

A Study of the Fair Participation of Disabled Students in Higher Education

Ms. Puja Lal¹, Ms. Dechen Ganju², Dr. Abdul Wadood Siddiqui³, Pranal Chhetri⁴

¹Lecturer, Department of Pharmacy, Usha Martin University, Ranchi- Jharkhand

²Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacy, Himalayan University, Itanagar- Arunachal Pradesh

³Professor, Department of Pharmacy, Mangalayatan University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh

⁴Assistant Professor, Collage of Pharmacy, Sikkim Professional University, Gangtok, Sikkim

Received: 18-June-2022
Revised: 20-September-2022
Accepted: 28-September-2022

Abstract:

Education has the potential to be a forceful agent of social transformation. It has the potential to serve as a tool for improving a person's socioeconomic standing and offering everyone, including people with disabilities, a respectable place in society. The pursuit of knowledge, its generation, preservation, and transmission can be significantly advanced through participation in higher education. As was mentioned earlier, higher education is directly connected to the development of skills, the building of nations, the integration of nations, employment opportunities, and research. It has the potential to increase both the potential for economic development and the potential for social development. Therefore, obtaining a higher education can play an important part in improving the socioeconomic and political status of Students with Disabilities; however, there were some challenges that Students with Disabilities (SWDs) encountered when attempting to obtain a higher education. As a result, the purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges that are experienced by students with disabilities and to also investigate the obstacles that are experienced by students with disabilities. Students with visual impairments, students with hearing impairments, and students with orthopaedic handicaps who were enrolled at the graduation level in higher education institutions were selected as a sample for the study for the purpose of gathering information for the purpose. Previous reviews were utilised as a resource in the process of both comprehending the issues and developing solutions. Following the consultation with the subject matter experts, the use of tools that were self-constructed was implemented. In addition, the issues were investigated from the perspectives of age, gender, disability, and access to academic or professional programmes offered by a variety of educational establishments at the higher education level.

Keywords: *Students with Disabilities, social transformation, socioeconomic*

Introduction:

Background

Birth of a child with a disability causes a variety of challenges for the entire family, and many well-established studies have proven that mothers who are in charge of the upbringing of children in their families feel severe stress as a result of their overloaded role burdens for their children. This is especially true for families in which the mother is the primary caregiver for the child (Hyun-Cheol Lee et al. 2021). Throughout its history, India has had a society that is multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-linguistic. Within this society, people of different religions, castes, classes, genders, and disabilities coexisted. Because of this, India is often referred to as the "Land of Varieties." On the other hand, India is a democratic nation, and therefore every citizen possesses the fundamental rights necessary to create a just society. In addition to this, there are numerous underrepresented communities that have been subjected to discrimination for a considerable amount of time. They have been falling further and further behind other social groups in the society as a direct consequence of this, which has led to the current situation. One of the groups that has been neglected for a significant amount of time in Indian

society is the Divyangjan (also spelled divyangjan), which refers to people who have disabilities. The number of people living with disabilities, also known as Divyangjan, is gradually growing and now accounts for a significant portion of the global population. As a result of the fact that different nations give different meanings to the term "disability," it is difficult to get an accurate count of the number of people who have disabilities (Ambati, 2012). According to the United Nations' estimates from 2006, approximately 650 million people, or 10 percent of the world's total population, are living with some form of disability. In addition, the data demonstrated that developing nations are home to eighty percent of the world's disabled population (UN, 2006). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the prevalence of disability and impairment is due to population growth, ageing, accidents, diseases, and advancements in medical facilities that have increased the life expectancy of the people. This has led to an increase in the average number of years that people can expect to live. As a result, the population of people who have disabilities, also known as Divyangjan, is becoming an increasingly significant part of society as well as educational institutions. The power of education as a tool for social reform cannot be overstated (Kothari, 1966). It served as a mechanism for improving a person's socioeconomic standing and putting them in a respectable position within the society in which they lived. The pursuit of knowledge, its creation, preservation, and dissemination all benefit greatly from participation in higher education (Kiranmayi, 1989). The development of skills, the construction of the nation, the integration of the nation, employment, and research are all directly related to higher education. It improved the likelihood of economic as well as social development taking place in the future. Therefore, the role that higher education plays in the socioeconomic, political, and industrial development of the country is extremely important. Taking into consideration how important education and especially higher education are, the government of India has implemented a number of policies and programmes to increase access for students with disabilities to higher education; however, the percentage of students with disabilities who actually enrol in higher education is still quite low.

LR

Hoffman An investigation entitled "Disability: Faculty Knowledge, Awareness, and Perceptions" was carried out by Jamie F. (2013). The research investigated the levels of faculty members' knowledge, awareness, and perceptions with regard to students who have disabilities. Additionally, the research investigated the regulations that must be followed in order to make higher education accessible to students with disabilities. A survey was given to 162 members of the teaching staff at a university in the Southeast of the United States that offers four-year degrees. The results of the study showed that there was a significant gap between the genders of the faculty members in terms of knowledge, awareness, and perceptions. There was no discernible difference between the groups of faculty members in terms of the number of years they had been teaching or their experience, awareness, or perceptions. In addition to this, the study paved the way for addressing faculty development concerns in higher education (Dr. Deepshikhasaxena et al. 2021).

Objective

- To conduct research into the current situation facing students with disabilities who are enrolled in higher education.
- To investigate the many approaches taken by colleges and universities to meet the requirements of disabled students attending higher education institutions.
- To ensure students with disabilities have equal participation in higher education, it is important to investigate the challenges they face.

Hypothesis

- H0. There is no significant change in the current situation facing students with disabilities who are enrolled in higher education.
- H1. There is significant change in the current situation facing students with disabilities who are enrolled in higher education.

- H0. There is no significant change in the many approaches taken by colleges and universities to meet the requirements of disabled students attending higher education institutions.
- H2. There is significant change in the many approaches taken by colleges and universities to meet the requirements of disabled students attending higher education institutions.
- H0. There is no significant change in the students with disabilities have equal participation in higher education, it is important to investigate the challenges they face.
- H3. There is significant change in the students with disabilities have equal participation in higher education, it is important to investigate the challenges they face.

Material and method: study design

The research plan, also known as the research design, is an organised blueprint that is followed in order to carry out the study. Research design is described by William Zikmund (1988) as "a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information." According to what Martin Bulmer (1974) had to say about research design, "Research design is the specification of the problem, conceptual definitions, and derivation of the hypotheses to test and defining of the population to be studied." Therefore, the design of research is a search that is both scientific and methodical for any particular issue. If it is carried out in an organised and scientific manner, a research project will yield fruitful results. It is not possible unless the research is carried out utilising the methods and procedures of scientific research.

In order to obtain results that are meaningful and desirable, it is necessary to carry out an investigation in a manner that is methodical, well-structured, and based on scientific principle.

Data collection

The activity of data collection had been prepared for in advance. To begin, institutions of higher learning were chosen to serve as the locations where the research would be carried out. After that, the permission was requested and received from the relevant authority of the educational institutions of higher learning. After receiving permission to do so, the researcher then proceeded to collect data from various higher education institutions' representative samples.

Individual data was collected from each of the samples by the researcher. The researcher took the time to read the questionnaire aloud and jot down the responses that were provided by the students who had visual impairments. The data for this study were collected from the respective institutions during the current academic session by the researcher so that they could compile information about the number of students with disabilities attending each of the different schools.

DATA ANALYSIS

The research utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods to compile its findings. In light of this, a Mixed Method analysis was carried out on the data collection. The documents from each respective institution have been analysed, and an analysis of the current status of SWDs in higher education has been performed. In addition, the prospectuses of each respective higher education institution for the selected sessions have been analysed, as have the data that the institutions have provided regarding the number of students with disabilities who have enrolled in the various graduation programmes. The open-ended questions on the questionnaires, the case study method, and the interview schedule were all used to collect qualitative data, which was then analysed using the thematic content analysis process and narrations. Themes were determined to be applicable to the interpretations of open-ended questions as well as interview transcripts.

In addition, a quantitative approach was taken in analysing the results of the questionnaires and rating scales. The statistical methods have been applied to the calculation of the analysis of quantitative data. In order to do this, we calculated the percentages and the mean. The mean and percentages were analysed using the statistical analysis software SPSS 22, and the results can be found below (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The demographic profile of the sample was coded using nominal coding, while the other items were coded using ordinal coding. Both types of coding were used in the study. In addition to this, the data have been presented in a clear and concise manner using graphs and charts.

Result and Discussion:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current status of students with disabilities (SWDs) in higher education, as well as various measures taken by higher education institutions and barriers experienced by students with disabilities while pursuing higher education.

According to the findings of the study, the proportion of female students attending higher education institutions is significantly lower than the proportion of male students attending these institutions. The findings of the study were supported by census data from India. There is a disparity between the sexes in terms of both the literacy rate and the number of graduates. The literacy rate for people with disabilities was 55%, with males having a 62% literacy rate and females having a 38% literacy rate, according to the Census (2011). In a similar vein, the graduation rate for men was 67.34 percent, while the graduation rate for women was 32.96 percent (Census, 2011). The results of a study that was carried out by the National Council on Educational Statistics (NCES, 2002) show findings that are diametrically opposed to those found in the present study. 59 percent of the students with disabilities who attended higher education institutions were female, according to the findings of the study, compared to only 41 percent of the students with disabilities who attended higher education institutions who were male. It was also discovered that these students tended to have an average age that was significantly older than that of students who did not have any disabilities.

Conclusion:

As was just mentioned, getting a college degree can be a useful tool in the fight for social justice. It gives people more opportunities in employment, a better life, self-confidence, and a respectable space in the family as well as in society. All of these benefits come from having a higher education. The current study provided a detailed portrait of students with disabilities attending higher education institutions who identified themselves as belonging to a variety of genders. A bleak picture was painted of the enrollment status of students with disabilities for the current academic session.

The percentage of students with disabilities who enrol in colleges and universities is significantly lower than that of students from other social groups. The representation of people of other genders is much lower in educational institutions of higher learning. The study's primary focus was on the challenges faced by students with disabilities (SWDs) while attending higher education institutions. These challenges included issues with the admissions process, academic challenges, financial challenges, social challenges, and support services offered by the institutions. In addition to this, it sheds light on a variety of policies and programmes that have been created specifically for students with disabilities. According to the findings of the study, the status of students with disabilities in educational institutions of higher learning is not significant. It is possible to reach the conclusion that the equitable participation of students with disabilities in higher education is not considered to be satisfying. As a result, there is a requirement for the development of specialised policies and programmes to ensure the fair participation of students with disabilities in higher education institutions.

References:

1. Ambati, Nageshwara R, (2012). Students with Disabilities in Higher Educational Institutions in Andhra Pradesh, PHD Thesis, Tata Institute of Social Science Research, TISS, Mumbai.

2. Kothari, L. N. (2016). Research Methodology, Nagri Printers, Delhi
3. Kirmani, Y.S. (1989). Management of Higher Education in India, Crown Publication, New Delhi.
4. UN. (2006). Convention on the Rights of the People with Disabilities
5. WHO, (1980). International Classifications of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicappes.
6. WHO, (2001). International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.
7. WHO, (2011). World Report on Disability, 2011.
8. National Centre for Educational Statistics, (2002). National postsecondary student aid study (NPSAS, 2000), U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C
9. GOI, (2011). Census of India, 2011, Data on Disability.
10. Lee, H. C., Han, K. I., & Kim, S. J. (2021). A Ground Theory Analysis of Fathers' Stress on Rearing of Children with Disabilities in Korea. *Ilkogretim Online*, 20(3).
11. Bijarnia-Mahay, S., Häberle, J., Jalan, A. B., Puri, R. D., Kohli, S., Kudalkar, K., ... & Verma, I. C. (2018). Urea cycle disorders in India: clinical course, biochemical and genetic investigations, and prenatal testing. *Orphanet Journal of Rare Diseases*, 13(1), 1-12.