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## Disability a major challenge in J&K

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- **By:** D S AHMAD
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SRINAGAR, May 1: The state is faced with an alarming situation as a report has revealed that there are more than six lakh disabled people in Jammu and Kashmir with nearly 50 percent of them having permanent disability.

The research conducted by noted Sociologist, Dr Bashir Ahmad Dabla reveals that there were 3,43,632 males and 2,61,708 females with one or the other type of disability. Out of 6 lakh disabled population a major chunk 4,59,436 lives in rural areas while as 1,45,904 hail from the urban areas.

The study reveals that of the total disabled population 3,02,670 persons suffer from permanent disability.

"2,08,713 are visually impaired while as 37,965 are having disability in movement followed by 24,879 people with mental disabilities," reveals the study.

As per the study there is a major chunk of deaf and dumb also with 16,956 suffer from disability in speech and 14,157 in hearing," study reveals.

Talking to Kashmir Times Dabla attributed the increase in the number of mental and movement disabilities in the state to the armed conflict. "There has been a tremendous increase in the movement and mental illness cases during last twenty years of turmoil in the state," he said.

He said that hospitals in the state received exceptionally higher number of movement and mental disability cases as the armed conflict has both the physical and psychological implications.

"The sole psychiatric hospital in Kashmir witnessed unusual rush of psychiatric patients," Dabla said.

He said that in the recent years one out of every 6-7 Kashmiris faced one or the other psychological problem.

Chairman of the non-governmental organisation (NGO), Helpline, working for the welfare of disabled population, Javed Ahmad Tak who is himself a disabled person accused the government of not doing anything for the rehabilitation of the disabled population of the state.

"Government still is unaware of the fact that the population of the mental and movement disabilities has doubled due to the armed conflict during last twenty years," Tak said adding "As per the government data the state has still only 3 lakh disabled population."