion (HAI, 2013).

1.3 Taking a human rights-based approach to inclusive WASH

The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for elderly with Disabilities is relating to human rights. That deal with the approach of accessing WASH by elderly with disability in a different manner. That is, it identifies that all elderly with disabilities can stand for their rights to freely contribute in the work especially for the development of activities for the betterment of the elderly with disability to reach the benefits of WASH. There are six important principles that focus on the mortal rights for the elderly with disabilities to access WASH services.

- Equal opportunity and Non-discrimination;
- Involvement and Liberation; and
- Transparency and Responsibility.

These principles are focusing on upgrading the rights of the elderly people with disabilities and also by raising the ability to enhance the assessment association between the government and also institution that meet the rights and also helpful to raise the capacity of the right holders. Here we can say that the elderly people with disability to affirm their rights. Implementation of mortal rights grounded approach is further adding Elderly with disabilities to the target groups of development programmes (CBM & BMZ; A Human Rights Based Approach to Disability in Development, 2012). This is all about the services of WASH that can be access through Government and other institutions and it leads to these mortal rights principles into practice.

The Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (RWSSH) in the National Strategic Plan 2014-2025 highlights, WASH service and benefits are also need to provide for the ‘poorest people and the marginalized community’ and also to the countries which WASH systems and the activities and services they are wish to do for the benefit of the elderly people. It also includes the discussions, predominant board or commission included in any of the association of elderly with disabilities. This will be a great lead to develop the RWSSH services that will follow the Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Elderly with disabilities.

1.4 Background

The age aspects, the change in social factor and also the functional capabilities are the core terms that define disability among elderly. The age that denotes elderly will vary according to various countries. In some of the nation's 60 years of age defines senior citizen, while in other countries it is 65 years (World Health Organization, 2010).

The process of inclusion of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) for elderly with disabilities can be possible only when the elderly with disabilities get equal opportunities and availability to attain benefits and share in programmes and process associated with WASH. The applicability of inclusive approaches to WASH is helpful to promote mindfulness creation and applicable involvement by all elderly with disabilities. Thus, we can understand that inclusion is not only focusing on the fully participation of elderly with disabilities, they are also ensuring whether the elderly with disabilities meet the rights associated with WASH. So that, inclusion is rudimentary to efficient WASH services, ensure WASH is accessible to the elderly with disabilities and they should also need to make sure is it elderly friendly and suitable for their family members and community.

1.5 Method

A literature review was conducted, to understand inclusion of elderly with disabilities in water, sanitation and hygiene; the search of the study was conducted using four electronic data bases, reference list checks and grey literatures.

Objectives:

- To understand the concept of inclusive wash for elderly with disabilities.
- To know the barriers to promote inclusion of elderly with disabilities in WASH.
- To suggest possible solutions to overcome barriers to promote inclusion of elderly with disabilities in WASH.

1.6 Results

In this paper, the researcher reviewed thirty studies among them 24 from scholastic literature and 6 from grey literature. This study concentrated specially on elderly with disabilities. Focusing elderly with disability is because, these people are always considered as weaker sections of the society and they are having so many psychosocial and economic problems to meet their daily needs. Here in considering WASH also, they are facing lots of troubles in meeting the health and hygiene, sanitation practice and water requirements. Majority of the reviews stressed that elderly with disabilities are always have weakness in muscles, body associated pain and majority of them have mobility issues. These issues make the elderly with disability to depend other persons or their care givers to meet their needs making them dependent on others to access water, toilet facilities or meet their hygiene needs, equivalent to elderly with different types of disabilities. This is due to they are having habitual illness or terminal disabilities.

Barriers that help to promote inclusion of elderly with disabilities in WASH.

The initial process the researcher had done was to identify the reasons that prevent the elderly with disabilities in accessing the services of WASH. We can term this as the barriers, which act as wall to prevent the elderly with disabilities in meeting the services and benefits of WASH. There are three types of barriers that prevent the elderly people with disabilities to attain the services of WASH. They are as follows:

- Attitude,
- Physical terrain,
- Communication and information.

Possible results to overcome Barriers to promote inclusion

Barrier 1: Attitude

While considering the first barrier, the attitude which the people possess towards the elderly with disabilities is a very big barrier that prevent elderly with disability to meet the needs of WASH. The common barriers may be;

- The elderly people with disabilities have no abilities
- Disability among elderly people with disability is due to they have committed sins
- If we participate with elderly people with disabilities that resulted in spreading the disability.
- People with disabilities are so dangerous
- These barriers can lead to negative attitudes towards Elderly with disabilities that discriminate and excludes them from,
- Rejection from decision- making within families and in the communities
- Rejection from social participation in their communities and within the family
- Rejection from using public water inventories that others use
- Hiding down of Elderly with disabilities due to shame and sweat they could have negative impacts on family status

Solutions to address and promote positive attitude

- Programs should include Elderly with disabilities and aged people in the planning, preparation, and evaluation of WASH activities. Also including the participation of DPO and OPA representatives, and representatives from NGOs that formerly in working with these groups. Any different requirements within these groups should also be taken into account.
- Training programs/ shops for design staff, community leaders, institutional staff (academy, health) on disability mindfulness. Training is delivered with the participation of DPO and OPA representatives, and representatives from NGOs that formerly working with these marginalized groups.
- Communication enterprise that appreciatively promote Elderly with disabilities and aged people and raise family, community and public understanding of disability and geriatric issues (similar as theatre, public education events, social media and so on)

Barriers; Physical terrain and communication and information

The physical terrain is focusing on whether the elderly people with disability can able to get free access to the WASH services.

Impact of barriers to WASH include;

- The installation of the restrooms with stairs and not with lift or ramp in the academic institutions, church and other government or non-governmental institutions will be very difficult for the elderly people with disability to walk and do their work or studies.
- Sometimes due to the inappropriate and unfriendly installation of the facilities of WASH will result difficulties for the elderly people with disabilities and it will be more affect the elderly people with vision impairment. They face difficulties in using restrooms and find the latrine openings. This results the elderly people with disability to defecate in the open.

These barriers will act as a major problem for accessing the needs and services of WASH and also it affect the health and quality of life of elderly with disabilities.

- We have to construct tube wells for the elderly with disability to reach the water availability and that will be a great help for meeting the unmet needs of the elderly people with disability.

This is also the same for the other two barriers.

- Find out the medium of communication for the persons with disabilities according to the types of disability and the medium that can be able to use the elderly easily.
- Lack of information's available related to inclusive WASH for elderly with disabilities.

Solutions to address physical environment and communication and information barriers

- Mobilizing resources to meet the unmet needs
- Provide training and proper assistance to the employer's those who work for the inclusive WASH for the elderly people with disabilities. This is very essential, because for identifying the barriers and solutions to promote inclusive WASH for elderly with disability is a difficult task. So an effective training needs to provide for the employers.

Conclusion

The organizers of WASH should require holding concrete conduct regard to the policies and programmes that involve elderly with disabilities and alike to ensure that, they are in reality being included in WASH. Findings of the study stressed that, inclusive WASH aims to meet everyone's requirements particularly aged people with disability. It does so by assuring aged people with disabilities similarly has the chance involve in all the activities and programmes associated with WASH and also they should need to ensure that whether the elderly people with disabilities can be able to reach the benefits of WASH.

From this study, it can be concluded that, water, sanitation and hygiene practices are more in taking care of elderly with disabilities and also for satisfying the unmet needs of the older people with disabilities. Providing awareness creation about WASH is also essential in terms of elderly care. Age and education were associated with it. These findings suggest that for the betterment of the elderly with disabilities, elderly friendly, easily accessible and safe water installation, proper hygiene education and logistics, and affordable and flexible sanitation should need to be handed.

Acknowledgement

Mrs.Priya.S.Dev, is a recipient of the Indian Council of Social Science Research Doctoral Fellowship. Her article is largely an outcome of her doctoral work sponsored by ICSSR. However, the responsibility for the facts stated, opinions expressed, and the conclusions drawn is entirely that of the author. A special word of thanks to the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) for the immense support and financial assistance.

References

1. Ahmed S, Jahan H, Bala B and Hall M (2011) Inclusive Sanitation: Breaking down barriers, 35th WEDC International Conference. WEDC, Lough-borough University: UK
2. CBM & BMZ; A Human Rights Based Approach to Disability in Development (2012)
3. Chambers R (2009) Going to Scale with Community-led Total Sanitation: Reflections on experience, issues and ways forward. Practice Paper 1. Institute of Development Studies: UK
4. Cambodia National Institute of Statistics (2013) Cambodia Inter-Censal Population Survey 2013 Final Report.
5. http://countryofce.unfpa.org/cambodia/drive/CIPS_Report_English_Final.pdf
6. Gosling L (2010) Equity and inclusion: A rights-based approach. WaterAid: UK
7. HAI (2013) Global AgeWatch. <http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/>
8. Handicap International (2010) Promoting inclusion of people with disabilities in community water management and access to municipal services in the district of Tenkodogo. Rights in Action: Good practices for inclusive local governance in West Africa. Handicap International: Dakar Senegal. pp 47-49
9. Hanley C (2011) Disability Inclusion within WASH Programs – Case studies. Disability and WASH Webinar. <http://www.inclusivewash.org.au/people-with-disabilities>

10. Hosseinpoor AR, Stewart Williams JA, Gautam J, Posarac A, Officer A, Verdes E, Kostanjsek N and Chatterji S (2013) 'Socioeconomic Inequality in Disability Among Adults: A Multi-country Study Using the World Health Survey', *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol 103, No 7, pp 1278-1286
11. International Development Committee (2013) Post-2015 Development Goals Eighth Report. UK Parliament
12. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmintdev/657/65702.htm>
13. Miller C and Albert B (2006) 'Mainstreaming disability in development cooperation: lessons from gender mainstreaming.' In: Albert B ed, *In or out of the mainstream? Lessons from research on disability and development cooperation*. The Disability Press: Leeds, UK
14. National Institute of Statistics (2012). *Demographics of population ageing in Cambodia, 2012 9 2014 Cambodia Country Report*
15. OHCHR (2012) Older persons among the poorest in the world. Online: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Olderpersonsamongthepoorestintheworld.aspx>
16. The National Strategic Plan for Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene 2014-2015. 6.1.8 Poverty, minorities and vulnerability
17. Thomas, P (for Department for International Development) (2005) *Poverty reduction and development: Enabling disabled people to play a role*. Disability Knowledge and Research.
18. Travis, R (2007) as cited in Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (2008) *National plan on of action for Elderly with disabilities, including Landmine/ERW survivors*. Phnom Penh, p. 5.
19. UN ESCAP (2002) *Pathfinders: Toward Full Participation and Equality of Elderly with disabilities in the ESCAP Region*. Retrieved on 13 March, 2022 from <http://wwda.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/pathfinders1.pdf>
20. WaterAid Australia (ed) (2012) *Towards Inclusive WASH: Sharing evidence and experience from the field*. <http://www.inclusivewash.org.au/>
21. WEDC (2013) *Equity and Inclusion in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Resources* <https://wedc-knowledge.lboro.ac.uk/collections/equity-inclusion/>
22. World Health Organization. *Definition of an older or elderly person*. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO; 2010.
23. <http://www.who.int/healthinfo/survey/ageingdefnolder/en/index>.
24. WHO and World Bank (2011) *World Report on Disability*. Geneva