

Improving service at police stations for persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities (PWDs), especially those with hearing-related disabilities, have difficulty communicating with officers at police stations. Most, if not all, law enforcement officers are unable to use or understand sign language. Due to this communication gap, complainants with hearing disability do not receive solutions to their problems. This situation can be addressed by using the services of sign-language interpreter. However, sign-language interpreters are in short supply. ICTs may be used to match the constrained supply with the large demand.

Summary of Recommendations

Immediately: Provide public Wi-Fi at police stations to facilitate short term activities (given below).

Short term: List all sign language interpreters around the country, providing calling information to police stations. Allow PWDs to use public Wi-Fi at police stations to access sign-language assistance via video calls to listed interpreters. Identify PWDs when they access public Wi-Fi at police stations (ex: one-time input at first log-in) and give priority to their Wi-Fi use.

Long term: Introduce a pre-paid digital identity card for PWDs which can be used by law enforcement officers to identify bearer's needs and for giving priority Wi-Fi access.

The Research

- LIRNEasia conducted a nationally representative survey among 15-65-years-old PWDs in Nepal to understand ICT access and use. Four hundred PWDs from 400 households in 100 wards in all 7 provinces were interviewed between August and October 2018. The questionnaire was designed based on the Washington Group on Disabilities Questions. The results are nationally representative with 95% confidence interval and ± 9.8 margin of error.
- LIRNEasia conducted qualitative research in Provinces No. 1, 2, 3 and 5 in urban and rural locations. The research was designed to understand how ICTs can help ensure independent living for PWDs in Nepal. Grounded theory was applied to identify key themes emerging in interviews of 174 PWDs and nine key informants.

Key Findings

- 1.6% of the population aged 15-65 reported as a PWD
- 43% possessed a disability card
- 54% had no schooling, and 26% had only primary education. Any solution for PWDs has to consider high illiteracy.
- Inability to communicate with government and other officials was a key issue:

“Police do not understand what we are trying to say. At that moment, we need a translator.” -- Hearing disability, Female, Biratnagar

“Since we cannot talk we have to write on paper in order to communicate with others. Since my writing is also poor, if they don't understand my writing then we have to call language translator in order to translate what I am trying to say.”
-- Hearing disability, Male, Kamalgaupalika

More Information: <http://bit.ly/NPtech4PWD>

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