# Access Challenges For Students With Disabilities In Higher Education

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## Abstract

In the last 20 years, the landscape of higher education in India has undergone a significant transformation. Higher education institutions have been working to ensure that people from all socioeconomic and economic backgrounds have equal access. In India, higher education for individuals with disabilities has long been a major source of worry. A disabled individual finds it extremely challenging to get through the Indian educational system. Numerous areas of the curriculum, the teaching and learning process, the facilities, the resources, and the educational and examination process all have issues. People with disabilities now have access to a variety of equipment and software that can help them succeed in school or even just get by with daily tasks. The education of children with special needs in higher education, specifically with regard to vision impairment, hearing impairment, locomotor disability, and speech-related impairment, has been covered in the current study in light of the aforementioned issues.

Keywords: Disabilities, Impairment, Challenge, Higher Education, Access

## Introduction

The phrase "disabilities" is a general one that includes impairments, activity constraints, and participation limitations. A defect in body structure or function is known as an impairment. A restriction on participation is a challenge that a person encounters when engaging in a situation in life; an activity constraint is a difficulty that a person encounters when doing a task or action. Higher education not only increases employability but also develops analytical and critical thinking skills.It transforms a person into a knowledgeable and responsible citizen who can support the growth and economics of the country. Any country's growth is dependent on its people. Even those with disabilities, whose contributions cannot be overlooked, have something to offer a country's progress. They are equally eligible to pursue higher education. Higher education improves employment prospects, ensuring a dignified life for people with disabilities.

According to McKinsey and Company, "the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers," Savolainen (2009) says that teachers are crucial to providing students with a high-quality education. (p. 16) According to studies, student success is most strongly influenced by the quality of the instructor than by any other aspect, including class size, student background, and student composition (Sanders and Horn, 1998; Baillie et al., 2008). In order to provide education for an inclusive society as well as equitable chances for everyone, it is clear that "high quality" instructors who are prepared to fulfill the requirements of all students are needed. According to Reynolds (2009), the teacher has a significant impact on the growth of the inclusive school and the education of all students because they bring their expertise, beliefs, and values to bear in fostering an effective learning environment for students.

## Objectives

**Objectives for this article are as follows:**

In the beginning, we discuss disability as a sort of variety and the numerous ways in which the diversity we refer to as disabilities may have an impact on higher education.

Second, we discuss various viewpoints on how to include people with disabilities in all facets of higher education.

Third, we talk about the importance of teacher preparation within higher education and how it specifically relates to issues of inclusion and accessibility.

Finally, we briefly touch on the topic of preparing college and university faculty members who teach courses offered by higher education institutions to collaborate with and support people with disabilities.

## Methodology

For this investigation, the descriptive analytical approach is applied. Studying, discussing, and extortion from articles, journals, books, theses, websites, etc. comprise the technique. To meet the needs, this study only used secondary sources.

## Children with Disabilities in Higher Education

In India, 2.68 billion people, or 2.21% of the 121 billion people, are classified as "disabled" according to the 2011 Census. 22% of handicapped people in the 20–39 age range have a mobility disability, and 18% have a hearing impairment. 15% are blind, 8% have speech impairments, and 6% have several impairments. According to Census 2011, over 55% (1.46 Cr.) of all handicapped people are literate. Only 13% of disabled people have completed their metric/secondary education but are not graduates, and 5% of disabled people are graduates. Of all disabled people, 45% are illiterate. It is obvious that such a large population cannot even be utilized after looking at the percentage of illiterates. According to the AISHE research, 38.5 million people are expected to engage in higher education nationwide in 2020, with 92,831 PwD students enrolling, up from 85,877 in 2019. This figure is the lowest when compared to other disadvantaged groups, which makes it evident that relatively few of them pursue higher education and that their numbers have not greatly increased over time.

**Disability-Related Diversities**

Disability is a kind of variety, and diversity of almost every sort should be valued in higher education among both students and professors [9,10]. One trend in contemporary higher education reflects the broader concern for inclusion—the active welcoming into society of those historically marginalized, shamed, or subjected to discrimination due to their difference or diversity in ethnicity, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and other factors.

**Role of teacher education as part of higher education**

It asserts that teachers play a crucial role in preparing students for life in society and the workplace and highlights the need for teachers to have the abilities needed to: Identify the unique needs of each individual learner and respond to them by utilizing a wide range of teaching strategies; Support the development of young people into fully autonomous lifelong learners; and Help young people acquire the competences listed in the Europe 2020 strategy.

**Faculty preparation for higher education**

Of course individuals with and without disabilities need to be prepared for their responsibilities as professors in higher education, including instruction in identifying and appreciating variety of all types in both their students and their colleagues. As Edwards et al. [9] highlight, disabilities are a component of this variety. As we have already mentioned, it is also a unique type of diversity that calls for distinctions that other types of diversity do not. Differentiating between acceptable variety in behavior and demeanor, reasonable diversity in behavior and demeanor, and suitable diversity in behavior and demeanor are all part of the training or preparation of higher education faculty.

**Inclusivity in Higher Education Meets Obstacles**

The Reservation for PwD students in HE has been raised by RPwD (2016) from 4% to 5% in order to make education affordable to all PWD students. Is it also declared that the appropriate Government and the Local Authorities shall strive to ensure that all educational institutions funded or recognized by them provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities and towards that end shall—

(i) admit them without discrimination and provide education and opportunities for Sports and recreation activities equally with others;

(ii)

make the building, campus and various Facilities accessible;

(iii) provide reasonable accommodations for :

(iv) ensure that the education of people who are blind or deaf or both is imparted in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication;

(v) provide necessary support individually or otherwise in environments that Maximize academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion; (vi) identify children with specific learning difficulties as soon as possible and take the necessary pedagogical and other steps to help them;

(vii) track each student with a disability's involvement, development in terms of attainment levels, and completion of their education;

(viii) offer transportation services for children with disabilities, such as blindness, impaired vision, and hearing loss;

**Suggestions**

• The proper execution of policies at the national level and their follow-up should also be taken into account. Despite the fact that several programmers have been created for them, implementation and follow-up are seldom practiced or carried out.

• The majority of PwD persons reside in rural regions, thus it is vital to organize a good awareness programmer to dispel any misconceptions and social stigma regarding opportunities, employability, scholarship programmers, disability certifications, and other significant issues.

•In order to meet the needs of every student, an interactive teaching style or a disabled-centric teaching strategy should be employed rather than only the traditional lecture method. Braille script should be made available to visually impaired pupils so they can become independent, and participation of speech and locomotor challenged people may be guaranteed as they don't require a distinct learning methodology—just assurance of acceptance—is sufficient for them.

• Even success stories should be shared in the awareness campaigns held at higher education institutions (HEIs) to inspire students and help them realize that they are no less capable than average people and can accomplish anything they set their minds to.

**Conclusion**

Recent initiatives by India's Ministry of Human Resource Development and University Grants Commission may change the country's approach to including people with disabilities in higher education. Empowerment and independence will result from the inclusion of disabled students in academic forums and the student union. If correctly executed, the suggestions in the 10th and 11th five plans might result in a significant shift. More has to be done in terms of academic teaching of disability studies and research in higher education. Most significantly, there is a need for the establishment of equal opportunity cells at universities so that every student with a handicap has a space where they may improve their abilities and share their experiences.

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