

## Socioeconomic wellbeing and human rights-related experiences of Persons with Disabilities in Covid-19 times in South Africa. Findings from a Survey.



**PHYSICAL ADDRESS**  
82 Andries Pretorius Road  
Edenvale, 1609  
**POSTAL ADDRESS**  
Private Bag x 10041  
Edenvale, 1610



Rehabilitation International (RI)

000-923 NPO | 930020816 PBO

**CONTACT THERINA WENTZEL**  
NCPD NATIONAL DIRECTOR  
Tel: +27 (11) 452 2774  
Cell: 083 255 6854  
Email: [therina@ncpd.org.za](mailto:therina@ncpd.org.za)

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## BACKGROUND.

COVID 19 has exacerbated the challenges and vulnerabilities faced by many South Africans and particularly persons with disabilities – one of the most marginalised sectors of society. Their lives have been profoundly impacted by COVID-19. The National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the Institute for Development Studies, (IDS,UK) partnered to embark on a study to investigate this impact. Done through a 119 instrument online survey that had almost 2000 respondents from 1 July to 31 August, the study has since come to completion and this document summarises some of the key findings from the study.

- ✓ Purpose and Focus: Socio-Economic and Human Rights Related experiences of Persons with Disabilities during COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown.
- ✓ Voices, attitudes, needs and changing circumstances
- ✓ 1857 respondents
- ✓ 119 instrument online survey disseminated from 1 July to 31 August ( Persons with disabilities only)
- ✓ Findings relate to sample only not to population.

## **ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES**

73% of respondents earned R5000 and below, average monthly net income.

Above 90% were concerned about their personal financial situation.

A striking 35% were unemployed.

Of the 37 % that were earning some kind of income through employment or other income generating activities, 35% have had these means of income disrupted either through reduced working hours, redundancy ,shop closures etc.

## **PSYCHOSOCIAL EXPERIENCES**

-Respondents indicated that they were stressed (60%) or depressed (above 50%) during lockdown (Addressed negative feelings through mental health care/reading/connecting and communicating.

-Sizeable portion of respondents either indicated that they were physically or non- physically harassed by law enforcement agents.

-Indicated worst thing about lockdown as economic conditions (60%), as restrictions ( 20%).

## SERVICE CHALLENGES

- Despite interventions, many were unfocused or insufficient
- Food insecurity security largely doubled for some at times during the pandemic
- Hunger turned out to be a huge concern
- Running out of money was a big challenge
- 40% ran out of money to buy food / went to bed hungry
- 29 % indicated that during the last 7 days ( at time of completing the survey) somebody went to bed hungry in their household
- Lack of access to water, sanitizer or soap a concern
- Electricity a problem for cooking and sanitization but also a concern for using assistive devices
- Almost half of respondents were not aware of government interventions or special assistance programmes, 45% indicated that disability services were interrupted
- Little recognition of special needs
- Service catch-up slow in terms of persons with disabilities
- Many reliant on non-state service providers
- Interventions were unfocused or insufficient

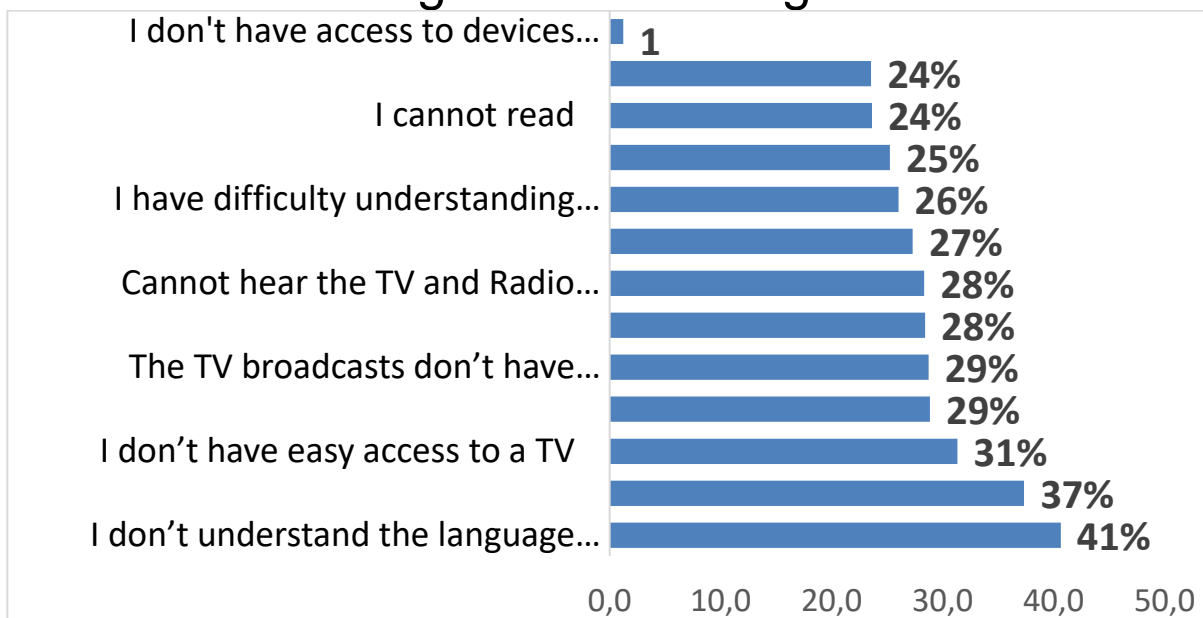
## ACCESSIBILITY TO CARE SERVICES

60 % were dependent on a caregiver

40% had their care services interrupted, some for a month or 2 , for others interruption still ongoing.

## PERCEPTION OF STATE HANDLING OF THE PANDEMIC

60 % had challenges in accessing information



Above half of respondents felt that the Government was doing a bad job in accommodating the rights and needs of persons with disabilities

## **VACCINE DEMAND**

78% indicated that they were willing to get the vaccine if made available

Only 5% indicated that they had been vaccinated

## **FUTURE INTERVENTIONS**

70 % of respondents felt that the disability grant should be increased to help poorer households, 60% vouched for creation of a special COVID 19 grant.

Over 70 % felt that they should be consulted in Government's framework to monitor disasters, and that the State should monitor the circumstances of Persons with Disabilities during disaster times.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- Disaster and risk framework for persons with disabilities far from complete – no baseline when pandemic hit.
- Few disaster regulations focus on Persons with Disabilities – Department of Social Development(DSD) and Department of Basic Education (DBE).
- Various needed services interrupted.

- Making Disaster Recovery Framework(DRF) disability inclusive is urgent now and for recovery.
- Little communication between departments and with Disabled People's Organisations(DPOs) – No sharing and compiling of datasets – no mapping or tracing
- As more than half (51%) reported getting services from Organisations of and for Persons with disabilities (OPDs), these must be included in improving the framework.
- Most respondents happy to be monitored during disasters if this is beneficial (83%).
- Persons with disabilities must be consulted on the development of the framework (71%),yet only 41% acknowledge any previous input.