

Disability and Education: Assessment of Enrollment of Disabled People and Their Empowerment in Higher Education in India

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Abstract: *The present paper is an attempt to highlight the empowerment of the disabled vis-à-vis their enrollment in higher education, substantiated by the data in the time frame of 2010-11 to 2018-19. It will also be analyzing the effort put forth by the State to ameliorate their ratio at the higher educational level. From the discussion and analysis, data shows that the empowerment of disabled in higher education has been very low and their enrollment is just 0.21 percent against the 5 percent reservation which is provided in the disabilities act. This shows that there is a miserable situation of disabled in higher education.*

Keywords: Disability, Policies and Programmes, Higher Education, Empowerment, India

1. Introduction

Constitution of India provides 'Right to Education' to all its citizens, whether they are able or disabled persons. Article 29 (2) provides the provision of education and stress that no citizen shall be denied admission into educational institutions established by the States or receiving aid out of the States fund on the ground of religion, caste, race, language and any other such as disabled. Constitution of India also provides the opportunities of free and compulsory education to the children with disabilities in the integrated and special schools till the age of 18 years (Source: Google).

Education is play a significant role in the promotion, development and empowerment of any community as well as individuals in the society. Through education a marginalized community, such as disabled can improve their situation, life of style with dignity in the mainstream society. An American Scholar Lester Frank Ward thought of education as a great equalizer. He states that the equal distribution of knowledge was the primary source of inequality in the society. Education for disabled persons has been a matter of great concern in India since time. Higher education has its own praiseworthy roles and importance in terms of employment, opportunities and their socio-political, economic development and affirms their dignified life in the mainstream society. Disabled students constitute minority groups within the higher educational institutions at world over as well as in India. There are various organizations and countries of the world which have formulated legislation and policies for the enhancement of disabled in higher education.

Disability in Indian context

The Government of India (GOI) Act of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016 defined disability as 'a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinder their full and

effective participation in society equally with other', along with 'those having not less than 40% of any disability as certified by a medical authority' and identified eight categories of disabilities, such as (I) Physical Disability (Locomotor disability including with acid attack victims; leprosy cured person; polio; cerebral palsy; dwarfism; muscular dystrophy; other Locomotor disability), (II) Visual Disability (including blindness and low vision), (III) Hearing Disability, (IV) Speech and Language Disability, (V) Mental Retardation or Intellectual Disability (including specific learning disability; autism spectrum disorder; other mental retardation/intellectual disorders, (VI) Mental Illness, (VII) Other Disability (including chronic neurological condition: Parkinson's disease; multiple sclerosis; other chronic neurological conditions, Blood Disorder: thalassemia; hemophilia; sickle cell disease), (VIII) Multiple Disability (more than one of the above specifies disabilities including deaf blindness).

2. Methods and Objectives of the Study

The present paper is based on the secondary source of data, which is taken from the various available literature, government reports and internet etc. The main objectives of this paper are: (i) an attempt to highlight the empowerment of the disabled vis-à-vis their enrollment in higher education, substantiated by the data in the time frame of 2010-11 to 2018-19 and, (ii) to analyzing the effort put forth by the State to ameliorate their ratio at the higher educational level.

A Glimpse on International Approach

For the equality, quality, and right based education to every individual, including disabled person, many conventions and conferences organized by the different organisation in the world. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNHR) adopted by the United Nation General Assembly in 1948. Among the various aims and objectives of this declaration one

was the protection of rights of children with disabilities and including inclusive education as basic rights. A world conference on 'Special Needs Education' held in Salamanca, Spain in 1994. Along with many participatory countries and international organisations, India was also a signatory country of this conference. The main objective of the conference was providing 'Education for All' children and adult within the regular school system. The conference emphasizes that regular school with this orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and getting education for all. Another lucrative and fruitful convention was adopted by the United Nation General Assembly called 'The United Nation Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities' in 2006. The intention of this convention was to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal human rights of disabled persons and it covers a various significant areas such as, accessibility, personal mobility, equality and non-discrimination along with education. India is also a signatory of this convention.

Apart from this, many countries officially recognized the needs and rights of disabled students as learner in higher education, such as America, Britain, Australia, and Israel; all have legislation concerning the integration of disabled students in higher education. In the America 'The Disabilities Act' and 'Individual with Disabilities Education Act' (IDEA) launched in 1990. The main goal and purpose of these two acts is to ensure that those who suffered from some degree of disabilities are allowed equal access and opportunities in employment and education sector without any kinds of discrimination based on disability. United Kingdom launched 'Disability Discrimination Act' in 1995, and it includes special education needs for disabled students in 2001 for the promotion and equalization of disabled in education.

National Approach

In order to promote higher education for disabled persons many policies, programs, schemes and legislations were made by different government at central level as well as state level. In 1995, GOI enacted a law called 'The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act' for the effective and full participation of disabled in mainstream society. The acts ensure that the disabled persons enjoy the right to equality, life with dignity and respect for his or her integrity equally with others. The GOI replaces this Act in 2016, and recommends the new act called The 'Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act'. The Act was enacted to give effect to the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of the People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region. Through this act, all government higher education institutions and other higher education institution such receiving aid from the government shall reserve not less than 5 percent seats for disabled persons. There are five years relaxations in the age of disabled persons for admission in institution of higher education. Other than these acts, there are also many schemes and programmes such as various fellowship schemes and other beneficiary schemes (which is not possible to describe here) launched by GOI for

the promotion and empowerment of disabled in higher education.

Disabled in Higher Education in India

As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE), Higher Education is defined as the education, which is obtained after completing 12 years of schooling or equivalent and is of the duration of at least nine months (full time) or after completing 10 years of schooling and is of the duration of at least 3 years. The education may be of the nature of General, Vocational, Professional or Technical education. In the Survey, courses which are include in the higher education are as follows- Under Graduate, Post Graduate, M.Phil., Ph.D., Post Graduate Diploma, Diploma course, Certificate course and integrated dual degree in various discipline such as Art, Science, Social Science, Technology and other discipline. All India Survey on Higher Education classified Higher Institutions into three broad categories: University/University Level Institutions, Colleges/Institutions - affiliated/recognized with University and Stand-alone Institutions - not affiliated/recognized with University.

Evidence from All India Survey on Higher Education Reports

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2010-11, the total enrollments of students in higher education were 27.5 million with 15.5 million males and 12.0 million females. Male constitute 56%, while female constitutes 44%. Among them 53,975 students enrolled with disabilities at various institutions and universities. In which, 26,507 were males and 27,468 females, and their proportion was 49.10% and 50.90%. Social category-wise representation of SWDs compared to all Scheduled Casts (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), the highest share of OBCs 24.3% followed by SCs 8.8% and STs Category 2.6%.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2011-12, the total enrollments of students in higher education were 29.2 million with 16.2 million males and 13 million females. Male constitute 55%, while female constitutes 45%. Among them 65,552 students enrolled with disabilities at various institutions and universities. In which, 37,153 were males and 28,399 females, and their proportion was 56.68% and 43.32%. Social category-wise representation of SWDs compared to all SCs, STs, OBCs, the highest share of OBCs 26.1%, followed by SCs 8.1% and STs Category 2.1%.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2012-13, the total enrollments of students in higher education were 30.3 million with 16.6 million males and 13.7 million females. Male constitute 55%, while female constitutes 45%. Among them 54,119 students enrolled with disabilities at various institutions and universities. In which, 31,547 were males and 22,572 females, and their proportion was 58.34% and 41.66%. Social category-wise representation of SWDs compared to all SCs, STs, OBCs, the highest share of OBCs 31.2%, followed by SCs 12.8% and STs Category 4.4%.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2013-14, the total enrollments of students in higher education were 32.3 million with 17.5 million males and 14.8 million females. Male constitute 54%, while female constitutes 46%. Among them 51,954 students were enrolled with disabilities at various institutions and universities. In which 31,374 were males and 20,580 females, and their proportion was 60.38% and 39.62%. Social category-wise representation of SWDs compared to all SCs, STs, OBCs, the highest share of OBCs 29.4%, followed by SCs 8.8% and STs Category 2.5%.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2014-15, the total enrollments of students in higher education were 34.2 million with 18.5 million males and 15.7 million females. Male constitute 54.5%, while female constitutes 45.5%. Among them 64,298 students enrolled with disabilities at various institutions and universities in. In which 34,757 were males and 29,541 females and their proportion was 54.05% and 45.95%. Social category-wise representation of SWDs compared to all SCs, STs, OBCs, the highest share of OBCs 32.6%, followed by SCs 10.3% and STs Category 2.4%.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2015-16, the total enrollments of students in higher education were 34.6 million with 18.6 million males and 16 million females. Male constitute 53.8%, while female constitutes 46.2%. Among them 74,435 students were enrolled with disabilities at various institutions and universities. In which 39,718 were males and 34,717 were females and their proportion was 53.35% and 46.65%. Social category-wise representation of SWDs compared to all SCs, STs, OBCs, the highest share of OBCs 32.6%, followed by SCs 10.9% and STs Category 2.5%.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2016-17, the total enrollments of students in higher education were 35.7 million, with 19 million males and 16.7 million females. Male constitute 53.22%, while female constitutes 46.8%. Among them 70,967 students were enrolled with disabilities at various institutions and universities. In which 40,894 were males and 30,073 are females and their proportion was 57.62% and 42.38%. Social category-wise representation of SWDs compared to all SCs, STs, OBCs, the highest share of OBCs 30.7%, followed by SCs 11.1% and STs Category 2.5%.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2017-18, the total enrollments of students in higher education were 36.6 million, with 19.2 million males and 17.4 million females. Male constitute 52.4%, while female constitutes 47.6%. Among them 74,317 students were enrolled with disabilities at various institutions and universities. In which 42,630 were males and 31,687 are females and their proportion was 57.36% and 42.64%. Social category-wise representation of SWDs compared to all SCs, STs, OBCs, the highest share of OBCs 28.4%, followed by SCs 9.4% and STs Category 2.9%.

According to All India Survey on Higher Education 2018-19, the total enrollments of students in higher education were 37.4 million, with 19.2 million males and 18.2 million females. Male constitute 51.4%, while female constitutes 48.6%.

Among them 85,877 students were enrolled with disabilities at various institutions and universities. In which 48,212 were males and 37,665 females and their proportion was 56.14% and 43.86%. Social category-wise representation of SWDs compared to all SCs, STs, OBCs, the highest share of OBCs 31.5%, followed by SCs 9.3% and STs Category 3.4%. The above discussion can be summarized in the following table:

Table 1: Represents Students with Disabilities as compared with Students without Disabilities in Higher Educational Institutions Enrolled over the past Nine Years 2010-11 to 2018-19

Calendar Year	Total Student Enrollment (in Millions)	Total Disabled Enrolment		
		Male	Female	Total
2010-11	27.5	26507	27468	53,975
2011-12	29.2	37153	28399	65,552
2012-13	30.3	31547	22572	54,119
2013-14	32.3	31374	20580	51,954
2014-15	34.2	34757	29541	64,298
2015-16	34.6	39718	34717	74,435
2016-17	35.7	40894	30073	70,967
2017-18	36.6	42630	31687	74,317
2018-19	37.4	48212	37665	85,877

Source: AISHE, from 2010-11 to 2018-19

3. Discussion and Conclusion

From the above discussion and evidence the enrollment of disabled students in higher education as compared with non-disabled students is very low, this is because their low population as compared with general population. From the table 1 the growth rate of disabled students in higher education has been more than general students such as 37.14 percent growth have been by disabled students, while 26.47 percent growth has occurred in non-disabled students during the calendar years of 2010-11 to 2018-19. In the case of fulfilling the reservation which is provided in the disabilities act, their pathetic and conditions remains and they are far behind to achieve their reservation criteria, they fulfilling only 0.20 to 0.21 percent. Despite, India being a signatory to various conventions and conferences, as well as launching several policies and programmes for the enhancement and empowerment of disabled persons in higher education, but the facts shows that all these International conventions and National legislations and policies have failed to engage and empower disabled persons in higher education. There can be various reasons for their low enrollment and empowerment in higher education such as lack of access in school education, lack of awareness among disabled students, their parents and staff and lack of proper implementation of policies and programmes.

Thus, the need of the hour is to look for the:

- Increase in the enrollment of disabled in higher education.
- Providing necessary facilities to attract them to colleges and universities.
- Needs to proper and well planned implementation of policies and programmes.

- Train them in vocational and technical education so as to make them independent.
- The enrollment at school levels will definitely have a direct bearing on higher education enrollment, which should also be one of the prime goals of the State.

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