

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's arm and hand resting on the rim of a wheelchair. The person is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt. The background is a blurred hallway with warm lighting and a series of circular lights on the ceiling.

**POLICY
BRIEFS**

Why are Persons with Disability missing from India's workplaces?



The Economics Society, SRCC

A photograph of a person sitting in a wheelchair on a gravel path in a park. The person is wearing light-colored trousers and tan shoes. Their hands are resting on their lap. The background shows green trees and foliage, slightly out of focus.

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INTRODUCTION

Persons with Disabilities in India face a great number of challenges in gaining and continuing with employment. The Constitution of India ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity to all its citizens with a view of promoting the establishment of an egalitarian and inclusive society, as is reflected in Article(s) 39 and 41. It is almost abysmal that even after existing legislations and evolving work environment, PwDs continue to face discrimination due to a gamut of factors when it comes to getting equal access and opportunities for/during employment.

As per Census 2011, around 2.68 crore people are classified as Person with Disabilities which is around 2.21% of the total population. Alarming, only 34 lakh of about 1.34 crore PwDs in the employable age group have a job in India. This constitutes an unemployment rate of around 70% (Source - Equiv.in). The huge number is abysmal for a developing nation considering the lost economic output due to this huge gap.

This very gap has led us towards the process of defining our research question - **Why are PwDs missing from India's workplaces?** The study aims at identifying issues acting as a barrier towards participation of Persons with Disabilities in India's workplaces, understanding their impact and giving potential policy interventions for overcoming the harmful impact of the identified factors.

The given project discusses the absence of the person with disabilities from India's workspaces. The core idea of the project is to study and classify the key factors that directly and indirectly affect their involvement in the work spheres. This project is an attempt to make a conscious effort towards taking the necessary steps towards their inclusion in workspaces

SCOPE

As per the revised Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, a total of 21 disabilities are covered under eight groups - locomotor disability, visual impairment, hearing impairment, chronic neurological conditions, persons affected with blood related disorders, developmental disorders, mental illness and multiple disabilities.

The scope of the project covers locomotor disability and the barriers faced by PwDs with the stated disability in getting/continuing employment. The project studies only the formal urban labour market in India.

OBJECTIVES

- Identifying the issues and challenges that PwDs face in gaining and continuing employment in the formal Indian Labour Market
- Understanding the economic and social impact of the factors identified
- Analysing the steps taken by the government with respect to legislation and budgetary allocation according to the latest RPWD Act 2016
- Recommending suitable policy interventions on the basis of impact identified.

METHODOLOGY

To logically study our research question, we identified two broad categories of factors that impact gaining employment & continuing with employment respectively:

A. Employment Inhibiting Factors - These factors comprises issues and challenges that impact an individual irrespective of employment status. In short, these factors impact the ability of a PwD to gain employment i.e. employability. These have been studied from both environmental and social perspectives to ensure comprehensiveness.

B. Employer and Workplace Factors - These factors comprises issues and challenges that a PwD employee faces while practicing employment. In short, these factors impact the ability of a PwD to continue with employment.

The idea behind this segregation was to be able to identify the key issues and challenges comprehensively.



**EMPLOYMENT
INHIBITING FACTORS**



FACTOR 1: POVERTY

20% of the poorest people in the world live with some kind of disability as per The World Bank. These people are often regarded as the most disadvantaged in their own communities. Disability, thus, attracts poverty as it leads to social exclusion and lack of participation in the society due to the environmental, institutional, systemic and attitudinal barriers that such people engage with in their daily lives.

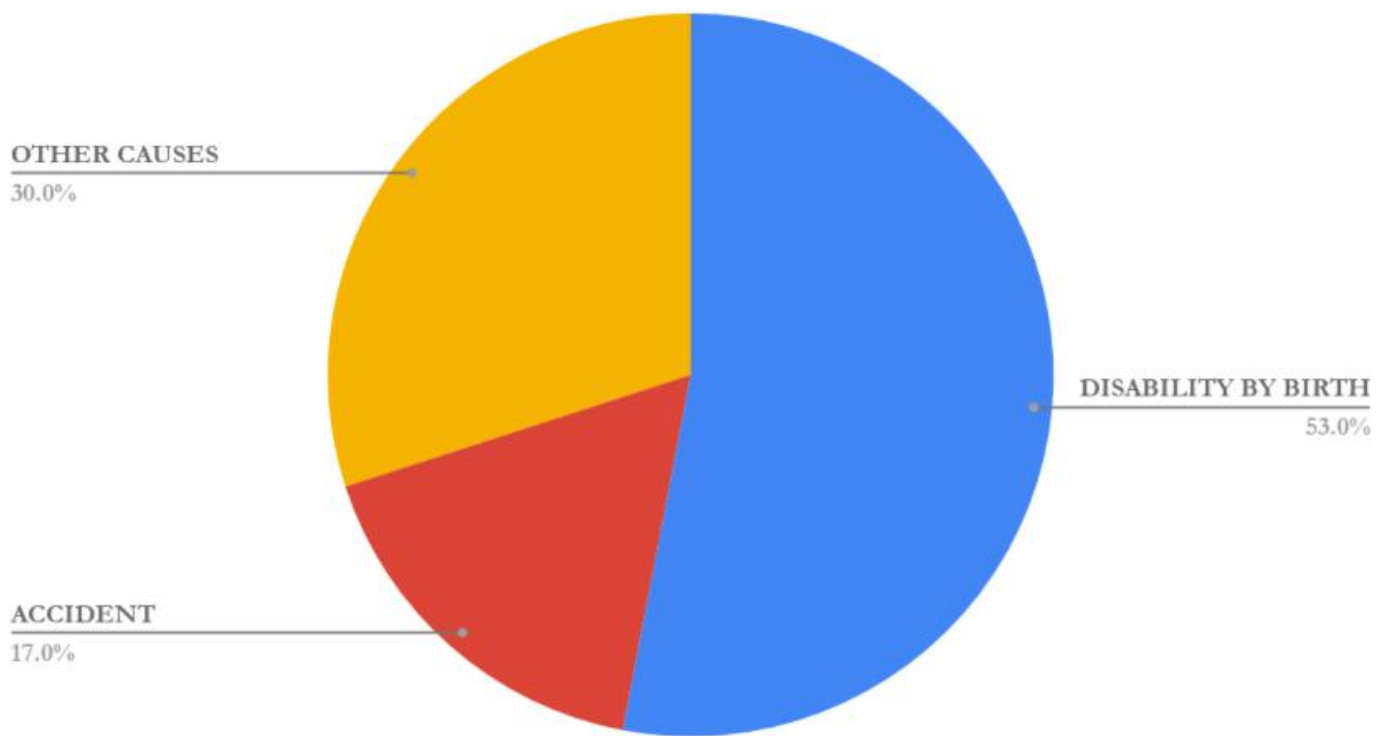
This leads to:

- a) discrimination, social marginalisation and isolation;
- b) insufficient access to education, adequate housing, nutritious food, clean water, basic sanitation, healthcare and credit;
- c) lack of ability to participate fully in legal and political processes due to the discrimination against them; and lack of preparation for and meaningful inclusion in the workforce

Poverty - Cause of Disability?

The British Department for International Development (DFID) recognizes disability to be a major cause of social exclusion and it is both the cause and consequence of poverty. The biggest cause of disability in India (excluding by birth) is poverty because persons with disabilities are more likely to suffer from malnutrition, live in crowded & unsanitary conditions (increasing risk of infectious disease), have limited access to medical care, poorly educated, non-immunization of children, lack of adequate care during pregnancy and birth and have multiple pregnancies. While we talk about the impact of poverty on the life of a PwD, we should also keep in mind that disability can arise due to poverty. When someone, who does not have access to proper healthcare due to financial constraints, gets involved in an accident or is diagnosed with a disease that could lead to a locomotor disability; he/she stands a higher chance of becoming differently abled.

CAUSES OF DISABILITY



SOURCE: NITI AAYOG REPORT

Apart from the above mentioned points, it also becomes necessary to acknowledge the additional costs of disability which in turn leads to a vicious cycle of low income and deteriorating health.

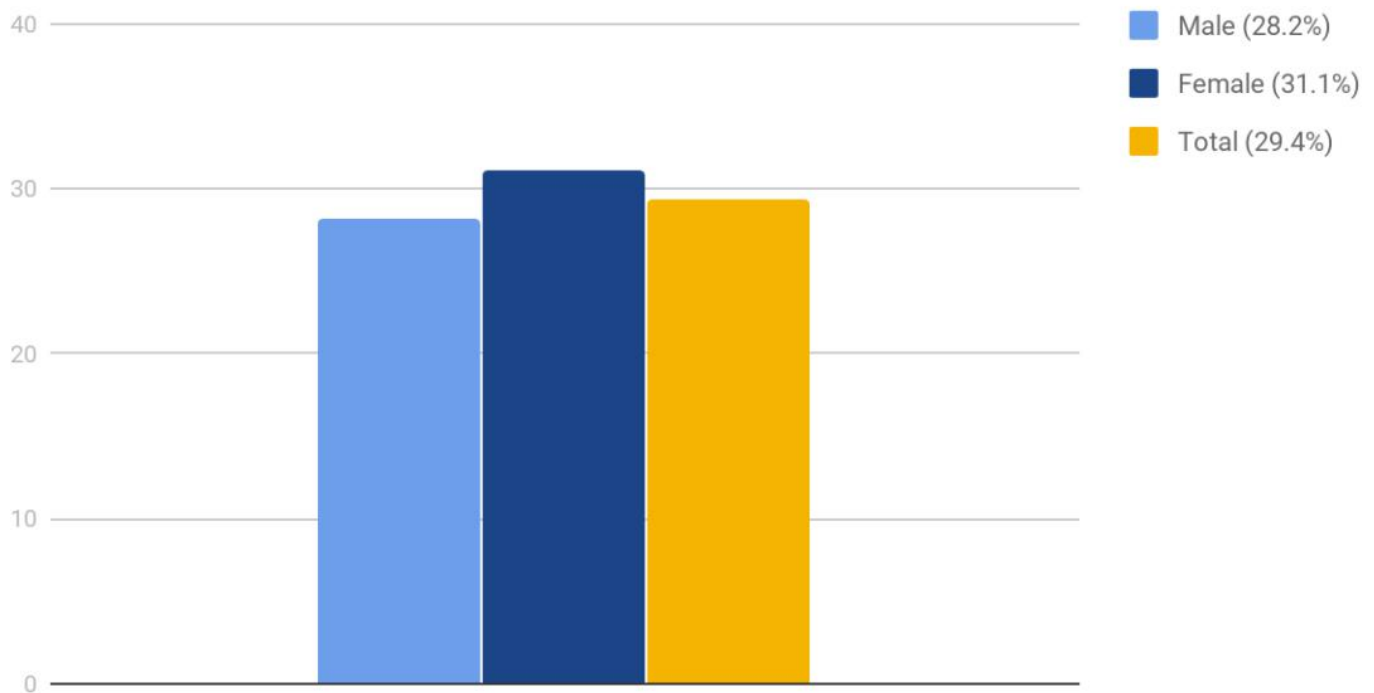
Additional Costs of Disability

Disability comes along with social and economic costs which are significant, but difficult to quantify. They include direct and indirect costs, some borne by people with disabilities and their families and friends and employers, and some by society. Many of these costs account for inaccessible environments and could be reduced in a more inclusive environment.

People with disabilities and their families often incur additional costs to achieve a standard of living equivalent to people without disability. Disability tends to reduce people's earning potential due to costs associated with disability. Due to this reduction in earning potential, PwDs 'usually need a higher income to achieve the same level of functioning as a person without disability' to meet additional costs resulting from disability (e.g. cost of assistive devices or personal support). This additional spending may go towards health care services, assistive devices, costlier transportation options, laundry services, special diets, or personal assistance.

As a result, they are less likely to spend money on education and training which in turn impacts their employability. Poor people with disabilities are less likely to earn their way out of poverty as a result of the work and education related barriers they face.

PERCENTAGE OF PWDS INCURRING OUT OF POCKET EXPENDITURE RELATED TO DISABILITY



SOURCE: DISABLED PERSONS IN INDIA A STATISTICAL PROFILE 2016

Sen's Capability Approach Theory

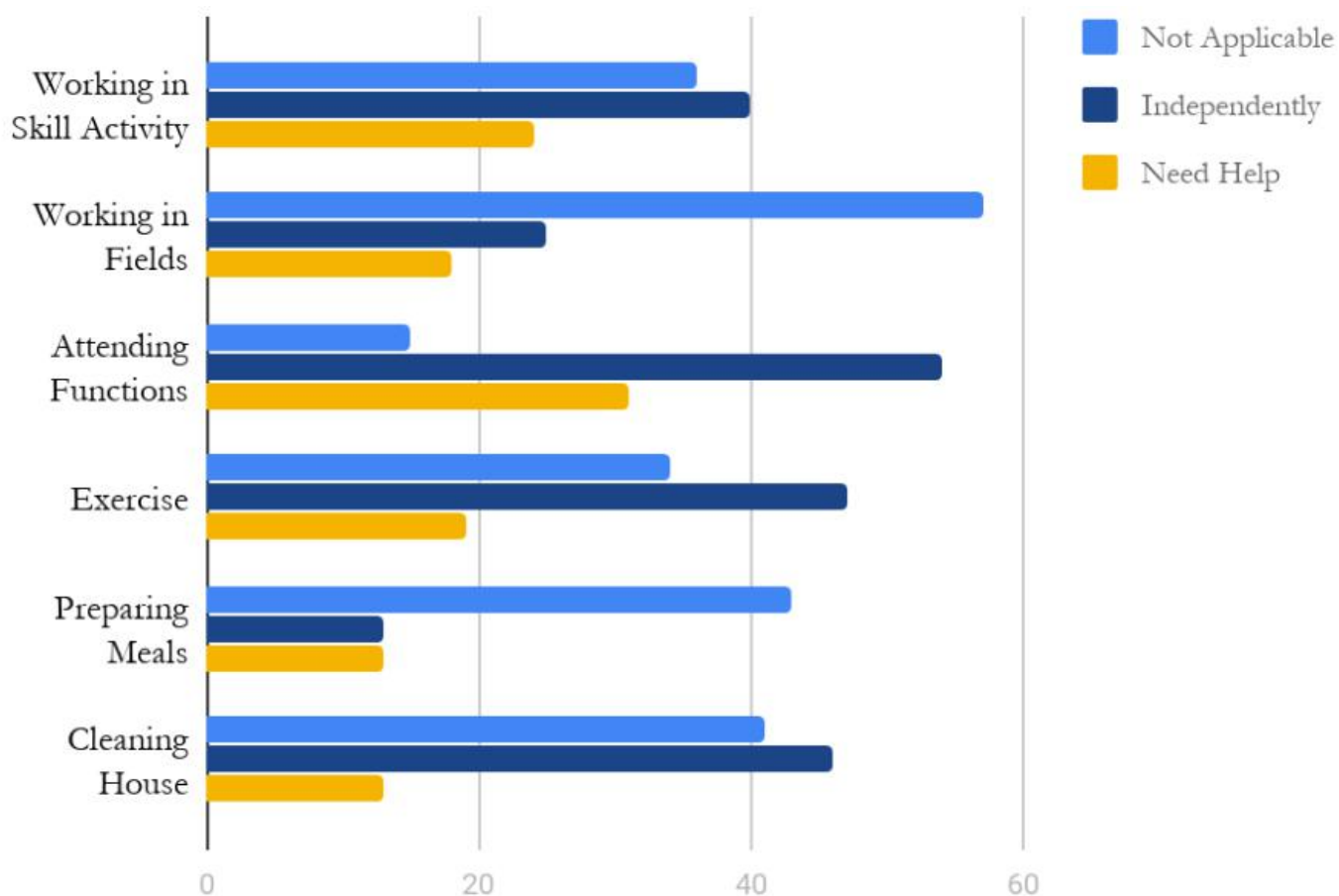
According to Sen's Capability Approach Theory, people with disabilities are more likely to become poor due to a couple of disadvantages, which are 'the earning handicap' and 'the conversion handicap.'

The earning handicap is the impairment of income-earning ability. For example, a person with visual disability cannot read or walk in the same way a normal person can; this affects the blind individual's ability to accomplish certain tasks. As such, the individual is restricted in his/ her choice of jobs when compared to the non-disabled and this will affect his/her potential income.

In a study by NITI Aayog, respondents were asked about their functional capabilities; it was found that various activities were performed by the persons with disabilities either independently or through help.

The conversion handicap is the difficulty in converting incomes and resources into good living due to disability. The conversion handicap is the extra need and cost needed in order to achieve the same level of advantage or well-being as the others as a result of disabilities. Consequently, PwD may experience a lower standard of living when compared to persons without disability with the same level of income. In a similar report by NITI Aayog, it was found out that 41% locomotive disability cases faced financial constraints to procure necessary aid/appliances

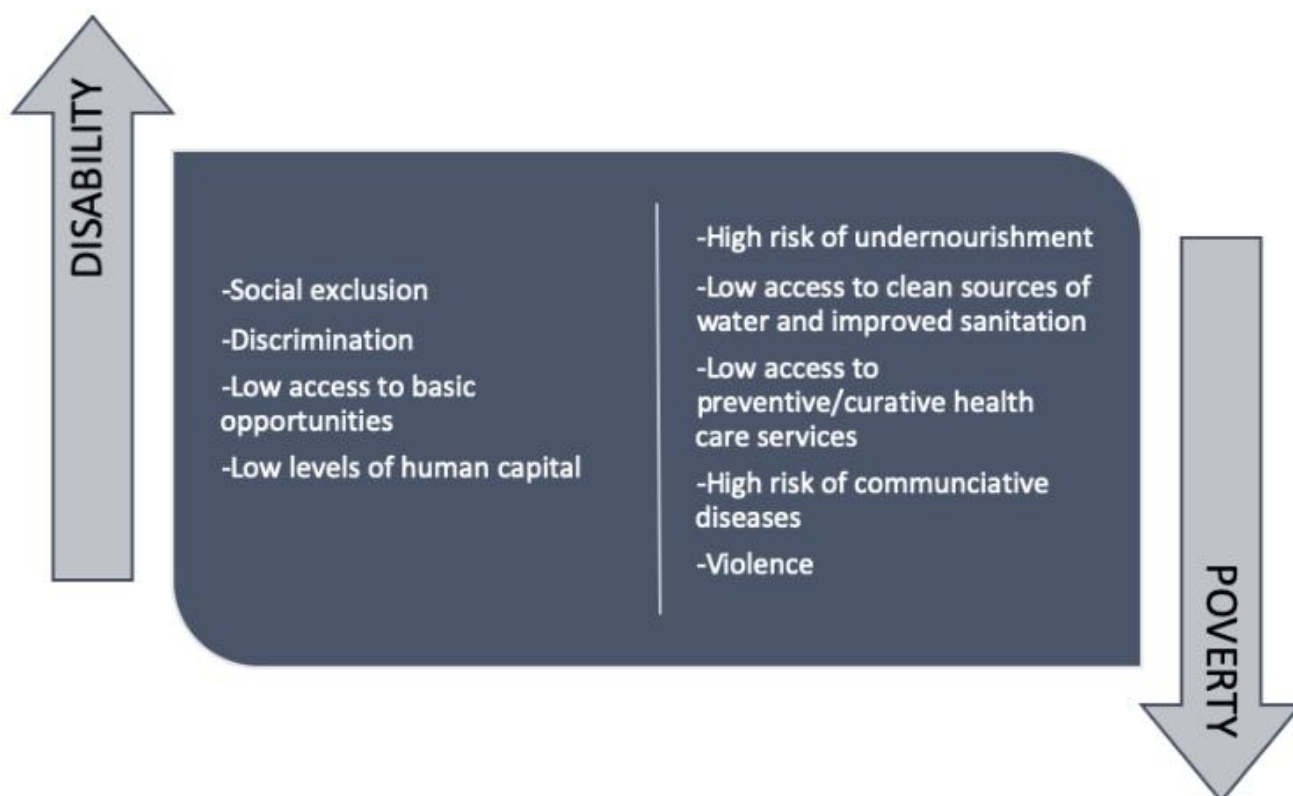
FUNCTIONING CAPABILITIES: THE EARLY HANDICAP



SOURCE: NITI AAYOG REPORT

Disability and Poverty: A Vicious Cycle

Disability and Poverty tend to form a vicious cycle where one thing leads to another. This, in turn, impacts the employability of PwD candidates. While leading life as a person with disability is not easy, mainstream poverty only worsens the condition and makes it difficult for people to create an aspirational value for them. As a result of this, most people drift away from the formal work-force.



GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION (RPWD ACT 2016)

Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) (PwD) Act, 1995

This is the main Act concerning Disability in the country. It provides for education, rehabilitation, employment, non-discrimination and social security for persons with disabilities. It ensures three percent reservation for PwDs in poverty alleviation programmes as well as in certain job categories. It casts obligations on central government, state governments and local authorities to ensure full citizenship benefits to PwDs.

Certain changes in PWD Act, 2016:

Additional benefits such as reservation in higher education (not less than 5%), government jobs (not less than 4 %), reservation in allocation of land, poverty alleviation schemes (5% allotment) etc. have been provided for persons with benchmark disabilities and those with high support needs.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Inclusion under MGNREGA : As of now, MGNREGA is not inclusive of PwDs, not by design but by default. Given how people below 40% of severity are suitable to work and engage in productive activity, giving them benefits under MNREGA will be helpful to these people.
2. Ensuring employment in private space : Private corporations usually employ a very insignificant number of PwDs under the garb of Corporate Social Responsibility and believe that their job is done.
 - Ensuring stricter compliance by imposing a minimum threshold that necessarily needs to be met for a large scale organisation will better improve employment prospects of PwDs.
 - Additionally, tax incentives in the form a rebate/exemption can be given to corporations that choose to employ such people.
3. Assistive Technological Solutions: For a poor person with a disability who has a hard time filling his stomach, access to technology and its better understanding is a far fetched dream. However, a lot of barriers in their daily lives can be taken care of once they know how to implement this technology for their betterment.

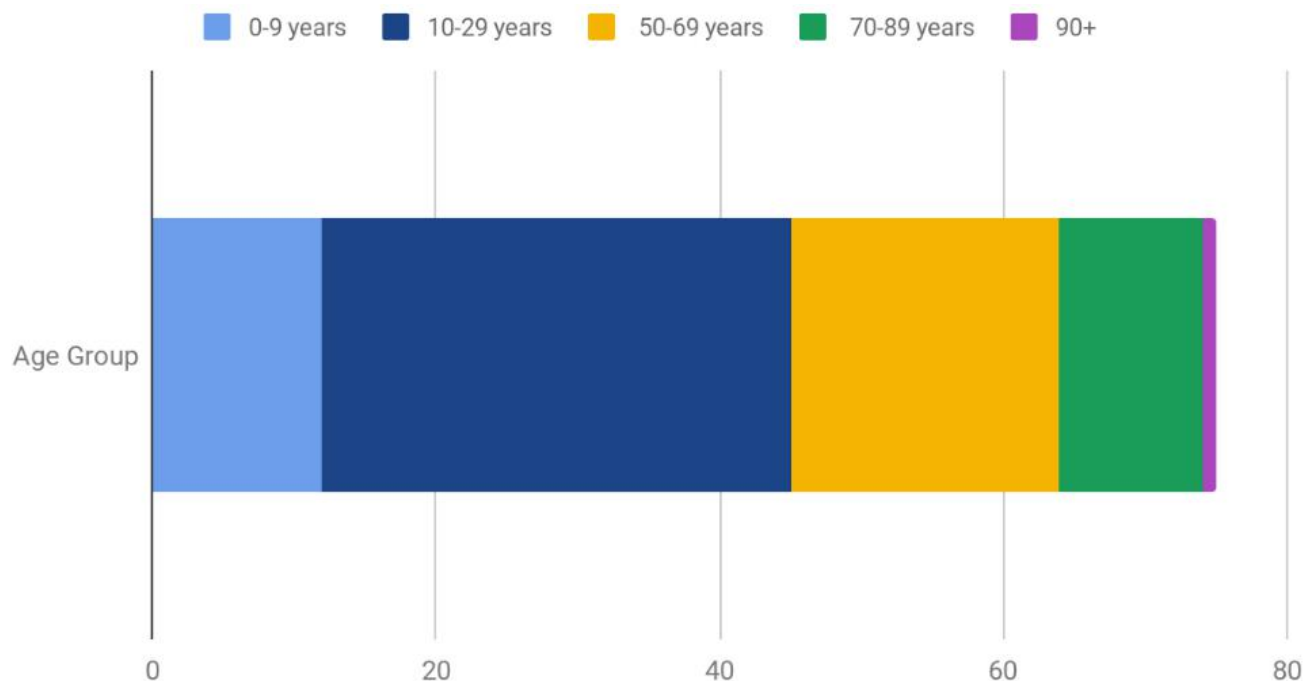
Various unclaimed amounts with the likes of insurance companies and corporate houses, coupled with inoperative provident fund accounts have a large sum which can be utilised to promote skilled-technological training among the poor to ensure that they are not disqualified to work at organisations that support such infrastructure.



FACTOR 2: EDUCATION

Among PwDs, there are, approximately, 5.5 million persons in the 12-24 years age group in India, according to Disabled Persons In India A Statistical Profile 2016 Report by NITI Aayog. Hence, it becomes essential to tap this labour force of persons with disability by imparting them with necessary education and training to be able to get and succeed at employment.

PWDS BY AGE GROUP IN INDIA

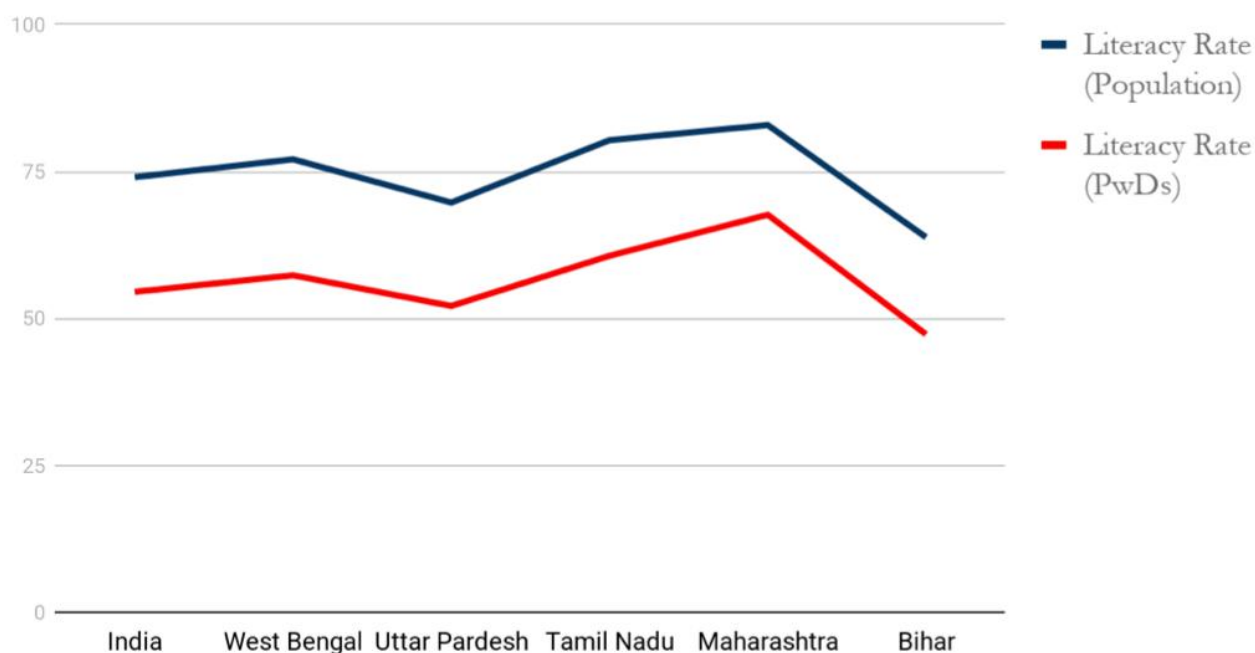


SOURCE: DISABLED PERSONS IN INDIA A STATISTICAL PROFILE 2016

Current Education and Training Status

As per Census 2011, among the total number of PwDs, 45% are illiterates. Further, only 13% have matric/ secondary education but are not graduates and 5% are graduates and above. Nearly 8.5% among the literate PwDs are graduates. When compared with the general population literacy rate, the picture seems to be very bad.

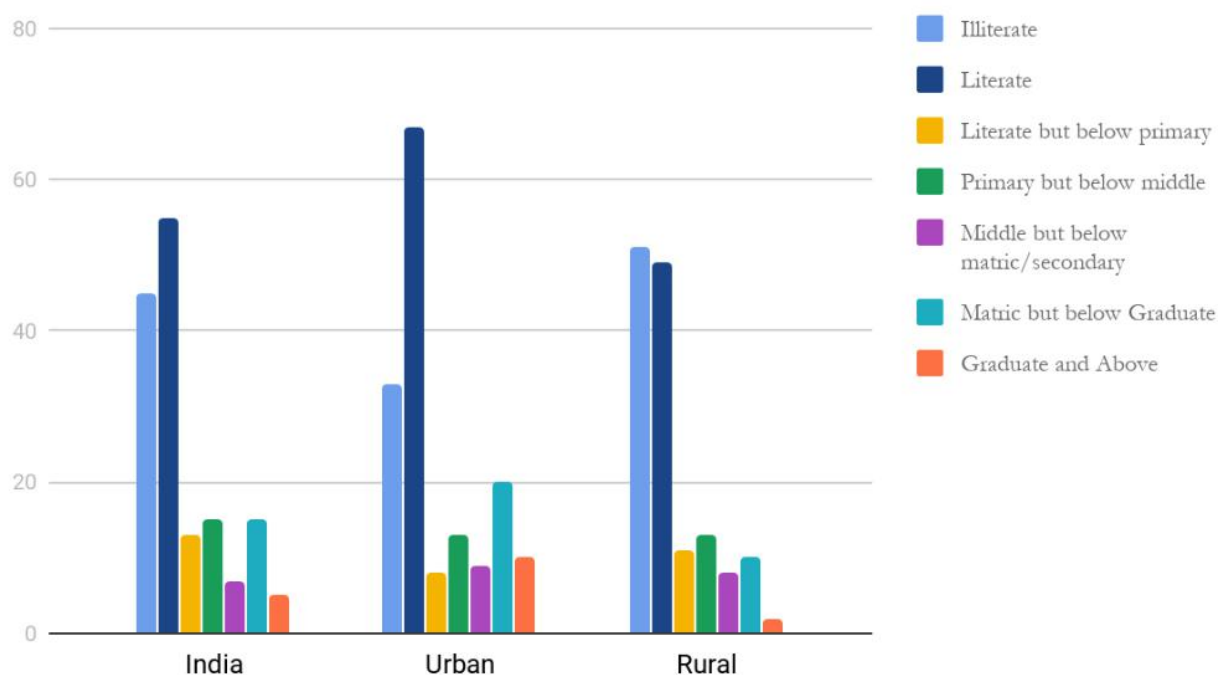
LITERACY RATES AMONG PWDS VIA-A-VIS POPULATION LITERACY RATE



SOURCE: CENSUS 2011

The educational level of PwDs is better in urban areas compared to rural areas, both for males and females. In urban areas, 67% of the total persons with disabilities are literate vis-a-vis 49% in rural areas. In urban areas 20% have matric/ secondary level education but below graduate and 10% are graduate and above, while in rural areas, the corresponding figures are 10% and 2% respectively. Illiteracy level of women in rural areas is also disproportionately high.

EDUCATION STATUS OF PWDS



SOURCE: CENSUS 2011, DISABLED PERSONS IN INDIA A STATISTICAL PROFILE 2016

In the rural areas, most of the PwDs are engaged in the informal sector. Most had been trained by family or community members in limited skills such as basket making, weaving, embroidery or typing. However, these skills did not really help them to earn a living, and many ended up doing manual work for a pittance (UNNATI 2004). A survey of blind hawkers in Greater Mumbai found that 40 per cent were educated to secondary level and three per cent ended up pursuing graduate and postgraduate degrees. About one third had received some vocational training from NGOs, but they said this was not helpful in getting them work (India Centre for Human Rights and Law, cited in NCPEDP 2004a).

There is a serious lack of quality of training amongst the PwDs. To add on to this, there exists lack of access to education, and society's negative attitudes. The result is that the vast majority of India's population of PwDs are unable to reach their potential, remain dependent on families for support, and are denied the opportunity to contribute to the country's development.

Education and Poverty: A Study of Opulence

Poverty and disability have a cause and effect relationship with each other, one thing leads to another. Poverty-disability combination results in a condition of "simultaneous deprivation". So unless and until the people who are differently abled are provided with education, they would not be able to gain financial independence and the real rehabilitation would not take place.

Filmer (2008) in the study titled *The Economic Burden of Disability in India: Estimates from the NSS Data*, found that PwD population constitutes among the poorest sections of the society, because they had the lowest or no education, leading to lowest earnings in the labor market and thus, to poverty. Controlling for other variables, his econometric estimates show that if individuals having disabilities attain the same level of education as the children without disability, there will be no difference between the PwDs and the persons without disability as far as the opulence i.e. income is concerned. It is important to note, however, that policies to educate the PwDs is only a necessary step for equality of opulence between PwDs and the general population, the labor market policies such as discrimination against workers with disabilities and making the workplace accessible to workers with disabilities must also be introduced and properly implemented. This can only equalize the opulence between the two groups. The population with disabilities still faces Sen's conversion handicap problem: equality of earnings of the able and PwDs would not necessarily guarantee equality of their living standards; we still have a long way to go for the PwDs population to achieve equity of living standard.

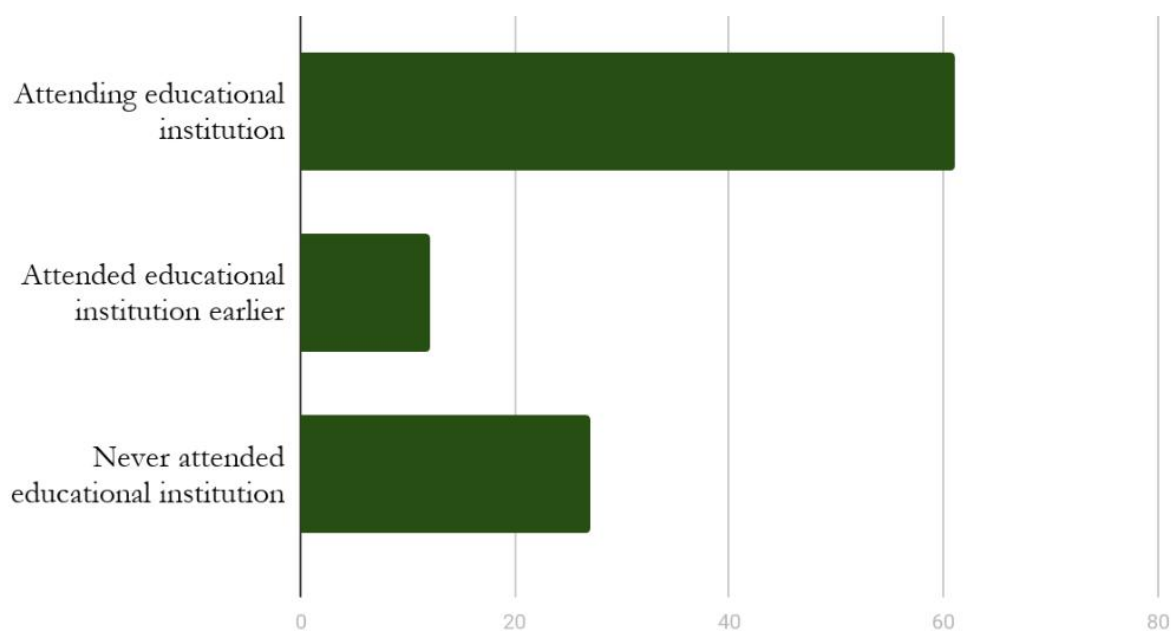
Barriers with respect to Education

There exists several barriers to education namely attitudinal, lack of accessibility and inadequacy of educational and human resource support. Beliefs about disability largely influence attitudes towards inclusion of PwDs from various groups. These attitudes tend to be more detrimental when there is an intersection between poverty and disability. Poverty in itself is a huge barrier to educational opportunity, but its effects are compounded when linked with disability.

Now, we attempt to analyse the above barriers individually:

A. Attitudinal Barriers: The attitude of parents having children with disability is more cautious than positive considering their apprehensions about the availability of the required resources in a mainstream school and emotional development of their child. Attitudes of parents of PwDs are a product of factors, ranging from religious and social beliefs, prevalent perceptions in their communities, concerns about the children's safety, mobility of the child, availability of transportation, and response from the school. The attitude of teachers in the school also plays a significant role. Teachers' attitudes are shaped by multiple factors such as sensitisation and awareness training and availability of teaching tools, assistive technology devices. However, a positive attitude does not guarantee inclusive education; factors such as lack of training of teachers on education of Children with Disability (CwDs), under resourced classrooms specifically in terms of resources specifically for curating inclusive environment for CwDs. A combination of socio-cultural and systemic factors underlie negative attitudes of parents and teachers towards inclusion which consequently impacts decision to attend school.

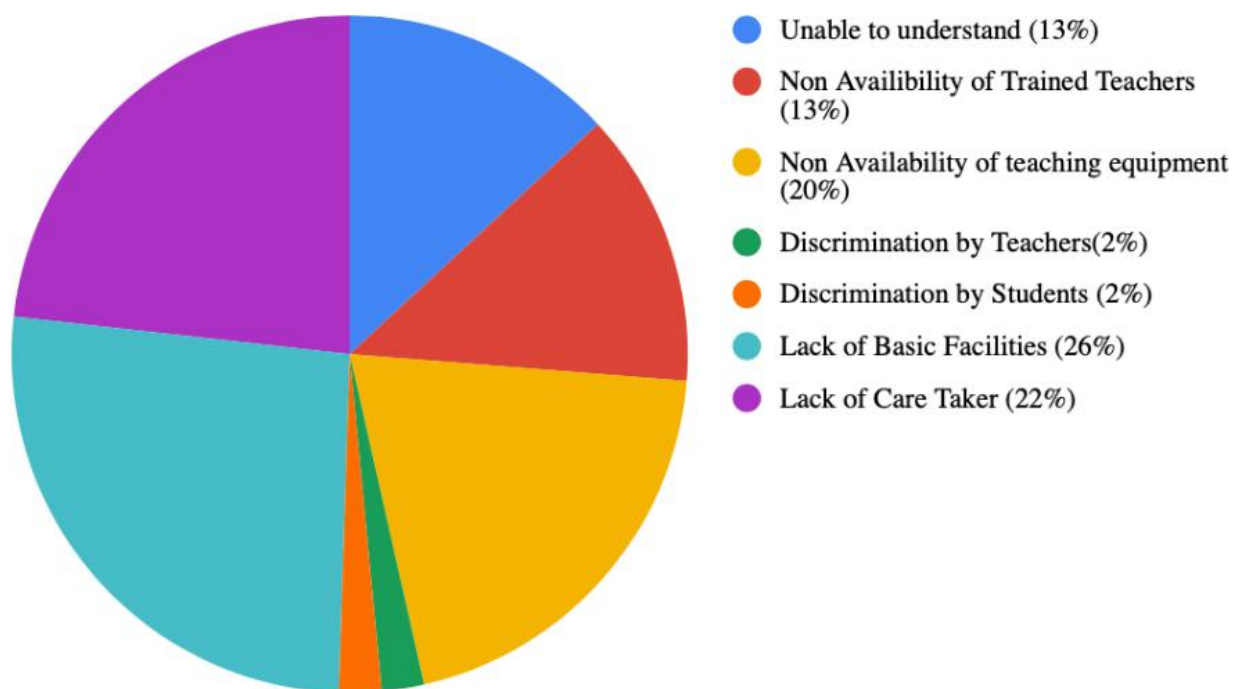
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STATUS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY (5-19)



SOURCE: CENSUS 2011

In a study by NITI Aayog titled *Research Study On Identifying And Profiling Skill Development Activities For Generating Potential Employment Opportunities For The Persons With Disabilities*, it was found that CwDs face a variety of issues and challenges in a typical classroom setting illustrated below through a chart. The sample size of the study was 1095 respondents with 191 respondents acknowledging that they face below-mentioned problems.

PROBLEMS FACED BY CWDS IN SCHOOLS



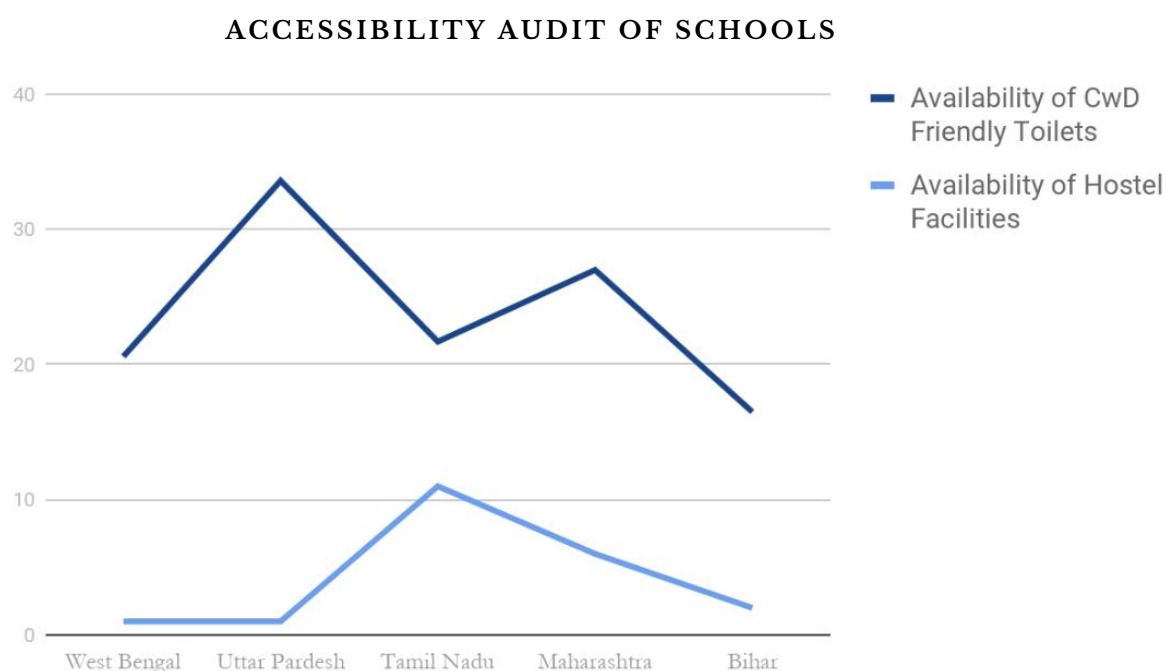
SOURCE: NITI AAYOG

B. Lack of Accessibility: Physical accessibility refers to access within the school building, which includes signages, accessible entrances, corridors, toilets, switches and controls, ramps, elevators, accessible desks etc. as well as the design of outdoor facilities like roads, footpaths, and transport that is needed to access the school. Accessibility inside the school building is a major challenge. Operationalization of physical accessibility mostly takes the form of ramps. Between 2011 and 2014, Samarthyam, an NGO, with the support of Department for International Development (DFID), Government of the United Kingdom, conducted access audits in 500 schools in 16 Indian states. It was found that due to lack of expertise and poor understanding of access standards among construction personnel and school administration, school infrastructure was often barrier-filled and unsafe for CwDs. This hampered their access to, and use of, classrooms, playgrounds, libraries, drinking water units, toilets, mid-day meal areas, and other areas. Children with disabilities are most vulnerable to disaster risks, and international efforts towards disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction have not percolated down to the school level.

Lack of access to proper education makes them less qualified to apply for certain jobs. It is one of the reasons why they are missing from workspaces as they fail to fulfill the eligibility criteria of a competent employee.

Lack of accessible toilets, an indicator of overall school accessibility, is another major barrier faced by CwDs. According to Secondary Education State Report Cards, less than 20% of schools have accessible toilets for children with disabilities. We selected six states to understand the ground reality of accessibility at schools for CwDs. The states were selected on the basis of population of CwDs spread over different states.

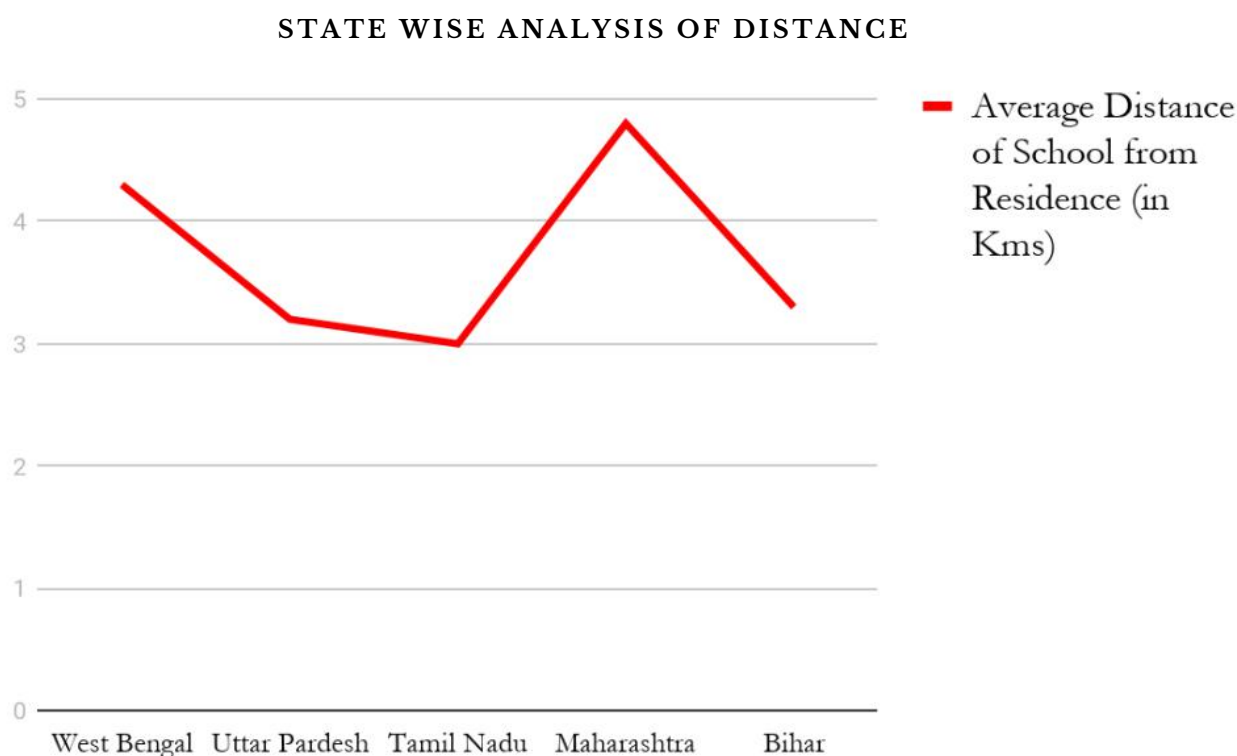
We took two parameters: Availability of CwD Friendly Toilets and Availability of Hostel Facilities for CwDs. The states chosen performed abysmally in both the factors thereby explaining why CwDs don't get access to education facilities which in turn impacts their employability.



SOURCE: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION AND NITI AAYOG

Another important parameter to be considered is the average distance of school from the residence of CwDs. Government schools, especially upper primary and secondary schools, become inaccessible to CWDs not only because of distance but also due to lack of accessible transportation in villages and remote areas. Since public transport in India is largely inaccessible for PwDs, especially in rural areas, and private transport is too expensive, distance constitutes an important factor in the overall decision of a parent in enrolling their child into school.

According to Disabled Persons in India A Statistical Profile 2016 by NITI Aayog, state-wise average distance traveled to attend school varies from 3 to 8 Kilometers. Detailed analysis of the above mentioned states is shown below.



SOURCE: DISABLED PERSONS IN INDIA A STATISTICAL PROFILE 2016

C. Inadequacy of educational and human resource support: As was evident from accessibility audits, there exists a lack of awareness regarding Information and Communications Technology or any other kinds of assistive technology that could improve their quality of life. Moreover, there is also a non availability of the required and right kind of products and services. There is a need for equitable access to assistive technology which acts as a barrier, these inequities are reflected in terms of wealth, age, geographical factors. Assistive technology is the gateway to inclusive education as they address barriers in participation in education. There are various ways in which assistive technologies create an inclusive education system. It makes the content more accessible and understandable by adopting electronic formats and using smart devices. Currently, this kind of support is missing from the education system.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION (RPWD ACT 2016)

The RPWD Act 2016 focuses on the education of all PwDs including children, women and adults. Education must be free up to 18 years and inclusive provision is ordered and all required learning materials, aids, methods, experts etc. will be provided. The act gives emphasis on the skill development and employment of

PwDs according to their individual capabilities and there will be no discrimination in employment. It provides 5% reservation in higher education.

- It ensures the education of people with disabilities in chapter No. III and makes provision of discrimination free education system, quite suitable to every individual with diversity. The intention of the RPwD act is to help inclusive education to achieve it's the dream of an inclusive community where every person can get equal space for ownself and the same for others.
- It discusses the admission, retention and full participation of children with disabilities in the educational process which is one of necessary principles of inclusive education.
- Same as the objective of inclusive education the act lays focus on the prevention of those diseases which cause disabilities. It focuses on awareness campaigns and rehabilitation measures of PwDs.
- The act focuses on the barrier free and least restrictive environment which is also an objective of inclusive Education.
- It helps inclusive education by making provision of disability certificates.
- Inclusive education focuses on the involvement of parents, family and community at all stages of the educational process and in the same way the act demands the cooperation from concerned society.
- When the act focuses on the collection of data, information and research works on disabilities it provides aids to inclusive education to make essential changes and adaptations in its administration and field work.
- Same as inclusive education the RPwD act focuses on the social security and safety of the disable children.
- The act makes provision of age relaxation that helps enrollment and retention in education.
- Through the special measures and provisions for benchmark disabilities the act helps inclusive education to motivate disable children to work competently and get better jobs and other facilities.
- With the provisions of financial, social and legal help the act helps inclusive education to improve the literacy of PwDs from 55% to national literacy rate 74% at least.
- The Act has mentioned the penalties and punishments. So no educational institute can refuse to give admission to PwDs and it is helpful for inclusion of all children in education.
- Inclusive education has aim of developing a most healthy and support system that is enforced by the RPwD act by its provisions of material, information, means and facility accessibility to every person with disability.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Education plays an important role in making the person employable. Given that the person is physically disabled, there is not much scope for jobs in the informal sector, hence getting proper education becomes even more important.

1. Accessibility: Amongst all the barriers that have been identified, one of the major barriers remains to be accessibility. There should be a conscious effort towards working making the commute to educational institutions more accessible, this can be achieved by including low floored buses in the transport system. There should be a shift towards differently abled friendly infrastructure especially in educational institutions. The infrastructure should move beyond just ramps and railings, it should span differently friendly washrooms, furniture etc.
2. Attitudinal: It is important to create awareness to sensitise the peers as well as the parents so that the children are not alienated. The parents can also be provided with some kind of incentive to send their children to school, this will act as a tool for reassurance and might be helpful in breaking the attitudinal barriers.
3. Technology: The usage of assistive technologies could significantly improve the lives of differently abled students. The government should take up the task of making such resources available in the rural areas along with proper guidance and training for their usage. In order to overcome the barriers of physical accessibility, assistive technology can be used to create a set up for homeschooling. Creating more awareness regarding the same would encourage the private sector to get more involved in this field of work, thus providing the right kind of resources to the PwDs.



FACTOR 3: SOCIAL EXCLUSION

People with disabilities are prone to social exclusion and poverty because of the social stigma. An important element to be studied for this particular factor is the phenomenon of indirect costs of disability.

Social Exclusion and Indirect Costs

Social exclusion leads to indirect economic and social costs due to disability which can be wide-ranging and detrimental. Economic Costs majorly comprise of fall in productivity and output from inadequate training and education of CwDs, exits from work or reduced work due to workplace issues and challenges, and the loss of taxation revenue related to the loss of productivity. An important indirect cost of disability is related to lost labour productivity of persons with disability and associated loss of taxes. Losses increase when family members leave employment or reduce the number of hours worked to care for family members with disabilities. The lost productivity can result from insufficient accumulation of human capital (underinvestment in human capital), from a lack of employment, or from underemployment.

Non-economic costs include social isolation and stress and are difficult to quantify.

Social Exclusion and Employment

People with disabilities face social exclusion in all spheres of life including employment. Most employers, service providers, governments, and markets are not equipped to enable the full participation of PwDs and, as a result, PwDs find themselves excluded from many aspects of day-to-day life including health services, economies and educational establishments which in turn impacts their employability.

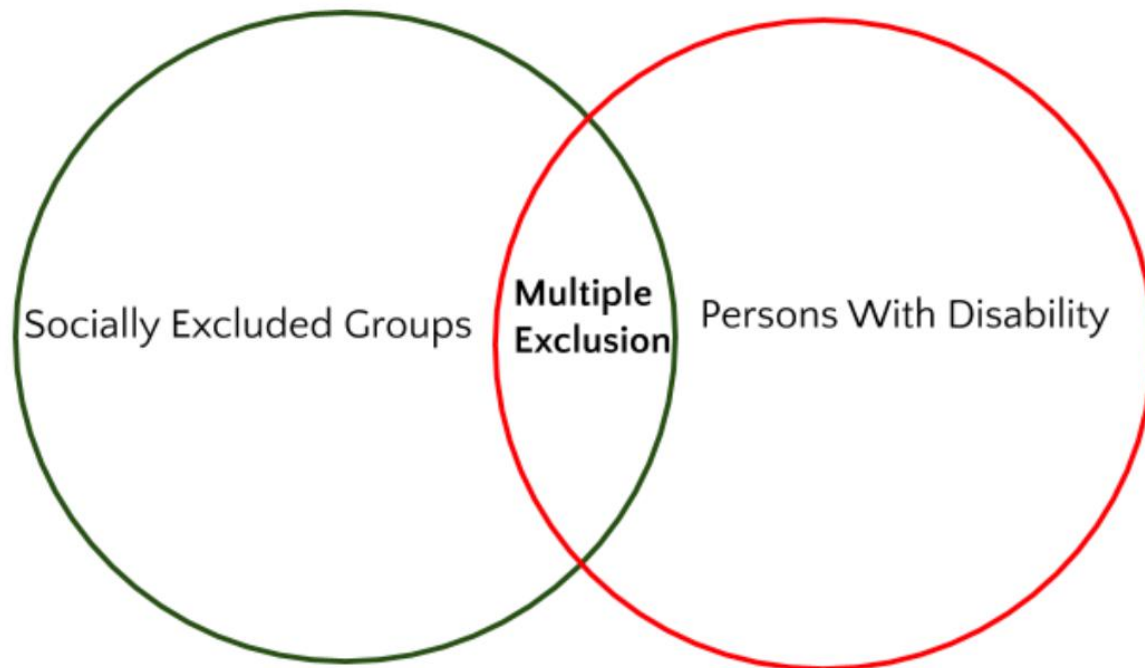
PwDs tend to face cultural discrimination, health discrimination, educational

discrimination, access discrimination as well as economic discrimination among many other forms of discrimination.

Multiple exclusion

A peculiar case is of PwDs who already belong to other socially excluded groups. A person who belongs to these groups tend to face social discrimination due to existing notions but a person with disability belonging to these groups has to face multiple exclusion because the person tends to be in two marginalised groups.

Example: Let X denote a socially marginalised group in Indian Society. A PwD belonging to X group faces double/multiple exclusion due to his association with X as well as his disability.



Discriminatory Hiring

Awareness of disability causes and rights is low in India. There are several misconceptions about people who are differently abled.

People without disabilities tend to assume that PwDs are helpless, inadequate and ineffective. This creates an inherent bias when it comes to hiring PwDs. As a result they are either patronising or uncomfortable around PwD candidates. Isolation therefore, is a common reaction in organizations. It leads to the isolation of the person from the peer group and the organisation, itself. Pity is another common reaction that leads to over helpfulness which may not be necessary at all. In fact, most challenged people have learnt to cope with their situation and have their own mechanism for dealing with difficulties they may encounter.

The differently abled person experiences a lot of insecurity and uncertainty also since they often wonder if they will be left out of the progression cycle or if they will be treated unfairly despite their performance levels. They may often experience fear - of failure, of being isolated, of being criticized and rejected by other people.

Due to all the above mentioned reasons, employers are hesitant to hire PwDs. Additionally, most organisations lack the required infrastructure as they are unwilling to incur the additional cost of implementing the required infrastructure.

Role of the Government

The government has always played a role in hiring PwDs. In the year 1977, it had 3% reservations for jobs for the PwDs. However, these were lower ranking jobs in the C & D categories. It was later in 1995, with the upcoming Disability Act, there were reservations in A & B categories as well. The government has worked on a lot of public programmes to promote employment amongst PwDs. However, the tangible impact of this has been negligible and confined to urban areas due to the weak design and implementation of these programmes.

Accessible India Campaign

A nationwide campaign had been launched by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for achieving universal accessibility. It consists of three components. The first component includes building an accessible environment. It involves undertaking measures to remove physical barriers and obstacles from the surroundings such as workplaces, medical facilities, institutions etc. it involves enhancing the proportion of accessible government buildings. This covers the built environment – services, steps and ramps, corridors, entry gates, emergency exits, parking – as well as indoor and outdoor facilities including lighting, signages, alarm systems and toilets. The second component talks about the transport system accessibility which is essential in helping the individual lead an independent life. The campaign seeks to enhance the existing proportion of accessible airports, railway stations and public transports. The third component focuses on creating an accessible information and communication ecosystem which involves enhancing the proportion of accessible and usable public documents and websites that meet internationally recognized accessibility standards.

Employment Exchange

The government has also taken the initiative of establishing special employment exchanges under the Ministry of Health and Labour with large infrastructure. These exchanges are disconnected from the market and only focus government jobs which results in a poor placement rate.

As of December 2013, there were 40 “Special Employment Exchanges for physically handicapped” and 38 “Special Cells”.

A large part of the reserved jobs is reserved for the people with physical disability. Yet, most of the posts that are reserved in government jobs remain unfilled for years. This is because in most cases, the requirements of the job do not match with the skill set of the PwD or in some cases the jobs are not appropriate for PwDs.

When it comes to government jobs, the primary reason behind the shortfall of the schemes has been the process of job identification which is inadequate. Every reserved job is open to all categories of disabilities. However, not every job is suitable for each category.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION (RPWD ACT 2016)

As per the Act:

1. The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall, within the limit of their economic capacity and development, provide incentives to employers in the private sector to ensure that at least five per cent of their work force is composed of persons with benchmark disability.
2. The appropriate Government may, by notification, require that from such date, the employer in every establishment shall furnish such information or return as may be prescribed by the Central Government in relation to vacancies appointed for persons with benchmark disability that have occurred or are about to occur in that establishment to such special employment exchange as may be notified by the Central Government and the establishment shall thereupon comply with such requisition.
3. The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall, by notification, make schemes in favour of persons with benchmark disabilities, to provide,—
 - (a) five per cent. reservation in allotment of agricultural land and housing in all relevant schemes and development programmes, with appropriate priority to women with benchmark disabilities;
 - (b) five per cent. reservation in all poverty alleviation and various developmental schemes with priority to women with benchmark disabilities;

(c) five per cent. reservation in allotment of land on concessional rate, where such land is to be used for the purpose of promoting housing, shelter, setting up of occupation, business, enterprise, recreation centres and production centres.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Incorporation of disability sensitization and awareness campaigns in school curriculum: The main factor behind PwDs facing social exclusion is a lack of awareness in society. Most people either don't understand the sensitive nature of the topic, or how to effectively communicate around it. For this reason, it is extremely important to focus on disability sensitization and awareness right from the beginning. Incorporating this in school textbooks and other modes of education will normalise the issue and make PwDs feel comfortable.
2. Increase in scholarships for the disabled: A scholarship can be of immense help to someone who is differently abled since it allows them to make proper use of any opportunities available to them. Once they are able to move ahead in life, it is easier for them to deal with social exclusion. This is particularly true for those suffering from multiple exclusion. Additionally, it can act as a great incentive for someone who feels that the costs involved are too high.
3. Tackling Discriminatory Hiring: Discriminatory hiring is mostly prevalent in the private sector since there are no reservations. Instead of providing incentives to the private sector, the government should make it mandatory for the private sector to reserve job posts for the differently abled, primarily because they can undertake the expenditure to install the required infrastructure. The private sector also offers better career growth prospects.



FACTOR 4: GENDER

When gender is factored into disability, it leads to further marginalisation. Women with Disabilities women tend to be doubly marginalised on account of their disability as well as their gender. They may be more vulnerable to poverty and social exclusion, sexual violence and even discrimination in education and family life.

They experience inequality in living, access to credit, and rarely participate in economic decision making. Because of the lack of necessary education and skills, they are specifically missing from the Indian workspaces. While women and children with disabilities have been given priority in RPwD act, 2016, specific provisions regarding employment of differently abled women are missing. At the level of policy, Women with disabilities continue to be neglected both in disability specific and gender specific programmes and policies. In the 4 and 5 per cent reservation for persons with disabilities in education and employment respectively, there is no specific reservation provision for Women with disabilities. Even though the Persons with Disabilities Act mentions 3 per cent allocation for persons with disabilities in all poverty alleviation programmes, there is no specific allocation for Women with disabilities. There is no segment of factorisation of gender in the planning and policy-making process.

Gender and Education

Further, due to the gender disparity that exists in society, women get even inadequate access to education. Along with this, they are often more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse which reduces their likeliness to attend school. More importantly, it is the lack of infrastructure that holds back PwDs from getting education. Especially in rural areas, there have been efforts to incorporate ramps and rails in schools however the school buildings remain unmodified and act as a barrier.

Gender and Employability

Further, among the male PwDs, 47% are working and female PwDs, only 23% are working. In rural India, 25% of the female PwDs are working, while in urban India, the corresponding figure is 16%. This tends to show a relation that since women with disabilities do not have adequate access to education, they lag behind in workforce participation.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION (RPWD ACT)

While women and children with disabilities have been given priority in RPwD Act, 2016, specific provisions regarding employment of differently abled women are missing. The Act falls short of making provisions regarding crimes against differently abled women.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As specific provisions regarding employment of differently abled women are missing in the RPwD Act, 2016, there is a need to include these provisions having specific focus on the differently abled women.
2. Girls with disabilities should be given a specific reservation in the education policies and provisions.
3. The government should create incentives for families to educate their female child with disability. One possible incentive could be tax returns.
4. An emergency helpline should be formed, exclusively for differently abled women where they can openly and comfortably share information about any violence or use of force against them.

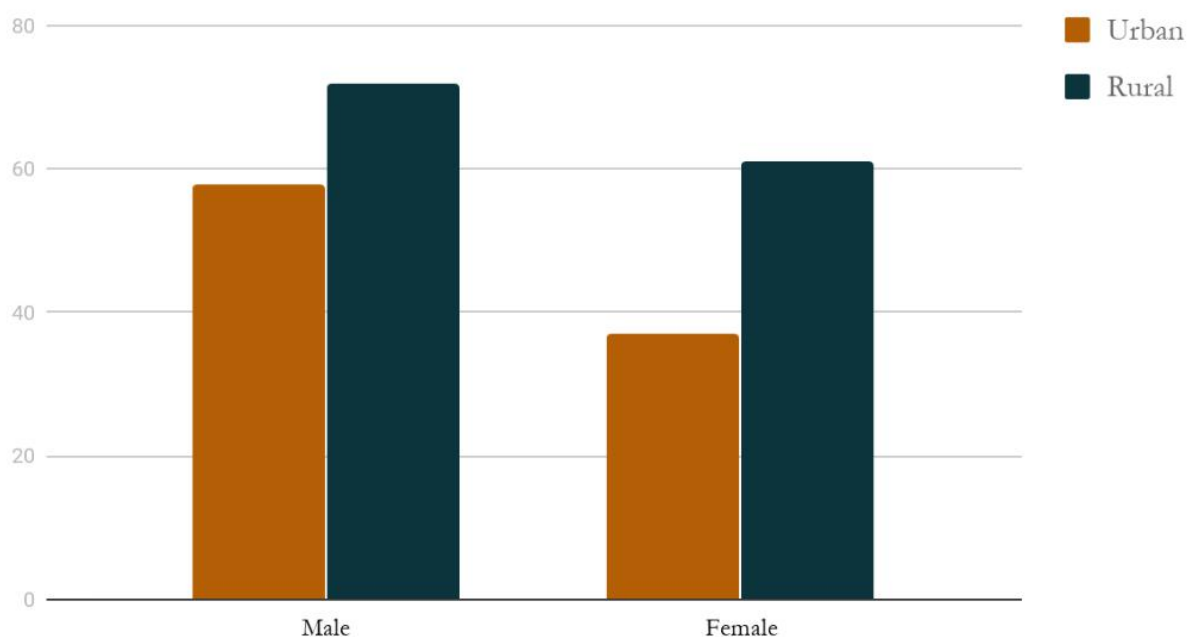
A review of state-wise audits of select girls' schools by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities shows that schools had no disabled-friendly toilets or emergency evacuation facilities. In some schools, drinking water facilities and classrooms too were not accessible. Lack of toilets accessible to girls with disabilities is a major reason for them dropping out, given the challenges it creates for maintaining menstrual hygiene (Women with Disabilities India Network, 2019).

Some families resist sending their girls with disability to school in an attempt to protect them from sexual violence. Others don't wish to send them to school due to cultural stigma and a lack of awareness.

It has also been observed that sometimes, teachers hold low expectations from these girls even if they get enrolled in school. This continues to hold them back. While allocating scarce resources such as available assistive devices, rehabilitation and special education services, girls with disability tend to lose out to boys with disability due to prevalent gender inequality in the society.

According to Census 2011, among all the female differently abled children (5-19 years), 60% are attending institutions, while among the male differently abled children 62% are attending educational institutions. Also, a mere 6% of the female differently abled population are graduates while for males the level is 9%.

GENDER DISPARITY: LITERACY RATES



SOURCE: CENSUS 2011, DISABLED PERSONS IN INDIA A STATISTICAL PROFILE 2016



FACTOR 5: HEALTH

32-33% of people without disability are unable to afford health care compared to 51-53% of people with disability. In a study titled 'Access to health care and employment status of people with disabilities in South India', the SIDE (South India Disability Evidence), it was found out that people with disabilities had 4.6 times higher risk of suffering from diabetes and 5.8 times higher risk of suffering from depression compared to people without a disability and the risk was significantly higher in males compared to females with disability. The study was conducted in one district each in two States (Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka) in 2012. The major reason for this is lack of both physical, financial and informational accessibility.

Physical Accessibility

PwDs face huge disparity when it comes to physical access to healthcare facilities. Issues vary from inaccessible buildings and diagnostic equipment, negative/stereotypical attitude of health professionals or their ignorance, lack of training to communicate with people with hearing/speech impairment or intellectual disability, inaccessible transport to reach the health centre, or sheer expense of treatment/rehabilitation. Physical barriers and lack of proper infrastructural facilities also are a barrier while accessing healthcare facilities. For example, women with mobility difficulties are often unable to access breast and cervical cancer screening because examination tables are not height-adjustable and mammography equipment only accommodates women who are able to stand.

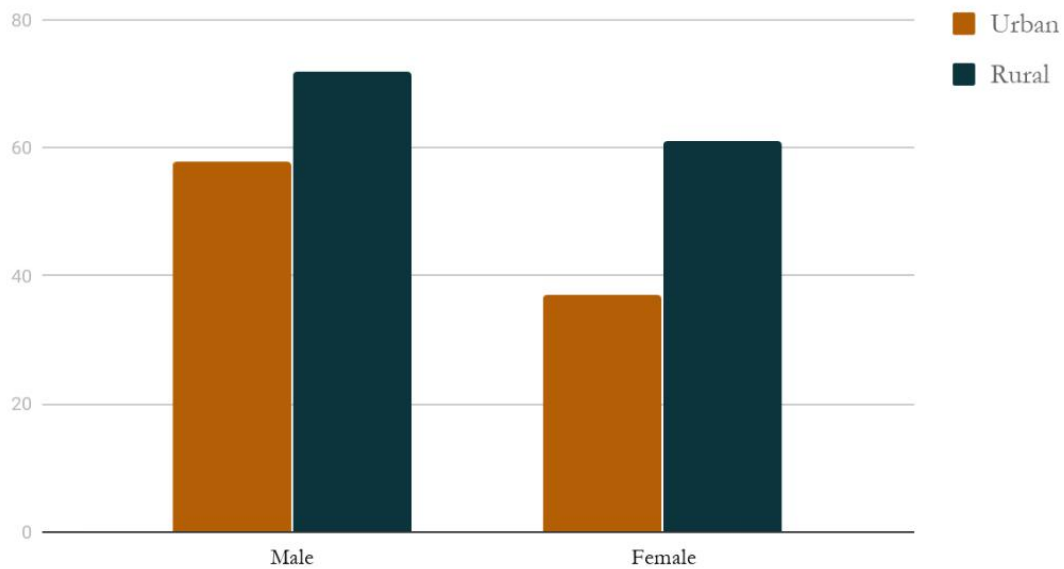
Financial Accessibility

Also, due to disability status, PwDs, in general, use public health care facilities more often than persons without disability. Apart from disability related health challenges, PwDs also require healthcare facilities for primary, secondary and

tertiary care. Due to inaccessible healthcare facilities, they often face neglect which in turn further deteriorates their health and in some cases, disability too. Family/Individual resources tend to burn out as PwDs continue facing poor quality and inaccessible healthcare. Hence, disability, poverty and poor health tend to form a vicious circle of its own.

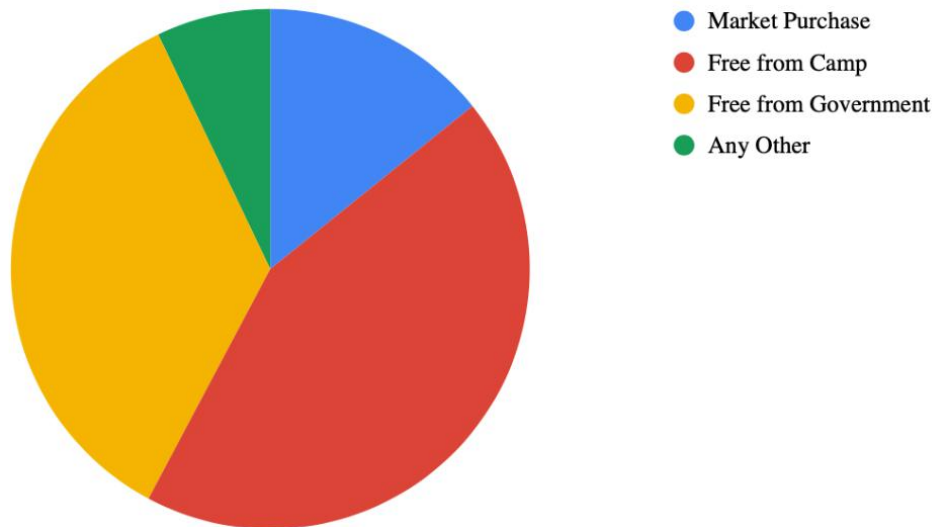
This phenomenon has been explained through the following three charts by taking the example of aid/appliance procurement among persons with locomotor disabilities in India. They have been sourced from a research study by Niti Aayog on identifying and profiling skill development activities for generating potential employment opportunities for the persons with disabilities.

STATUS OF AID/APPLIANCE PROCUREMENT BY PERSONS WITH LOCOMOTOR DISABILITIES (OUT OF TOTAL ADVISED)



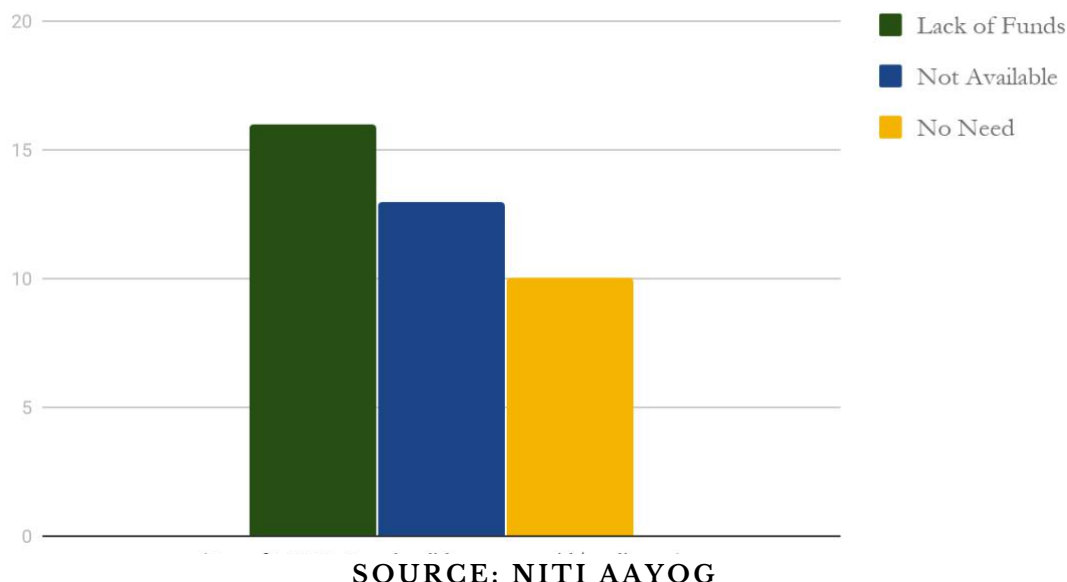
SOURCE: NITI AAYOG

SOURCES OF PROCUREMENT



SOURCE: NITI AAYOG

REASONS FOR NON PROCUREMENT OF AID/APPLIANCES



Informational Disability

Health outreach and health promotion efforts also often fail to reach persons with disabilities due to existing social barriers and exclusionary practices. Further, due to lack of awareness and understanding in health workers and society in general, PwDs often tend to not obtain necessary information about health care facilities and provisions.

Mental Health Facilities for People with Locomotor Disabilities

Where mental health treatment is already stigmatized in our society, PwDs (in this case, persons with locomotor disabilities) tend to face double exclusion. Ignorance and blind beliefs form the base of unsupportive behaviour from the normal people towards the employees with disabilities in an organization.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION (RPWD ACT)

The RPWD Act, 2016 provides that “the appropriate Government shall ensure that the PWD enjoys the right to equality, life with dignity, and respect for his or her own integrity equally with others.” The Government is to take steps to utilize the capacity of the PWD by providing an appropriate environment. It is also stipulated in section 3 that no PWD shall be discriminated on the ground of disability, unless it is shown that the impugned act or omission is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim and no person shall be deprived of his personal liberty only on the ground of disability. Living in the community for PWD is to be ensured and steps are to be taken by the Government to ensure reasonable accommodation for them. Special measures are to be taken to ensure

women and children with disabilities enjoy rights equally with others. Measures are to be taken to protect the PWD from being subjected to cruelty, inhuman, and degrading treatments and from all forms of abuse, violence, and exploitation. For conducting any research, free and informed consent from the PWD as well as a prior permission from a Committee for Research on Disability to be constituted in the prescribed manner.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.The machines and equipment used for conducting various diagnostic tests should be disabled-friendly and should mandatorily be available in all hospitals.
- 2.Government should introduce a scheme wherein all PwDs are provided health insurance with additional benefits and incentives.
- 3.The PwDs who are financially weak or unemployed should be provided financial aid by the government for easy access to healthcare resources.
- 4.Hospital staff and doctors should be given special training to deal with the PwDs wherein they are trained to be a little more sensitive towards dealing with the disabled.
- 5.Necessary health promotion efforts for the PwDs should be undertaken and their maximum reach should be ensured.
- 6.In all hospitals, a trained and qualified counsellor, specialising in the needs of the PwDs, should be made available for helping PwDs through the treatment process.





EMPLOYER AND WORKPLACE FACTORS



FACTOR 1: WORKPLACE AND TRANSPORT ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility is one of the most important considerations when talking about the employability of persons with disability. The concept focuses on enabling access for everyone through the use of assistive technology. Keeping this in mind, in 2015, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities launched the Accessible India Campaign or Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan. The campaign seeks to serve the PwD community of the country. The program came with an index to measure the design of disabled-friendly buildings and human resource policies.

Here we consider accessibility in public transport (to and from workplace), workplace accessibility and other forms of accessibility too. We took Delhi as our case scope and undertook a detailed study with regards to accessibility for PwDs in our national capital.

Accessibility in Public Transport

Delhi Transport and PwD Accessibility: A Case Study

Public transport continues to be inaccessible for persons with disability, causing them to use more costly forms of travel such as personal cars and private cabs thereby increasing their cost of commute. Further, this luxury is available only to the rich. In most cases, lack of a cheap and accessible means of transport is a major reason for PwDs to not seek/get employment.

Delhi Metro: Though the Delhi Metro is perhaps India's first public transport system with adequate systems for differently-abled persons, most persons with disabilities still don't prefer to use it for reasons such as its huge crowd.

The metro provides for:

- Extra wide automatic flap gates for wheelchairs
- Provision of wheelchairs at stations and reserved seats for wheelchairs in trains
- Ramps are provided wherever there is a change in the level. Lifts have been provided with wide access doors, handrails, buttons at low heights and a telephone button in case of an emergency
- Tiles with tactile markings have been provided outside the lifts so the differently-abled can follow these to go directly from the ground level to the trains.

However, even these provisions are not efficient enough. PwDs struggle to deal with the crowd, the embarrassment of needing escorting and the time taken to make their way to the escalator, wait for it or alternatively, take someone's help to use the stairs.

City Bus: Differently abled commuters complain of long waiting periods at the city bus stations. This is because most buses are either not accessible for them or because bus drivers themselves avoid stopping the bus when they see someone who is in a wheelchair.

Although 3,600 buses of the Delhi Transport Corporation are low-floor, several of them continue to be inaccessible to wheelchair users because of factors such as the lack of functional ramps at bus stands, inaccessible pavements, as well as the lack of awareness of the bus staff towards the requirements of wheelchair users and also their insensitivity.

Another issue commuters face is that buses stop far away from the actual stand. Thus, they have to depend on other commuters to help them get to the bus. Differently abled commuters also talk about how buses never really stop: they expect the passengers to be able to jump off at their stop. For them, the buses represent a hot climate and unreliability.

However, as of March 2020, the Delhi government procured 100 low floor high capacity buses. The new buses are equipped with hydraulic lifts and wheelchair ramps for the convenience of the differently-abled passengers.

Differently abled rights activist Nipun Malhotra of Nipman Foundation called this move welcoming but added that he hopes that the next Budget calls for proper allocation of funds towards this issue, otherwise nothing substantial will come out of it.

Even with expensive modes of transport like cabs, it is not that simple. Most cab drivers refuse to have a differently abled person as a passenger due to lack of space and the inconvenience caused. The differently abled often have to book 4-5 cabs just to get to one destination because drivers prefer cancelling their rides.

Accessibility in Workplaces and Public Buildings

A barrier free environment is one which enables persons with disabilities to move about safely and freely and to use the facilities within the built environment. Accessibility in public buildings, especially office spaces is one of the key factors affecting employability of PwDs. Many are at a disadvantage due to lack of accessibility.

Even four years after the launch of the Accessible India Campaign that aimed to make public offices, transport and websites accessible to persons with disabilities (PwDs), officials reported that the number of buildings of the Central Public Works Department across the country were not known.

Officials of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs reported that 787 out of 889 buildings had been made accessible while work would be started for 13, and the remaining 89 buildings still awaited approval.

Data regarding accessibility of office spaces is not known. However, through our research it became apparent that the Accessible India campaign was unable to translate its objective on ground and we are far from achieving accessibility for all in public spaces.

An inaccessible workspace becomes a major impediment in the way of PwDs seeking employment. The inability of a person in a wheelchair, for example, to move around the workspace freely or sit at the same desk as others will create exclusion and might hold them back from opportunities. Accessibility and inclusivity of the workspace thus plays an important role in the employability of PwDs.

Accessibility in Information and Communication Technology (Websites and Television Viewing). While the virtual world seems to be accessible for everyone with an Internet connection, persons with disability find themselves excluded from it due to their inability to use the mouse or keyboard or even inability to access content or unfriendly user interface. Data regarding creating accessibility in ICT, one of the objectives of the Accessible India Campaign is

not known. In this digital age where the internet is a basic necessity and where economic activities are increasingly becoming dependent on it, an effective accessibility policy is essential to increase employability of PwDs.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION (RPWD ACT 2016)

The Rights of Persons with Disability Act, 2016 also provides for making public spaces accessible for all.

According to Section 40 of the Act, The Central Government shall, in consultation with the Chief Commissioner, formulate rules for persons with disabilities laying down the standards of accessibility for the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including appropriate technologies and systems, and other facilities and services provided to the public in urban and rural areas.

The Act mandates that governments take suitable measures to provide:

- (a) facilities for persons with disabilities at bus stops, railway stations and airports conforming to the accessibility standards relating to parking spaces, toilets, ticketing counters and ticketing machines;
- (b) access to all modes of transport that conform the design standards, including retrofitting old modes of transport, wherever technically feasible and safe for persons with disabilities, economically viable and without entailing major structural changes in design;
- (c) accessible roads to address mobility necessary for persons with disabilities. Moreover, the Act states that no establishment shall be granted permission to build any structure if the building plan does not adhere to the rules formulated by the Central Government under section 40.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS


1. Accessibility Cell: There should be creation of an accessibility cell at every administrative level of the government to give specific focus to making public spaces accessible. This cell will be responsible for ensuring that office spaces, public transport and other public buildings are disability friendly:

- i. Conducting an accessibility audit of all public buildings and office spaces, including private ones falling in their zone.
- ii. Carry out activities to achieve Accessible India targets in their area.
- iii. Manage a grievance portal for accessibility specific concerns of PwDs, to ensure speedy solutions for the same.

2. Wheelchair friendly streets: There is a need for creation of wheelchair friendly streets to make travelling from one place to another easier for PwDs. Physical dependence acts as a major obstacle in their bid to seek employment. Additionally, there is a need to construct separate cemented lanes for wheelchair users to make transport safer for them.

3. Make public transport free of use for PwDs: Many disability rights organisations have campaigned in favour of this, given the additional costs PwDs have to bear due to their disability. While there should be sustained efforts to make public transport more and more disability friendly, there will always be some amount of discomfort PwDs face while using it. This can be discounted by making public transport free of use for them, which will give them an incentive to use it more frequently, which will in turn make it easier for them to seek employment.

4. Raising awareness through education: The need to sensitize the population about this issue and the problems PwDs face while seeking employment. This will be achieved through spreading awareness and including this knowledge in the school curriculum.



FACTOR 2: WORKPLACE INCLUSION

Workplace inclusion plays a major role in influencing PwDs career trajectory at a workplace. Some of the key sub-factors that influence workplace inclusion are:

A. Disability Discrimination

PwD employees at workplace tend to face discrimination from a number of parties including but not limited to superiors, peers, support staff etc. Broadly, such discrimination can be classified into two types:

1. Direct Discrimination

Such discrimination is explicit and obvious from conduct and/or actions of the opposing party/parties.

Examples of such discrimination are: Excluding PwD employee from decision making committee, practicing discriminatory hiring and progression policies, having inaccessible infrastructure.

2. Indirect Discrimination

Such discrimination is not obvious and not targeted at a particular individual. In some cases, indirect discrimination is a result of lack of awareness among persons without disabilities about the needs and wants of PwDs. It occurs when a particular group (in this case - PwDs) is put at a disadvantage by company policies or practices which applies to everyone.

Example of such discrimination: A person with mobility impairment may require parking space near the office premises, but there is no such facility.

Another example would be of a job advertisement for the role of manager and job requirement in the advertisement necessitating to produce a driving licence as proof of identification, a person with physical disability may not have it and hence feels excluded.

B. Lack of Employee Support Services and Organizational Sensitization

PwD employees tend to feel feelings of isolation and discomfort at the workplace due to lack of accessibility and inclusion.

The opposite end of the spectrum is pity demonstrated by other employees which may not be necessary at all. In fact most challenged people have learnt to cope with their situation and have their own mechanism for dealing with difficulties they may encounter. PwDs also tend to experience a lot of insecurity and uncertainty also since they often wonder if they will be left out of the progression cycle or if they will be treated unfairly despite their performance levels. They may often experience fear - of failure, of being isolated, of being criticized and rejected by their peers and superiors.

All these factors necessitate establishing employee counselling and support services which is missing in current Indian Job Market which in turn hampers productivity of employees and in some cases due to prolonged exclusion they tend to quit. Further, all people in the organisation should be educated about disability and the expected behaviour so as to provide a wholesome environment to PwD employees.

C. Lack of investments in Assistive Technology (Duty to make reasonable adjustments)

It is the duty of employers to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that PwD employees do not face exclusion and inaccessibility at workplaces. Hence it is inevitable for employers to invest in assistive technology to provide equal access and opportunities to PwD employees.

Assistive technology is a set of devices/services that helps PwD in performing a significant amount of daily activities efficiently. These can be present anywhere including schools, workspace, home and community. While the employment of such technology can go a long way in making these people more efficient, lack of such infrastructure becomes a huge barrier in their employment prospects. Today, there are several problems faced by the corporations while providing for assistive technology:

- Many line managers, and even IT departments, are simply unaware of what suitable products are available to help: The organisations lack a specialist rehabilitation personnel whose only duty is to ensure that adequate help is provided to all the differently abled by providing them access to the latest technology. Too many times, people who are in-charge of this are not aware about the latest trends that make the lives of all these people better.
- There are compatibility issues between newer assistive technologies and existing systems: A lot of times, organisations establish the right infrastructure and incur the costs associated with the same. However, they are always reluctant to continue upgradation of the same due to the costs involved. When better and newer technology comes into the picture, there is always a compatibility problem that requires these organisations to change their existing systems.
- Technological solutions are often expensive: Experts feel that though technologies can bring about a revolution in the lives of differently abled people, they are often very expensive. Therefore, making them affordable and accessible for everyone is still a distant dream in India. Many of the technologies like JAWS, which costs more than Rs 4 lakh, are beyond the reach of the organisations.

Since cost is a major barrier, government intervention is necessary in the forms of tax incentives and subsidies in purchase of technology.

GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION (RPWD ACT 2016)

The new RPWD Act, 2016 emphasises a little bit on technological advances and tries to make such technology accessible to people but does very little to use technology as a medium to achieve greater accessibility. Salient features of the Act related to technology are as follows :

Section 2(ze) defines universal design as “the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design and as being applicable to assistive devices including advanced technologies for particular groups of persons with disabilities.

Section 40 requires the Central Government to formulate standards with advice

from the Chief Commissioner in the areas of “physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including appropriate technologies and systems, and other facilities and services provided to the public in urban and rural areas

Section 29 talks about making art accessible to persons with disabilities, redesigning courses in cultural and arts subjects to enable participation and access for persons with disabilities, developing technology, assistive devices and equipment to facilitate access and inclusion for persons with disabilities in recreational activities. Similar provisions have been made for sporting activities under Section 30.

As evident, these measures do not specifically place any importance on including the PwDs in the workspace. As a result, workspace specific reforms do not take place due to which employment numbers drop.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERCOMING DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION:

1. Proper infrastructure at workspaces: Not enough attention is paid to building a workspace that is accessible to all. Sometimes, something as small as the slope of a ramp can be an added obstacle in the life of a differently abled employee. Thus, there is a need to invest in proper architecture of a workspace. Disability experts should be approached for the same. Emphasis should be put on interior circulation, height of tables, toilets, ramps, signage and communication and finally, emergency evacuation.
2. Inclusivity Officer: There should be stationing of an inclusivity officer within every office. The officer would be responsible for ensuring that the workspace is accessible to all, and will report about the state of affairs to the concerned ministry every month.
3. Regular audits: The government should conduct regular audits, say one every 3 months to ensure the inclusivity and accessibility in workspaces. This will keep employers on their toes and make achieving the targets of the Accessible India Campaign much easier.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT SERVICES:

1. Employee Sensitization and Awareness Workshops: The company leadership should organise employee sensitization and awareness workshops every year. The workshop, taken by a professional will attempt to make employees understand the sensitive ways of communicating with a differently abled colleague since so many continue to struggle with this.
2. Grievance Portal: A special grievance portal should be opened for all differently abled employees who can voice their complaints anonymously. Any concerns received can then be taken up by the inclusivity officer.
3. Employee Counselling: While employee counselling is important in all workspaces, it plays a special role for differently abled employees. They should have a safe space to discuss any issues they've been having, or any insecurity they've been facing at the workspace.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY:

1. Listening to people who find such technology inaccessible: Any government policy should address concerns pertaining to the lived experiences of these individuals who have a hard time in gaining employment. Very often, these are the same people who are ignored in the process of policy formation and then bear the brunt.
2. Appointment of Specialist Rehabilitation Personnel: Existence of specialist rehabilitation personnel in corporations in large numbers by development of standards in training for different types and levels of rehabilitation personnel can help in enabling career development and continuing education across levels.
3. Including such services under Make in India campaign: Technological outlay in present times is mostly manufactured by and imported from foreign countries. Promoting localised production of the same with reduced duties and taxes on such services, while taking advantage of economies of scale would help producers bring down costs and make the adoption of such services more widespread.
4. Step towards creation of a SMART workplace: A SMART workplace would refer to a technologically equipped workplace built around the needs of Persons with Disabilities which tracks their movements inside the workplace and detects if they need help in completion of any task. More details about this can be found.



CONCLUSION

We started our research project with the question - **Why are Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) missing from India's workplaces?** Through preliminary research, we had observed their absence in jobs and sought to deeply study the factors that led to this.

After a careful analysis, we came to the conclusion that broadly, there are two kinds of factors that hinder a differently abled person from gaining employment and continuing with employment respectively:

- a) Employment Inhibiting Factors such as poverty, lack of education, social exclusion, gender, ill health
- b) Employer and Workplace Factors such as workplace and transport accessibility and workplace inclusion

At the base of this issue lies inaccessibility and a lack of proper integration of PwDs into the society and into the economy.

Though the government has formally recognised the need for creating an inclusive and accessible space for PwDs and framed strategies such as the Accessible India Campaign, implementation of the same remains inadequate. We noticed a lack of allocation of funds. The campaign, though started in 2015, has seen little progress. Deadlines for ensuring universal accessibility of public buildings, transport and viewing of websites have been missed by several years and the new deadlines set do not seem very hopeful either.

A similar story has been observed with the revised Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act. While the Act itself has been praised for being more inclusive in terms of the number of recognised disabilities, its implementation remains poor. Many state and local governments still lack the requisite infrastructure and designated

authority mandated by the Act.

After a thorough analysis of the problems, we have come to the conclusion that there needs to be a greater and stronger emphasis on implementation of the guidelines given and that targets need to be clearer and deadlines stricter. Greater transparency is needed in the execution of the Accessible India campaign. We also came up with policy recommendations to start the process of diminishing the impact of factors identified.

Moreover, it is imperative that disability sensitization and awareness campaigns should be incorporated in workplaces as well as school curriculums. Something as basic as how to address PwDs in a conversation goes a long way in inclusion and integration of PwDs in the society. Most importantly, it is critical for those in power to be receptive to the voices of the community and the voices of those pushing for its inclusion. Often, their suggestions and their grievances are not paid enough heed.

We have, in this project, listed a number of recommendations that would lead our society towards the direction of integration of PwDs and higher employability rate among PwDs. Although the current situation is far from ideal, one sees hope for the future.



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