

प्रसन्न कुमार पिंचा  
मुख्य आयुक्त  
(निशक्त जन)



सामाजिक न्याय और  
अधिकारिता मंत्रालय  
भारत सरकार

**Prasanna Kumar Pincha**  
**Chief Commissioner**  
For Persons with Disabilities  
Ref.No.10-04/CCD/2012

Ministry of Social Justice  
and Empowerment  
Government of India

Dated 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2012

To

- (1) Chief Secretary of all the States/UTs
- (2) Secretary, MSJ&E
- (3) Secretary, DoP&T
- (4) All Commissioners, Disabilities

Subject: Banning the use of the expression "handicapped"

Madam / Sir,

In inviting your attention to the subject noted above, this Commissionerate hereby seeks to impress upon you the need for discouraging and banning the use of the expression "handicapped" at least in the context of official correspondence, official reports, Government institutions, organizations, etc. It goes without saying that the expression "handicapped" violates and undermines the dignity of persons with disabilities which is so manifestly against the spirit of the Constitution of India, the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, and, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to which India is a State party.

2. That such an expression, as stated above, violets and undermines the dignity of persons with disabilities becomes all the more clear when one considers the origin or etymology of such expression. In medieval Europe, beggars used to beg with a cap in their hands. Over a period of time, this came to be associated with persons with disabilities as they were, for all practical purposes, considered objects of pity and passive recipients of charity not capable of doing anything except begging. How blatantly erroneous such an attitude happens to be requires no elaboration!

3. Moreover, the use of such other expressions as "differently abled" should also be discouraged as such an expression harps more on the differentiability dimension at a time when we need to promote equality dimension. In addition, no two living entities under the sun are uniformly abled or uniformly disabled in all respects. In that sense, each one of us, regardless of our ability or disability, happens to be unique and different. Therefore, it is erroneous to single out and to describe only persons with disabilities as "differently abled".

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4. In view of the above, it would be appropriate to describe such persons as “persons with disabilities”, or for that matter, as “persons with blindness”, “persons with speech and hearing impairment”, “persons with locomotor disabilities”, etc. wherever such description is both necessary and relevant.

5. In the facts and circumstances stated above, you are requested to ban the expression “handicapped” and such other demeaning expressions with immediate effect. You are also requested to appropriately rename the National institutes like “National Institute for the Visually Handicapped”, “National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped”, etc.

6. Action taken in the matter may kindly be intimated.

Yours Sincerely,

Sd/-  
( P.K. Pincha )