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# LIRNEasia's Disability Research

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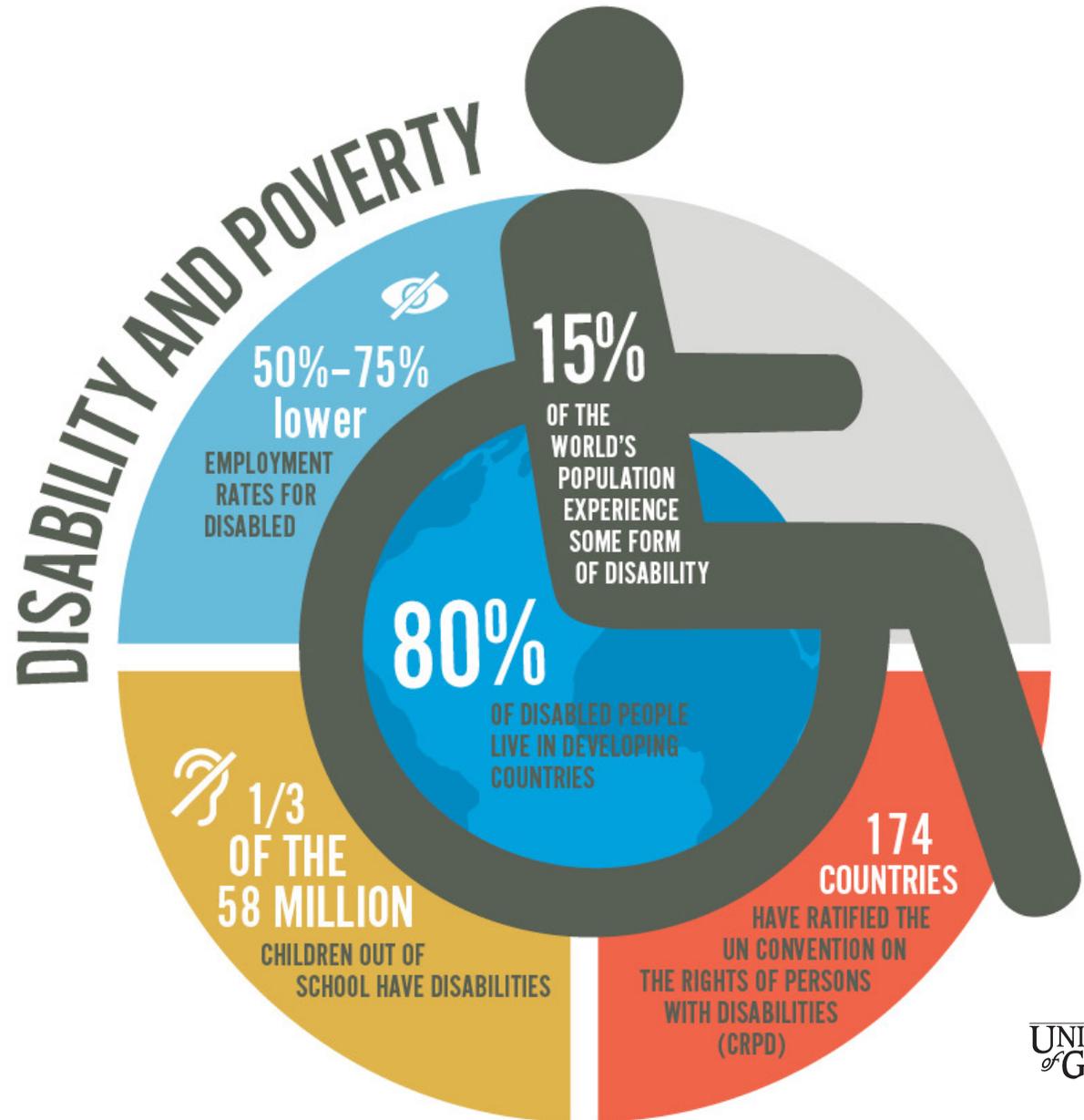
# Content

- 01 Disability in the Global South
- 02 UN Convention
- 03 Research Problem
- 04 Key Considerations



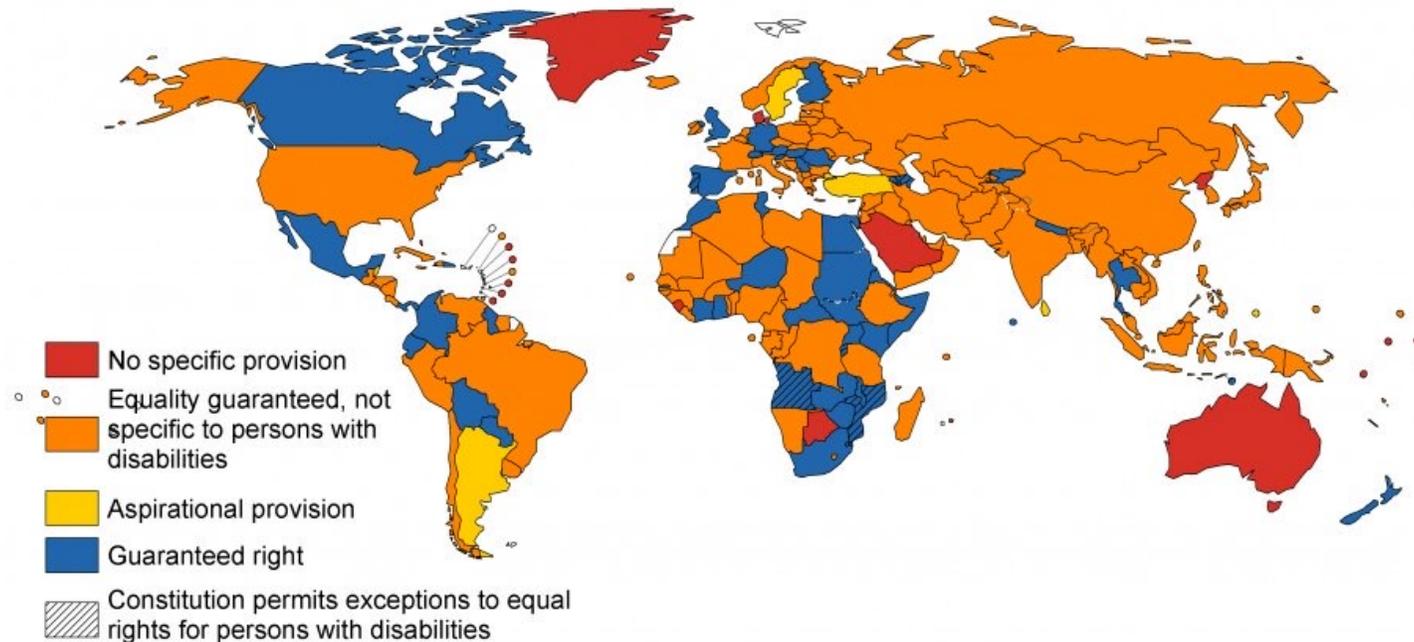
## Disability in the Global South

- It appears at first sight that disability is predominantly a “third-world problem.”
- Not just because of the prevalence, but also because of the policy non-complementarity (welfare vs. underdevelopment).
- ICT-based solutions to solve the social aspects of disability pose immense promise as well as intriguing doubts.
- This intersection of disability and underdevelopment as a research focus provides a foundation to use Myanmar, Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka as a case studies.



# UN CRPD and North-South Divide

Does the constitution explicitly guarantee equality or non-discrimination for persons with disabilities?



## 01. Global North

In Europe, 60% of the PWD participate in the labour force as opposed to 72% of the non-disabled people (Fundación ONCE et al. 2019).

## 02. Global South

In India, 73.6% of the PWD don't participate in the labour force (Shenoy 2011).

Source: WORLD Policy Analysis Center, Constitutions Database, 2017

# Research problem

- Disability was seen as a major social problem, a barrier, that restricts people with disabilities (PWD) from fully participating in society.
- In this premise, two questions emerged: What can be considered as a disability? How to operationalize participation in society?
- The first question concerns the functional limitation of a disabled person – hearing, seeing, remembering, etc., while the second concerns the domains of life that are hindered by the disability – education, health, work, etc.
- The goal of this research was to understand how a robust information and communication technology (ICT) policy could alleviate or minimize disabling barriers, allowing PWDs' full participation in society.

# Functionality, environment, and identity

- Categorization was used as a means to castigate and discriminate people (Lamont, 2012).
- Categorization based on type of activity: basic activities of daily life (BADL) and instrumental activities of daily life (IADL).
- Environment as an alternative site of disabling barriers (Pryor et al., 2018).
- The universal design of the analog and the digital space, as opposed to mere accommodations caters to inclusion well.
- “Deaf deaf” relations and “sameness work” as identity creation in disability– Friedner (2015)

# “Participation in society”

- Special schools:
  - The widely accepted principle of organizing the education bureaucracy to support children with disabilities is through inclusive education rather than segregated education (Elton-Chalcraft et al., 2016).
- Employment:
  - Supported employment where anyone who wants to get a paid job is facilitated to do so by partnering the employers, job seeking person with disability, and the support worker, as opposed to quota-driven employment.
- Other domains of participation: health care, financial institutions, etc.

# ICT based interventions

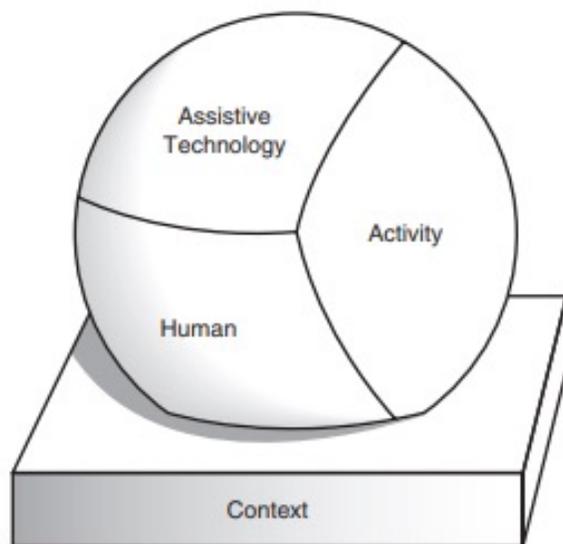


Figure 1: HAAT model of AT

Source: Reproduced from Cook & Polgar 2015 (figure 1-1)

- Accessibility of the environment is essential for disability inclusion (Cook and Polgar 2015).
- The universal design of the analog and the digital space, as opposed to mere accommodations, caters to this well.
- In the last decade, there has been a rapid increase in the universal design of ICTs aimed at improving their accessibility to PWD (Persson et al. 2015).
- ICT, a mobile phone or a computing device often connected to Internet, is a cheaper form of technology and indicates significant use across people in different income levels (Lazar and Stein 2017).
- Evidence from Myanmar and India show that the use of ICT in a developing context, for BADL and IADL of PWD is extensive and often experienced as an assistive function.

# Visual tech products



Braille Note Taker



K-Sonar Cane



Index Everest-D V5 Embosser



Ultra Bike



Trekker



Portable Reading Solution

# Hearing tech products



In-the-ear (ITE) Digital Hearing Aid



Frequency-modulated (FM) Systems



Infrared Systems



Clarity AlertMaster Door, Phone, and Clock Alert Device



Captioned Telephones (Cap Tel)

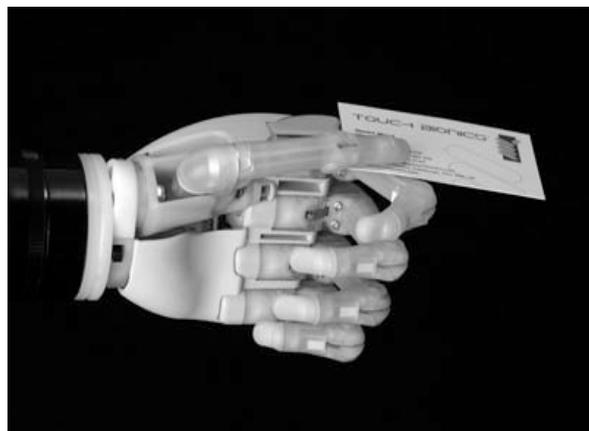
# Physical tech products



ComfiCare®



Mounting Arm



iLIMB Hand



Jouse 3 Mouth Control System



Integra Mouse

# Outcomes of policies and technologies

- Independent living
  - 1) that all human life, regardless of the nature, complexity and/or severity of impairment is of **equal worth**;
  - 2) 2) that anyone whatever the nature, complexity and/or severity of their impairment has the capacity **to make choices** and should be enabled to make those choices;
  - 3) 3) that people who are disabled by societal responses to any form of accredited impairment have the right to **exercise control over their lives**; and
  - 4) 4) that people with perceived impairments and labelled 'disabled' have **the right to participate fully** in all areas, economic, political and cultural, of mainstream community living on a par with non-disabled peers (quoted in Giermanowska et al., 2021, p. 406).
- Wellbeing is a multidimensional notion covering “material wellbeing, health status, personal activities, social relationships, and economic security” (Mitra et al. 2020).

# Summary

- The guiding hypothesis was that ICT related technologies and policies could positively influence disabling barriers to generate positive outcomes in independent life of the PWD.
- Categorization: by type of disability and functionality
- Participation in society: education, livelihoods, health care, banking, etc.
- ICT use: mobile phones, laptops, assistive tech
- Outcomes: independent living (public and private space)

The End.