'A Comparative Analysis Of Higher Education Prospects For Differently-Abled Students'

(A Study of Hotel Management Institutes in India)

by

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ABSTRACT

An inclusive higher education policy incorporated in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 based on SDG 4: "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and supporting lifelong learning opportunities for everyone." This research work is a comparative analysis of the readiness of government and private hotel management institutes. For data National Council of Hotel Management colleges and top private hotel management colleges were approached. Descriptive statistics are used as a quantitative research tool. The case-study approach is used to determine the relationship between known disabilities regarding the RPWD Act 2016. The finding of the study identified that the RPWD ACT-2016 is mostly familiar to the members of these inclusive institutes and only a few of them have specially qualified faculty for such students. Also, research established Auxiliary departments as the most suitable department for differently-abled students but not the core departments.

Research limitations–The research has been conducted between 'June 2020 to March 2021' during which many institutes were not operational due to the Covid – 19 pandemics, so the response rate remains 50% only. We have tried to reach them over the phone which was not very successful. More number of Government-sponsored institutes should be accessible, at present only 1/3 rd. of the total number has a provision for differently-abled students which will not help in achieving UN, SDG-4 goals of 100% accessibility by 2030 as targeted by the Government of India.

Keywords: Differently-abled, Inclusive Education, Hotel Management, Students.

INTRODUCTION

Considering the quality gained in improving attendance in both elementary and secondary education, heading in the right direction in inclusive higher education is incredibly significant as the first two decades of the twenty-first century come to a close. Higher education institutions must catch up to ensure that inclusive education is available to the children after they complete their secondary school. As university education continues to alienate persons with impairments, many differently-abled youths will end their academic careers following secondary school, regardless of their ability or willingness to continue on to higher education.(Thompson, 2020)The complex and organic connection between education and society lies at the centre of bringing about change and achieving social justice (Bhatnagar, 2006). By ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), India has adopted a rights-based approach RPWD Act -2016 for inclusion of children with disabilities (UNESCO, 2019). Education programs built on inclusiveness and equality to create inclusive communities. The international normative structure that includes the UNCRPD and the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically SDG 4 and Agenda 2030, offers a clear vision and set of priorities that have driven India's processes of fostering school inclusion(United Nations, 2018). The 2009 Right to Education (RTE) Act and the 2016 Right of Persons with Disabilities Act (RPWD) helped establish a robust statutory structure for inclusive education. Gaps exist in the form of appropriate standards and practices common to all educational institutions, facilities given to CWDs, and the absence of a structured regulatory authority (Das, Kuyini, & Desai, 2013);(Das & Shah, 2014).The operationalization of legal provisions takes place primarily through '*SamagraShikshRPWDa Abhiyan'* which envisages comprehensive education as the underlying concept of educational policy(Gulyani, 2017) ; (MHRD, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: A programme for the universalization of inclusive education., 2000).

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has focused on higher education as it is crucial for fostering human and societal well-being and for transforming India into the democratic, just, socially aware, cultured, and humane nation that upholds liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all that its Constitution envisions. (MHRD, National Education Policy 2020 , 2020)

The 2016 Regional Children's Action Plan lays out concrete targets, objectives, and benchmarks for the CWD curriculum, feasible by 2021. There is, however, a lack of evidence on real success against certain targets and priorities. (Development M. o., 2016).

In a report titled 'Inclusive education of the disabled at secondary stage', compiled by MHRD (2009), it is identified that the education level for differently-abled people is only 59%, which is very less in comparison to the general category of people according to the Indian census report of 2011. Societal attitude matters a lot for education level among different genders and differently-abled as a whole. The case of higher studies above graduation is very low and alarming.(MHRD-report, 2009),(Report on Post Enumeration Survey, 2011)

In accordance with the RPWD Act 2016 and NEP 2020, the education guidelines entail that all State Governments and the local bodies should ensure that all educational institutes funded by them should

take initiations in providing inclusive education. This guideline focuses on accessible building or institute campuses, indiscriminate educational & recreational opportunities for everyone, providing reasonable accommodation and support services to increase academic and social development, regular observation of the students for maximum participation, and train them according to their needs in relation to their impairments with proper pedagogical methods.(MHRD, The action plan for inclusion in education of children and youth with disabilities., 2005) ; (NCERT, Handbook on Including Children with Special Needs, 2014).

Directives are given to all the government bodies and authorities for promoting and facilitating continuous inclusive education in line with the 2016 act of law. This directive includes setting up teacher training institutes for special education like sign language, Braille, and teaching students with intellectual infirmity. Free education to the student up to the age of 18 years and scholarships thereafter for continuous education (MHRD, RTE, 2009b).The law also directs the periodic assessment of all school – going students every five years for identifying the differently – abled students and how they can be guided for continuous education. The designated authorities should design the curriculum and simplify the examination process for the ease of these types of students. (Development-MHRD, The action plan for inclusion in education of children and youth with disabilities., 2005).

The RPWD Act 2016 stresses on skills of differently-abled people through vocational courses and empowering them with financial support through loans at a lower rate of interest for promoting self-employment. In an article by Kapur (2016), published in India Today, points out that hotel management as a successful career option for persons with learning disability. (Kapur M. , 2016)

The hotel management education started in India in 1970's and by 1984 under the Ministry of Tourism "National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology" has been established. This council manages around 46 hotel management institutes supported by Central and State governments, 25 private institutes and 14 food craft institutes in all over India (NCHMCT). Despite the emphasis on increasing access to higher education for students with disabilities by NEP 2020 and RPWD Act 2016 there is lack of information about how the hotel management institute of the government of India participate for inclusiveness in higher education prompted for this research on IHMs. Furthermore, considering the correlation between higher education, jobs, and social mobility, it is expected that one of the goals of disabled students will be to pursue jobs after their chosen course of study has been completed ((Riddell, 2005);(Tomlinson, 2008);(Livanos, 2010). The prospects of differently-abled students in the hotel industry according to the head of institutes were explored.

Significance of the present study

Inclusive institutions are crucial gateways for egalitarian knowledge production and the development of future professionals, according to research. While all institutes would benefit from becoming more inclusive, development institutes must be the trailblazers, as inclusivity is important to the delivery of development studies, as well as emerging as an important discourse within the discipline that continues to evolve in an increasingly interconnected global society, the need for universities to leave no one behind.(Thompson S. , 2021)

Review of Literature

All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) was launched in 2011 under MHRD, for conducting the survey annually in the higher education sector. This data is important for making sound policy and research decisions for the advancement of the sector. Higher education is defined by this department as education that is obtained after completing 12 years of schooling or equivalent and lasts at least nine months (full time) or after10 years of schooling and lasts at least three years. The schooling can be general, academic, specialized, or technological schooling in nature. In all States, the enrolment of people with disabilities (PWD) has risen over the years but no clear pattern is evident. It may be because many institutions do not keep an appropriate database of PWD (Development, 2019).

National Education Policy has highlighted higher education as its top priority because it will open up a world of opportunities for both people and communities, allowing them to break free from disability to ability. The policy also stresses to support higher education by removing barriers like language, admission process, financial constraints, accessibility in the campus, and employment potential by making things feasible with a multilingual approach, lenient admission process, scholarships, accessible building designs and exploring employment opportunities (MHRD, National Education Policy 2019, 2019). Higher education plays an important role in the life of differently-abled students all over the world as it helps them to upgrade themselves as an earning member in the family and take decisions in life independently. (Dunay. A, 2016)The parental & societal support is very important for facing the world with confidence. The Government of India is promoting an inclusive education system but it is not yet helpful in increasing the number of enrolments of differently-abled students in higher education to a distinguishing number.(NCPEDP, 2019) According to a study on the overall satisfaction of differently abled students, private institutes are more compatible than government institutes in terms of providing an inclusive infrastructure. (Kiran, 2012)

H1: Government and private sponsored hotel management institutes have significant awareness in imparting an inclusive environment of education for differently-abled students.

The ratio of the population of differently-abled student's post-secondary education is below 2% in India according to the census report of 2011. Though after the RPWD Act – 2016 implementation and stress on continuing education has helped in forming a guideline for the education system in implementing inclusive education in India. Steps like scholarship and formation of skill council for differently-abled students have shown a ray of hope for the differently-abled students in India. (Justice M. o., 2016)

Not only does the world view children with disabilities in a negative way, parents often do not generally have supportive views on children with disabilities (Bach, 2010). He also suggests that a parent-based, family-based, and community-based campaign is crucial to improve the school environment and socio-economic standards for people with disabilities.

Uditsky (2012) cited hotel management and hospitality studies as one of the options for the students with developmental disabilities in Canada and are included in regular colleges with others, creating an inclusive educational environment. (Uditsky, 2012)

The idea of a more inclusive life, whether it is about mainstream schooling or university – level education, has always been grounded throughout parents' hopes and passion for their differently-abled wards. It is assumed that the role of practitioners and supporters is to promote the leadership and natural authority of families seeking to completely involve their sons and daughters in continuing education (G. Lloyd, 2003);(Hughson.J, 2003).

Even with the presence of a supportive family, the differently-abled youth face many challenges in higher education like inadequate lodging or lack of suitable assistance. In comparison, other pupils, teachers, and school staff can subject children with disabilities to threatening behaviour, intimidation, assaults, physical assault, and bullish attitude. This is the most critical and vulnerable period of disabled life that forever leaves psychological marks on the mind of the child (Sharma, 2016) .

H2- Higher education in India have significant support system towards differently-abled student, specifically in hotel management colleges.

A study on the role of education and educators for employment of differently able peoples in the European Union and Hungary had worked on medical and social models of disability. Most of the participants having better prospects of jobs after they have done their graduation from vocational institutes and acquired some special skills as well. Some were working in the catering industry as well. Inclusive education, practice-oriented learning will bring new experiences to disabled people according to the research. (Dunay. A, 2016)

Chen in his study among the peoples of America who have problems in hearing or are partially impaired and have completed higher education, learned to overcome many obstacles and gain knowledge about how to meet their goals, resulting in greater self-efficiency.(Roy, 2019)

The number of students in higher education is mostly visually impaired and there is a very a smaller number of students with other impairments. More specifically, universities need to open equal opportunity cells so that there is a position in every institution that is a forum for any disabled student to develop their skills and share their experiences (Jameel, 2011) .

Special schools play an important role in visually impaired student's aspirations for higher studies after secondary schools than those studying in inclusive schools. Their analysis showed the entire sample was poor in educational ambition and if compared with female students, male students were more aspirated (Kant, 2016) .

H3: All differently–abled students of hotel management have significant positive prospect in the hotel industry.

OBJECTIVE

- To identify awareness factor of government and non-government colleges imparting an inclusive environment of education.

- To compare supportive facilities provided by the government and non-government institutes in promoting an inclusive education system.

- To determine the significant prospects of differently-abled students in the hotel industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in 26 different government and non-government institutes of Hotel Management across India. Government institutes under NCHMCT and top non-Government institutes listed in 'The Week' survey 2019 were approached. Types of institutions i.e., government and non-government institutions, are considered as independent variable and infrastructural facilities available in institutions are considered as the dependent variable for the study.

For secondary data, the analysis of already existing data that is correlated to the research topic is referred to. Sources for secondary data collection are internet/ Web Site, books, journals, magazines, newspapers and reports, HR manuals/ training policies, old records, and feedback forms.

Primary data is collected firsthand from the stakeholders of the institutes. For identifying the efforts by different government and non-government institutes of hotel management in India, quantitative data has been collected through a structured questionnaire. A descriptive statistic has been used to analyze the available data and results are summarized to provide information to conclude the research. To identify the equality of the two population variances f-test is being used. So, to establish the degree of variance and spread in data set f test is applied on the data collected.

DATA ANALYSIS

Awareness of Stakeholders: Stakeholders of the government institutes are more aware of the RPWD Act -2016 in comparison to the non- government institutes but the number of differently-abled students were more in non - government institutes.

Table -1 Presence of differently-abled students

Institutes	Percentage of differently-abled students	Awareness about RPWD Act-2016
Government Institute	0.92%	90%
Non-Government Institute	2.43%	76.47%

When respondent was asked that as per their information, 'what all statement are included in this Act', and 76.4% **(Table-1)**respondents accepted that they are aware for all below mentioned statements:

(1) Government institutes to provide inclusive education to children with disabilities.

(2) Making building, campus & other facilities accessible

(3) Provide reasonable accommodation and transportation to them

(4) Exclusive skill training programme for differently-abled

Later when they were asked about as per their information, what all different types of disabilities are included in this Act; and 100% respondent identified that 21 different types **(Annexure-I)** of disabilities are included in the RPWD Act-2016.

Table – 2 Specially trained faculty/staff for differently-abled students

Institutes	Employees (Non-teaching) with disability (Yes/ No)	Specially trained faculties / Staff (Yes/ No) braille or sign language?	Percentage of specially trained faculties
Government Institute	46.15%	30%	Less than 10%
Non-Government Institute	53.84%	6%	Less than 10%

Though both type of institutes have differently-abled employees, based on the employment reservation ratio criteria, but there is a lack **(Table-2)**of specially trained facultiesin either of the special language.

Hence with the help of above-mentioned analysis of the data we can easily identify that most of the colleges (Govt & non - govt) are aware about the RPWD Act-2016, And to fulfill the need of handling differently abled students approx 50% non-teaching staff with around 30% specially trained staff hired by the specified colleges**(Annexure-II).** But in contrary only around 2% **(Table-2)**differently abled student were studying on average in hotel management colleges, hence alternative hypothesis H1 (Government and private sponsored hotel management institutes have significant awareness in imparting an inclusive environment of education for differently-abled students) has been accepted for the study.

Inclusive Education Status: There are no specially designed courses for the differently – abled students in either category of the institutes. Only regular degree or very few vocational courses are offered to these students.

Table – 3- Courses (Regular)offered

Courses offered	Non-government college	Government college
DHM	43.75	36.36
DpHM	0	0
MHM	12.5	0
VC	6.25	9.09
ALL	37.5	54.55

The presence of differently- abled students in the hotel management colleges are negligible and there is no specially designed curriculum for them **(Table-3)**

Table-4 Support and Facilities

Institutes	Percentage of Campus Placement		Support and facilities					
			In getting loan for entrepreneurship		In getting scholarship for higher studies		In getting help from Skill India	
	Yes	**No**	Yes	**No**	Yes	No	**Yes**	No
Government college	20%	**80%**	50%	50%	15%	85%	**80%**	20%
Non-government college	12.5%	**87.50%**	31.25%	**68.75%**	10%	90%	**68.75 %**	31.25%

There is a mixed reaction for support facilities provided by the institutes for career development and the chances of getting a job through campus recruitment drive. Government institutes still fair better in campus placements or in supporting their career advances than the non-government institutes **(Table-4).**

Table-5 Enrolled differently-abled students and specially designed Curriculum for them

Institutes	No. of students enrolled at present	Specially designed Curriculum	
		Yes	No
Government college	1.49%	30%	70%
Non-government college	1.22%	6.25%	93.75%

Results for the data analysed proved that not only student count in hotel management colleges is less **(Table-5),** but support facilities are also at the minimum par, not only in non-government colleges but also in Government colleges **(Table-4)**. Hence alternative hypothesis, H2 (Higher education in India have significant support system towards differently-abled student, specifically in hotel management colleges) is rejected.

Most suitable department (according to the ability of the differently able students):To identify the pictorial relationships with the disability of the students and suitability of the department in a hotel, data was analyzed for mean distribution and it was analyzed that mean difference between government and non-government colleges is not (Graph-1) statistically significant.However, while analyzing the data, it was identified that most suitable department viability for non-government colleges' students appears to have more variable than ingovernment colleges. The graph below shows how non-government college students have a broader range of department than government collegestudents.

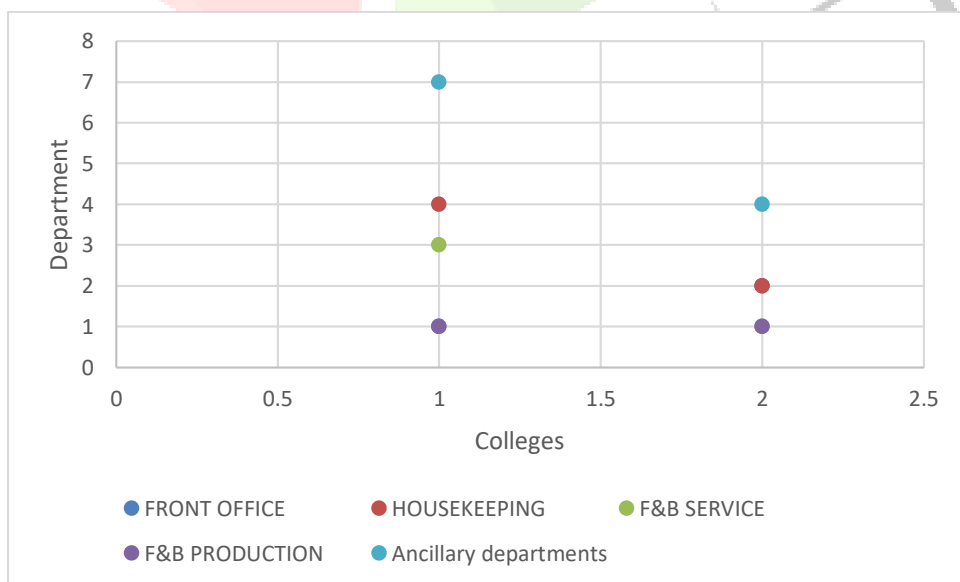**Graph-1: Suitability of Differently-abled Students in Hotels**

Table-6F-distribution table

|	*Variable 1* **(Non-government college)**	*Variable 2* **(Government college)**
Mean	3.2	2
Variance	6.2	1.5
Observations	5	5
Df	4	4
F	4.133333	
P(F<=f) one-tail	0.099062	
F Critical one-tail	6.388233	

Variance tells the degree of spread in data set. The more spread the data, the larger the variance is in relation to the mean. In this case, value of variance is 6.2 > 1.5. Therefore, it is being established that the variances of the two populations are unequal.

Further, to study and establish the visual relationships with differently abled students and their suitability for the hotel department, the received data was analyzed. And the results identified, most suitable department for differently abled students is Ancillary departments (Accounts/ Stores/ Purchase/ Tele-operators/ Marketing Department) in a hotel.

Graph-2:Suitable Department (variance as per type of Institutes)
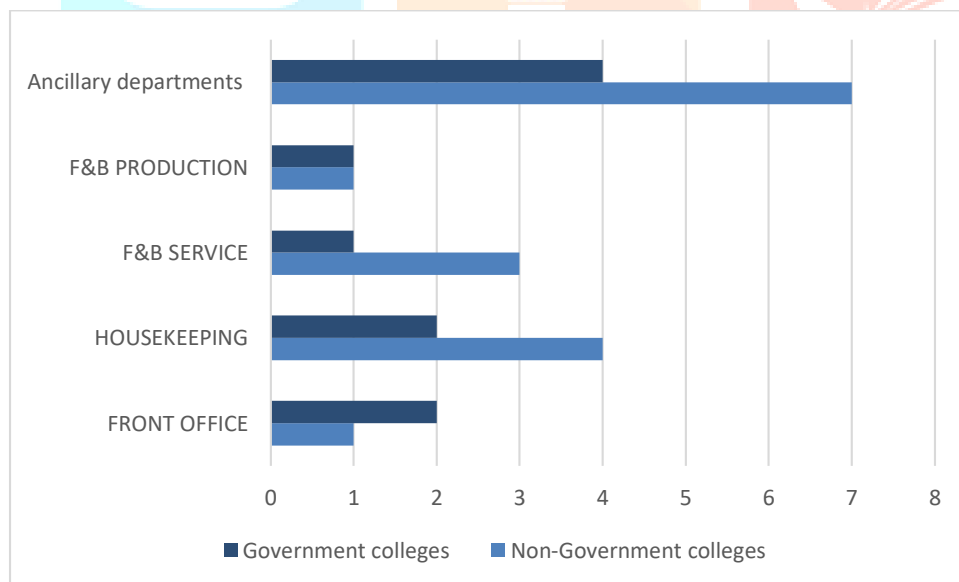
Further to identify hotel department suitability, as per certain disabilities like leprosy cured, locomotor disability, dwarfism, muscular dystrophy, thalassemia, hemophilia, acid attack victims are identified as the disability which can easily suitable for the Front Office department in a hotel.

Graph-3: Suitable department as per disbility
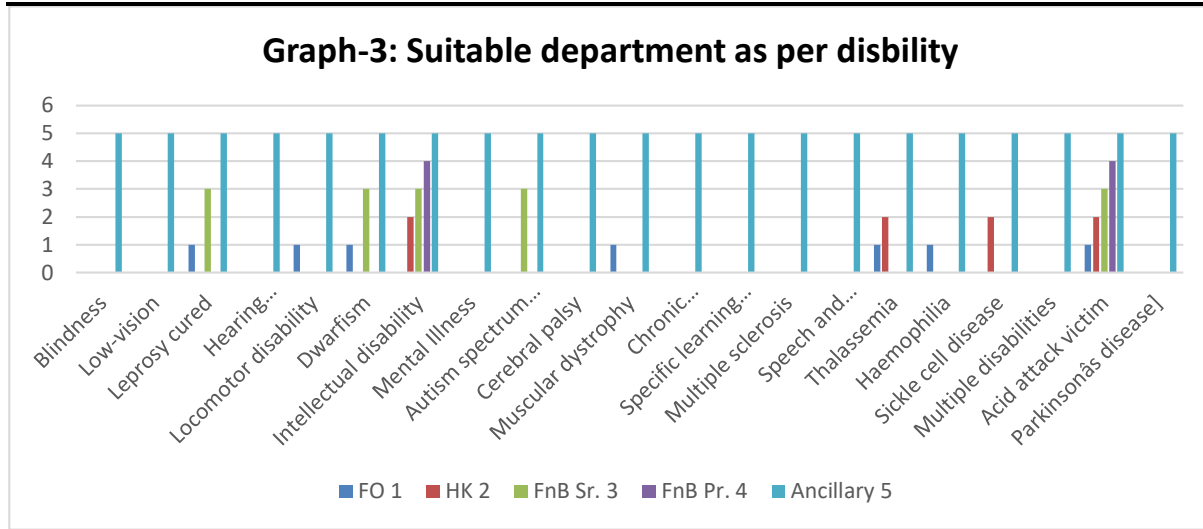
For Housekeeping as well as Food and Beverage Service department in a hotel, disabilities like intellectual disability, thalassemia, sickle cell disease and acid attack victims are identified as suitable disability for working in a hotel. The data received, identifies that, students with a disability like intellectual disability and acid victims are suitable for working in Food and Beverage Production department in a hotel. Hence alternative hypothesis H3 (All differently–abled students of hotel management have significant positive prospect in the hotel industry) has been accepted for the study.

Conclusion

Though the data collected from a limited number of institutes which responded but still we can conclude as the response rate is fifty per cent. Many researchers have concluded in social science and other fields as well citing the importance of depth of study than just matter of numbers (Bolarinwa, 2020); (Spencer, 2003). The stakeholders of these inclusive institutes are aware of the RPWD ACT -2016 but none of them have specially trained faculty for the differently-abled students. The presences of differently-abled students are very less and the institute premises are not fully accessible. As per the college authorities' ancillary departments and housekeeping job is more suitable for the differently-abled pupils. The research shows that there were little supports from other government bodies like Skill India and MHRD in providing financial or technical support to these institutes and moreover their employment through campus is below 10%. This is an alarming situation in supporting the SDG – 4 and the government's aim in making India an inclusive country and achieving the sustainable development goals by 2030.

Recommendation and Limitations

The research report recommends the government to transform all the national institutes of hotel management into an inclusive design and all government bodies should work together in providing an inclusive atmosphere to the differently abled students of higher education in hotel and tourism studies. Limitations of financial support and time bound have restricted the researcher in exploring the issues more finely.

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ANNEXURE-I

Annexure 1: Different types of disability included in the RPWD Act-2016	
S. No	**Types of Disabilities**
1	Blindness
2	Low-vision
3	Leprosy cured
4	Hearing Impairment (deaf)
5	Locomotor disability
6	Dwarfism
7	Intellectual disability
8	Mental Illness
9	Autism spectrum disorder
10	Cerebral palsy
11	Muscular dystrophy
12	Chronic neurological conditions
13	Specific learning disabilities
14	Multiple sclerosis
15	Speech and language disability
16	Thalassemia
17	Haemophilia

18	Sickle cell disease
19	Multiple disabilities
20	Acid attack victim
21	Parkinson's disease

ANNEXURE-II

List of Hotel Management Institutes Participated in the Research

Government Institutes	Non – Government Institutes
IHM Kolkata	AISSMS College of HMCT, Pune
IHM Gurdaspur	BCIHMCT, New Delhi
IHM Ranchi	WGSHA,MAHE, Manipal
IHM Bathinda	IHM Chitkara
IHM Guwahati	IHM Amrapali
CIHM SRINAGAR J&K	C Z Patel College of Business and Management, Vadodara
IHM CHENNAI	AURO University
IHM Lucknow	Manav Rachna
	UEI- Global, Lucknow
	GD Goenka University
	Munnar Catering college
	LPU School of Hospitality
	IIAS, Siliguri
	Gurunanak institute of Hotel Management , Kolkata
	Oriental School of Hotel Management
	NSHM, Durgapur
	DY Patil, School of Hotel Management, Navi Mumbai.