

## **Socio-physical and Health Conditions of Person with Disability in Nepal**

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### **Abstract**

*Disability is a complex multidimensional condition and poses a number of challenges for measurement. This study seeks to identify the issues and challenges on disabilities management and socio economic and demographic aspects of person with disability. Similarly, this study has also explored the health problems and economic opportunities of disable people of Bhaktapur district. This study is based in Bhaktapur district and concentrate to person with disability. Primary data was collected from the field study through sourcing at study side. Sampling procedure is Census and quantitative nature of data was collected through questionnaire and interviews tools. Conclusion of this study is disabling people are living with low socio economic and poor health condition. Descriptive research design was used in this study. In the study side just 97 persons with disability are recorded at the study time. Among 97 respondents nearly 15% are involved in service. Only 36.84% are literate and 97.89% of the respondents get treatment received against disability. 63.16% of the respondents are not participating in social activities because of disability. Out of 97 respondents, 35(46.06%) are not engaging in economic activities Findings of this study is that, they are denied access to essential services. People with disabilities are greater risk of being neglected and excluded from their family. It is imperative for the government to ensure access to education and healthcare services for all citizens. Additionally, the government should adapt policies to ensure equal opportunities for the disabled in economic participation, thereby improving their socio-economic status.*

**Keywords:** Disable, Health condition, Federation, Province

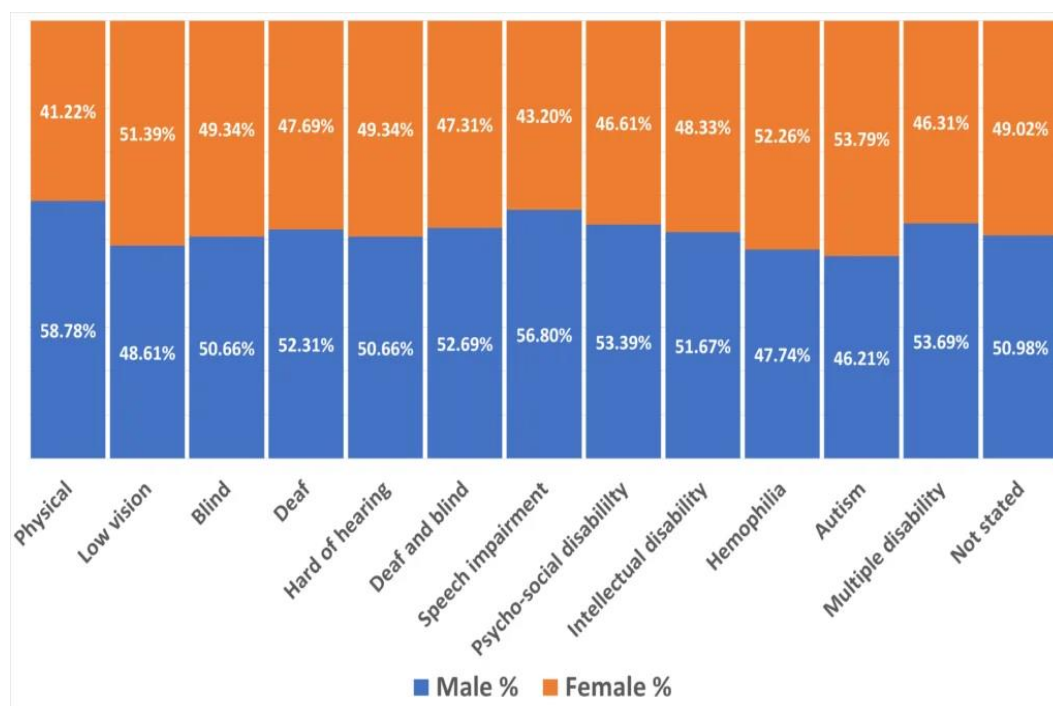
### **Introduction**

A disability can be understood as a state where a person's condition or abilities fall below the typical standard expected for individuals or groups. This encompasses a range of impairments affecting physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, and mental functions, as well as various chronic illnesses. Disability is characterized as a state

where a person's abilities deviate notably from the typical standard expected for individuals or groups. This term includes various aspects of individual functioning, such as physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual abilities, mental health, and chronic illnesses. It acknowledges that disability is a complex and multi-faceted experience for those affected (von Liebenstein, 2022). The World Health Organization defines "Disability" as an umbrella term which covers three interrelated areas namely, Impairments, Activity Limitation and Participation Restrictions. Accordingly, An Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; An Activity Limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situation (Barnes et al., 2010). Poverty is one of the major causes for physical and mental disabilities. It's notable that poverty in Nepal is more widespread, profound, and disparate compared to other regions in South Asia. (Acharya1, 2004). According to the report, Nepal has encountered multiple crises encompassing economic, social, and political dimensions. Ultimately, the movement fell short of fulfilling its commitments to achieve socio-economic development. (Khamanarong et al., 2004). The definition of disability lacks consistency; anyone can become disabled at any time. Continued positive and negative impact of traditional myths and beliefs on the contemporary social constructs of disability are occurs. However, slight changes in negative attitudes have been found among parents of disable where education and counseling are offered immediately after the birth of a child with disabilities (Setume, 2016). This indicates that formal education is one of the best way clarifying, dispelling and challenging some negative cultural myths and beliefs that are entrenched in history (Setume, 2016). Disabilities encompass a broad field of challenges that affect individuals in various aspects of their lives. These include impairments related to vision, hearing, cognitive functions, learning capabilities, motor skills, mental health, memory retention, communication aptitude, and social interactions. There is no one specific way that the meanings of disability synonyms have changed: some have changed only slightly, others have gone through the pejorative process and yet others have meliorated (Josefiina, 2022). A disability denotes a functional limitation, such as difficulty in communication

(including challenges in seeing, hearing, or speaking) and learning. It involves a restriction or inability to perform an activity in the typical manner or range expected for a human being (Organization, 1980). “Disabled people are those who are physically or mentally unable to do the usual daily activities. Because of physical, mental impairment or impairment of knowledge, disabled people have little possibility to get job”(Adhikari & Studies, 2019). Disability can occur at any point in time, whether it's temporary or permanent. It can affect individuals of all ages, from childhood to old age, and may occur in all species. There are more than 1 billion people are currently disabled in the world. Person with disabilities found 16% are in the world’s population, with living in the global south, they are frequently the most affected by natural hazards, climate induced disasters, and global health emergencies (UNDRR, 2023). The Nepalese economy is heavily dependent on agriculture, which is not only serves as an occupation but also represents a way of life for a significant portion of the population. Approximately 85% of Nepal's inhabitants reside in rural areas characterized by limited transportation infrastructure. Such circumstances bearing significant challenges for individuals with disabilities, highlighting the imperative of integrating them into the developmental mainstream to ensure equitable access to opportunities. Without nurturing this inclusivity, the prospects for societal, communal, and national advancement remain greatly constrained. The National Federation of disabled Nepal asserts a figure of approximately 2.04 million are individuals in Nepal. According to the census of Nepal 2078, approximately 2.2% are attain disability in different way. This prevalence is slightly higher among males, with 2.5%, compared to females, where it stands at 2.0%. Types of disability reveals diverse, including Physical impairments (36.75%), Low vision (16.88%), Blindness (5.37%), Deafness (7.85%), Hard of Hearing (7.87%), Deaf-blindness (1.56%), Speech impairments (6.36%), Psycho-social disabilities (4.2%), Intellectual disabilities (1.73%), Hemophilia (0.75%), Autism (0.75%), Multiple Disabilities (8.78%), and cases where disability status is not specified (1.07%) (NFDN, 2024).

### Types of Disability in Nepal



Source: National Federation of Disable in Nepal 2024

Above figure clearly indicates the situation of the disable in Nepal. Out of total population of Nepal according to census year 2078 BS, 2.2 percent disable are recorded which can see in above figure. This incongruity underscores the importance of relying on rigorously collected and verified data in assessing the demographic landscape of disability within Nepal. Such precision is crucial for devising targeted interferences and policies aimed at fostering the full inclusion and participation of individuals with disabilities in the nation's socioeconomic fabric (Yuba Raj Paudel et al., 2016). The proportion of the population living with a disability has increased in recent years in Nepal. Due to the conflict from 1996 to 2006 resulted deaths of 12,000 people and left many injured who now have long-term physical disabilities (Y. R. Paudel et al., 2016). Women with disabilities experience the combine disadvantages associated with gender as well as disability and may be less likely to marry then non-disabled women"(Akbar, 2022). According to the standard rules on the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities (1993), the term "disability" encompasses a wide range of functional limitations present in any population across all countries globally. According to UN estimation, the Asian and the pacific region have nearly 200 million people with disabilities. Additionally, there are about 600 million People with disabilities (about 10% of world population) worldwide. Among them 82 percent live in developing countries (Metts, 2000). The UN stress that, likewise demographic

trends in the region that due to increasing life expectancy several developed countries have already experienced a phenomenal increase in aging population and developing countries are on the threshold of facing the same (UN, 1995). Habib (1995) pointed out that three fourth of the 250 million disabled women in the world live in developing countries, development program must consider the specific needs and rights of disabled women who suffer from double discrimination and are more likely than disabled men to live impoverished and isolated lives which lead to depression and despair (Shirley,2000). Identifies four main obstacles hindering efforts to improve the situation of disabled individuals in developing countries: poverty, ignorance, misconceptions, and misplaced priorities. Disabled individuals in impoverished communities often receive the least benefits from development efforts, and families with disabled members face stigma, misinformation, prejudice, superstition, and fear. Disability affects all levels of society and contributes significantly to inadequate responses to the issue. Preventing the causes of disability should be a fundamental responsibility of society, starting with promoting peace and avoiding conflict and violence. This includes ensuring access to adequate food, safe drinking water, environmental hygiene, disease control, and adequate shelter for all individuals (UN,2001). The universal declaration of human rights, in its initial article, emphasizes the equality of all individuals in dignity and rights from birth. Consequently, it underscores the imperative of considering the rights and needs of all people with equal importance and dignity. Advancements in policies and plans aimed at equalizing opportunities for individuals with disabilities within their communities can be realized through development programs and projects. However, such activities must be precisely planned and implemented with a genuine spirit of developmental progress (Dernbach, 1998). x This study will provide information on living standard of people with disabilities in the study area. Reflection of this study show the relationship within family and society and try to find out the potentialities of disable in economic development. The results will be useful to the social scientists, planners, policy makers, if they will try to study this report. The study will help the disabilities issue in the study area as well.

### **Methodology**

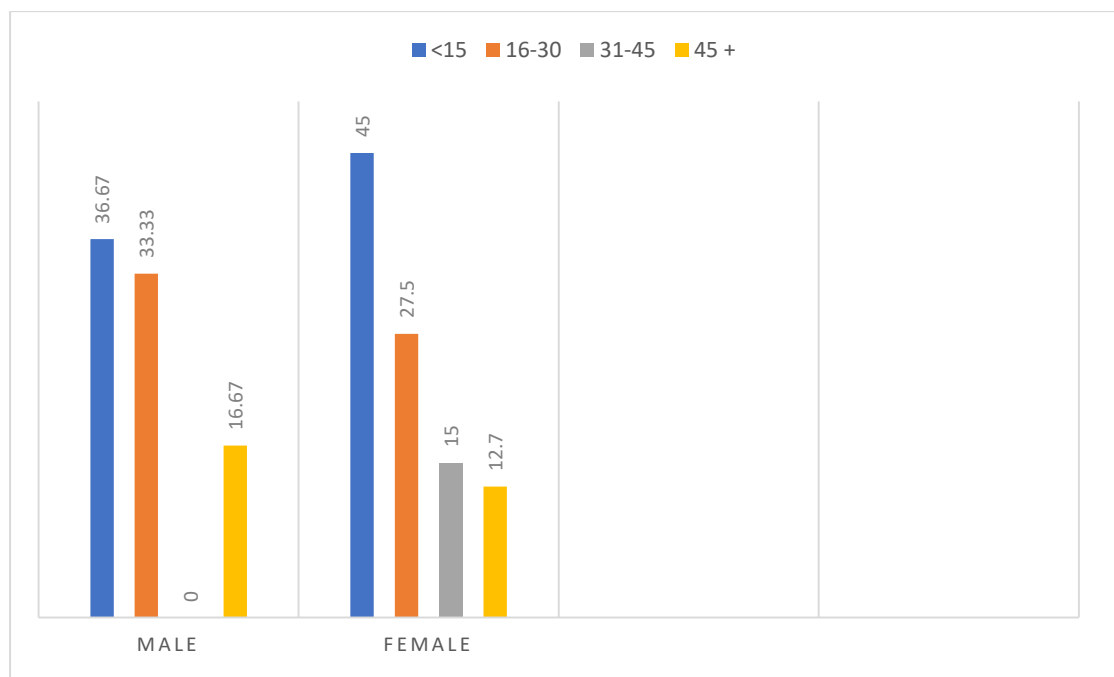
This study employed a descriptive research design and utilized quantitative data analysis methods. The research was conducted in Madhyapur Thimi Municipality, located in Bhaktapur district. Primary data collection involved

fieldwork, where self-administered questionnaires were filled through direct personal interviews with respondents selected via snowball sampling. The sample size comprised 97 participants. Additionally, visits were made to relevant institutions catering to disabled individuals within the municipality to gather necessary information. Researchers also conducted door-to-door visits to disabled individuals to ensure the acquisition of reliable and factual data. The presentation of collected information predominantly adopted a descriptive analysis approach. Various methods and techniques were employed to analyze the data, with the findings presented in separate chapters for interpretation. Data were further organized into tables and distinct sections, with appropriate statistical tools utilized for analysis. Percentages were also employed to facilitate data interpretation.

### Results

#### Age and sex Composition

**Figure 1:** Percentage distributions of respondents by age and sex.



The study discloses that the highest proportion of respondents, constituting 45%, belongs to the age group of less than to 15 years, followed by 26% in the age group of 16-30 years. Additionally, 14% of respondents fall within the age range of 31-45 years, while 15% are aged 45 and above. Among male respondents, the largest percentage (41.67%) falls within the age group of less than or equal to 15 years. person with disable are found 4 years to 65+ years respectively. with the lowest percentage (13.33%) in the age group of 31-45 years. Similarly, among female

respondents, 50% are in the age group of less than or equal to 15 years, followed by 22.5% in the age group of 16-30 years. The smallest proportion (12.5%) of female respondents are aged equal to or above 45 years.

**Literacy and educational Status.**

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents by literacy and educational status by Sex.

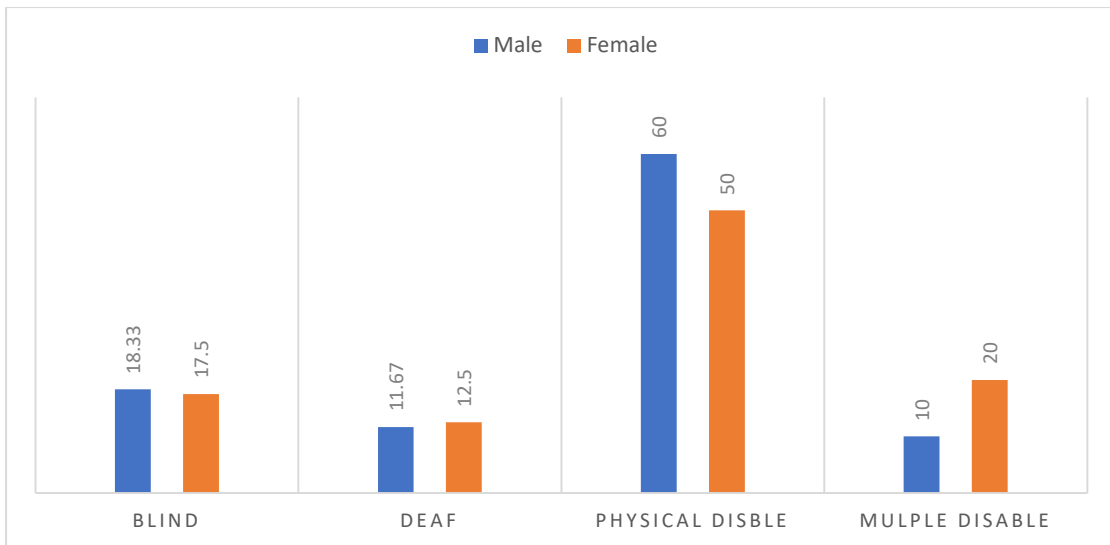
| Education Level   | Respondents |            |           |            |           |            |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                   | Male        |            | Female    |            | Total     |            |
|                   | Number      | Percent    | Number    | Percent    | Number    | Percent    |
| Illiterate        | 5           | 8.33       | 5         | 12.50      | 10        | 10         |
| Below than S.L.C. | 15          | 25.00      | 10        | 25.00      | 25        | 25         |
| S.L.C.            | 28          | 48.27      | 18        | 36.73      | 46        | 47.42      |
| I.A & above       | 10          | 16.67      | 6         | 15.00      | 16        | 16         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>58</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>49</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>97</b> | <b>100</b> |

The saying "Education is power, and knowledge is a weapon" underscores the crucial role of education in human development. The outcomes of this study concerning the educational status of individuals with disabilities reveal significant insights. Specifically, 10% of the respondents lacked basic literacy skills, while 25% had attained the school leaving certificate (S.L.C.) level of education. A substantial proportion, comprising nearly half (47.42%) of the total respondents, had achieved at least the S.L.C., with 16% having pursued education beyond the intermediate level. Regarding gender disparities, the study found that 8.33% of male respondents were illiterate, contrasting with 12.50% among female respondents. These findings emphasize the determined challenges in ensuring equitable access to education for individuals with disabilities, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address educational inequalities based on gender and disability status.

**Types of Disability**

Disabilities are conditions that hinder or diminish a person's capacity to perform their daily tasks. These impairments categorize as disabilities, affecting various aspects of functioning. The main types include Mobility/Physical, Spinal Cord (SCI), Head Injuries (TBI), Vision, Hearing, Cognitive/Learning, Psychological, and Invisible disabilities. Among them below types are recorded in this article.

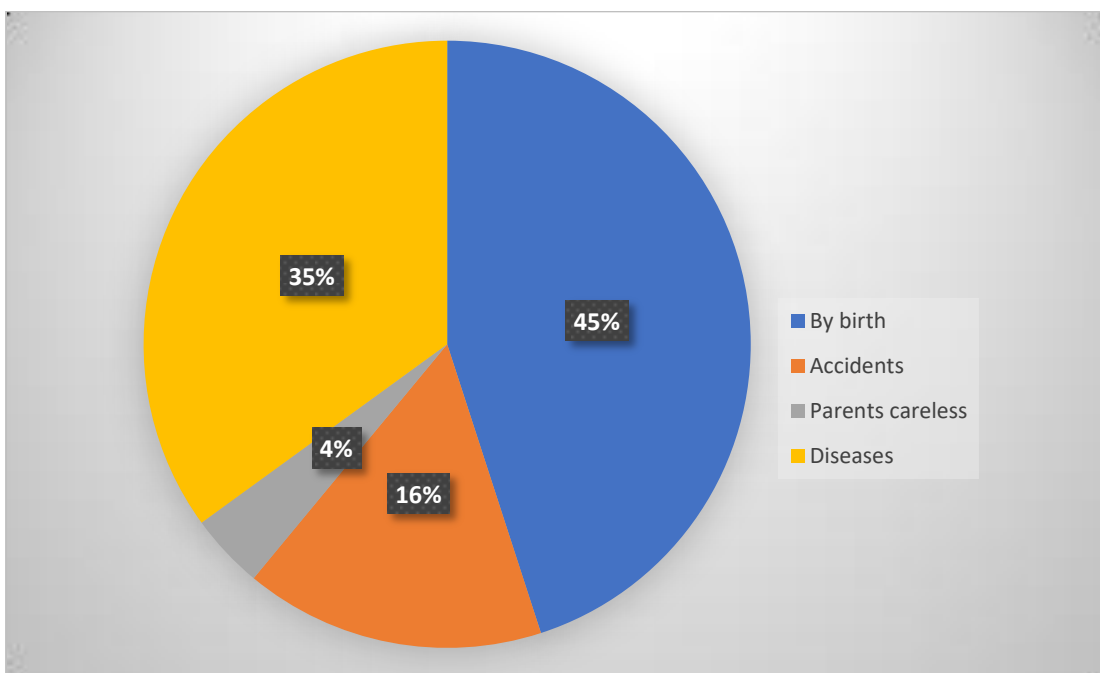
Figure 2: Percentage distribution of respondents by types of disability by Sex



**Cause of Disability**

The cause of disability is shown in the below figure.

**Figure 3:** Distribution of respondents by cause of Disability.



Approximately 96% of the survey participants have engaged in therapeutic interventions for their disabilities, indicating a widespread reliance on medical assistance. The dominance of allopathic treatments among respondents, accounting for 76%, raises questions about the influence of mainstream medical practices on treatment choices for individuals with disabilities. Meanwhile, traditional treatments at 17% and ayurvedic therapies at 14% suggestion at continuing cultural and alternative medical preferences within this demographic. This distribution underscores the need for critical examination regarding the accessibility,

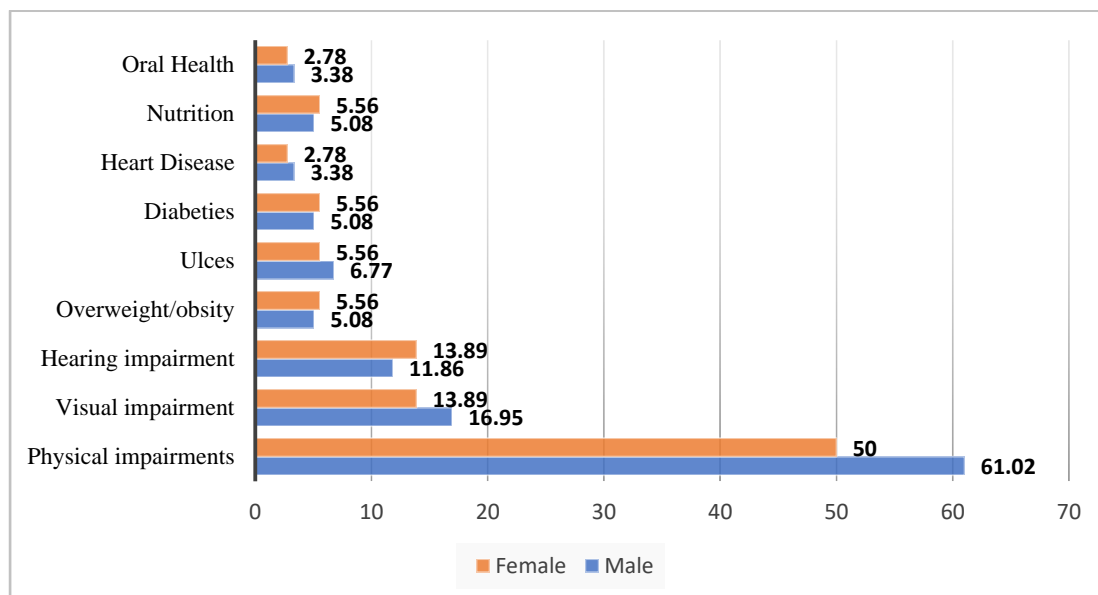


effectiveness, and cultural appropriateness of various treatment modalities for individuals with disabilities.

**Health Problems of the Disabled**

Being healthy encompasses the universal goal of achieving and maintaining wellness to lead fulfilling, active lives. This entails having access to resources and knowledge to make informed, healthy decisions and understanding preventative measures against illness. For individuals with disabilities, health also involves the assurance that health issues associated with their disability can be effectively managed. Certain disabilities, such as spinal cord injuries, spina bifida, or multiple sclerosis, may predispose individuals to additional physical or mental health conditions.

**Figure 4:** Distribution of the respondents by their health problems



**Discussion**

This study is concentrated on disabilities and to find out the condition of their health as well as physical condition. Physical disabilities, deafness, blindness, multiple and mentally retardation are occurs. There are 56.84% were physically disabled, 15.79% were blind and also Deaf were found 12.63% and 14.74% were founded the multiple disabilities. By birth disable were found 45% of the total respondents and followed by Disease 35%, accident 16% and parent’s carelessness founded 16%. Among them percentage of literate are higher and followed by illiterate which 63% and 36.84% respectively. Most of the respondents are engaged in

agriculture occupation and followed by service. Condition of health is weak among the disable people but 93% of the respondent's got treatment against disability and 7% of the respondent was found not received treatment to against disability.

Traditional medicine system is dominated to the modern treatment. Disabled people are facing problem indifferent place in different ways problem caused by disability discrimination teasing scolding etc. Role and responsibility of the family to the disable is satisfactory. Psychologically they are poor and are not active in their daily life.

### **Conclusion**

Disability includes a range of physical conditions delaying normal function, including physical disabilities, deafness, blindness, multiple disabilities, and mental retardation. Among the 97 respondents. 56.84 percent reported physical disabilities, 15.97 percent were blind, 12.63 percent def and 14.74 percent had multiple disabilities. Birth accounted for 45 percent of disabilities, followed by disease 35 percent, accident 16 percent, and parental negligence 16 percent. The majority, approximately 93 percent received treatment, primarily through allopathic methods 76 percent followed by 17 percent and ayurvedic treatments 14 percent. This analysis underscores the socio-economic challenges faced by disabled individuals, coupled with limited access to essential services. Early intervention, education, and equitable economic opportunities are imperative for their upliftment. Agriculture remains a primary income source, highlighting the necessity for tailored skill development programs. Recognizing their inherent potential, society must prioritize education, skills training and healthcare for disabled individuals, fostering their full integration into the fabric of the nation.

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