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Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Iran 2003

Abstract
[Excerpt] This report is descriptive in nature. When the ILO commissioned the researchers for the *Country Study Series*, each was asked to follow the comprehensive research protocol appended to this document. The resulting report therefore includes country background information, statistics about people with disabilities and their organizations, a description of relevant legislation and policies and their official implementing structures, as well as the education, training and employment options available to people with disabilities. While few countries have such information readily available, researchers were asked to note the existence or lack of specific data points and to report data when it did exist. Since the lack of information about people with disabilities contributes to their invisibility and social exclusion, the information itself is important. The protocol called for limited analysis and did not specifically ask for the researchers recommendations, however, researchers were asked to report on existing plans and recommendations of significant national stakeholders.

Keywords
disability, Iran, training, employment, public policy

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AbilityAsia Country Study Series

International
Labour
Office

Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Iran 2003

Pooya Alaedini

Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Iran 2003

An *Ability Asia* Country Study

Pooya Alaedini

International Labour Office

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Preface

Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Iran 2003 is part of the *AbilityAsia Country Study Series.* The series was designed as a contribution to the end of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, and to mark the 20th anniversary of the ILO's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention No.159, 1983.

One of the primary purposes of the *Country Study Series* is to contribute to the knowledge base on people with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. According to World Health Organization estimates, people with disabilities account for up to 10 per cent of the population of developing countries. Yet, in many countries, people with disabilities remain "invisible". Little reliable data exists about their numbers, needs and achievements. While they are recognized as among the poorest of poor, people with disabilities typically face barriers to the very services that might lift them out of poverty – such as education, vocational training, and employment and business development services. Even the barriers they face have not been adequately documented.

A second purpose of the *Country Study Series* is to provide baseline data regarding the status of education, training and employment of people with disabilities. This takes on greater significance in light of the adoption of the ESCAP Asia and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003 to 2012, and the implementing Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. Governments from across the region adopted the BMF at a high-level meeting in October 2002. The BMF will guide regional and national disability policies and activities in several priority areas, including training and employment, during the new Decade of Disabled Persons.

The BMF includes the ILO's principle of decent work, which is "productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity for women and men everywhere". Further, the BMF's employment and training targets call upon countries to mainstream and integrate vocational training programmes, collect reliable employment and self-employment participation rates for people with disabilities and consider ratification of ILO Convention 159. This Convention, among other things, requires a national policy of vocational rehabilitation and employment based on the principles of equal treatment and equal opportunity for workers with disabilities.

With regard to the BMF, *Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Iran 2003* should prove useful as an evaluation tool since it provides a baseline description of the situation in Iran against which progress can be compared.

The report is descriptive in nature. When the ILO commissioned the researchers for the *Country Study Series*, each was asked to follow the comprehensive research protocol appended to this document. The resulting report therefore includes country background information, statistics about people with disabilities and their organizations, a description of relevant legislation and policies and their official implementing structures, as well as the education, training and employment options available to people with disabilities. While few countries have such

information readily available, researchers were asked to note the existence or lack of specific data points and to report data when it did exist. Since the lack of information about people with disabilities contributes to their invisibility and social exclusion, the information itself is important. The protocol called for limited analysis and did not specifically ask for the researchers recommendations, however, researchers were asked to report on existing plans and recommendations of significant national stakeholders.

Upon completion of the draft country studies, they were shared with participants of the ILO/Japan Technical Consultation on Vocational Training and Employment of People with Disabilities, held in Bangkok in January 2003. Unlike the other country studies in the series, this version of *Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Iran 2003* was completed in the latter part of 2003. It was therefore not available for the meeting and the information is more recent than in other studies in the series. However, as is the case in many other countries, concrete data and reliable information is lacking. Nevertheless, this report provides a comprehensive view of the employment and training situation of people with disabilities against which future developments can be better understood and progress assessed.

The ILO wishes to acknowledge Development Cooperation Ireland, whose resources contributed to the research project that resulted in the *AbilityAsia Country Study Series.* Debra A. Perry, Senior Specialist in Vocational Rehabilitation for Asia and the Pacific deserves special recognition for her technical oversight and hard work in designing and coordinating the overall project. Pooya Alaedini, the consultant who researched and wrote *Training and Employment of People with Disabilities: Iran 2003* deserves specific acknowledgement for his excellent work in preparing this country study and his writing and research expertise. Dr Alaedini prepared this study based on existing government reports and information provided by Ms Fereshteh Tolu'i of the State Welfare Orgnization and Mr Bahram Jangjoo of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs with suggestions provided by Professor Mariam Sharifian.

Finally, members of the ILO support staff, partcularly Sugunya Voradilokkul, who supported the project from its inception, and Teerasak Siriratanothai, whose computer expertise made the Web publication a reality, made valuable contributions to the overall project.

To the reader, whether you are an academic, a researcher, policy maker, practitioner or an individual with a disability, we appreciate your interest and hope you will find the information you are looking for in these pages. For more information about the *AbilityAsia Country Study Series* or to learn more about the ILO, Convention 159 or other issues related to employment and training of people with disabilities in the region, please visit the *AbilityAsia* Web site: www.ilo.org/abilityasia. For more information about the ESCAP Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, visit www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/index.asp.

Readers may also be interested in one of two recently-published documents by the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific: *Moving Forward: Toward Decent Work for People with Disabilities − Examples of Good Practices in Vocational Training and Employment from Asia and the Pacific* and *Proceedings of the ILO Technical Consultation on Vocational Training of People with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.* Please make your requests for copies by email to abilityasia@ilo.org.

Lin Lean Lim
Deputy Director
Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

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Abbreviations

BMF	Biwako Millennium Framework
CPI	Consumer Price Index
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ILO	International Labour Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MIA	Missing in Action
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
POW	Prisioners of War
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Part One: Country Overview

1.1 Introduction

Brief history

The Islamic Republic of Iran, previously known as Persia, has a rich history and culture going back thousands of years. The establishment of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great in 559 BC marked the birth of a unified land by bringing Iranians and non-Iranians under a single ruler.

Following a short period of disruption caused by the invasion of Alexander of Macedon, Parthians reestablished Iranian rule in the country. Later, the Sasanid Dynasty created a sophisticated centralized administration in Iran and gave Zoroastrianism the status of official state religion. Arab-Muslim forces invaded Iran in 639 AD. Following this event, Iran became part of the Muslim Empire and the majority of the population converted to Islam. Independent Persian kingdoms began to reassert the Persian identity in the eighth and ninth centuries — in particular through the provision of patronage to literature written in a new form of the Persian language. A series of Turkic and Mongolian invasions marked the period between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. The rebirth of the Iranian nation is generally traced back to the establishment of the Safavid Dynasty in the sixteenth century (a process continued through the rule of the Afshar, Zand, Qajar and Pahlavi Dynasties).

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Iranian state still had sufficient strength to fend off would-be colonizers that had been active in the region for decades. At the same time, the state lacked the vision or the means to develop the country and to close its widening gap with the advanced countries of Europe. While becoming extremely weak, Iran escaped the colonial era somewhat unharmed relative to other countries in the region. The country witnessed a modernist revolution in the first decade of the 20th century and the establishment of a constitutional form of monarchy. Iran was declared an Islamic Republic following the 1979 (1357) Revolution led by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

Structural factors and recent events affecting the economy

A major characteristic of Iran's economy since the 1960s has been its strong dependence on oil revenues. While oil revenues provide the hard cash needed for accelerated economic growth, they also result in a number of structural problems that hinder development. Iran experienced a devastating and long war with Iraq that cost the country close to US$1,000 billion in damages. With a recent population boom and declining oil revenues in relative terms, serious efforts are required to achieve reasonable economic growth levels, human development and to control the unemployment rate.

Level of development

Ranked 98 out of 173 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI) at 0.721 in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Report 2002 (1381), Iran is considered to have a medium level of human development. The same report points out that Iran's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita purchasing power parity (PPP) stood at $5,884 in 2000 (1379), while the literacy rate stood at 76.3 per cent. Combined primary, secondary and tertiary school enrolment stood at 72 per cent, while life expectancy at birth stood at 68.9 years.[1]

There has been a steady improvement in health and education indicators over time that has resulted in an improved HDI ranking over recent years. Changes in per capita GDP on the other hand have been modest in general, although they have improved somewhat over the last two years (2000-02 [1379-81]). It should be noted that economic growth levels are highly dependent on the level of oil revenue. Strong oil prices usually usher in periods of increased economic activity across all sectors.

1.2 Geography

Iran covers a land area of 1.6 million square kilometres (sq km), and is found in southwest Asia. The country borders Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Armenia in the north, Afghanistan and Pakistan in the east, Iran, Iraq and Turkey in the west, while there is access to the Oman Sea and the Persian Gulf in the South and the Caspian Sea in the north.

Iran enjoys a diverse climate, although a large part of the country is in a semi-arid zone with generally low levels of precipitation. Two significant mountain ranges cross the country, making up the Iranian plateau. The Caspian region in the north enjoys significantly higher precipitation rates than the rest of the country. The diverse climatic conditions mean that a wide range of agricultural produce can be farmed in Iran.

1 UNDP Human Development Report, 2002.

1.3 Population

General

The last National Census was carried out in 1996 (1375). [2] The results indicated that from a total population of 60.05 million, 30.5 million (50.8 per cent) were male, while 29.5 million (49.2 per cent) were female. Around 60 per cent of the population lived in urban areas, close to 39 per cent resided in rural areas, and the remainder was classified as transhumant.

Between 1986-1996 (1365-75), the average annual growth rate of the female population stood at 2.03 per cent, while the growth in the male population stood at 1.9 per cent. The average annual growth rate of the total population stood at 1.965 per cent per annum during this period. The female population growth rate stood at 3.26 per cent and 0.41 per cent in urban and rural areas, respectively[3]. The ratio in terms of gender (male-female) stood at 103 in 1996 (1375) compared with 105 in 1986 (1365). The ratio declined in urban and rural areas by 0.9 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively, during the period 1986-96 (1365-75). In 1996 (1375), the sex ratio at birth was 105.8 per cent nationwide, while the corresponding ratios in urban and rural areas stood at 105.5 per cent and 106.3 per cent, respectively.[4]

Levels of education in the country have experienced a steady rise over recent years. While there is great disparity between men and women with regard to literacy rates, they have risen both in rural and urban areas and this increase has been quite steep over the last 20 years. Since Iran has witnessed a population explosion over the same period, the steep rise in literacy rates has been achieved through the steady improvement in the percentage of children attending school. In this respect, the relatively young age of the population has served to enhance the country's overall literacy rate. However, normative literacy increased faster among girls and women during 1986-1996 (1365-75), growing 42.5 per cent compared with 19.2 per cent among boys and men. This trend was the case in both urban and rural areas and so the overall gender literacy gap narrowed during the 10-year period. The ratio in terms of gender among the literate population stood at 141 in 1986 (1365), showing that for every 141 literate boys and men there were 100 literate girls or women. This had fallen to 118 by 1996 (1375), an improvement of about 25 per cent.

The age pattern with regard to the literacy rate remained constant during the period 1986-1996 (1365-75). Literacy increased in all age groups at an almost equal pace. The highest rate among the female population was recorded for the age group10-14, reflecting the rising rate of school enrolment over time.[5]

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2 The Iranian calendar year 1375 corresponds to part of 1996 and a few months of 1997. In this report, the year observed in Iran will follow the Western year in brackets. Due to the fact that the Western years do not directly correspond, the year equivalent may differ on occasion.

[3] *Iran Statistical Yearbook 2001 (1379)*, Statistical Center of Iran, Tehran, 2001 .

[4] Statistical Center of Iran and UNFPA, Socio-Economic Characteristics of Women in Iran: 1986-1996 (1365-75). Statistical Center of Iran, Tehran, 2001 (1380); Alaedini, P. and A. Prizadeh. Gender, Poverty, and Employment: The Case of Iran. Mimeograph prepared for the ILO, October 2002 (1381); and Pirzadeh, A. and G. Farjadi, Overview of Demographic Trends and the Labor Market Transition in the Islamic Republic of Iran. April, 2002 (1381).

[5] Alaedini, P. and A. Prizadeh. *Gender, Poverty, and Employment: The Case of Iran*. Report prepared for the ILO. October, 2002 (1381); Pirzadeh, A. and G. Farjadi, *Overview of Demographic Trends and the Labour Market Transition in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. April, 2002 (1381).

A total of 99 per cent of all Iranians are Muslims, the majority of whom follow the Jafari Shia branch of Islam. This is also known as Emami or Twelver Shi'ism. There are significant numbers of Sunnis and smaller numbers of other branches of Shi'ism. Zoroastrian, Christian, and Jewish communities can be found in major towns, but their numbers have decreased relative to the overall population or even in absolute terms. Other religions, such as Yarsani Bahai and Mandaean faiths, which are not officially recognized, also have followers in Iran.

Most Iranians speak an Iranic language, which is a branch of the Indo-European family of languages. Among these, Persian, also known as Farsi-ye Dari, Farsi, Dari or Tajiki, is the official language of the country and is used and understood by most Iranians. While no reliable estimates exist, probably around 60 per cent of the population speaks Persian as a first language. Other Iranic languages or dialects spoken in Iran include Caspian dialects, Kurdish languages and dialects, Lori-Bakhtiari dialects, and Baluchi. Turkic (Azerbaijani) is probably spoken by about 15 per cent of the population as a first language. There are also speakers of Semitic languages in Iran, including Arabic and Assyrian. Armenian is spoken by the Armenian Christians.

1.4 Government and general development plans

Iran was declared an Islamic Republic in 1979 (1358) following a national referendum. The Supreme Leader, chosen by the Council of Experts, an elected body, has the highest authority within the state. An elected president, head of the executive branch, nominates the cabinet, which is composed of 20 ministers to be endorsed by Parliament. The president also appoints the heads of the Management and Planning Organization, Atomic Energy Organization, Civil Service and Social Security, the Environmental Affairs Organization, the Executive Affairs Organizations, and the Physical Training Organization. Some of these organizations are on a par with some ministries, or perhaps surpass them in their authority and scope of work. For example, this is the case for the Management and Planning Organization.

The legislative branch of the state is led by two institutions − the *Majles*, or Parliament and the Guardian Council of the Constitution. All legislation passed through parliament must be approved by the Guardian Council in order to become law. The judiciary is independent of both the legislative and the executive branches of the government and answers directly to the Supreme Leader.

Administration in Iran is centralized and provincial officials are appointed by central government. There are 28 provinces, 293 sub-provinces, 777 counties, 885 cities, approximately 2,300 rural districts and about 68,000 inhabited villages in Iran. A recently established institution – local and municipal councils – allows for democratic representation at local level.

General development strategies

Iran follows a five-year development planning cycle. The development plans are the most

important documents specifying social, economic and cultural programmes to be followed over a five-year period.

The current Third Five-Year Development Plan, which has been in place since 2000 (1379), recognizes the need for poverty alleviation. It targets a reduction in the poverty headcount from 15 per cent to 7 per cent by 2005 (1384). Improvements in education and health are identified in the plan as direct mechanisms for poverty alleviation through greater empowerment. Because of the established direct link between poverty and employment in Iran, this needs to be realized through the annual creation of 765,000 jobs in a bid to reduce the rate of unemployment from 16 per cent in 2000 (1379) to 12.5 per cent by 2005 (1384). The plan offers a sectoral approach in promoting employment and reducing poverty.

The plan calls for greater support to the agricultural sector through greater public investment in water management and other productivity-enhancing measures, as well as support to other economic development activities, such as fisheries, animal raising and forestry. In mining and industry, the strategy includes support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through special incentives for investment in less-developed regions. In the housing sector, tax and credit incentives are provided to promote the construction of low-income housing that will benefit the poor directly and indirectly (through employment creation).[6]

Another part of the government's poverty-reduction programme concerns people with disabilities and people who are unable to work. The plan envisages improvements in the efficiency of transfers through better targeting, improving the poverty map, and enhancing the coordination between various social safety net institutions.[7] While the Plan provides important elements of the social safety net, it does not address explicitly how these mechanisms can be used to mitigate the adverse effects of economic reforms. Rationalization of subsidies, particularly the extensive energy subsidies, as well as privatization will require commensurate measures such as worker training, cash compensation, and short-term employment creation. The absence of a clearly articulated social protection strategy could act as a barrier to implementation of the reforms.[8]

1.5 Economy

While there have been serious problems with achieving sustainable economic growth in the past, the Iranian economy has experienced respectable expansion over the last two years. Reportedly, real GDP growth reached 5.9 per cent in 2000-01 (1379-80), beating an International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast of 3.4 per cent and much improved upon the average growth rate of 2.5 per cent recorded during the period 1997-2000 (1376-79). Relatively strong oil prices accounted for much of this expansion that has also resulted in the enhancement of manufacturing, trade and construction activities.[9]

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[6] Alaedini, P. and A. Prizadeh. *Gender, Poverty and Employment: The Case of Iran*. Report prepared for the ILO. October, 2002 (1381); Farjadi, G. and A. Pirzadeh, *Planning in Post-Revolutionary Iran*, 2001 (1380).

[7] Ibid.

[8] Alaedini, P. and A.Prizadeh. Gender, Poverty and Employment: The Case of Iran. Report prepared for ILO. October 2002 (1381); and Pirzadeh, A. and G.Farjadi, Overview of Demographic Trends and Labour Market Transition in the Islamic Republic of Iran. April 2002 (1381).

[9] Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Economic Report and Balance Sheet, 1380 (2000-01). January 2001 (1380).

Growth in agricultural value added has also been significant at 3.8 per cent despite the continuation of drought during the period 1999-2001 (1378-80). Production of major food items such as meat, poultry and milk also expanded with the increase in value added in the animal husbandry sub-sector. Production of aquatic and forestry products also witnessed significant expansion. The value added of manufacturing and mining grew by 8.9 per cent in 2000-2001 (1379-80). Growth in the value added of construction was 8.7 per cent during the same period. The energy sector recorded 4.5-per cent growth in its value added, while the non-public service sector grew by 5 per cent.[10]

While recent changes in economic indicators suggest economic recovery, the Iranian economy faces several problems. First, as mentioned earlier, over-reliance on oil revenues means that economic activities are at the mercy of the volatile oil market. This has, in fact, resulted in erratic economic cycles. Further, with the continued deterioration of the terms of trade for oil and Iran's population boom, there has been little improvement in per capita income figures. Income distribution in Iran is also reported to be skewed. However, the most challenging issue facing the country today is the unemployment rate, which is examined in the following section of this report. The following tables provide information on recent developments in the Iranian economy.

Table 1.1: Per capita GDP and consumption during 1966-1997 (1345-1376), using 1981-82 (1360-61) prices

Year	1966-7 (1345)	1976-7 (1355)	1986-7 (1365)	1991-2 (1370)	1996-7 (1375)
Population (millions)	25.8	33.7	49.4	55.8	60.1
Gross Domestic Product (billion rials)	4,089.6	13,131.4	10,692.5	13,264.1	16,141.1
Per Capita GDP (rials)	158,511.6	389,655.8	216,447.4	237,707.9	268,570.7
Private Consumption (billions rials)	1,683.3	4,969.6	6,543.7	8,281.5	9,644.3
Per Capita Private Consumption (thousand rials)	65	147	132	148	160

Source: Statistical Center of Iran

[10] Ibid.

Table 1.2: Sectoral shares of the Iranian economy (per cent)

Description	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-2001
(At constant prices)			
Agriculture, hunting, forestry	15.56	13.69	12.69
Fishing	0.32	0.31	0.34
Mining	11.45	10.19	10.49
Manufacturing	16.1	17.29	16.64
Water, electricity and gas	1.65	1.59	1.29
Construction	4.02	4.6	6.21
Wholesale & retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and personal and household goods	15.76	14.83	15.13
Hotel and restaurants	0.97	0.88	0.8
Transport, storage and communications	5.56	6.12	6.31
Financial intermediate	1.87	2.48	2.35
Real estate, renting and business activities	13.16	13.8	13.54
Public administration, defense and social security	5.06	5.18	5.36
Education	3.89	3.97	3.95
Health and social work	2.67	2.81	2.71
Other community, social and personal activities	0.97	1.19	1.03
Total	**99.01**	**98.91**	**98.85**
Net taxes on imports (Taxes minus subsidies)	0.99	1.09	1.15
Gross domestic product (at market prices)	100	100	100

Source: Statistical Center of Iran

There is limited information regarding Iran's informal economy. By some estimates it may account for up to one third of economic activities. It should also be noted that due to low wages and high living costs, many people have more than one job, often one in the formal sector and another in the informal sector, or by participating in criminal activities.

1.6 Labour markets

The overall labour force participation rate in Iran shows a descending trend. It fell from 42.52 per cent in 1976 to 35.3 per cent in 1996 (1375) according to the 1996 (1375) Census. The latest survey results from April 2002 (1381) estimate the overall participation rate at 37.7 per cent.[11] The major reason behind this decline has been the unprecedented population boom in the 1980s and the resulting low average age of the population who do not participate in economic activities.

Women's participation rate compared to men experienced a severe decline in the 1980s, but began to bounce back in the 1990s. Women accounted for 16.14 per cent of the labour force in 2001 (1380), as opposed to 10.26 per cent in 1986 (1365) and 14.78 per cent in 1976 (1355). The latest survey in April 2002 (1381) estimates the percentage of women 10 years and older who are economically active at 12.0 per cent.[12] The corresponding figure for men is 62.4 per cent. Between 1986-96 (1365-75), the rate of women's participation increased for those in the 15-54

[11] Data provided by the Statistical Center of Iran.

[12] Alaedini, P. and A. Prizadeh, *Gender, Poverty and Employment: The Case of Iran*. Report prepared for ILO. October, 2002 (1381); and Pirzadeh, A. and G. Farjadi, *Overview of Demographic Trends and Labour Market Transition in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. April 2002 (1381).

and 55-64 age brackets, rising from 9.81 per cent to 11.73 per cent and from 4.5 per cent to 5.0 per cent, respectively. The rates of men's participation fell for all cohort groups except those over 65 years of age during the same period.[13]

Overall employment rose from approximately 11 million in 1976 (1355) to 14.6 million in 1996 (1375) as the adult population grew at an unprecedented rate due to the earlier population boom. According to the 1996 (1375) Census figures, of two million women in the workforce, 1.77 million, or 86.6 per cent were formally employed. In the same year, of 16 million active men estimated to be in the workforce, 14.57 million persons, or 91.5 per cent were formally employed. Women's employment, which had reached a high of 13.8 per cent of all people employed in the years before the 1979 (1358) Revolution, experienced a severe drop in the post-revolutionary period, reaching a low of 8.9 per cent in 1986 (1365). Following the rising trend in women's participation rate, this figure has bounced back such that according to the 1996 (1375) Census, women accounted for 12.1 per cent of the total workforce. The percentage loss of female employment during the mid-1980s was more severe in rural areas than urban areas, reflecting the loss of employment opportunities in rural areas during the previous two decades.[14]

According to the 1996 (1375) Census figures, 1.456 million, or 9.1 per cent of the population was unemployed. However, the unemployment rate has been rising, standing at 14 per cent in 2001 (1380). At the time of writing (April 2002) the total number of unemployed was estimated to stand at 12.6 per cent of the total active population. Unemployment is widely regarded as the Achilles heel of the Iranian economy and with 45 per cent of the population aged less than 20, officials are under no illusion that creating jobs is essential to both economic and political stability.

Women's unemployment stood at 17.6 per cent in 2001 (1380), while the rate for men was 11.7 per cent.[15] While the unemployment rate among men represented a decrease from 2000 (1379), the rate among women increased during the same period. However, the sizeable increase in the female labour force participation rate during the period 1996-2001 (1375-80) meant proportionally more women continued to be unemployed. Women's unemployment rates among the economically-active population were higher than the unemployment rate for men throughout the period 1986-96 (1365-75). However, the differential between men's and women's unemployment rates widened during this period, with the rate for unemployed women reaching 19.45 per cent in 2001 (1380), an increase of 6 per cent.[16]

In absolute terms, there were 436 unemployed men for every 100 women nationwide in 1996 (1375). This figure was 446 men for every 100 women in 1986 (1365). While the unemployment rate fluctuated during the period 1986-96 (1365-75), the age pattern among unemployed women was almost constant. In 1986 (1365), the highest female unemployment age groups were 15 to 19 years (47 per cent), 10 to 14 years (43 per cent) and 20 to 24 years (38.2 per cent), while the age group 40 to 44 years registered the lowest unemployment rate (4.7 per cent). In 1996 (1375), the same categories reported were 31 per cent, 27.1 per cent, and 22.8 per cent, respectively. The

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Data provided by the Statistical Center of Iran.

[16] Alaedini, P. and A. Prizadeh. *Gender, Poverty and Employment: The Case of Iran*. Report prepared for the ILO. October, 2002 (1381); and Pirzadeh, A. and G. Farjadi, *Overview of Demographic Trends and Labour Market Transition in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. April 2002 (1381).

lowest unemployment rate (1.7 per cent) belonged to 40 to 44 year age group. The latest survey in April 2002 (1381) estimates the unemployment rate for people aged 15-24 at 26.5 per cent. The unemployment rate among women in this age group stood at 35.4 per cent, while the corresponding rate for men stood at 24.5 per cent. Young people are clearly facing serious difficulties securing jobs and young women are doing significantly worse than young men.[17]

Table 1.3: Employment by economic activity in 1996-97 (1375-76)
(Total: thousands of population [‘000s])

Category	Total	per cent*	Men	per cent*	Women	per cent*
Agriculture	3,319	22.8	3,024	23.6	294	16.7
Fishing	39	0.3	38	0.3	0	0.0
Mining	120	0.8	115	0.9	5	0.3
Manufacturing	2,552	17.5	1,969	15.4	583	33.0
Utilities	151	1.0	145	1.1	5	0.3
Construction	1,650	11.3	1,635	12.8	16	0.9
Retail, Wholesale and Repair Shops	1,842	12.6	1,804	14.1	38	2.2
Hotels and Restaurants	85	0.6	82	0.6	2	0.1
Transportation, Depots, and Communication	973	6.7	955	7.5	18	1.0
Financial Institutions	153	1.0	139	1.1	14	0.8
Public Services and Defense	149	1.0	137	1.1	12	0.7
Real State, Public Services and Defense	1,618	11.1	1,519	11.9	99	5.6
Education	1,041	7.1	582	4.5	459	26.0
Health and Social Work	303	2.1	184	1.4	119	6.7
Other Public Services	224	1.5	183	1.4	41	2.3
Domestic Service	62	0.4	57	0.4	5	0.3
Central Offices and Bureaus	33	0.2	30	0.2	3	0.2
Expatriate	1	0.0	1	0.0	0	0.0
Unknown	257	1.8	205	1.6	52	2.9
Total	14,572	99.8	12,804	99.9	1,765	100

Source: Iran Statistical Yearbook 2000 (1379)
Note: *Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding errors

[17] Alaedini, P. and A. Pirzadeh. *Gender, Poverty and Employment: The Case of Iran*. Report prepared for the ILO. October 2002 (1381); and Pirzadeh, A. and G. Farjadi, *Overview of Demographic Trends and Labour Market Transition in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. April 2002 (1381).

Table 1.4: Employed population aged 10 and over, by major occupational groups, ('000s/people)

Major Occupational Groups	Total	Male	Female
Legislators, senior officials and managers	325	283	41
Professionals	1,263	770	494
Technicians and associate professionals	457	385	73
Clerks	614	510	104
Service and sales workers	1,480	1,403	78
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	3,043	2,788	255
Crafts and related trades workers	2,942	2,384	558
Plant-machine operators, assemblers, drivers	1,303	1,289	15
Elementary occupations	1,931	1,847	84
Others and not stated	1,213	1,149	64
Total	14,572	12,806	1,765

Source: Iran Statistical Yearbook 1996 (1375)

In both the first national plan for the period 1989-94 (1368-73) and the second national plan for the period 1995-99 (1374-79), the goal was for the rate of job creation to exceed the growth in the labour force, so that unemployment would eventually decrease.[18] These goals were not achieved and unemployment has become one of the most serious problems Iran's economy and society are facing today. Youth unemployment is a particular concern today in Iran.

Although in absolute numbers more men are unemployed, the rate of women's unemployment is disproportionately high, given women's smaller share of the labour force. The high and increasing rate of unemployment among women in the country perhaps indicates that the supply of job-seeking women is growing and the fact that women are encountering barriers to their employment in addition to the labour market's demand deficiency. Unemployed women appear to be mainly new entrants with a high-school or higher level of education, but they may also include previously employed women who have lost their jobs. Unemployment is persistently higher among those with some education, and the share of those with high-level educational qualifications in total unemployment has also increased during the period 1986-2001 (1365-70).

Employment and the creation of new job opportunities has been one of the main concerns of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran over recent years. In the fiscal year 2000-2001 (1369-70), extensive measures were carried out by the government to create new jobs in line with the Third Development Plan's objectives. During that period, the number of employees in the public sector reached 16 million, with 430,495 new jobs having been created. However, based on the objectives of the Third Development Plan, in order to stabilize the unemployment rate at between 10.5 per cent and 12.5 per cent, 765,000 job opportunities need to be created annually in Iran.[19].

During 2001-2002 (1370-71), the government carried out extensive measures to enhance production and investment toward generation of gainful employment. Provision of foreign exchange facilities from the foreign exchange reserves to private and cooperative sectors, tax discounts, amendments to taxation and import export laws were amongst the structural reforms implemented as part of the Third Development Plan.

[18] Plan and Budget Organization, *First Five-Year Development Plan, 1990 (1369)*, and *Second Five-Year Development Plan, 1993 (1372).*

[19] Alaedini, P. and A.Prizadeh. Gender, Poverty and Employment: The Case of Iran. Report prepared for the ILO. October 2002 (1381); and Pirzadeh, A. and G. Farjadi, Overview of Demographic Trends and Labour Market Transition in the Islamic Republic of Iran. April 2002 (1381).

As mentioned earlier, while Iran's informal labour market is known to be relatively large, little reliable information exists on its structure. What is known is that a large number of people are employed in the informal sector and that a great number of people are also engaged in the informal sector activities through second jobs.

In Iran, the determination of wages for each wage stratum and wage increases follow specific regulations in the formal sector. For government employees, wage increases may be decided annually based on subsistence cost indexes produced by the state. Minimum wages for those that are covered by the labour law (non-government employees) are determined annually by the Supreme Labor Council based on the rate of inflation and household size.[20]

The minimum wage increased from 635 rials per day in 1982-83 (1361-62) to 12,061 rials (approx $1.50) per day in 1999-2000 (1378-79), growing at an annual nominal rate of 18.9 per cent. However, this rate has been lower than the average annual inflation rate of 21.7 per cent during the same period. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose from 100 in 1982-83 (1361-62) to 2,311 in 1998-99 (1377-78). In 2000-2001 (1379-80), the average CPI increased by 12.6 per cent. Data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs indicated that in 2002 (1381) the minimum wage paid was 28,446 rials ($3.55) per day.[21]

[20] Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.

[21] Ministry of Social Affairs and Central Bank of Iran.

Part Two: People with Disabilities—Definitions, Data and Situation

2.1 Definitions of disability

According to the definition adopted by the State Welfare Organization a person with a disability is someone whose physical or psychological health, or both, have been impaired, reduced or damaged, and whose ability in performing daily work has been diminished.[22]

2.2 Disability classification systems

The following operational categories are used in Iran by the State Welfare Organization to define disability:[23]

1. A physical-motor disability includes the absence or deformity of any visible upper or lower body organ placing limitation on activities.

2. Hearing disabilities - definitions
   - Deafness is defined as lack of ability to learn sounds from one's surroundings even with the use of hearing aid
   - Semi-deafness is defined as lack of ability to learn sounds from one's surroundings without the use of hearing aid or without special training.

3. Visual disabilities - definitions
   - Legal blindness is defined as lack of ability to see an object at a distance of 3 metres and a visual angle of less than 10 degrees
   - Relative blindness is defined as less than 1/10 eyesight and less than 20 degrees visual angle
   - Absolute blindness is defined a lack of ability to comprehend distance
   - Occupational disability is defined as lack of ability to perform job due to visual disability

[22] Mohammad Mansuri, Majmu 'eh-ye qavanin va mogrrarat-e behzisti (collection of welfare laws and regulations), Tehran: State Welfare Organization, 1997 (1376).

[23] Ibid.

4. A person with a mental disability is defined as one whose ability to work and function in society has been limited due to low mental ability or mental disorder. A person with a mental disability is categorized according to Intelligence Quota (IQ) by means of scoring groups 0-25, 25-50 and 50-70.

Another classification officially used in Iran to designate disability is based on the cause of disability. The main category was created following the Iran-Iraq War that tragically resulted in a great number of wounded combatants as well as non-combatants. Around 400,000 of the wounded were registered as permanently disabled after the War. They were categorized as *janbaz*, literally meaning those who were willing to lose their lives. The government created a special programme to assist these disabled war veterans under the Janbazan Foundation (Foundation for Disabled War Veterans).

2.3 Sources of disability information and statistics

Sources of disability information

There is no single source of disability information in Iran. The organizations that collect information on the issue include:

- The Statistical Center of Iran, which is responsible for all major statistical surveys and the National Census
- Educational organizations, in particular the Special Education Organization under the Ministry of Education and the Technical and Vocational Training Organization under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
- The Janbazan Foundation
- The State Welfare Organization
- The Social Welfare and Rehabilitation University
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with people with disabilities, in particular the Ra'd Organization

Apart from the Statistical Center of Iran, all the organizations referred to collect information for the most part from the people who access and use their services. That is, they keep and compile information on the services they provide and individuals who receive their services. In some cases they may conduct occasional research studies. Information collected by the State Welfare Organization, Janbazan Foundation and the Ministry of Education is quite extensive, classifying the disability conditions of the users of their services. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs collects information regarding on-the-job injuries.

The Statistical Center of Iran asks a few questions regarding disability-related issues on the questionnaire it uses when it conducts the National Census every ten years. The questions have been targetted at people with disabilities nationwide. As the next sub-section reveals, however,

the information has not been consistent from one census to the next. In particular the 1996 (1375) Census results had less information on disability-related issues than the 1986 Census. Further, the information provided in the two surveys was not comprehensive and the definitions were not accurate enough to allow for a thorough analysis of the results. The reliability of data has therefore come under question. For this reason, the State Welfare Organization is now trying to have the Statistical Center of Iran use better targetted questions, improved definitions, and a wider range of questions on disability-related issues for the next census in 2006 (1385).

Population with disabilities

The 1996 (1375) Census showed that 479,590, or 3.9 per cent of all Iran's 12,398,235 households had members with a disability. Of the 479,590 households with disabled members, 270,487, or 56.5 per cent were urban households and 206,921, or 43.5 per cent were rural households. Of the total, 78,174 households had a blind member, 71,858 households had a deaf member, 210,645 households had a member with a physical-motor disability, and 146,921 households had a member with a mental disability (without any form of breakdown).[24] Of the total number of households with a disabled member, 89.8 per cent were headed by a man, while 10.02 per cent were headed by a woman.

Among households with a disabled member, 13.5 per cent had no literate member (9.8 per cent in urban areas and 18.3 per cent in rural areas). Other types of information are also available in the 1996 (1375) Census, including age and educational structure of heads of households with a disabled member. But they do not shed much light on the disability structure in the country.

The previous census taken in 1986-87 (1365-66) contained more detailed information on people with disabilities.[25] It reported the disabled population as representing 9.1 per cent of the total population, or 4.49 million of a population of 49.44 million. The huge disparity between the figure recorded in the 1996 (1375) Census and the 1986 (1365) Census would suggest severe inaccuracies in the data collection or data collection methods. The percentage of households with disabled members stood at 4.6 per cent of all households. Of the country's disabled population, 37 per cent were female and 67 per cent male. Most people with disabilities were aged between 15-64.

About half of the disabled population resided in urban areas, 49.3 per cent in rural areas, while 0.7 per cent was classified as transhumant. In terms of the cause of disability, 21.3 per cent of people's disabilities were due to a birth defect, 41.2 per cent due to illness, 28.2 per cent as due to an accident, and 9.3 per cent unknown. It revealed that 42.9 per cent of all people with a disability had a physical-motor disability, 30.6 per cent had a mental impairment (without a clear definition) and 16.3 per cent had a visual disability. Whereas 61.8 per cent of the population was reported to be literate in 1986, only 35.5 per cent of the disabled population was literate. The unemployment rate among the disabled population was double that of the non-disabled population in 1986 (1365).[26]

A recent survey of people with disabilities in Tehran indicated that in the sample drawn from

[24] Statistical Center of Iran.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid.

people with disabilities in employment, 95.7 per cent were men, while only 4.3 per cent were women.[27] Among women with disabilities in employment, 82.6 per cent had office or manual jobs. The corresponding figure among men was 86.1 per cent. Among the group, 13.3 per cent had a visual impairment, 30 per cent had a physical-motor disability, and 55.3 per cent had multiple disabilities. The literacy rate of the group stood at 86 per cent and 29 per cent received job training, 17.2 per cent of these were in technical-professional occupations.

2.4 On-the-job injuries

Up-to-date statistics on the number of disabilities caused through on-the-job injuries are lacking. There is compensation available to such people, assuming they are registered with social security. Available statistics on the number of people receiving compensation insurance payments shows that during 2000-01 (1379-80), 9,105 people were receiving compensation for minor disabilities and 8,128 for major disabilities. The figures have been rising over the past decade.[28]

2.5 Environmental factors affecting full participation

Most public buildings in Iran are not accessible for those using wheelchairs or walking aids. Many of the buildings, including office buildings and education and training centres, have steps at their entrances and those that don't have other barriers. Buses and urban trains lack any special equipment to allow usage by people with disabilities. There are very few special lavatories for people with disabilities. In addition, sidewalks are in a very poor state in all major cities, making it very difficult for people with a physical-motor disabilities to use them. No provisions have been made to facilitate the activities of people with visual disabilities in Iran. Nor are there any provisions for people with hearing impairments. Mainstream training centres are not equipped with the staff or equipment to provide training in Braille or use sign language.

In a recent study using a limited sample size, the results of which were cited in a report prepared by the Labor and Social Affairs Institute, the following discoveries were made. The commute time to work was found to be relatively long for a majority of people with disabilities. In 41 per cent of the cases, this took more than 2 hours, and in only 14 per cent of the cases was the journey time an hour or less. In 51 per cent of cases, people with disabilities used the workplace transportation service. Some 37 per cent use public transportation, while only 6 per cent of people with disabilities use their own cars. Overall, the information points out the difficulties people with disabilities face in reaching the workplace.[29]

As mentioned earlier, the Government of Iran has developed a special programme for disabled war veterans. One focus of this programme has been on creating a suitable physical environment. Coordination is being made with all relevant government organizations, including municipal

[27] The results of this study were made available by the Ministry of Labor.

[28] Information provided by the Ministry of Labor.

[29] Labor and Social Affairs Institute. Country Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

administrations to address the needs of people with physical disabilities in terms of the physical environment in which they live. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has also asked the High Council of Urban Planning and Architecture to form a committee to address the urban needs of people with disabilities. A number of seminars have been held on the issue, and a set of guidelines has been drawn up. These guidelines are to be reviewed every five years with the cooperation of Mostaz'afan, the Janbanzan Foundation and the State Welfare Organization.

Until now there have not been any discernable results from this programme on the state of the cities. However, the programme has been successful in the provision of free special equipment to allow a number of those people with physical disabilities to drive cars. Other equipment provided to disabled war veterans includes those used at home or in the office to facilitate the movement of the persons with disabilities. Further, the State Welfare Organization provides grants for the purchase of equipment required for people with physical disabilities, or provides this equipment for free. The organization has also started a programme to train personnel in various government organizations sign language.[30]

2.6 Social factors affecting full participation

Most members of society are not familiar with the potential of people with disabilities. Until recently, disability was considered a taboo and was kept hidden. This was the case for people with both physical and mental disabilities. Under such circumstances people with disabilities were obliged to stay at home and were deprived of most social activities. Indeed, disability was considered a domestic issue. However, these attitudes have changed over time due to major changes in society, but also recently due to the impact of the Iran-Iraq War, which left many people disabled. However, unless employers can be convinced to employ trained and qualified people with disabilities, little progress will be made in vocational rehabilitation programmes for people with disabilities.

The government has provided some incentives in this area. However, a recent study cited in a report prepared by the Labor and Social Affairs Institute found that most employers (89 per cent) were unaware of the incentives laid down in the laws and the facilities provided by government for the employment of people with disabilities. Further, 75 per cent of employers interviewed were unaware of the legal provision concerning employment of individuals with disabilities. Rather, the main incentive cited for employing people with disabilities was a sense of sympathy and a humanistic responsibility towards fellow human beings (43 per cent). "Acquaintance with the person with a disability" (22 per cent) was another reason cited in the study.

Overall, the study found that employers assess the work of people with a disability to be of lower quality. Some 54 per cent of employers believed the work of workers with a disability to be "different", 68 per cent thought of it as of a lower quality, while 31 per cent believed it to be of a higher quality. Despite this, about 59 per cent of the employers who assessed the work quality of employees with disabilities to be lower still wanted to continue to employ them. Further, 80 per cent of the employers were satisfied with the work of the workers with disabilities employed in

[30] Ibid.

their workshops.[31]

To overcome the negative cultural attitudes toward the economic participation of people with disabilities, the State Welfare Organization is planning to prepare a number of educational films focusing on the abilities of people with disabilities for the general public. The Janbazan Foundation has also been active in helping publish literature on disability, as well as those produced by disabled war veterans. All efforts so far, however, have not been a part of a comprehensive plan. Nor have they had any particular target.

2.7 Disabled people's organizations

If we apply the strict definition, there is a real lack of disabled peoples' organizations in Iran. However, three national organizations should be mentioned that have founding members or management boards including people with disabilities and that advocate the cause of people with disabilities. These include:

Iran Disabled Persons Association [Jemeeh-ye Ma'lulin-e Iran]

This organization was established in 1979 (1358). Its main activity is to advocate the cause of people with disabilities with the government in order to provide rehabilitation facilities, subsidies, and tax and duty exemptions for much-needed equipment. In some instances, this organization provides educational facilities, but the kind of training provided is not the kind that results in employment.

White Cane Institute [Moassesseh-ye Asa-ye Sefid]

This organization was founded in 1990 (1369) with the goal of creating awareness in the society on the situation of blind people and partially-sighted people, encouraging them to participate in all aspects of life.

Association of Persons with Spinal Cord Injuries [Anjoman-e Zaye'-Nokhai-ye Iran]

The Association was established in 2000 (1379) to create awareness about the abilities of those with spinal cord injuries, promote their cause and advocate their access to educational, social and cultural facilities.

Other organizations dealing with disability issues include the NGOs founded by people with disabilities that are focusing on technical and professional training and the provision of employment. Four such organizations exist in Iran today, each in a different city – Qazvin, Esfahan, Behshahr and Hamadan. The most successful among them is the Qazvin Association of the Disabled. This organization has been active in the provision of training in several fields as well as employment. They have managed to secure contracts with several production firms to supply manufactured electronics and other products or services.

[31] Labour and Social Affairs Institute. Country Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

Part Three: Legislation, Policies and Institutional Structures

3.1 International policies adopted

The Islamic Republic of Iran signed the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) Resolution 48-3 on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993 to 2002 (1372-1381). Iran has not yet ratified the ILO's Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention No. 159 (1983).

Other international ILO Conventions which Iran has ratified include:[32]

Table 3.1: ILO Conventions ratified by Iran, and relevant ILO recommendations

Convention No., (year established)	Convention title	Year of ratification
Convention 14, 1921 (1301)	Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention	1972 (1351)
Convention 19, 1925 (1305)	Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention	1972 (1351)
Convention 29, 1930 (1310)	Forced Labour Convention	1967 (1346)
Convention 95, 1949 (1329)	Protection of Wages Convention	1972 (1351)
Convention 100, 1951 (1331)	Equal Remuneration Convention	1972 (1351)
Convention 104, 1955 (1334)	Abolition of Penal Sanctions (Indigenous Workers) Convention	1959 (1338)
Convention 105, 1957 (1336)	Abolition of Forced Labour Convention	1958 (1337)
Convention 106, 1957 (1336)	Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention	1967 (1346)
Convention 108, 1958 (1337)	Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention	1966 (1345)
Convention 111, 1958 (1337)	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention	1964 (1343)
Convention 122, 1962 (1341)	Employment Policy Convention	1972 (1351)
Convention 182, 1999 (1378)	Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention	2001 (1380)

3.2 National legislation

There are a number of laws, regulations, and guidelines that deal with disability-related issues in Iran. Indeed, the numbers are too large to be covered within the confines of this study. As a result, this section only provides an overview of some of the major relevant legislation.

A law requiring the government to hire workers from among war veterans disabled during conflict or the revolution was passed in 1985 (1364). It states that all ministries, institutions of the Islamic revolution, organizations, government-owned factories and companies, banks, municipalities and all other organizations that in some way receive funds from the government's general budget are required to hire at least 10 per cent of their staff from this group or their families. With regard to other people with disabilities that don't fall into this category, Addendum 1 of the law states that these organizations must hire 3 per cent of their personnel from this group in coordination with the State Welfare Organization.

The only article in the Labor Law of the Islamic Republic of Iran to deal with the employment of people with disabilities is Article 119 and its addendums. The other legal case dealing with the

[32] Labor and Social Affairs Institute. Country Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

issue of the employment of people with disabilities and the war wounded is the Bill on Supporting the Employment of the Disabled, which was passed by the cabinet in 1985 (1364). Article 6 of this Bill states that the placement of people with disabilities in jobs determined by the State Welfare Organization with the agreement of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Janbazan Foundation is considered a priority. Article 8 of the same Bill states that the Planning and Budget Organization is required to maintain the required priority in providing the budget pertaining to the employment of people with disabilities and provide the required funds for the implementation of this law.

The third Development Plan law also includes some items on this topic. For example, in article 57 priority has been given to "exemplary veterans".

People with disabilities and the Constitution

The Iranian Constitution recognizes the rights of people with disabilities in the following Article:[33]

> Article 29 [Welfare Rights] (1) To benefit from social security with respect to retirement, unemployment, old age, disability, absence of a guardian, and benefits relating to being stranded, accidents, health services, and medical care and treatment, provided through insurance or other means, is accepted as a universal right.
>
> (2) The government must provide the foregoing services and financial support for every individual citizen by drawing, in accordance with the law, on the national revenues and funds obtained through public contributions.

Law on duties of various organizations dealing with people with disabilities[34]

This law mentions the duties of various organizations dealing with disability issues, defines disability, and makes provisions for the establishment of rehabilitation centres and cooperatives. Protected work in the passages refers to work created for people with disabilities who face difficulty in holding jobs in the mainstream environment.

> For the purpose of realization of the objectives mentioned in Articles 21 and 29 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in order to act in compliance with the provisions of the Legal Bill on Establishment of the State Welfare Organization, to follow the sublime instructions of Islam, and in order to satisfy and to expand social services, particularly in respect to employment of the disabled, the following provisions of law will be put into force:
>
> Article 1
>
> For the purpose of this law, the disabled individual is a person whose physical or psychological health or both have become impaired, reduced or damaged, and whose ability in performing daily work has been diminished.
>
> Note

[33] The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (adopted 24 Oct, 1979 [1358], effective since 3 Dec 1979 [1358], amended 28 July, 1989 [1368]).

[34] Cited in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

Assessment of the type and degree of disability of war heroes is vested with the Mostaz'afan [and Janbazan] Foundations, and that of the other disabled people with the State Welfare Organization.

Article 2

Vocational rehabilitation constitutes the creation of required opportunities for the disabled in the area of professional skills training and employment in view of their physical and mental capabilities and their interest, taking into account the requirements of the labour market.

Article 3

Vocational rehabilitation centres are those in which the disabled persons are voluntarily engaged in training and apprenticeship.

Note

The organization and administration of these centres for attraction of disabled individuals and making best use of their products shall be in accordance with a bylaw to be drafted by the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Training and approved by the Council of Ministers.

Article 4

Disabled Cooperative Companies are set up by disabled with support (including training and protection) provided by the State Welfare Organization in accordance with the respective regulations, in compliance with Article 119 (Note 2) of the Labor Law.

Article 5

Protected employment is a type of employment for the disabled who owing to the type and severity of their disabilities are not able to work for a full day, or who are unable the whole week in their working place.

Note

Disabled persons' working hours and salary levels when employed in the government and the non-governmental sector shall be determined in accordance with the regulations specified in the bylaw drafted by the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Training, the State Administrative and Employment Organization, and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, incorporating the opinions of Mostaz'afan [and Janbazan] Foundations. The bylaws shall be put into force after approval by the Council of Ministers.

Article 6

Priority of assignment shall be given to the disabled in jobs specified by the State Welfare Organization, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the [Janbazan] Foundation.

Article 7

Failure of authorities and governmental institutions to comply with the provisions of the laws requiring employment of a certain percentage of the disabled shall be considered as an administrative offence and shall be punishable in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Non-governmental enterprises that have failed to comply with the provisions of these laws for any reason shall pay a penalty for each case of the monthly amount 10,000 rials [$1.25] for duration of the time the disabled person was refused employment. The Planning and Budget Organization [Management and Planning Organization] shall appropriate the equivalent of the

amount collected annually, through its incorporation in the State Welfare Organization budget for the enhancement of the disabled persons' employment.

Note

The manner of implementing the provision of this Article including collection and payment of the funds shall be in accordance with the bylaws to be proposed by the Ministries of Health, Treatment and Medical Training and Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, approved by the Council of Ministers, and put into force.

Article 8

The plan and Budget Organization [Management and Planning Organization] shall give due priority to provision of financial credit pertaining to the employment of the disabled, and shall provide the necessary budget for implementation of this law.

Article 9

All Disabled Cooperative Companies shall be exempted from income taxes.

Article 11

The State Welfare Organization shall be responsible for implementation of this law.

Note 1

The organizational position or job of the employees of the organizations mentioned in Document No. 64330 dated October 15, 1985 (1364) shall be retained [this means most governmental and semi-governmental organizations], and the respective organizations shall appoint the persons who have become paralyzed in the course of their service or in the war, but who are able to work, at least to as high a position as their former position. In cases where owing to paralysis their installation to the same position is not possible, they shall be provided with positions equal to their earlier ranks without any reduction in their regular salaries, allowances, and promotion. The same shall apply to those persons who are placed under medical care or become bedridden as a result of their presence in the front.

State obligation to hire 10 per cent of personnel from the disabled war veteran population[35], approved in 1986 (1365)

This is expressed as a single article:

Respecting all existing regulations and in coordination with the Foundation of the Martyrs, from the date this law is passed, all ministries, institutions of the Islamic revolution, state institutions, companies, plants, banks, municipalities, and all other organizations that receive state funding are required to hire at least 10 per cent of their needed personnel from the disabled war veteran population or their families as well as the families of the martyrs, MIAs, and POWs, provided that qualified persons exist among the mentioned categories.

Note

Respecting all existing regulations and in coordination with the State Welfare Organization, the

[35] Cited in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

above-motioned organizations are obligated to hire 3 per cent of their needed personnel in suitable positions from the general disabled population.

Executive guidelines on the retirement of disabled war veterans and general disabled population and those employed in hazardous occupations[36], approved in 1988 (1367)

All ministries, institutions of the Islamic revolution, state institutions, companies, plants, banks, municipalities, and all other organizations that receive state funding (whose obeying of this law requires their mention) may allow the retirement of the disabled war veterans, or those with job-related disabilities, or those fallen ill as a result of their occupation, or the general disabled population, after twenty years of acceptable service upon their written request.

The calculation of the retirement pension for the above-mentioned persons is based on their last salaries before their retirement.

Regulations concerning government hiring exemptions, approved in 1984 (1363)[37]

The most relevant article states:

Article 3

Selection of personnel for government employment or trainees whose training will result in permanent government employment shall be based on entrance examination except in the following cases:

Exception C: Upon referral by relevant organizations of the families of the martyrs, disabled war veterans or their families, or guardians of such families.

Labour law [covering private sector workers][38]

The most relevant articles state:

Article 31

If the termination of an employment contract is due to disability or retirement, the employer must pay the employee 30 days of wages for every year of service based on his or her most recent pay level.

Article 32

If the termination of the contract is due to work-related reductions in the worker's mental or physical ability (based on the opinion of the Health Ministry's Medical Commission upon referral by the Islamic Labour Council or the worker's legal representative), then the employer must pay the employee an amount equal to 2 months of her-his pay for every year of service.

Article 119, Note 1

[36] Cited in Mohammad Mansuri, Majmu 'eh-ye qavanin va mogrrarat-e behzisti (collection of welfare laws and regulations), Tehran: State Welfare Organization, 1997 (1376).

[37] Cited in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

[38] Ibid.

Job placement centres in provincial capitals are required to establish offices under the title of "planning and support for the employment of the disabled". All relevant organizations are required to cooperate with the latter offices.

Article 119, Note 2

The government is required to assist the formation of cooperatives (in production, agriculture, industry, and distribution) for the disabled through granting zero-interest loans and provision of training and other facilities. It is also required to address architectural obstacles in such offices to facilitate their use by the disabled.

Article 119, Note 3

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is required to formulate guidelines on the provision of facilities for the disabled through consultation with the Disabled Association and the State Welfare Organization.

National employment law [covering public workers][39]

The most relevant articles state:

Article 79

If a permanent government employee is disabled due to accident so that he/she cannot continue working, his/her compensation shall be one thirtieth of his/her average monthly salary plus adjustments times the number of service years – provided that this calculated compensation is not larger than his/her average monthly salary.

Article 80

If a permanent government employee is disabled on the job so that he/she cannot continue work, his/her compensation shall be equal to his/her monthly salary plus adjustments.

Bill on employment and social facilities for disabled war veterans[40]

The most relevant articles state:

Article 8

In order to appropriately benefit from the labour force of disabled war veterans, all organizations covered by this Bill are required to utilize the services of the disabled war veterans in accordance with the latter's physical and psychological conditions.

Article 9

All organizations covered by this Bill are required to change the employment status of disabled war veterans from temporary to permanent when they meet the requirements upon their request.

Article 13

[39] Cited in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

[40] Ibid.

In order to enhance the educational level of disabled war veterans, all organizations covered by this Bill are required to create the possibility for disabled war veterans to continue their education up to the college level through short courses and full or part time education fellowships. Disabled war veterans participating in such programmes will continue to receive salaries and benefits.

Article 21

All organizations covered by this bill are required to allocate a certain percentage of their nominal capacity to disabled war veterans, finding suitable employment for them with the cooperation of the Janbazan Foundation.

New developments

A draft plan on the provision of support to people with disabilities has been submitted to the Parliament's Research and Education Commission for consideration. The plan calls for the expansion of all services, including rehabilitation and training, provided to the disabled population by also encouraging private-sector participation; addressing the physical and ergonomic needs of people with disabilities in all public buildings and across urban spaces; provision of subsidies to centres dealing with disability issues, and a host of other programmes that will boost the support for social and economic participation of the disabled population. While this Plan is under review, critics point out the high cost of its implementation and therefore feel it is unlikely to be approved.

3.3 Disability policies and regulations

As mentioned earlier, Iran follows a five-year planning cycle with the third post-revolutionary national plan currently in effect during 2000-05 (1379-84). The current plan contains the following passages:[41]

- In order to promote the qualitative and quantative levels of rehabilitation services and place these services at the disposal of all people, and with the aim of creating equal opportunities for the disabled and allowing them to participate in society, and in order to make public places (whether private or government-owned) available, in the course of the Third Development Plan, certain spaces shall be allocated for hospitalization of female war injured and special ambulances shall be placed gratuitously at the disposal of the war injured who have lost over 70 per cent function of their organs, or those whose spinal cords, or nervous system has been damaged.
- The executive Bylaw pertaining to the foregoing paragraph shall be drafted with the collaboration of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the State Welfare Organization, and State Plan and Budget [now Management and Planning] Organization, and shall be approved by the Council of Ministers.
- Technical and vocational training appropriate for the disabled and the war injured shall be provided on the basis of their special needs.

[41] Labour and Social Affairs Institute. Country Report on the Status of the Disabled in Iran, 2002 (1381).

- Efficient execution methods shall be determined for placing under health and treatment coverage vulnerable groups, such as the disabled, the elderly, those with no support, the retirees, low income families, the unemployed, people with physical, mental and psychological disabilities, refugees, residents of the country's deprived regions, and residents of city margins and urban areas lacking health care as well as other vulnerable strata.
- Appropriate execution methods shall be formulated for the provision of health and treatment services in an active manner to the vulnerable group, including quarantine, disease prevention, appropriate treatment, rehabilitation, follow up, and reporting.
- Expansion of society-based rehabilitation shall be made through the following measures:

  a. Revision and amendment of traditional methods (rehabilitation of the disabled in rehabilitation centres), to society-based rehabilitation methods, relying on the participation of the disabled, their families and other people in society and using all existing resources and capabilities within society.

  b. Ensuring disabled people, their families and society aware of society-based rehabilitation methods.

  c. Providing financial assistance for the education of the disabled and for keeping them within their families.

  d. Provision of rehabilitation services through mobile groups for the purpose of increasing disabled persons' access in the areas located outside the rehabilitation centres.

  e. Controlling and preventing the emergence and exacerbation of disability and social and psychological damage, paying attention to the factors inflicting damage through the following measures:

  f. Implementing programmes to increase the society's awareness, raising public acceptance of the disabled, psychological patients and people with special conditions.

  g. Expansion of clinical therapy and counseling services, and providing the facilities required in these centres for rehabilitation of people with disabilities and people with chronic psychological disabilities.

  h. Provision of services and formulating execution methods for the development of social aid and counselling activities, and performance of social rehabilitation measures for the purpose of satisfying the basic needs of the groups with demand, and helping their adjustment within society.

3.4 Evaluation and review of policies

The evaluation and review of policies are carried out by the same organizations and institutions that have enacted laws or formulated policies dealing with the issues of people with disabilities. These include Parliament, the Guardian Council, the Expediency Council, the National Administrative and Personnel Council and the Management and Planning Organization. However, there is no specific mechanism in place to evaluate a plan or policies related to people with disabilities.

3.5 Institutional structures

There are three main national organizations that deal with issues related to people with disabilities: the State Welfare Organization, the Janbazan Foundation, and the Special Education Organization. There is currently no specific body in the country tasked with coordinating the activities of the various organizations or NGOs working on disability issues.

State Welfare Organization

With the approval of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the provisions of Principle 29, those making policies regarding the affairs of people with disabilities decided to provide due service to special groups by establishing an organization operating in harmony with existing efforts. Consequently, on 14 June 1980 (1359), the Islamic Revolution Council approved a Bill on the establishment of the State Welfare Organization. This newly-established unified organization was tasked with providing support, rehabilitation and reeducation through all pre-existing institutions and organizations. The main tasks of the State Welfare Organization are:

- The provision of rehabilitation, training and social aid services to people with a motor-physical disability, including those with spinal cord injuries
- The provision of rehabilitation and training services to people with intellectual disabilities (educable, trainable and isolated) on a regular basis
- The provision of rehabilitation and training services to the deaf and individuals whoa are hearing impaired
- The provision of rehabilitation and training services to the blind and individuals who are visually impaired
- Supporting and protecting people with disabilities and the elderly
- Studying and formulating methods of preventing disability
- Conducting research projects on disability issues
- Raising awareness both among policy makers and society

The State Welfare Organization is now an independent organization under the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Training, which is the official current title for the Ministry of Health. All activities related to people with disabilities are centralized under the Deputy of Rehabilitation Affairs. There is representation of this office in all provinces. The Deputy for Rehabilitation Affairs supervises rehabilitation affairs of the whole country through three offices of Social Rehabilitation, Vocational Rehabilitation and Medical Rehabilitation.

There were 800 rehabilitation centres nationwide in 2001. The largest segment of these were 182 physical therapy centres that served 81,887 people. There were 106 trade training centres

attended by 4,479 people with disabilities, 97 speech therapy centres utilized by 11,638 people, 83 hearing evaluation centres serving 83,056 people, and several work-treatment centres which served 27,547 people. Some 94,889 people with disabilities received financial aid and rehabilitation services at home, 631,403 received short-term aid and 242,056 received rehabilitation equipment. Of these 1.052 million people, or 45.32 per cent received social services support and aid. It was recorded that 32,359 received services or were cared for in 654 private centres, while 302,135 people with disabilities were cared for in government-run centres.[42]

The responsibilities of the Deputy Office for Rehabilitation Affairs within the State Welfare Organization include:

- Supporting the families of people with disabilities who require rehabilitation services
- Providing preventive efforts, treatment and vocational and social rehabilitation facilities and education for people with disabilities
- Supporting and caring for people with disabilities who can't be rehabilitated, as well as the elderly
- The training of the workforce required for rehabilitation services
- The promotion of participation by volunteer groups and NGOs
- The issuance of permits and determining guidelines for the establishment, utilization, management, supervision and evaluation of centres
- Investigating violations by NGOs

The objectives of the Deputy Office for Rehabilitation Affairs within the State Welfare Organization include:

- Informing society and changing people's perceptions regarding people with disabilities
- Identification and development of people with disabilities' potential
- Offering a regular life and creating equal opportunities for people with disabilities
- Offering timely rehabilitation services
- Expanding the society-based rehabilitation plan
- Expanding services in the private sector
- Establishing information and data systems for the disabled community

The State Welfare Organization continued offering rehabilitation services in 2003 (1382) by focusing on extending medical and vocational rehabilitation and social therapy (for improved participation in society) to various groups of people with disabilities, including those with a

[42] Ibid.

physical-motor disability, those who are completely or partially blind or deaf, those suffering from various psychological or mental conditions, elderly people with disabilities, as well as those suffering from chronic mental illness. Programmes being implemented through rehabilitation services include:

- The establishment of a rehabilitation information centre
- Informing society and raising awareness about disability
- Organizing patients with chronic mental conditions
- Training people with disabilities in life skills
- Offering rehabilitation services to those with spinal cord ailments through mobile rehabilitation teams
- The establishment of a plan for training deaf or partially deaf people
- The implementation of a community-based rehabilitation plan
- Provision of support and aid for the formation and expansion of NGOs, as well as capacity-building in this area
- Streamlining round-the-clock centres in order to improve the situation with regard to the care and rehabilitation of children with disabilities
- Provision of livelihood and income aid to families whose service provision has been transferred to NGOs
- Provision of employment and an enabling environment to people with disabilities
- Provision of aid to equip and expand rehabilitation centres
- Provision of financial aid towards covering the costs of care and rehabilitation of needy patients in centres not run by the government
- Supplying rehabilitation support equipment
- Pursuing the implementation of sections of the Third Development Plan pertaining to the adjustment of the built environment to the needs of people with disabilities

The State Welfare Organization proposed a plan in 1999 (1378) called The Employer's Share of Insurance Premiums, which was officially endorsed. Based on this plan, it was decided that 1,200 million rials ($150,000) of insurance premiums for people with disabilities employed in private workshops and other organizations be paid by the State Welfare Organization and this amount was increased to 1,400 million rials ($175,000) in 2000 (1379) in order to encourage more privately-owned workshops to hire people with disabilities.

The Janbazan Foundation

As a result of its wars with Iraq, the number of people with disabilities in Iran, particularly those

suffering from orthopedic problems, has rapidly increased. The care and aid provided to disabled war veterans and other people with disabilities are given special priority with the aim of rehabilitating them, so they can lead normal, active lives, both socially and economically.

The activities, including rehabilitation services, of the Healthcare and Treatment Deputy Offices of the Janbazan Foundation are as follows:

- The provision of nursing and rehabilitation services
- Conducting a programme of home visits for disabled war veterans
- Conducting a programme of periodic visits to disabled war veterans
- The provision of general and complimentary insurance through government and foundation treatment centres
- The provision of enabling services provided in specialized centres to those who have suffered nerve and brain damage
- Providing services in day centres
- Providing rehabilitation services to disabled war veterans in the Foundation's centres
- Covering costs for the donation of body organs to disabled war veterans
- Sending disabled war veterans abroad for treatment
- Covering nursing costs for disabled war veterans
- Organizing educational and treatment camps
- Educating disabled war veterans on their healthcare and treatment issues
- Offering treatment services to difficult-to-treat war wounded and their families
- Procurement, supply and maintenance of rehabilitation equipment, including wheelchairs, beds, canes, hearing aids, physical rehabilitation equipment, physical therapy equipment, dental works, treatment equipment, special mattresses and medicines

The Special Education Organization

A law passed in the Parliament in 1990 (1369) established the Special Education Organization as a government-run organization attached to the Ministry of Education. After pre-school, this organization is in charge of the education of the disabled pupils at the primary, secondary, and high school levels.[43] It is delegated the job of rehabilitating, educating and training all children with disabilities.

In Iran, vocational training and employment generation is the responsibility of the Technical and Trade Training Organization attached to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The activities of this organization include the following:

[43] Introduction to the activities and programmes of the Special Education Organization for the years 1998-2001 (1376-81), Ministry of Education.

- The establishment of basic training centres for unskilled youth and workers seeking jobs
- The establishment of expert training centres in order to elevate the expertise of workers and those with some expertise, employment specialists and professional trainers
- The establishment of training centres for instructors

3.6 Other implementing organizations

Officially, there are 247 NGOs dealing with disability issues in Iran. They are active in the provision of rehabilitation services, education and training, advocacy and public awareness, and employment services. The majority of these organizations receive some form of public funding.

NGOs focusing on people with disabilities can be classified within three grroups. First are those organizations providing vocational rehabilitation leading to employment. A prime example of this group is the Ra'd Organization, which has branches in Tehran and Karaj, Tavanyab in Tehran and the Tavanyaban organizations of Mashhad and Yazd. Philanthropists founded these organizations, and they issue certificates endorsed by the Ministry of Labor to those who have completed vocational training programmes.

The second group includes organizations providing employment services to people with disabilities, such as the Qazvin Association of the Disabled. Such organizations include people with disabilities themselves and their main aim is securing employment and generating income for their members.

A third category provides services to the elderly, including those with disabilities. While their main aim is to house and rehabilitate people with disabilities, they often provide services that result in employment and income generation. Branches of the Kahrizak organization fall under this category.

Part Four: Education, Vocational Training, Self-Employment and Employment Services for People with Disabilities

4.1 The education system

Schooling is provided for free to all Iranians until the end of secondary level. The first eight years of education is mandatory for all Iranian children. The table below provides information on school enrolment, including special education, based on the 1996 (1375) Census.

Table 4.1: Pre-university students in 1996/7 (1375-76)
(by study level/institution)

	All Students	Boys	per cent	Girls	per cent
Special Education	64,077	38,762	60.5	25,315	39.5
Pre-School	195,181	99,842	51.2	95,339	48.8
Primary	9,238,393	4,885,665	52.9	4,352,728	47.1
Middle School	5,188,812	2,845,092	54.8	2,343,720	45.2
Secondary					
General	908,376	462,798	50.9	445,578	49.1
New System	2,492,094	1,294,473	51.9	1,197,621	48.1
Pre-College	107,345	48,802	45.5	58,543	54.5
Technical	41,607	40,983	98.5	624	1.5
Vocational	39,910	20,811	52.1	19,099	47.9
Evening Schools					
Primary	1,595	739	46.3	856	53.7
Middle	86,968	51609	59.3	35,359	40.7
Secondary	223,161	131872	59.1	91,289	40.9
Total	18,587,519	9,921,448	53.4	8,666,071	46.6

Source: Iran Statistical Yearbook 1996 (1375).

Educational levels in Iran have steadily risen over recent decades. The table below provides information on the literacy rate stretching back almost 50 years, including children younger than 6. While it is clear there is a wide disparity between men and women and urban and rural areas, literacy has been on the rise in both urban and rural areas, particularly over the last two decades. Since Iran has witnessed a population explosion during the same period, the great improvement in literacy rates has mainly been achieved by ensuring a steady percentage of children attend school. The growth in the number of children of school age in Iran has therefore helped ensure that the literacy rate has improved.

Table 4.2: Literacy (thousands of people [‘000 people])

Year	1956-57 (1335-36)	1966-67 (1345-46)	1976-77 (1355-56)	1986-87 (1365-66)	1996-97 (1375-76)
Nationwide					
Total Population	18,955	25,789	33,709	49,445	60,056
Literate Population	1,911	5,556	12,877	23,913	41,582
Per cent of total (approx)	10	20	38	48	69
Men	1,454	3,928	8,197	14,078	22,465
Women	457	1,628	4679	9,835	19,118
Urban Areas					
Total Population	5,954	9,794	15,855	26,845	36,818
Literate Population	1,396	3,833	8,628	15,507	27,857
Men	982	2,442	5,145	8,765	14,861
Women	414	1,390	3,483	6,742	12,996
Rural Areas					
Total Population	13,001	15,995	17,855	22,350	23,027
Literate Population	514	1,723	4,249	8,371	13,661
Men	471	1,485	3,053	5,287	7,565
Women	43	238	1,196	3,084	6,096

Source: Iran Statistical Yearbook 2000 (1379).

Pre-school (kindergarden)

Since 1966 (1345), kindergarden has been considered the first pre-school phase of education. In a plan for changing the educational system passed in 1989 (1368), pre-school was included as part of the country’s educational system. Children between the ages of 3-6 are taught at this level.

Daycare centres

In order to care for and educate children in accordance with their age and capabilities, day care centres were established under the auspices of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, as well as through other organizations. Based on the law and their charters, these centres come under the supervision of the State Welfare Organization.

Pre-school

Problems with language learning, especially in regions that have their own distinct and separate languages, led planners and officials of the Ministry of Education to prioritize the preparedness of 5-year-olds for entry into primary school and to establish and expand independent centres, or add them to existing primary schools.

The pre-school term was set at one year and new regulations were established and issued by the Primary Education Office. Under this office is a section called the Pre-Primary School Education Unit, and its most important duty is the planning, organization and supervision of kindergartens and pre-schools across the country. In the school year 1997-98 (1376-77), 204,643 pupils attended 3,458 centres. Of these, 100,342 students were girls.

Primary schools

Primary schooling in Iran includes five years of official education which begins at the age of 6. Its first phase is called common education. Primary schools in Iran fall into the following categories:

- Public schools - Those in which the government accepts and handles all educational, monetary and administrative matters
- Non-profit schools - Those which are established through the participation of the public based on the goals, regulations, programmes and guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education, under the supervision of the ministry
- Special schools - Schools established for children with mental and physical disabilities, including learning disabilities. Some schools have also been established for students with high potential, known as schools for gifted children
- Foreign schools - Those established by foreign embassies for the education of the children of their staff under special guidelines
- Adjustment schools - Those preparing students who don't understand *Farsi* sufficiently well to attend regular Iranian schools
- *Shahed* schools - Schools where a large percentage of the students attending come from families of the martyrs
- Exemplary schools - Those based on statutes passed by the Higher Education Council to educate gifted students with great potential
- General and adult night schools - Attended by those who are unable to attend day schools
- Schools for religious minorities - Those attended by religious minorities under which religious teachings are based on their faiths
- *Ashayeri* schools - Small, often mobile schools established among the transhumant population. Usually run by a single teacher
- Schools attached to regular universities and teacher training centres

Middle schools

This is the second phase of education, lasting three years, in which children aged 11-13 are taught. The schools are categorized in the same way as primary schools.

General and technical study, trade high schools

This phase includes four years of formal education in the two primary areas of academic and technical studies or trade-related studies. Three years of study at this level is required in order to obtain a high-school diploma, while the fourth is only for those who wish to continue their education through to university level. Students completing middle school can study in one of the following areas when attending high school:

- The academic or general branch, which allows the student to major in the two fields of human sciences and natural sciences or mathematics and physics. Those attending this branch after passing their final exams receive a high-school diploma
- The technical and trade branch, which originally offered the three areas of industry, services and agriculture, has been expanded to cover other areas over recent years

Higher education

Higher education starts from the 13th year of formal education and students can receive an associate degree after two years successful study, a bachelor's degrees after four years, a master's degree after two years of post-graduate study, and a doctorate degree in four to seven years. Higher education comes under the supervision of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

The Literacy movement

Following the Islamic revolution in 1979 (1358) in an edict issued by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic revolution, people unable to read and write were provided with the opportunity of becoming literate, while the literate population was invited to help in teaching these vital skills. In order to achieve this objective, the Literacy Movement was founded as an organization attached to the Ministry of Education to gradually expand its activities across the country. Courses offered by the Literacy Movement offer primary and continuing education and each course lasts for six months.

4.2 Educational opportunities for people with disabilities

The educational programme for people with disabilities starts in the pre-school phase. This includes all programmes in which children with disabilities, either independently or with their families, are trained and educated in kindergartens or rehabilitation centres. Of the nine million children of pre-school age, 3 per cent have some form of disability and are cared for and educated in private, self-sufficient and public pre-school centres and kindergartens under the supervision of the State Welfare Organization.

After the pre-school phase, the Special Education Organization of the Ministry of Education is in

charge of the education of children with disabilities at primary, secondary, and high school levels. It has the job of rehabilitating, educating and training all these children.[44] That said, a number of children with disabilities are attending mainstream schools, but there is a lack of data available on enrolment levels. There is also a lack of data on retention rates and the quality of instruction in specialized schools, including teacher training and the provision of teaching aids. In the school year 2001-02 (1379-80), 72,904 students with disabilities studied in programmes and schools run by the Special Education Organization, of which 29,160, or 40 per cent were girls.[45]

Table 4.3: Students with a disability enrolled in the academic year 2000-2001 (1379-80)

Category	Deaf or hearing impaired	Blind or visually impaired	Mental disability	Behavioral Disorder	Physical-Motor Disability	Multiple Disabilities	Total
Female	7,824	1,650	18,229	25	623	809	29,160
Male	9,202	2,247	30,125	80	896	1,194	43,744
Total	17,026	3,897	48,354	105	1,519	2,003	72,904

Source: The Special Education Organization

Table 4.4: Students with a disability enrolled in the academic year 2000-2001 (1379-80)

Category	Pre-School	Primary School	Vocational Skills	Middle School	Secondary	Total
Female	4,651	17,825	2,628	2,142	1,914	29,160
Male	6,494	28,111	4,551	2,671	1,910	43,744
Total	11,145	45,936	7,179	4,820	3,824	72,904

Source: The Special Education Organization

Alongside the activities of this organization and in order to create the grounds for participation by the private sector in the education of people with disabilities, the State Welfare Organization has also allocated a subsidy to the private and charity sectors. Some 428 private education and charity centres had commenced educational activities for people with disabilities by 2001 (1380) using this subsidy. The table below summarizes the activities of these centres.[46]

Table 4.5: Number of private education centres for people with disabilities and their capacity

Centre	Number	Capacity
Day centres for people with mental disabilities	236	13,718
Boarding centres for people with mental disabilities	159	7,899
Day centres for the deaf	14	720
Day centres for people with a physical-motor disability	15	710
Boarding centres for people with a physical-motor disability	3	135
Education centre for the blind	1	80
Total	428	26,162

[44] Introduction to the activities and programmes of the Special Education Organization for the years 1998-2002 (1376-81), Ministry of Education.

[45] Ibid.

[46] The State Welfare Organization Annual Report 2000-01 (1380).

In line with efforts aimed at improving educational opportunities for people with disabilities, the State Welfare Organization also has the following programmes:

- Expanding pre-school centres in urban and rural areas for people with disabilities
- Offering special educational provisions and facilities to people with disabilities, including deaf and blind students - for example in the national university entrance exams. The exams for the blind, deaf and some other categories of disabilities, such as those with physical-motor disabilities, are held in special environments with special staff in order to better facilitate students
- Covering the educational expenses of disabled students. In 2001 (1380), 37,452 primary school, junior high and high school students with disabilities and 2,307 university students with disabilities came under the coverage of the organization

The educational activities of the Moztaz'afan and Janbazan Foundation

The Cultural Deputy Office of the Janbazan Foundation offers the following services to disabled war veterans:

- Educational financial aid: This includes financial aid for education to disabled war veterans, their spouses and children
- Special financial aid: Special financial aid is paid to the blind war veterans, those who have lost both hands or have suffered spinal cord lesions for the purchase of special typewriters, cassette tapes and special players and offering special sensing, movement and coordination training
- Bedside education: Teachers are hired to educate disabled war veterans, who are physically unable to attend classes, at their residences or in the rest homes
- University tuition: The university tuition of all disabled war veterans and their families attending Azad and non-profit universities (meaning non-public universities that require tuition) are paid for
- Elevating sciences: In order to improve the scientific knowledge and understanding of disabled war veterans and their families, special preparatory courses for undergraduate and graduate students are provided
- University student rewards: Special rewards and bonuses are given to students who have achieved a high Grade Point Average (GPA), those who graduate early, and those who are accepted on graduate programmes. Bonuses are also paid for the successful completion of master's and doctorate theses.

4.3 Mainstream vocational training system

The vocational training system is in Iran is quite large, and numerous organizations have technical and vocational training programmes. The main activities, however, fall under the auspices of the following organizations:

- The Ministry of Education is in charge of vocational and technical schools, which are for the most part at secondary level
- The Technical and Vocational Training Organization, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, is in charge of technical and vocational training for unskilled and semi-skilled workers in both the public and private sectors
- The Ministry of Sciences, Research and Technology and the Ministry of Health are in charge of higher education, some forms of which can be considered as technical and vocational training

The activities of the Ministry of Education have already been examined, while those falling under the last item in the above list fall outside of the scope of this report.

The following table shows the number of people trained by the Technical and Vocational Training Organization of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in 2000-01 (1379-80). "Permanent centres" refers to those run directly under the organization, while independent centres only indirectly come under the organization.[47]

Table 4.6: Number of people trained by technical and trade training organizations

Type of centre and training	Men	Women	Total
Permanent centres	271,523	221,295	492,818
Mobile teams	57,792	160,255	218,047
Garrisons	30,719	4,536	35,255
Training in industries	161,844	11,336	173,180
Training in the construction industry	24,930	0	24,930
Technical self-help	61,242	21,187	82,429
Independent centres	239,066	502,409	741,475
Total	847,116	921,108	1,768,134

It should be noted that 119,640 of those trained in 2000-01 (1379-80) had a university education, representing 7 per cent of the total.

The Technical and Vocational Training Organization is currently pursuing the following objectives. Most of the items, however, are only "on paper", having yet to be realized:[48]

- Offering the equivalent of 60 hours training per person per year in the active labour force by 2004 (1383) based on the plan shown in Table 4.7.

[47] Cited in Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

[48] Cited in Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

Table 4.7: Plan for upgrading skills through training

	1997 (1376)	1998 (1377)	1999 (1378)	2000 (1379)	2004 (1380)
The country's active labour force	16,665,575	17,299,970	17,967,267	18,508,056	21,531,000
Organizational performance (people hours)	152 388 300	217 687 500	391 258 109	665 831 750	1 291 860 000
Training hours per person in the active labour force (per year)	9.1	12.5	21.7	35.9	60

- Implementation of a decentralization policy in order to delegate authority to the provinces
- Forecast the growth of technical and vocational training during the Third Five-Year National Development Plan
- Implement programmes to increase productivity
- Automate the information system and utilize advanced technology in order to optimize staff requirements and reduce government expenditure
- Encourage the private sector to invest in technical and vocational training through offering incentives, such as loans, and simplify the regulations in order to accomplish a 50-50 share between the public and private sectors by the end of the plan
- Offer advanced training in information technology and use new technologies in training programmes
- Establish a national distance-training network

4.4 Mainstream vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

There are no special provisions to include people with disabilities in mainstream technical and vocational training programmes. In fact, the current structure practically discourages their participation. Most training centres are inaccessible to people with disabilities. Exams carried out at the end of course modules do not recognize the special needs of students with disabilities. While some people with disabiltiies do participate in such programmes, they are less likely than the general population to be accepted by training centres and complete their courses.

4.5 Segregated vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

Segregated vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities in Iran are limited.

According to a State Welfare Organization report for 2001-02 (1380-81), a total of 219 training workshops in carpentry, handicrafts, carpet weaving, tailoring, knitting and other skills were held. Some 5,540 people with disabilities attended these courses.[49]

[49] The State Welfare Organization Annual Report 2000-01 (1380)

In addition to the State Welfare Organization, the Technical and Trade Training Organization of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs offers vocational training in highly-skilled needlework, saddler work and kilim weaving to people with mental disabilities. A total of 605 people with such disabilities received training through these courses during the first nine months of 2002-03 (1381-82).[50]

The Cultural Deputy Office of the Janbazan Foundation provides disabled war veterans with vocational training in tandem with institutes in the private sector and vocational training centres. Participants receive 150,000 rials ($18.75) per month in the form of a scholarship.[51]

However, the validity of the opportunities cited are questionable and it is not clear whether or not these programmes lead to meaningful employment. During the compilation of this report, in general it was found that the only training courses leading to meaningful employment were those offered by NGOs. About 20 NGOs are active in this area nationwide. The number of trainees accessing these opportunities, however, remains rather modest.

4.6 Self-help and peer vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

Self-help and peer vocational training opportunities are provided by a dozen NGOs for people with disabilities nationwide. These activities really represent the only form of segregated training on offer to people with disabilities that can lead to employment opportunities. While there is a lack of data relating to these activities, the number of recipients is reportedly very small.

4.7 Mainstream employment-services opportunities for people with disabilities

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs runs a network of placement offices across the country. Unemployed people may register with these offices in their local areas. Their names are entered into a database in order to try and find a match with the requirements of employers. The services of these centres are also provided to people with disabilities, yet no special provisions have been made.

The government adopted a series of short-term measures over recent years to address the country's severe unemployment problem. Articles 49 and 56 of Iran's Third Development Plan, 2000-04 (1379-83) call for the allocation of funds to be awarded to people as micro credit for the creation of gainful employment. In early 2001 (1380), it was decided that employment-generating credit should be provided to employers rather than individuals. The new programme, known as the Emergency Employment Scheme (*tarh-e zarbati-ye eshteqal)* offers very-low-interest loans to employers who offer additional employment opportunities. The employers must select unemployed people registered with placement offices, under the Ministry of Labour, to fill new positions in order to be eligible for the loans. The database gives priority to vulnerable groups. Credit is provided through the banking system using zero-interest public deposits (*qarz*

[50] Cited in Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

[51] Ibid.

al-hasana) held by the banks. Each loan is for the amount of 30,000,000 rials ($3,750) and must be paid back within five years. Repayment begins one year after the date the loan is awarded and continues for four years. A 4-per cent annual rate is charged by the banks as a transaction fee.

As part of the scheme, employers are provided with additional incentives. They are exempt from paying their share of employees' social security (20 per cent of salary/wage) and unemployment insurance (3 per cent of salary/wage) for the first three years of the loan period for those individuals hired through the scheme. The current minimum daily wage, which is set by the Supreme Labour Council, stands at 28,446 rials ($3.55).

The Emergency Employment Scheme was officially launched in May 2002 (1381) with the aim of providing employment for 300,000 people. According to the Ministry of Labour, as of March 2003 (1382), all 300,000 jobs had been created and all available loans had been awarded. However, the country's social security system is still processing the exemptions referred to earlier. While the programme was initially aiming to create 300,000 jobs, its lifetime was extended beyond March 2003 (1382), when it was originally set to end.

4.8 Special employment and employment-support services for people with disabilities

Addendum 1 of Article 119 of the Labour Law states that Employment Service Centres based in the provinces need to establish an office for the planning and support of employment of people with disabilities. However, these offices have either not been established or are not operational. Despite this, it has been reported that 5,006 people with disabilities were able to secure employment through the services provided. Of the these, 344 people found employment in cooperatives, 1,123 became self-employed through grants and subsidies, 775 secured home-based employment, 242 found employment with the government, while 335 found employment in supported workshops.[52]

Additionally, the Social Deputy Office of the State Welfare Organization hosts a programme for the employment of people with disabilities. While it was not possible to examine the effectiveness or scope of the programme, it is aimed at people with disabilities who have completed some form of vocational training or gained work experience in a given field, who can the facilities provided through the programme.

The programme is based upon the following policies:

Exemption for the employer for its share of insurance premiums

This has been carried out in order to motivate employers to hire people with disabilities and create parity in the pay and cost ratio to the levels of productivity of disabled and non-disabled workers.

[52] The State Welfare Organization Annual Report 2000-01 (1380).

Employment subsidies

In this plan, any person with a disabilitiy who is able to become self-employed can receive an interest-free loan of 15 million rials ($1,875 dollars).

Employment loans

Low interest 5-year loans are payable for the creation of jobs for households headed by a women and those who would find it difficult to secure employment.

Disabled war veterans

The Cooperative and Social Affairs Deputyship of the Janbazan Foundation is in charge of maintenance, stabilization and elevation of the employment situation of disabled war veterans and their families. The services offered include:

- Referral to public and private organizations for employment. All disabled war veterans are issued letters of recommendation
- Employment loans − Unemployed disabled war veterans are offered employment loans. The amount of the loan is set by the High Council of Employment each year and loans are provided through government funds
- Support loans − Self-employed war wounded with a disability affecting 25 per cent of the body who require financial support are offered support loans
- Investigating employment complaints by the war wounded. All employment complaints filed by disabled war veterans are investigated in this committee and its rulings have to be implemented
- The payment of salaries

As mentioned earlier, NGOs are perhaps the most active groups in the area of employment of people with disabilities (not including disabled war veterans). About a dozen NGOs across the country use their training programmes to place people with disabilities. The number of people participating, however, is very small.

4.9 Mainstream support for self-employment and income generation

Other than the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Cooperatives and the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee are two other institutions that have long-established active employment-generation programmes.

The Ministry of Cooperatives has played an important part in the effort to alleviate poverty and generate employment by facilitating the formation of cooperatives in rural and urban areas. The cooperatives are registered under the legal framework of the Ministry of Cooperatives. Their main goals are mobilizing productive resources and the creation of self-employment using a

small amount of initial capital.

The Imam Khomeini Relief Committee is a large and influential NGO that is very much affiliated with the government system, and is under the control of the Office of the Supreme Leader. It is a charitable organization with significant assets. It provides interest-free micro-credit towards the engagement of vulnerable groups in productive activities. For example, 3,400 women have received primary capital by means of a grant, equal to 134 billion Iranian rials ($17 million) through its programme. Training centres affiliated with the organization offer technical and training workshops to approximately 8,000 women and girls on an annual basis. Graduates of these workshops can apply for capital on completion of their courses.

4.10 Mainstream support for self employment and income generation for people with disabilities

People with disabilities may also apply to join the mainstream programmes examined earlier in this report. While no special provisions have been made to include people with disabilities in the programmes, the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee is the most active large organization to provide mainstream support for self employment and income generation to those in need, including people with disabilities.

4.11 Self employment and income-generation support services for people with disabilities

As previously stated , the Janbazan Foundation provides support loans to war wounded veterans with a more than a 25-per cent disability who wish to become self-employed, while the State Welfare Organization provides any person with a disability who is able to become self-employed with an interest-free loan of 15 million rials ($1,875).[53]

4.12 Poverty Alleviation

Since the 1979 (1358) Revolution, Iran has placed particular emphasis on human development, social protection and social justice. Significant investments have been made in the social sector over the last 20 years leading to virtually universal education, extensive health coverage and an active distributive strategy through direct transfers and indirect subsidies. In the past the government has approached the reduction of poverty through handouts and charitable transfers, rather than through employment and empowerment. While subsidies and transfers are of merit in reaching the poor, Iran still maintains, often in the name of the poor, an expensive and excessively large untargeted subsidy system.

Official sources maintain that the proportion of the population living under the poverty line has fallen from about 40 per cent in 1978 (1357) to about 15 per cent in recent years. While the fact that education and health indicators have shown an improvement cannot be disputed, Iran still faces a significant amount of income poverty, which has probably increased. A study conducted

[53] Cited in Minstry of Labor and Social Affairs' Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

for the period 1984-98 (1363-77)– by calculating the relative poverty rate by counting those households whose expenditure is less than half of median household expenditure – found that 15.8 per cent of all households were under the relative poverty line in 1984 (1363). The corresponding figure for 1998 (1377) was 20.23 per cent. Further, increases in the prevalence of poverty among rural households were found to have been more severe than urban households.[54] Other analysts have even calculated relative poverty at 45 to 50 per cent and absolute poverty at 30 to 35 per cent of urban households.[55]

There is a strong linkage between poverty and employment in Iran. Indeed, over one third of households in the poorest decile and a larger per cent across all income deciles only have one working person. This characteristic underscores the positive impact that growth and productive employment could have on poverty reduction.

The Iranian economy has grown at an average rate of 1.3 per cent per annum during the post-revolutionary period, even in strong economic performace recently as a result of some recovery amid stronger oil prices. With an unexpected population boom in 1980s and early 1990s, this has resulted in a serious decline in average incomes. The population growth rate was 2.9 per cent in the early 1980s and 3.4 per cent in the early- to mid-1990s, which was among the highest worldwide.[56]

The concept of human poverty is often classified and assessed in relation to the state of a population's health, education and income. Iran's position on the Human Poverty Index (HPI) fell from 31 per cent in 1988 to 18.1 per cent in 1997 (1376). [57] However, this trend was largely due to improvements in the health and education indicators rather than any improvement in income.

While the HPI does not provide any information on levels of income inequality in the country, there are several ways of examining to what degree they are prevalent in a country. The Gini index of income or resource inequality is one way of measuring the degree of income inequality in a country. Over recent years Iran's Gini score has been calculated at 0.419 for urban areas and 0.424 for rural areas.[58] In 1990 (1369) it stood at 0.43 according to a semi-official source.[59] These figures highlight the skewed income distribution in Iran. However, overall the country's score with regard to poverty is about average for a developing nation.

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[54] Nili, F., et al, *Barrasi-ye Tahavvolat-e Faqr, Towzi'-e Daramad va Refah-e Ejtemai Teyy-e Salha-ye Gozashteh* (An examination of Developments in Poverty, Income Distribution and Social Welfare in Previous Years), Institute for Research, Planning and Development, Tehran, 1997 (1376).

[55] Raisdana, F., *Zir-e Khatt-e Faqr dar Iran* (Under the Poverty Line in Iran), in *Faqr dar Iran* (Poverty in Iran), edited by Raisdana, F., et al, Entesharat-e Daneshgah-e Olum-e Behzisti va Tavanbakhshi, Tehran, 2000 (1379).

[56] *Iran Statistical Yearbook 1979* (1358), Statistical Center of Iran, Tehran, 2000 (1379).

[57] Management and Planning Organization and UNDP, Human Development Report of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Management and Planning Organization and UNDP, Tehran, 1999 (1378).

[58] Zonuz, B.H., *Ertabat-e Faaqr va Nabarabari ba Syasatha-ye Eqtesadi-ye Dowlat* (The Relationship between Poverty and Inequality and Government Economic Policy, in *Faqr dar Iran* (Poverty in Iran) edited by Raisdana, F. et al, Entesharat-e Daneshgah-e Olum-e Behzisti va Tavanbakhshi, Tehran, 2000 (1379).

[59] Mohammad Tabibian, edited Faqr va Towzi'-e Daramad dar Iran (Poverty and Income Distribution in Iran), Institute for Research in Planning and Development, Tehran, 1999 (1378).

4.13 Staff training for vocational rehabilitation

The Deputy Office for Rehabilitation Affairs in the State Welfare Organization is responsible for the training of staff required to oversee and support the rehabilitation of people with disabilities. Other organizations, including the Janbazan Foundation, also provide staff training. However, there is a lack of data on the nature and quality of training provided.

4.14 Barriers and gaps

There is no easy way to estimate the size of the disabled workforce and therefore provide them with relevant services due to the fact that:

- Data on the variety and dispersion of disabilities is not available and studies that have been carried out have been geared more towards identifying the numbers of people with disabilities rather that determining the services needed by them
- The occurrence of disability or delays in growth for children may seem ordinary to some families and they may believe that the problem will be solved in due course, thus preventing them from seeking help. Similarly, disability among the elderly may also seem normal to some families. This means that fewer people may be seeking help in rehabilitation centres than really need such services
- Rehabilitation centres can be inaccessible, particularly for people with disabilities living in rural areas. This is considered to be a major problem
- The existence of a direct relationship between poverty and disability and the fact that most families with disabled members are from the poorer segments of society in itself means that there are limitations and complications in providing effective rehabilitation services to all who need them
- There is a general lack of knowledge nationwide among officials of various organizations, even in some specialized areas and sectors relating to people with disabilities and the issues which effect them. Other problems include stereotyping, superstition, fear and misunderstanding, as well as pre-judgement, all of which can have a negative impact. These expressions of ignorance or misunderstanding distort, or at least overshadow and hide the real issues facing people with disabilities

Studies and other activities and actions regarding people with disabilities have mostly been carried out by non-disabled people. In most cases this means that people with disabilities are not dealt with in a humane enough manner, while their problems and difficulties are often treated as “issues” or “subjects”. It is also clear that:

- Women with disabilities face more problems that men with disabilities
- The country has few vocational training centres and they are not evenly distributed across the nation
- The centres have mostly been equipped for basic training for people with little education and so people with disabilities who have reached a higher level of education are not able

to get much out of them

- Some instructors have learned their subjects through experience and lack the academic and practical knowledge required
- The elements that play a role in people with disabilities leaving training programmes include family problems, a lack or loss of interest, inability to follow a programme or a programme being too difficult for them
- People with disabilities who have found jobs should participate in the planning of vocational training centres and their operation, but currently do not
- Because of the long wait in finding jobs, people with disabilities lose hope and also forget some of the skills or knowledge gained through training
- Once they leave their employment, most people with disabilities lose contact with employment officials
- Some specific groups of people with disabilties may be left out of the process of developing training and employment services
- People with disabilities are often unaware of labour laws and regulations, particularly the supporting laws that relate to them

The problems, limitations and shortcomings faced in offering services to disabled war veterans include:

- A lack of a unified planning and implementation system across the country with the participation and collaboration of all public bodies and NGOs for serving disabled war veterans
- A lack of coordination between the Janbazan Foundation and other national and military organizations
- Insufficient budget for the Janbazan Organization, considering the large number of people covered by it
- The government does not have a comprehensive and strong enough perspective and determination towards the necessity and priority of responding to the problems of disabled war veterans and does not provide a sufficient balance in the quality and quantity of the services on offer
- A lack of serious commitment to the implementation of national laws and regulations and carrying out participatory plans with the Foundation by some national organizations for solving the problems faced by disabled war veterans
- Some principal needs have still not been addressed even though many years have passed since the end of the war, including housing, vehicles and jobs suitable given the vulnerable situation of disabled war veterans
- New applicants are being added every year
- An increase in the physical and mental ailments and the disabilities of war wounded over

time

- Some of the war wounded having fallen out of the normal system and process of education, employment and life because of the physical and mental injuries suffered and the extent of this damage

Part Five: Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities

5.1 Open employment opportunities for people with disabilities

There is a lack of data available on open employment opportunities for people with disabilities. What is known, however, is that there is certainly a scarcity of such opportunities. Data from the 1996 (1375) Census showed that the number of people with disabilities employed in the private sector was greater than those working for government. The overriding feature of people with disabilities working in the private sector is that the majority were independent workers by means of self-employment, or owned the companies or businesses.

Table 5.1: Proportion of labour force with disabilities in the private and public sectors (per cent)[60]

Total (per cent)	Private Sector	Public sector	Didn't state
Total workforce	64.4	31.4	4.2
Total PWD employed	68.2	27.3	4.5

It has been proposed that on the basis of the policies and services provided by the State Welfare Organization in the area of the employment of people with disabilities 2,055 people were active in the open employment market as of 2001-02 (1380-81).[61]

Article 10 of the Bill on Support for the Employment of the Disabled stipulates that employers who hire workers above the minimum required will be exempt from paying the employer's share of the insurance premiums for the disabled workers hired in excess of the set percentage.

As referred to in Section 3 of this report, in order to encourage private workshops to hire people with disabilities, the State Welfare Organization proposed a plan entitled, The Employer's Share of Insurance Premiums (1999 [1378]) which was officially endorsed. Based on this plan it was decided that 1,200 million rials ($150,000) of insurance premiums for people with disabilities employed in private workshops and other organizations be paid by the State Welfare Organization and this amount was increased to 1,400 million rials ($175,000) in 2000 (1379).

5.2 Employment opportunities for people with disabilities in protected work environments

While there is a lack of data on employment opportunities for people with disabilities in protected environments, it is likely that such opportunities are very scarce. See section 5.4 for more information

[60] Cited in Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

[61] The State Welfare Organization Annual Report 2001-02 (1380).

5.3 Self-employment opportunities for people with disabilities

While the State Welfare Organization offers a loan of 15 million rials ($1,875) to people with disabilities in a position to start their own enterprise through the employment subsidy plan, there is a lack of data available on the performance of the programme. Aside from this initiative, opportunities are scarce.

5.4 Other segregated or protected employment opportunities for people with disabilities

It should be noted that by 2001-02 (1380-81), 125 disabled cooperatives were active across the country and 823 people with disabilities worked in these companies. One such collective for people with disabilities in Tehran province, for example, operates a very active tailoring cooperative.[62]

5.5 Barriers and gaps

A number of issues create major obstacles and barriers for people with disabilities in gaining access to employment opportunities. These include:

- Society's mindset (stereotyping) - This is a major problem faced by the disabled population that can only be solved with through careful planning and advocacy
- Economic obstacles - Economic issues such as increased international competition and reduction of profits have caused manufacturers to seek ways to reduce their workforces. Under such circumstances, people with disabilities face major problems in securing and maintaining sustainable employment
- Physical barriers - As mentioned earlier, urban planning and design in Iran is such that it limits the free movement of people with disabilities

The perspective of trade unions

The primary job of every union is supporting their members. Since there may be a perception that workers with disabilities may be willing to work for lower salaries than their non-disabled counterparts, this may create friction or lead to difficulties. This may be the reason why the unions have not shown much interest in improving and expanding training and job opportunities for people with disabilities over recent years.

[62] Cited in Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' Internal Report on the Status of the Disabled, 2002 (1381).

The perspective of other workers

There are several stereotypes or ‘myths’ regarding workers’ perceptions of co-workers with disabilities. Workers may feel that the hiring of people with disabilities might lower the productivity among the group of workers and therefore threaten their own position. Some people even feel that people with disabilities may cause disruptions in the workplace, such as those suffering from conditions such as epilepsy.

The mindset of people with disabilities and their families

Excessive support by families makes it difficult to convince people with disabilities of the benefits of working. Also, fear of losing compensation or benefits may play a role in the case of people who have become disabled through an accident.

Part Six: Employment-promotion Activities Involving Social Partners

There has been no specific programme in Iran for the employment of people with disabilities involving social partners. Some NGOs have said that their attempts to establish relationships with Islamic Labour Councils and advocate the cause of the unemployment of people with disabilities have not been successful. Yet, as shown in previous sections, the laws and regulations on the employment of people with disabilities have been directed at both employers' and workers' organizations.

Part Seven: Summary and Future Directions

7.1 Looking back over the past decade 1993-2002 (1372-81)

While there have been specific programmes in the country to provide training and employment to people with disabilities, overall the programmes have not been able to provide coverage to a great majority of the disabled population. Further, most programmes have focused on physical rehabilitation rather than training, and those that have focused on training have had low-skilled occupations in mind. Further, whereas polytechnic institutions may only be established by the government, non-governmental-run (private) technical training centres are only allowed to offer training for a single type of vocation. This limits their ability to offer a range of services to people with disabilities despite the fact that they require an array of services based at a single convenient location. Additionally, non-governmental institutes are often not exempt from taxes, nor from duties on imports of equipment.

Overall, progress has been limited. While mainstream training programmes are accessible in theory, physical access and other barriers to inclusion remain. The development of support services to assist people with disabilities access training and employment, such as through accommodation, special curricula and services, has also been limited. Many of the structures recommended during the Asia and Pacific Decade 1993-2002 (1372-81), such as a collaborative body to address employment and training issues, targets and other issues do not yet exist. Some efforts have been initiated through the State Welfare Organization, but these have tended to focus on disabled war veterans.

7.2 Looking Forward

In the absence of any formal plans or recommendations put forward by the government or major stakeholders, the author offers the following suggestions and comments as the country moves forward to address the needs of people with disabilities:

- NGOs in Iran have shown relative success in their efforts toward the provision of training and employment. Indeed, as these organizations have been "closer" to the disabled population, they have been in a better position to provide targetted services to them. Further, they have been able to offer their services at lower cost compared to services provided by government. The government should be fully aware of this fact and try to channel more of its programmes through NGOs
- Considering that 60 per cent of people with disabilities in Iran fall within the working age group, and in light of the challenges they face through unemployment, it is important to formulate special programmes for them. Top of the list of priorities should be ensuring that the country's current law requiring that 3 per cent of jobs go to people with disabilities is properly enforced
- Due to lack of opportunities in smaller towns and rural areas, a large number of people

with disabilities migrate to Tehran. It is therefore very important to create employment opportunities for people with disabilities living outside of the country's capital city

- The gender gap in the employment of people with disabilities is very large. Indeed, fewer than 5 per cent of working people with disabilities are women. It is therefore important to add a gender dimension to any programme aimed at improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- Considering the reluctance of employers to hire people with disabilities and other impeding factors, a specific body should be established to address their employment needs drawing its membership from various organizations that deal with issues concerning people with disabilities
- Specific facilities should be established to allow for the import of equipment required for the operation of workshops employing people with disabilities
- Pamphlets and brochures should be prepared that provide information on potential employment for people with disabilities.
- The establishment of special workshops that aim to provide employment of people with disabilities should be facilitated
- The cooperation of households that have a member with a disability should be encouraged to try and secure employment for them
- The provision of education and training to people with disabilities should become a major focus of activities. In particular, the Ministry of Education should make sure that regular schools have the facilities required in order to be able to accept people with disabilities. The same is true for facilties among higher education establishments
- Non-governmental technical training centres should be allowed to offer polytechnic and polyclinic services
- NGOs formed by people with disabilities should also be exempt from paying the employer's share of the national insurance premium as is the case for private sector employers hiring people with disabilities
- Serious efforts should be made to ensure urban areas are accessible for people with disabilities, particularly with regard to transportation and access

7.3 Plans and recommendations from in-country

Currently, no formal plans or recommendations have been proposed, although various groups have a host of issues that they would like to advocate on for people with disabilities when the opportunities present themselves.

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About the Author

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Research Protocol

PART ONE: COUNTRY OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction
- Brief history and current events
- Brief introduction to level of development and UNDP Human Development Index

1.2 Geography
- Area in square kilometers
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1.3 Population
- Total population
- Geographic distribution, including rural/urban
- Annual growth rate (total and by gender)
- Life expectancy (total and by gender)
- Age composition (total and by gender)
- Literacy levels (total and by gender)
- Unusual demographic patterns (e.g. declining birth rate affecting workforce, etc.)
- Primary religious groupings

1.4 Government and general development plans
- Form of government
- Political system and stability
- Structure of government, including number of ministries
- Administrative structures (i.e., central and local, including number of provinces/states and description of local government structures)
- Influence of central government vis a vis local structures and influence
- Socio-economic/development objectives and strategies (e.g. 5-10 year plans), especially in relation to training and employment and/or people with disabilities

1.5 Economic composition and status
- Economic sectors such as the size and significance of the country's primary agricultural, manufacturing and service industries
- Relative sizes of the formal and informal sectors of the economy
- Current annual GDP, GDP per capita, and annual growth rates
- Percentage of people below the international poverty level
- Impact of recent current events on0 economy, if appropriate (e.g., impact of the Asian economic crisis, political instability, etc.)
- Economic projections

1.6 Labour markets

- Labour force participation (total and by age and gender)
- Unemployment rates (total and by age and gender)
- Underemployment rates defined as less than 35 hours per week (total and by age and gender)
- Relative levels of open employment, multiple employment (individuals holding more than one job), and self-employment (total and by age and gender)
- Levels of employment in the formal and informal sectors (total and by age and gender)
- Wage levels for the primary occupations in the formal and informal sectors
- Identify and describe any special issues that impact the country labour markets (e.g. importing labour, high rates of youth unemployment, ageing workforce, etc.)

PART TWO: PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES---DEFINITIONS, DATA AND SITUATION

2.1 Identify and describe the most common definition(s) of disability used, especially the legal definition(s). If multiple definitions exist, describe them and reference their sources.

2.2 Identify and describe the primary disability classification system(s) used for official government purposes. If multiple classification systems exist, cite their sources, describe them and explain how they are used.

2.3 Identify and describe the major sources of disability information. For each, specify the

- Nature of the source (e.g., Census, national database, survey, registration for services, study, etc.)
- Definition of disability and classification system
- Data gathering procedures
- Scope (e.g., aimed at all disabled persons, a disability subgroup, a geographic part of the country, etc.)
- Primary demographics and findings to include, as available, the number of and types of disabled persons, principle causes of disability, gender, literacy level, education, employment status, and income levels
- Problems that may have existed in collecting information or that affect the validity of the available data (e.g., unclear definitions, etc.).

2.4 Cite and describe national data sources and statistics related to the number of people disabled by on the job injuries and cite return to work rates, if available.

2.5 Describe the environmental factors affecting the full social participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life, especially their direct participation in training and employment. Note those specific to certain disability groups. For example:

- Environmental accessibility/barriers

- Communication accessibility barriers (e.g., sign language development/use, signage, use of Braille, etc.)
- Transportation accessibility/barriers
- Others.

2.6 Describe social factors that may also affect participation including
- Prevailing cultural attitudes toward disability (including religious beliefs)
- Negative attitudes or misconceptions (note disability specific attitudes)
- Societal and family expectations for people with disabilities by gender, if appropriate.

2.7 Identify and describe the primary advocacy organizations of (not for) disabled persons and their advocates. In particular, note
- If the organizations represent a single disability group or all types of disabilities
- Number of members and geographic scope
- Objectives, influence and services, especially those related to employment and training.

PART THREE: LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

3.1 International policies adopted

- Has the country ratified the Asia Pacific Decade Declaration? If so, when?
- Has the country ratified ILO Convention No. 159? If so, when? Describe any supervisory comments.

3.2 National legislation, official decrees, etc.
- Describe reference to equal rights, especially of disabled persons in the Constitution.
- Cite and describe any global disability rights or disability-specific legislation.
- Cite and describe legislation that currently influences persons with disabilities in relation to (include name, date, purpose, and disability provisions or lack thereof):
  - Education, vocational training and/or human resource development
  - Employment, wage, and labour issues
  - Income generation, self-employment and enterprise development
  - Transportation, housing and building codes, assistive devices, other.
- Cite and describe in detail any employment promotion legislation or provisions to promote employment of people with disabilities, such as quotas, levies, employer incentives, laws protecting employment rights, etc.
- Cite and describe any national legislation that discriminates against disabled persons, for example, with regard to employment in certain professions, etc.
- Cite and describe vocational rehabilitation provisions contained in the country's workers' compensation, social security and/or employment injury laws.
- Cite any other legislation that promotes or hinders the training and employment of people with disabilities.
- Describe any draft or impending legislation that deals with disabled persons.

3.3 Disability policies and regulations

- Cite and describe the national development plan as it relates to training and employment or includes the mention of people with disabilities.
- Cite and describe significant existing regulations or policy statements to implement the legislation described in 3.2.
- Cite and describe the national plan regarding vocational rehabilitation, training and employment for disabled persons, or a general rehabilitation/disability plan that includes these issues. Include the date developed, when and how the plan was developed, who was involved in its development and if workers' and employers' organizations and people with disabilities were included, the process for developing the plan, and its significant contents.
- Cite and describe any policies and/or regulations related to the availability of vocational rehabilitation staff and their competency and training.
- Cite and describe any policies and/or regulations related to vocational rehabilitation research activities.
- Cite and describe any other policies and regulations that relate to the training and employment of people with disabilities, their equal treatment, and their access to support services to enable them to secure employment and training.

3.4 Evaluation and review of policies

- Are there measurable targets with regard to the training and employment of people with disabilities? If yes, describe these targets, including gender dimensions and requirements for joint action by all ministries (such as those responsible for employment, training, small enterprise or rural development).
- Describe methods of reviewing and evaluating national plans or policies.

3.5 Institutional structure for policy and service implementation

- Briefly describe the historical evolution of vocational rehabilitation and other strategies to foster the employment of people with disabilities.
- Identify and describe the activities of the key government ministries or semi-autonomous organizations involved in implementing the policies and overseeing the services related to the vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons.
- Identify and describe any national coordinating body [ies] in support of employment and training activities for disabled persons, including the composition, structure and functions.
- Identify and describe any inter-ministerial groups or committees in support of employment and training activities for disabled persons.
- Describe the role of local (state/provincial) government in implementing disability policy.

3.6 Other implementing organizations

- Describe the relationship between the government, the private sector and the NGO community regarding the implementation of disability policies and vocational rehabilitation services. In particular, note the funding relationship between government and NGOs, including organizations of/for disabled persons, and how they cooperate to implement policies or deliver services in response to policies (e.g., funding

arrangements, policy implementing roles, partnerships, collaborations, etc.).

- Describe any policy implementation or service provider roles for employers' groups and trade unions.

PART FOUR: EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING PRACTICE AND EMPLOYMENT

4.1 General education system

- Describe the structures of the primary, secondary and post-secondary education systems.
- Is schooling compulsory, and if so, to what level?
- Are fees charged, and if so, how much and to what level?
- Provide enrolment data for each level of schooling (total and by gender).
- Describe any urban/rural differences in educational systems and opportunities.

4.2 Educational opportunities for persons with disabilities

- Cite data or estimate the proportions of the disabled population that receive primary, secondary and post-secondary education (by gender and disability type).
- Identify and describe the educational opportunities for disabled persons in the country's mainstream educational systems, and estimate the numbers of disabled persons enrolled at each level (by gender and disability type).
- Identify and describe NGO-sponsored educational opportunities for disabled persons, and estimate the numbers enrolled (by gender and disability type).
- Identify and describe the educational opportunities for disabled persons in other systems that may exist (e.g., community based rehabilitation programmes) and estimate the numbers enrolled (by gender and disability type).
- Estimate the retention rates for persons with disabilities in each of the above systems.
- Describe the availability of appropriate teaching aids, assistive devices and facilities for promoting successful educational outcomes for persons with disabilities.
- Describe the nature and extent of disability related teacher-training programmes for teachers in the mainstream and special educational systems.
- Describe differences in availability and/or quality of educational services related to urban and rural areas, type of disability or gender variables.
- Cite data, evaluation studies or other authoritative sources to describe the quality of education services for students with disabilities.

4.3 The mainstream vocational training system

- Describe the formal vocational training system (i.e., certificate, diploma or qualification based), including oversight bodies, ministry or ministries involved, institutional structures, and types of training courses offered.
- Describe the informal vocational training system (i.e., provides skills training that does not result in formal qualifications), including ministries involved, institutional structures and types of training courses offered.
- Identify and describe programme[s] to provide vocational training through distance learning.

- Identify and describe work-based and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Identify completion rates (total and by gender) and outcome data (percentage who are employed or self-employed after training) that are available for the different types of training.

- Describe the availability of NGO or commercial vocational training programmes and their importance to the overall human resource development system.

4.4 Mainstream vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

- Identify and describe any existing opportunities for mainstreaming and/or special support services for disabled trainees in the mainstream formal and informal vocational training systems.
- Identify disabled persons enrolment and completion rates (by gender and disability type) and outcome data (percentage who are employed or self-employed after training) that are available for the different types of training.
- Discuss differences in availability and/or quality of mainstream vocational training related to urban and rural areas, type of disability and gender variables.

4.5 Segregated vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

- Identify and describe any existing segregated government and NGO-sponsored vocational training systems and programmes for persons with disabilities, including those providing formal and informal vocational training and any distance learning or apprenticeship opportunities.
- Describe special accommodations or special support services offered to students, including follow-up.
- Describe prevocational, remedial or other specialized training that may be offered.
- Describe the types of occupational skills taught, and discuss their relevance to labour market and self-employment opportunities.
- Describe the nature and extent of disability related instructor-training programmes for those in mainstream and segregated systems.
- Identify (or estimate) completion rates (total and by gender) and outcome data (percentage who are employed or self-employed after training) that are available for the different types of training.
- Discuss differences in availability and/or quality of mainstream vocational services related to urban and rural areas, type of disability and gender variables.
- Cite evaluation studies or other authoritative sources to describe the quality and responsiveness of the vocational training system to people with disabilities.

4.6 Self-help and peer vocational training opportunities for people with disabilities

- Identify and describe any existing self-help or peer vocational training programmes.
- Estimate the number of disabled persons enrolled, graduated and employed as a result of their participation by gender and by disability type.
- Discuss any differences in availability and/or types of self-help and peer vocational training related to urban and rural areas, type of disability and gender variables.

4.7 Mainstream employment services

- Identify and describe the government sponsored employment services system (i.e., providing assessment, vocational guidance and job placement services), the responsible ministry or ministries involved and particular groups targeted.
- Describe the institutional service delivery structures (e.g., schools, employment offices, and outsourcing to NGOs) and nature and extent of services provided.
- Identify significant NGO-sponsored employment programmes, the services that are offered, and the target groups (e.g. youth or women) served.

- Discuss any differences in availability and/or types of employment services based on urban/rural or gender dimensions.

4.8 Opportunities for people with disabilities in mainstream systems

- Identify and describe any existing opportunities for mainstreaming and/or special support services for disabled job seekers in the mainstream employment services.
- If mainstreaming occurs, provide data or estimate the proportion of disabled persons who use the mainstream system (s) and their success rate in terms of employment outcomes.

4.9 Special employment and employment support services for people with disabilities

- Identify and describe special employment and employment support services available to people with disabilities through government agencies, NGOs, schools or other sponsoring institutions.
- Describe the structures for delivering employment and employment support services (e.g., employment offices, work oriented rehabilitation centres or sheltered workshops, special vocational schools, etc.).
- Describe the services offered, especially disability specific employment support services (e.g., vocational assessment, peer group counseling, work experience or adjustment services, supported employment, job analysis, selective placement, etc.).
- Note if these services focus entirely on open employment, or include placement in sheltered employment, enclaves or other protected environments.
- Identify the number of persons served by gender and disability type and the number placed in employment (open employment, protected employment or self-employment) by gender and by disability type.

4.10 Mainstream support for self-employment and income generation

- Identify any government sponsored self-employment and income generation services and the responsible ministries.
- Describe the services offered (e.g., business planning, business development training, access to credit. etc.) and target groups.
- Identify any NGO sponsored self-employment and income generation programmes.
- Describe the services offered (e.g., business planning, business development training, access to credit, etc.) and target groups.

4.11 Mainstream support for self-employment and income generation for disabled persons

- Describe opportunities for inclusion of people with disabilities in self-employment programmes by identifying mainstreaming policies and special outreach and support services.
- Describe the extent to which people with disabilities are included in such programmes by citing or estimating participation and outcome rates.

4.12 Self-employment and income generation support services for people with disabilities

- Identify support programmes for self-employment and income generation for people with disabilities sponsored by governments, NGOs or special schools and training facilities.
- Describe the services offered and target groups.
- Identify the participation and outcome data (number starting businesses) by gender and by disability type.

4.13 Poverty alleviation programmes

- Describe any major poverty alleviation programmes and their sponsors and related ministries (if not identified in 4.11 or 4.12).
- Identify policies and practices related to the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Identify or estimate the participation rates of people with disabilities in such programmes.

4.14 Staff training for vocational rehabilitation

- Identify and describe training programmes for professionals providing vocational rehabilitation and training and employment services for people with disabilities.
- Describe the availability of competent trained personnel related to vocational rehabilitation practice (e.g. trained rehabilitation counselors, vocational assessors, vocational counselors, job placement specialists, etc.). Cite data, if available, and estimate the proportion of disabled persons.

4.15 Barriers/gaps related to services

- Identify specific barriers that people with disabilities face in accessing or benefiting from educational, vocational training, employment and self-employment and income generation services, both mainstream and segregated (e.g., related to accessibility, transportation, support services, availability of assistive devices, trained instructors, policy support, etc.).
- Note gaps in services that may exist (e.g., such as for those with certain types of

disabilities, age, ethnic or gender groups, those residing in certain geographic areas, etc.).

- Whenever possible, identify data or a rationale to support the identification of these barriers or gaps.

PART FIVE: EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 Open employment

- Identify and describe open employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the public, for profit and not for profit sub sectors.
- Estimate or provide data related to the number employed (by gender and by disability type) especially in relation to the types of jobs, wages, benefits, and career advancement potentials in the open labour market.
- Identify and describe any teleworking, home-based or other non-traditional employment structures in the open market.
- Identify and describe employment opportunities that have developed because of advances in information technology, the Internet and the computer industry.
- Identify and describe any decreases in open employment opportunities, especially related to employment of disabled persons, such job loss due to technology, trade or globalization issues, the impact of transition economies, etc.

5.2 Employment opportunities for people with disabilities in protected work environments

- Describe the available employment opportunities in protected work environments designed for people with disabilities including the following:
- Government set-aside job programmes (i.e., jobs that are set aside or give priority to people with disabilities, such as sale of lottery tickets in Thailand)
- Sheltered workshops and work centres for people with disabilities.
- Supported employment programmes
- Enclaves (segregated work setting for people with disabilities within larger companies)
- Other.
- For each type of protected job opportunity, provide data or estimate the number of people employed (by gender and by disability type), especially in relation to the types of jobs, wages, benefits and rehabilitation services that are available to participants in these protected work programmes.
- Explain and describe opportunities and specific services for transitioning workers with disabilities from protected employment to open employment.
- Cite data or estimate the numbers or proportions of people with disabilities who transition from protected to open employment.

5.3 Self-employment opportunities for persons with disabilities

- Identify and describe self-employment opportunities for disabled persons in the formal sector, and estimate the numbers of people employed and the incomes of self-employed people with disabilities in the formal sector.

- Identify and describe self-employment opportunities for disabled persons in the informal sector, and estimate the numbers of people employed and the incomes of self-employed people with disabilities in the informal sector.
- Identify any special government or NGO programmes to support or assist people with disabilities in self-employment, such as special marketing schemes, tax breaks, etc.

5.4 Identify and describe other segregated or protected employment opportunities that may exist, such as disabled persons cooperatives, welfare enterprises, etc. and estimate the number of persons employed, types of job opportunities, wages, and number and types of disabled persons served.

5.5 Barriers and Gaps

- Identify specific barriers that people with disabilities face in accessing or benefiting from employment opportunities including those in open, formal, informal and protected environments (e.g., related to accessibility, transportation, support services, availability of assistive devices, discriminatory practices, lack of policy support, etc.).
- Note specific gaps to accessing employment opportunities that may exist (e.g., such as for those with certain types of disabilities, age, ethnic or gender groups, those residing in certain geographic areas, etc.).
- Whenever possible, identify data or a rationale to support the identification of these barriers or gaps.

PART SIX: ACTIVITIES INVOLVING SOCIAL PARTNERS

6.1 Identify and describe any government or NGO initiatives specifically designed to educate, raise awareness in, or provide supports and encouragement to, employers who are involved in the training or employment of people with disabilities.

6.2 Identify and describe any government or NGO initiatives specifically designed to educate, raise awareness or provide supports and encouragement to trade unions or workers' organizations that are involved in the training or employment of people with disabilities.

6.3 Describe any employer or trade union initiated activities, partnerships, or liaisons with government or NGOs that are specifically designed to promote the training and employment of people with disabilities.

PART SEVEN: SUMMARY AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

7.1 Looking back over the past decade 1992-2002

- Describe significant changes in policy and practice over the past decade.
- Describe specific progress or lack of progress.

7.2 Looking forward

- Describe major barrier needs related to policies and practices for equal opportunity and treatment of people with disabilities in regard to training and employment.

- Describe major strengths or opportunities related to policies or practices in regard to training and employment of people with disabilities.

7.3 Plans and recommendations from in-country

- Cite and describe goals, directions, and targets from official government planning documents related to training and employment policies and practices and specify time frames.
- Cite and describe any current recommendations made by advocacy or disability organizations related to the future of employment and training policies and practices.
- Cite and describe any other recommendations, studies or analyses within the country that pose specific recommendations about the future of policies and practices for the training and employment of people with disabilities.

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