



LINK: [Disabilities Defined](#)

Information below from: <http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/disability-statistics.shtml>

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Disability affects hundreds of millions of families in developing countries.

Currently around **10 per cent of the total world's population, or roughly 650 million people**, live with a [disability](#). In most of the OECD countries, females have higher rates of disability than males.

Having a disability places you in the world's largest minority group. As the population ages this figure is expected to increase. Eighty per cent of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, according to the UN Development Programme (UNDP). The World Bank estimates that 20 per cent of the world's poorest people have some kind of disability, and tend to be regarded in their own communities as the most disadvantaged. Statistics show a steady increase in these numbers.

The reasons include:

- a) Emergence of new diseases and other causes of impairment, such as HIV/AIDS, stress and alcohol and drug abuse;
- b) Increasing life span and numbers of elderly persons, many of whom have impairments;
- c) Projected increases in the number of disabled children over the next 30 years, particularly in the developing countries, due to malnutrition, diseases, child labor and other causes;
- d) Armed conflict and violence. For every child killed in warfare, three are injured and acquire a permanent form of disability. In some countries, up to a quarter of disabilities result from injuries and violence, says WHO.

In countries with life expectancies over 70 years of age, people spend on average about 8 years, or 11.5 per cent of their life span, living with disabilities.

The two-way link between poverty and disability creates a vicious circle. Poor people are more at risk of acquiring a disability because of lack of access to good nutrition, health care, sanitation, as well as safe living and working conditions. Once this occurs, people face barriers to the education, employment, and public services that can help them escape poverty.

Dr. Amartya Sen pointed out in his keynote address at the World Bank's conference on disability, the poverty line for disabled people should take into account the extra expenses they incur in exercising what purchasing power they do have. A study in the United Kingdom found that the poverty rate for disabled people was 23.1 percent compared to 17.9 percent for non-disabled people, but when extra expenses associated with being disabled were considered, the poverty rate for people with disabilities shot up to 47.4 percent.

Disability rates in the population are higher among groups with lower educational level in the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). On average, 19 per cent of less educated people have disabilities, compared to 11 per cent among the better educated. Ninety per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school, says UNESCO. In the OECD countries, students with disabilities in higher education remain under-represented, although their numbers are on the increase, says the OECD.

1991 Brazilian census reported only a 1 percent to 2 percent disability rate, but the 2001 census recorded a 14.5 percent disability rate. Similar jumps in the measured rate of disability have occurred in Turkey (12.3 percent) and Nicaragua (10.1 percent).

Persons with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence or rape, according to a 2004 British study, and less likely to obtain police intervention, legal protection or preventive care. Women and girls with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to abuse. A survey in Orissa, India, found that virtually all of the women and girls with disabilities were beaten at home, 25 per cent of women with intellectual disabilities had been raped and 6 per cent of women with disabilities had been forcibly sterilized. Research indicates that violence against children with disabilities occurs at annual rates at least 1.7 times greater than for their peers without disabilities.

Claims for disability benefits are surging in industrialized countries - up to 600 percent in some nations - encouraging governments, private companies and unions to search for ways to get disabled people back to work, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Discriminatory practices continue to deny persons with disabilities, as well as workers who become disabled, access to work. Two-thirds of the unemployed respondents with disabilities said they would like to work but could not find jobs.

An estimated 386 million of the world's working-age people have some kind of disability, says the International Labour Organization (ILO). Unemployment among the persons with disabilities is as high as 80 per cent in some countries. Of the some 70 million persons with disabilities in India, only about 100,000 have succeeded in obtaining employment in industry.

A 2004 United States survey found that only 35 per cent of working-age persons with disabilities are in fact working, compared to 78 per cent of those without disabilities. One third of the employers surveyed said that persons with disabilities cannot effectively perform the required job tasks. The second most common reason given for not hiring persons with disabilities was the fear of costly special facilities.

Unions are becoming involved in the return to work through the direct provision of services, and through disability management programs in the workplace, the ILO says. The ILO study also finds that private insurance providers are introducing more flexible arrangements so that workers who become disabled and who attempt a gradual transition to work do not lose their benefits. Companies are looking for ways to reduce costs by introducing disability management programs in the workplace.

Thousands of persons with disabilities have been successful as small business owners, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

45 countries have anti-discrimination and other disability-specific laws. Recent changes in national laws to promote the employment of disabled persons have often not been adequate to assist individuals with new types of impairments. This is particularly true for those workers suffering from the "new" occupational diseases, for example those related to stress and repetitive strain injury, and for those who have [invisible disabilities](#), such as mental illness and [chronic pain](#), that do not fall within the scope of legal definitions in some countries.

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