



Challenges Faced By Women With Disabilities In India

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Abstract

Women with disabilities are the world's most disadvantaged and neglected demographic. As a result of their handicap and gender, women with disabilities endure double prejudice. They are more likely to be victims of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse. Whilst disabled girls are exposed to academic structures, they often experience a sense of separation and misery. Women frequently face boundaries to equality and progress as a result of race, age, language, society, way of life, religion, and incapacity. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) states that, "The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take measures to ensure that the women and children with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others". To summarize, access to education that is free from prejudice based on gender and disability may help overcome the difficulties.

Keywords: Challenges, Women with disabilities, Education, India, Barrier-free

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most frequently disregarded topics in India is the rights of women with disabilities (WWD). Because of the social attitude, women with disabilities are denied rights and advantages. Millions of people have various disabilities, but it is still dreadful that such a big population suffers everyday pain due to inadequate care and treatment. Disabled people are not only the most vulnerable, but also the most disregarded. (Amartya Sen and James D Wolfensohn, 2014). Many disabled women in India have limited access to both education and employment. Even during social gatherings, they are uninvolved. According to the 2011 Census, 2.2% of Indians have a disability. According to multiple

studies, girls and women with disabilities are especially vulnerable to sexual and physical abuse (Groce, 1999). A lack of health care during childhood is one of the leading reasons of a girl's long-term impairment.

Education is critical for the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities because it provides them with access to information, allows them to communicate their needs, interests, and experiences, connects them with other students, builds their confidence, and supports them in advocating for their rights (Leni Chaudhuri, 2006). It also helps them achieve financial security and economic freedom. Without a solid education, their chances of finding work are slim, and their desires for empowerment go unfulfilled. According to a 2018 UNESCO research, girls who are marginalized on many grounds—disability, gender, and age are the group that is most driven out of education. People with disabilities are also the group that is most marginalized. The integration of women with disabilities in the general education system must therefore be emphasised more strongly in policies and initiatives.

II. Areas of challenges faced by women with disabilities in India

1. Barriers to education

In addition to the policies and programmes for the educational empowerment of females with disabilities being overlooked, there are other additional factors that provide challenges for girls and women. For a number of reasons, including social, cultural, economic, physical, and most importantly, attitude, they miss school. So, rather than governmental negligence, socioeconomic factors are the greatest hindrances to disabled girls' and women's access to education (Groce, et al., 2011).

The lack of inclusive and accessible infrastructure is a significant impediment to education for women with disabilities. Many educational institutions in India lack facilities to meet the unique needs of women with disabilities. This includes the absence of ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and other essential features that would enable their mobility and full participation in classrooms.

2. Attitudinal barriers

Around the world, there are several environmental and attitude hurdles that women with disabilities must contend with on a daily basis. Attitude obstacles include actions, words, offensive social and cultural norms and practices, as well as unfavorable preconceptions that stigmatize people with disabilities. In their day-to-day lives, women with disabilities frequently fall victim to attitudes hurdles. These challenges are frequently brought on by a lack of knowledge, which can lead people to ignore, stigmatise, or misjudge someone with a disability. (Sankalpa Satapathy, 2020).

3. Family and societal barrier

The family of a disabled person is incredibly significant in their lives. Living with a disabled person has an immediate influence not just on the challenged person, but also on the entire family, which includes parents, siblings, and extended family. Families will experience it differently, albeit it may cause disruptions in all aspects of family activities (Fahd, et al, 1997). Women with disabilities who experience obvious or covert rejection from their family are more likely to develop strange attitudes towards themselves and society as adults. Yet, caring for a disabled child has time and financial costs, demands on the body and mind, and logistical difficulties that can be very difficult. Depending on the degree, the family's financial situation, emotional state, and physical condition, as well as any available assets.

4. Physical barrier

The two different categories of physical barriers are environmental and physical limitations. While the type and severity of the disability influence the type of education these women and girls receive, those who are severely and moderately disabled have fewer opportunities to enrol in mainstream programmes than those who are mildly disabled, and those who have mental disabilities have fewer opportunities to enrol in special schools than loco-motor, hearing, or visually impaired girls and women. Environmental and infrastructure restrictions also eliminate even the most minor chances. (Gregorius, 2016). Women and girls with disabilities are more likely than men to be denied access to education owing to social barriers. The issues are exacerbated by the school's inadequate infrastructure, remote location with restricted transportation alternatives, a lack of money, and other considerations.

5. Barriers related to poverty

Poverty and disability are inextricably linked. Both poverty and disability have significant causal relationships. Poverty is a key contributor to disability. According to Mondal & Mete (2012), while disability causes poverty, it is also plausible that, poverty creates disability. Women born into low-income households are at a higher risk of developing impairments due to poor healthcare, malnutrition, a lack of access to clean water and sanitary facilities, unsafe living arrangements, and unfavorable employment conditions. They are seen as destitute throughout their life as a result of their lack of education, refusal to participate in training courses or job training schemes, and rejection from independent living and employment.

6. Infrastructural barrier

Inadequate school infrastructure may be caused by a number of things, including crowding or danger, a lack of adequate restrooms, and a shortage of water for hygiene. Poor sanitation and a lack of restrooms have serious detrimental consequences on health. Furthermore inaccessible are the school's grounds, classrooms, library, labs, playground, and facilities. Women with disabilities are particularly rejected if there are inadequate facilities (Hopkins 2011 and Jacklin et al., 2007).

7. Barriers related to provisions of rights

The vast majority of individuals, including parents and teachers, are unaware of the most recent laws passed by India's legislature. All policies and programming should include people with disabilities to ensure that all women are aware of their fundamental human rights and are not discriminated against (Ranjita Dawn 2016). The funding that is available to integrate students with disabilities in regular classrooms is sometimes unknown to many school officials.

III. CONCLUSION

One of the most disadvantaged and persecuted groups in society today are women with disabilities. Education should help teachers who work with female students who have special needs and raise awareness of their acceptance in society. The family should give those with impairments equal access to employment, education, and socialization. It is critical that we take all necessary actions to ensure women with disabilities' total growth, advancement, and empowerment in order to ensure their ability to exercise and enjoy the fundamental freedoms and human rights specified in the current context. To remove the barriers that still prevent them from gaining a higher education and social equality, we must first gain a greater understanding of their way of life. To present India to the world as an inclusive society that is fully developed, the people and the government should collaborate to end violence, abuse, and any type of discrimination against PwDs with a special focus on WwDs. (Sarkar & Parween, 2016).

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