

WHY ARE WE LEAVING THEM BEHIND?

The drive for industrialisation and human activities like clearing forest, constructions, transportation, electricity production etc. have caused 1.0 degree of global warming and the consequence of global warming are many folds and which creates long lasting impacts like rising sea level, submergence of islands, heat waves, unusual excessive rainfall, drought etc. The climate change not just affect the weather, soil, flora and fauna, which has direct impact on humans. People with Disabilities are most vulnerable due to climate change and the climate related disaster. One of the reasons for their vulnerability is barriers in the full participation before the disaster and it is reflected and worsens during climate related disaster. Their problem is not discussed much and there is a need to come up with appropriate mechanism to protect them during and after the natural disaster.

PROPOSED SOLUTION:

PWD are disproportionately affected by the natural disaster in evacuation, response and recovery efforts. In the recent Chennai floods 2016 nearly 100 PWD are affected, many went with less food, lack of fresh drinking water, many were living in the low lying and upon encroachment of river banks of river Adyar. PWD with better economic conditions were not much affected, women and transgender PWD face certain unique problems. According to my own experience PWD are most affected during the time of climate related disaster, due to lack of preparedness and community support, they are left behind by the community and the government. The Government of India, has come up with the Draft National Disaster Management Guidelines, Disability and Disaster Oct 2018, which protects the interest of the PWD during disaster by working with various stakeholders and organisations, based on the guidelines States of Odisha and Kerala have come up with their own state plans. Making policies on disaster management is in the hands of both Centre and State, but the implementation of the policies are in the hands of State Government. Tamil Nadu has no inclusive disaster management policy and many PWDs lives are at stake without a proper policy or guidelines.

In my project I will be making an awareness video in my vernacular language (Tamil), explaining climate change and its impact on people with disability, and what people can do to

help them in such crisis and also experience of PWD during such disaster. My video will be posted in my Facebook and Instagram Account. Since this project is done with the collaboration with my Brother's NGO called December 3 Movement, the video will also be posted in his official Facebook and Instagram Page. The video will be target students, mostly students doing Master of Social Work, Government officials, various social workers associated with December 3. According to my estimates, approximately the video would impact 100- 150 people. I hope the video helps to understand the gravity of the climate change and impact on people with disability so that they could pitch in the rescue work or they could contribute in assisting PWD during and after the disaster. The video might have a positive impact on people's life style choices which is climate friendly.

LONG TERM SOLUTION

Secondly in the long run I could collaborate with my brother and make representation to the Government of Tamil Nadu to make appropriate inclusive State Disaster Management Policy, which protects PWD during climate related crisis. For the policy making, a panel should be established constituting PWD to make their representation from policy formulation to implementation as provided by UN Disability and Development Report and Sendai Agreement.

TIMELINE

I was working in the field of disability since my UG days. I am very much concerned about accessibility of People with disability and wrote an article about it. My very own experience has given me an interest to do something regarding the issue. I finalised the topic after reading the Bali Convention, and based on Article 19, which states formulation of public policy without any discrimination. After many discussion in class break room activities with my beloved classmates Mirnalini and Sakshi gave me various perspectives and approaches to my project. Discussion with my brother Mr. Deepak and Ms. Nishah Thota of Shudha have given me insights on practical issues faced by PWDs and it is connected with climate change.