

Status of Mainstream Education of Disabled Students in India A Research Study

1. UNIVERSITIES

All the 322 Universities in India were sent the research questionnaire. A total of 119 (36.9%) Universities responded. Out of those that responded, 48 of them were Autonomous, 35 were State Government Universities, 16 belonged to the Central Government and for 20 other Universities, no clear category could be established.

Except for the North-Eastern region, all other regions were well represented. There was no response from any University in Bihar. All the IITs of India sent their response to the questionnaire.

Among the notable Universities not replying to the questionnaire, in spite of several reminders, were Delhi University, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (New Delhi), Indira Gandhi National Open University (New Delhi), Jamia Millia Islamia University (New Delhi), Bangalore University (Karnataka), University of Calcutta (West Bengal), University of Calicut (Kerala), and Indian Agricultural Research Institute (New Delhi).

The analysis of the data on the mainstream educational status of the disabled youth in India is presented under three sections, as 'Statistics related to Disabled Students', 'Status of Constitutional Policies related to Admissions of Disabled Students', and 'Status of Provision of Schemes, Special Equipment and Services for Disabled Students'.

1.1 Statistics Related to Disabled Students

1.1.1 Total Number and Percentage of Disabled Students

In 119 Universities, representing approximately 7,280 institutes and colleges that responded to the Questionnaire, the total number of disabled students studying were only 1,635 (M - 76.3%; F - 23.7%). Even though the data was available from only 119 out of the total of 322 Universities in the country, it is likely to be highly representative of the overall situation in the country. According to the University Grants Commission (UGC), 6% of India's youth population is in Universities and Colleges. Proportionately, based on the most conservative estimate for the disabled youth population in the country (National Sample Survey, 2003), at least 3160,000 disabled youth should be in the Universities and Colleges of India.

However, just 1.2% of the 3.6 lakh disabled youth, who should have been studying according to India's norm for the general youth population, are in

the Universities and Colleges. It brings the stark reality into an established truth that India's higher educational system is not accessible to 98.8% of its disabled youth.

Only Banaras Hindu University (U.P.) and Aligarh Muslim University (U.P.) had the number of disabled students in three digits - 208 and 202 respectively. Table 1.1 highlights the top 10 Universities in relation to the presence of number of disabled students regardless of the fact that the numbers were anyway very small. 38 Universities had no disabled students. These included Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai), University of Allahabad, Guru Nanak Dev University (Amritsar), University of Rajasthan, Rabindra Bharati University (Kolkata), and Manipal Academy of Higher Education (Karnataka) among others. 31 Universities projected less than 5 disabled students, which included National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (Bangalore), School of Planning and Architecture (Delhi), Indian Institute of Technology (Kanpur), Punjab Agricultural University (Ludhiana), North Eastern Hill University (Shillong), and University of Pune. 23 Universities had more than five but less than 20 disabled students. These included Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai (7), Punjab University, Chandigarh (15), Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai (16), Roorkee (9), Mumbai (15), and G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Uttaranchal (7).

Table 1.1 Top Ten Universities in terms of total number of Disabled Students

University	Number of Disabled Students
Banaras Hindu University (UP)	208
Aligarh Muslim University (UP)	202
Kurukshetra University (Haryana)	72
Osmania University (Andhra Pradesh)	60
University of Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh)	56
Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi)	54
South Gujarat University	50
Karnataka State Open University	49
Anna University (Tamil Nadu)	48
Acharya Nagarjuna University	44

The total percentage of disabled students vis-a-vis total number of students in the Universities could be worked out only for 52 of 119 Universities, as the question regarding the total number of students and male/female ratio in the University was not included in the original Questionnaire and was sent later. Only 52 Universities could respond to this question within the time limit.

Table 1.2 shows that only 0.1% (male 0.07%, female 0.03 %) of the total number of students in 52 Universities were students with disabilities. This reveals the dismal state of adherence to the 3% reservation for disabled students as mandated by the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995.

Table 1.2 Number of Disabled Students vis-a-vis Total Number of Students (Data from 52 Universities)

	Total No. of Students	Total No. of Disabled Students	Male Students	Disabled Male Students	Female Students	Disabled Female Students
Number	7,13,167	694	4,96,209	489	2,16,958	205
Percentage	100%	0.1%	69.5%	0.07%	30.4%	0.03%

1.1.2 Disability-wise data analysis of disabled students

According to Table 1.3, among the disabled students admitted in the various Universities, the largest percentage was of students with orthopaedic disabilities (73.6%) followed by students with visual disability (19%). The percentage of students with hearing disabilities was very low (2.3%). Assuming that people with mental retardation are unlikely to reach the higher education level, 1.3 % of students with mental disabilities in the Universities were likely to be students with mental illness. This was confirmed on phone from Osmania University that had 21 of the 22 students with mental disabilities.

Table 1.3 Disability wise Data of Disabled Students

	Orthopaedic Disability			Visual Disability			Hearing Disability			Mental Disability			Any Other			Total		
	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	I Tot	M	F	I Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot
No	955	248	1203	211	100	311	26	12	38	16	61	22	40	21	61	1248	387	1635
%	79	21	73.5	68	32	19	68	32	2.3	73	27	1.3	66	34	3.7	76.3	23.7	100

Most of the Universities had admitted students with orthopaedic and visual disabilities only: All the disabled students at Banaras Hindu University were with orthopaedic disabilities. Only 11 Universities had students with hearing disabilities as well. Most of these had just one such student except Osmania University (Hyderabad) that had 23 of total of 38 students with hearing disabilities. Students with mental disabilities were present in just two Universities: Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapith (Andhra Pradesh) and Osmania University (Hyderabad).

South Gujarat University (Surat) had put all its disabled students (50) under 'Any Other' category. It seemingly did not have necessary records regarding the disability-wise break-up of its disabled students. Osmania University was the only one that projected a healthier trend in giving opportunities to students with different disabilities - out of its total 60 students with disabilities, 13 had orthopaedic disabilities, 3 visual disabilities, 23 had hearing disabilities, and 21 had mental disabilities.

1.2 Status of Constitutional Policies Related to Admissions of Disabled Students

1.2.1 Awareness about the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act, 1995

101 (85%) of Universities reported being aware of the Act, whereas 15 (13% see List 1.1) were not even aware of its existence. Among the Universities not being aware of the Act, the prominent were Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai), University of Jammu (J & K), Baba Farid University of Health Sciences (Punjab), and National Institute of Technology (Kurukshestra). 3 Universities did not give any response. They were Mangalore University (Karnataka), Jaypee University of Information Technology (Sol an) and Kavikulaguru Kalidas Sanskrit University (Maharashtra).

Table 1.4 Universities not aware of PWD Act, 1995

1.	Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University (A.P)
2.	Allahabad Agricultural Institute (U.P)
3.	Baba Farid University of Health Sciences (Punjab)
4.	Central Institute of Fisheries Education (Maharashtra)
5.	Ch. Sarwan Kumar H.P. Krishi Vishvavidyalaya (H.P)
6.	Indian Veterinary Research Institute (U.P)
7.	Indira Gandhi Agricultural University (Chhattisgarh)
8.	National Dairy Research Institute (Haryana)
9.	National Institute of Technology, Kurukshestra (Haryana)
10.	National Institute of Technology, Silchar (Assam)
11.	Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel University of Agriculture & Technology (Meerut)
12.	Tamil Nadu Veterinary & Animal Sciences University (Tamil Nadu)
13.	Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai)
14.	Telugu University (A.P)
15.	University of Jammu (J & K)

1.2.2 Policy on 3% Reservation for Disabled Students

95 (80%) of 119 Universities responded that they were following the 3% reservation policy for disabled students, although 18 of them did not have a single student with disability. The real situation is further made clear by the fact that average percentage of disabled students in the 52 Universities was only 0.1 %, calculated on the basis of data contained in Table 1.2.

17 Universities openly admitted to not following the 3% reservation policy including Nalsar Institute of Law (Hyderabad), National Institute of Mental Health and Sciences (Bangalore), Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS, Pilani) and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (Mumbai). This was in spite of the fact that many of them reported knowing about the PWD Act, 1995.

Four Universities did not give any response while Jaypee University of Information Technology (SolGn) said the policy did not apply to it!

1.2.3 Policy to Admit Disabled Students

112 (94%) Universities replied in affirmation in response to having a policy for admitting disabled students. HOINever, 6 Universities openly stated as not admitting students with disabilities, although except one the other 5 stated being aware of PWD ACT, 1995. Shri Rawalpur Sarkar International University (Chattisgarh) said the policy did not apply to it.

1.2.4 Reasons for not admitting Disabled Students

In response to the question asking the apprehensions/reasons for not admitting disabled students, only 4 Universities stated lack of infrastructure, lack of trained staff and concern about the academic abilities of disabled students as the main reasons. Although giving admission to disabled students, three Universities honestly shared their apprehension regarding lack of infrastructure and trained staff, concern about the safety of disabled students and their academic abilities. These were Sardar Patel University (Gujarat), Lucknow University, and Indian Veterinary Research Institute (UP). Almost all other Universities mentioned these reasons were not applicable to them.

1.3 Status of Schemes, Special Equipment and Services for Disabled Students

1.3.1 UGC Schemes - TESPE/HEPSN

Awareness regarding the Schemes: Only 50% of the 119 Universities reported being aware of the UGC Schemes. The remaining 50% did not know of any such Schemes - the notable ones among them were National Institute of Mental Health & Sciences (Bangalore), Indian Institute of Technology (Chennai and Kanpur), School of Planning and Architecture (New Delhi), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Lucknow University, and Nalsar University of Law (Hyderabad).

Recipient of UGC Grant: Just 11 (9%) Universities had received UGC Grant under the Schemes including Banaras Hindu University, University of Mumbai, Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi), Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Mumbai), and Aligarh Muslim University. Out of these 11 Universities, 6 had received grants for establishing Disability Units and 5 for providing special equipment to disabled students. 8 Universities received grants for making the premises accessible to disabled students, which included University of Mumbai, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and Aligarh Muslim University.

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Table 1.5 Universities receiving grants from UGC and purpose of grant received

S.No.	Name of University Receiving grant from UGC	Establishment of disability units in University! Colleges	Providing access to persons with disabilities	Providing special equipment to augment educational services for disabled
1.	Avinashilingam Institute for home Science and Higher Education for Women	Yes	Yes	Yes
2.	Gandhigram Rural Institute	Yes	Yes	NA
3.	Banaras Hindu university	NA	NA	NA
4.	Achar'ya Nagajuna University	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.	University of Mumbai	NA	Yes	NA
6.	Jawaharlal Nehru University	NR	NR	NR
7.	Kurukshetra University!	No Yes	No Yes	No Yes
8.	Aligarh Muslim University	Yes	Yes	No
9.	Vishva Bharti University	No	No	No
10	Nagarjuna University	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	MJP Rohilkhand University	No	No	No

1.3.2 Special Equipment

52 (44%) Universities accepted not providing any special equipment to the disabled students. 38 (32%) felt it was not applicable to them. Of the 24 (20%) who were providing the special equipment, Osmania University (Hyderabad), Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Coimbatore), and Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi) reported providing all types of equipment mentioned including computer software, books in Braille, appropriate desks and chairs, wheelchairs, tricycles, and hearing aids.

Banaras Hindu University with 208 students with orthopaedic disabilities, was not providing any special equipment to its disabled students.

Shanmugha Arts, Science: Technology & Research Academy (Tamil Nadu) mentioned providing all types of special equipment to the disabled students but did not have a single disabled student on its rolls!

Aligarh Muslim University with 142 students with visual and 60 with orthopaedic disabilities, was not providing any special equipment for its disabled students.

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1.3.3 Special Services

Out of 119 Universities only **47 (39%)** were giving **scholarships** and **29 (24%)** were providing **financial assistance**. Considering the fact that there is a strong correlation between poverty and disability, this puts especially the disabled students at a disadvantage. **73 (61%)** Universities claimed that they provided **hostel facility**, though only 4 listed having accessible hostel rooms and/or toilets. These were Indian Institute of Technology (Chennai and Mumbai), School of Planning and Architecture (New Delhi) and Punjab University.

Some Universities responded in affirmation to the provision of special services namely scholarships, financial assistance, bus travel concession, hostel accommodation and leniency in admission policy even though these did not have any disabled students'

But some Universities reported providing writers for students with blindness and sign language interpreter for hearing impaired students, even though they did not have any students with disabilities. These include University of Kashmir, Shanmugha Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (Tamil Nadu), Manipal Academy of Higher Education (Karnataka), and Amravati University (Maharashtra).

Nine out of the 10 Universities that reported provision of sign language interpreter either did not have students with hearing disability or denied having such a facility when called on the phone, as in the case of Osmania University and Tata Institute of Social Sciences.