

Perception of the differently abled on the Education System in India

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Abstract:

“We cannot despair of humanity, since we ourselves are human beings.” Albert Einstein. This paper is aimed towards understanding the perception of the differently abled students on the education systems in Indian Universities. Disabled people are very large in number, but in a country like India it is difficult to cater to a smaller group of people as compared to the large population. The facilities and amenities to help these people grow and learn are not adequate in this country. However, through this research we are targeting the urban population of a city like Bangalore and what difficulties are faced by them or how institutions are supporting them in order to make lives of those better, more enriched and increase the standard of living of those who are affected by natural abnormalities. The results indicated that 66.7% of the students feel the teachers are underqualified and 48% of the students felt that they are treated differently from their peers.

Key Words: Differently abled, Indian Universities, Access and Support

1. Introduction :

Disability is defined as any impairment of the body or mind that limits a person’s ability to partake in typical activities and social interactions in their environment (Scheer and Groce,1988).

There are mainly two types of disabilities - Physical disabilities and Psychiatric disabilities. Physical disabilities are visible. Physically disabled people include the visually challenged, handicap, people with hearing disabilities, etc. Psychiatric disabilities include non - visual disabilities like- anxiety disorder, depression, autism and other such disabilities. Differentlyabled is another term for disabled people.

Perception of Disability not only affects the differently abled but also affects the society and its moral compass. Allowing differently abled people to learn and grow is extremely important for the society to grow and for the

individual's well-being. Education is something that should be given to all irrespective of where they come from or who they are, the same applies to education for the differently abled. Our Aim with this research paper is to find out how accessible Indian Universities are for the large population of differently abled people in our country. How easily these people can navigate in their universities and to learn and communicate with other people, whether they get assistance from people working in the universities.

For different disabilities, Universities should have different facilities.

Facilities that should be available at colleges to make them more disability friendly-

- For the visually challenged they should have access to books with braille
- For individuals who use a wheelchair, they should have ramps to access different parts of the campus
- For psychiatric disabilities there should be a campus counselor to avoid any major episodes for those individuals.

Another huge factor would be Attitude towards the differently abled people, this is extremely important because already disabled people tend to feel isolated, so having a comfortable environment and people who have the same behavior towards the differently abled could possibly make them feel a lot better about being in that university.

Stigma towards the differently abled in higher education - Students with disabilities encounter a range of harmful social interactions at university because of misperceptions held by classmates and faculty. Some studies have found that while faculty tend to have overall positive attitudes toward students with disabilities, some believe that these students are faking their condition and are less academically competent than students without disability.

This has a huge effect on the perception of the differently abled. Taking the Indian education system into consideration regarding the guidelines for the differently abled students, The University Grants Commission (UGC) wrote a letter to the vice-chancellors of all universities and the principals of all colleges on information about the Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) and steps to take to make differently abled students feel more included. There are campaigns which aim to achieve universal access, infrastructural development, and psychological support for persons with disabilities.

Taking all the above factors into consideration research will be conducted on 'perception of the differently abled on the education systems in Indian Universities'.

2. Literature Review:

2.1. Carrington S and Brownlee J; David R and Kuyini AB (2013)

The researchers have concluded in their study that teachers in Indian schools believe in the Idea of Inclusive learning, however the students feel that the implementation is not done well.

Teachers are willing to put in special efforts on the differently abled students but they are not professionally trained in order to do the same.

2.2. Bansal S and Neena Sawney (2014)

This study on the perception of the differently-abled on the Indian education system concluded that differently abled students of private institutions and government institutions experience equal amount of participation by the government in terms of helping the children with special needs.

2.3.Sanjeev, K., & Kumar, K. (2007)

The study concludes that in Inclusive learning , special needs of each child are not catered to, instead the disability and the teaching process is generalized. The teacher training course curriculum of general pre-service training programs neither fully equips the teachers and teachereducators to deal with the CWSN nor it equip them to manage the mild and moderately disabledchildren in general classrooms.

2.4.Dr Gautam Patra (2011)

The study concluded that Integrated Education programmes are being taken at different levels but still 95 percent of CWSN are out of mainstream schools. Even the schools where IE is in operation, infrastructural facilities required for inclusive teaching-learning processes are poor. Capability of teachers required to deal CWSN along with normal children also appear to be poorreflecting the poor quality of training for IE.

2.5.Kuyini and Desai (2013)

The study examined the current skill levels of regular primary and secondary school teachers inDelhi with respect to teaching CWD. They reported that nearly 70% of the regular school teachers had neither received training in special education nor had any experience teaching students with disabilities. Further, 87% of the teachers did not have access to support services intheir classrooms.

2.6. United Nations (2015)

As per united nations reports it was found that 75 per cent of children with disabilities in India do notattend any educational institute in their lifetime. This is despite the existence of a seemingly comprehensive policy on education with provisions to make the Indian education system inclusive.

2.7.Biplab Dey , Preeti Bala (2012)

The study concluded that the schools that are specifically created for children with special needs such as schools for the visually impaired, schools for the deaf have unknowingly created a culture of disability. According to them, children should be put in mainstream schools in order tochallenge and motivate themselves.

2.8. Ashima Das (2017)

The study concluded that in most cases (6 among 10 students), children with disabilities perceived problems for social interactions. They expressed that their 'disability' caused social isolation.

They desired to have more friends and be involved in normal activities with their friends. However, they expressed dissatisfaction in their relationships with their non-disabled peers.

2.9. Claes Nilholm (2020)

We need better theories with regards to how more inclusive practices can be created, especially if we mean that inclusion encompasses all pupils. Prior theorizing has been either too restricted or too removed from practices. Often inclusion research has been a disguise for traditional special needs research.

3. Statement of Problem:

A society will only move forward and progress when no one is left behind. Education is one of the most crucial parts of one's life. Some people however do not get the same opportunities as others, because of natural abnormalities or being differently abled due to an accident. Whatever the cause of this abnormality may be, these people should not be denied access to basic education. Without denial, it can be said that there is more effort to be made for people who require the extra support. In this paper, the researchers have tried to understand the perception of differently abled students in the Indian education system. This research will help the policy maker to understand the need for concrete and robust mechanisms to keep a check on the implementation of policy laid by the Government.

4. Objectives of the study:

1. To outline the physical, mental and social potentials of the differently-abled students.
2. To understand the efficiency and effectiveness of the government policies for the differently-abled students.
3. To find the efficiency and qualification of teachers with regards to dealing with differently-abled students.
4. To examine the availability of adequate infrastructure to support the differently-abled students.

5. Scope of the study:

Children with Disabilities have always struggled when it comes to their Education. Even though in the past few years, provisions have been created but they don't fully create an inclusive environment for those children. The scope of this study is to currently assess the perception of the differently abled students about the Indian Education system and study the current laws and provisions governing Inclusive learning in India. The outcome will lead to solutions to tackle the problems and loopholes are identified in the system.

Methodology:
The present study was conducted to investigate the availability of facilities in the schools and Universities for differently abled children. Schools and Universities of Bangalore district have been considered as the population

of the study. Data is collected from different schools and universities and have been asked questions related to their and facilities provided. The study Is descriptive in nature therefore the survey method has been used.

Data has been collected through filling up the Google form. After the collection the data is analyzed and interpreted. Percentage is used for the statistical treatment of the data in order to draw the results. The data collected from the students include the questions related to their mental as well as Physical health and how the school facilities and the environment affect them. The collection of data through Google Form circulation helped us to reach the maximum number of students. Students’ responses helped us to make a pattern of how many students are satisfied or unsatisfied with the environment. The analysis of data helped us to make a pattern of what changes should be made according to the students’ requirement. The method used for the collection of data was cost friendly as well as helped us to work smoothly. Most of the responses that we got were from the schools or universities that were especially for the education of disabled students. The method used for collection of data was unable to attend or reach each and every student, so the conclusion that we made through the collection was based on the responses we were able to get.

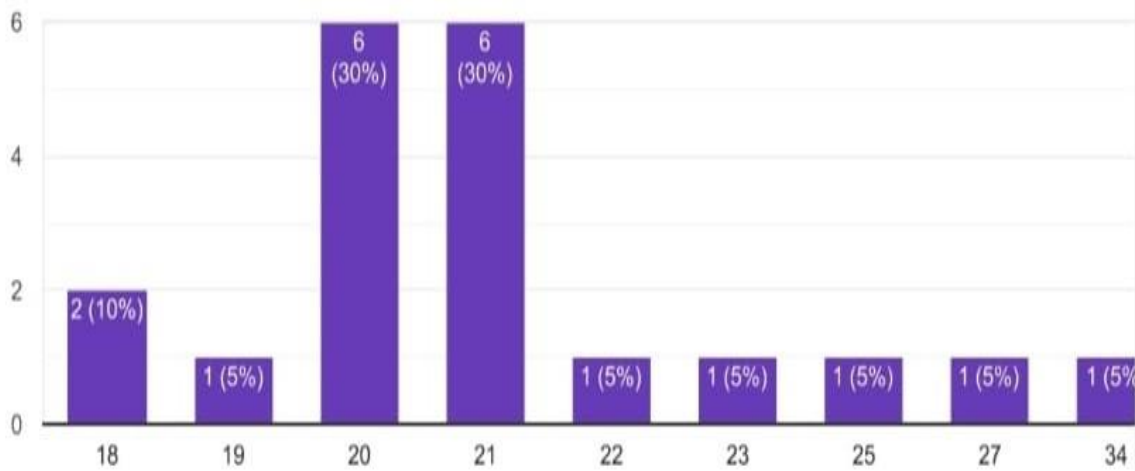


Figure 1 (Respondents age category)

100% of our respondents have passed 12th grade, out of which:

- 10% are pursuing MBA
- 60% are in BBA or BBA graduates
- 5% are pursuing B.com (honors)
- 25% are pursuing B. Tech

6. Limitations:

1. The sample size may not represent the entire population of differently abled students.
2. The accuracy may not be 100% as the data collected was insufficient to determine the study on a larger scale.
3. The research was not penetrated to all sectors of society and different income brackets.
4. Data and statistical limitations – Insufficient data in terms of statistics and graphs.

7. Data Interpretations and Analysis

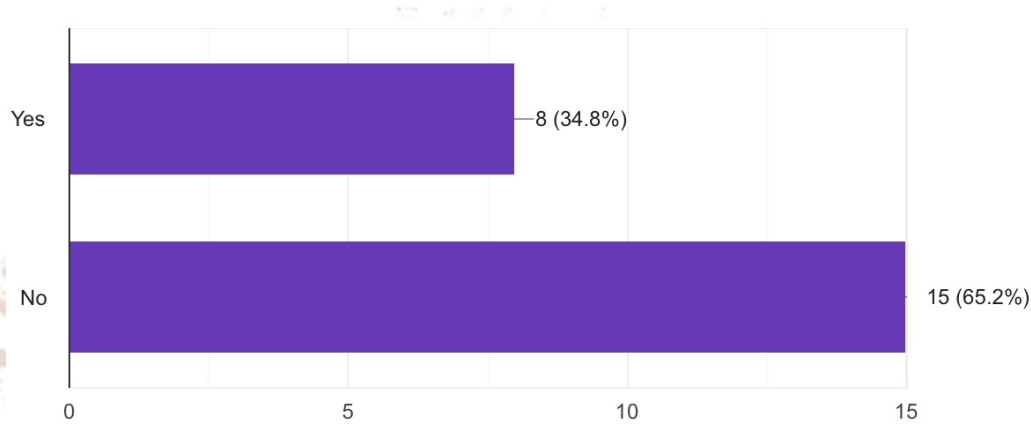


Figure 2

Is there adequate infrastructure to support the needs the differently abled students?

The statistics show that even after the huge rise in the budget invested on infrastructure, there is a need to cater the wants of the differently abled before the others. Many students feel that basic infrastructure required by the differently abled students is not available such as ramps, special restrooms, etc.

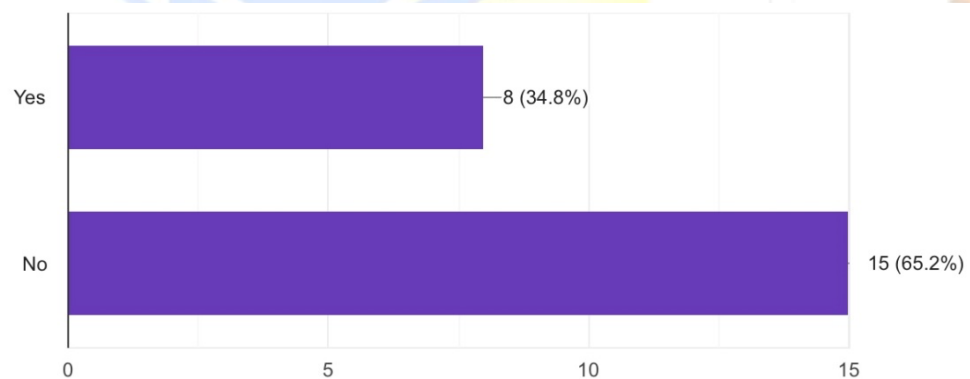


Figure 3

Are the teachers trained well to teach the differently abled students?

The teachers not only require the right skill but also the correct equipment for teaching. With the mainstreaming of this content, we need advanced technology which will bring better learning.

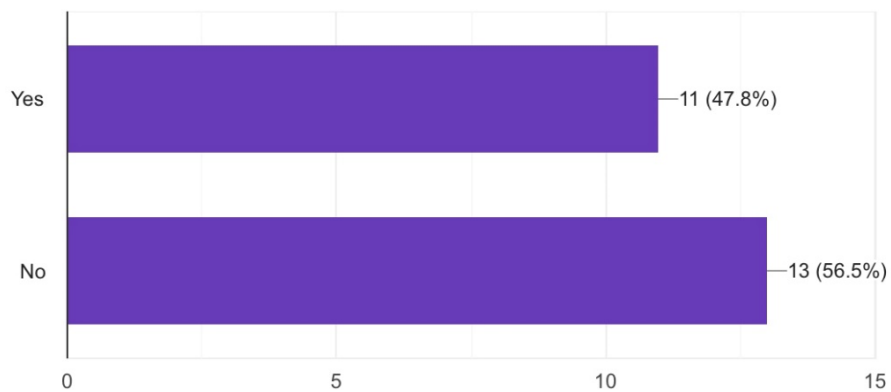


Figure 4

Do you think there are concrete policies of the government that help the differently abled students?

Quite a debatable response. Here we can see that even though the government has been successful in reaching out and helping the visually impaired, there are many yet to see light.

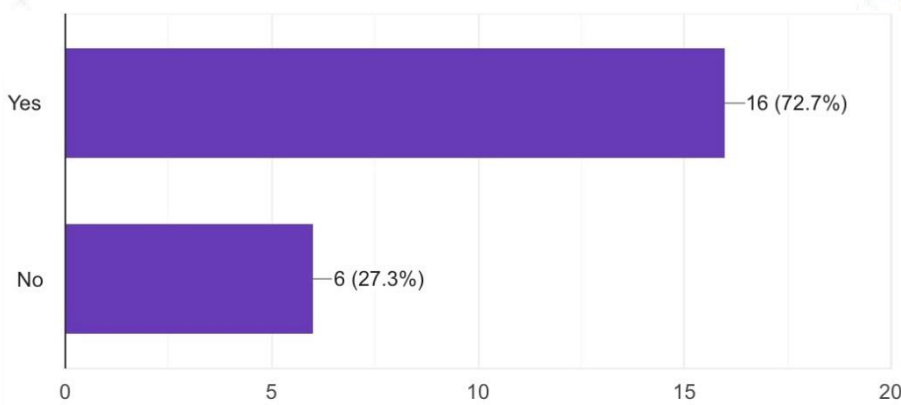


Figure 5

Does being differently abled affect your mental health?

As per responses received, majority of respondents believed Yes, mental health can be affected by disability. Depression, anxiety, and feelings of loneliness and isolation are just a few of the emotional and psychological difficulties that people with disabilities may encounter as a result of their condition.

Living with a disability can be hard because it can make it hard to get around obstacles that can make it hard to get into school, work, and social activities, which can hurt a person's mental health. People with disabilities may also experience mental health issues because of discrimination and stigma.

To assist people with disabilities in overcoming these obstacles and maintaining good mental health, it is essential to provide them with support and resources. Access to mental health services, social support networks, and accommodations that enable them to fully participate in their communities are examples of this.

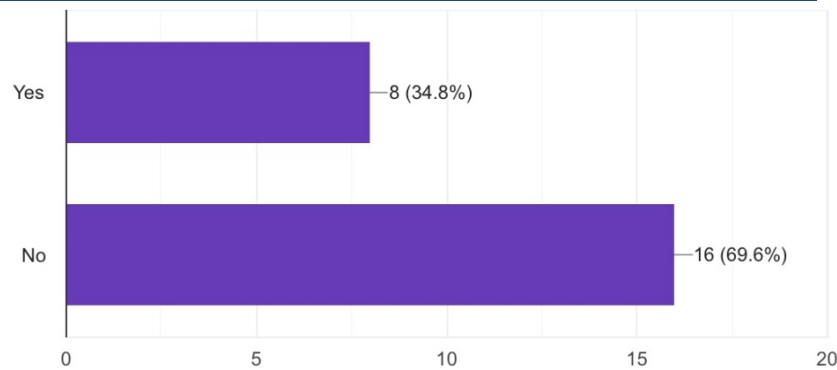


Figure 6

Does your educational institution provide the required medical professionals to help with the stress you go through on a daily basis?

As per responses received, only 30% said that institute provide Counseling and other forms of assistance have begun to be offered by a number of educational institutions in India that have realized the significance of addressing students' mental health issues. This includes providing students with medical professionals who can assist them in managing stress and other mental health issues, such as psychologists and counselors.

However, the quality and availability of these services may vary from institute to institute. In addition, there may still be stigma associated with mental health in some regions of India, making it challenging for students to seek assistance or for educational establishments to provide sufficient support.

It is essential to contact your institute's counseling or support services or a qualified mental health professional if you are a student and are experiencing stress or other mental health issues.

In addition, there are numerous organizations and resources for mental health support in India, including helplines and online counseling services.

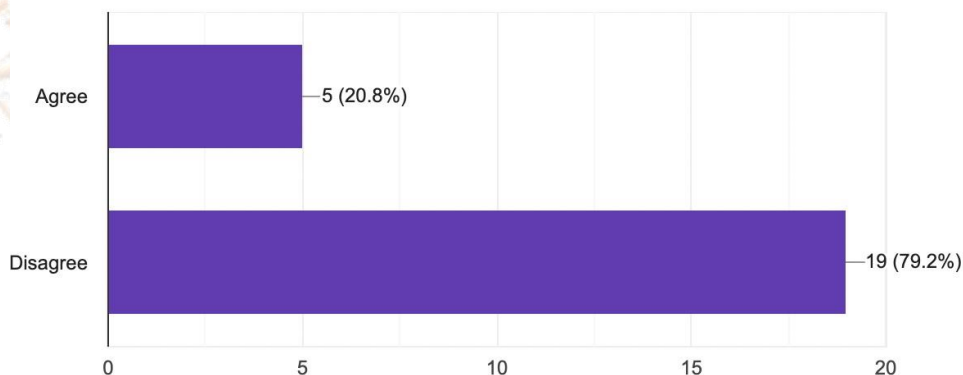


Figure 7

‘Is the Indian educational system an ideal system?’

Most of the respondents have ‘disagreed’ with the fact that the education system in India is ideal. The education system doesn’t allow one to branch out over a bunch of streams. For example, if one chooses to take commerce even if they are extremely passionate about Psychology, they won’t be able to study it along with Commerce which is allowed in other countries many a time. The system is based on one’s capacity to memorize and not the understanding capacity.

Out of all the respondents 87.5% agreed that the Indian education system requires change and needs to be updated and the other 12.5 disagree.

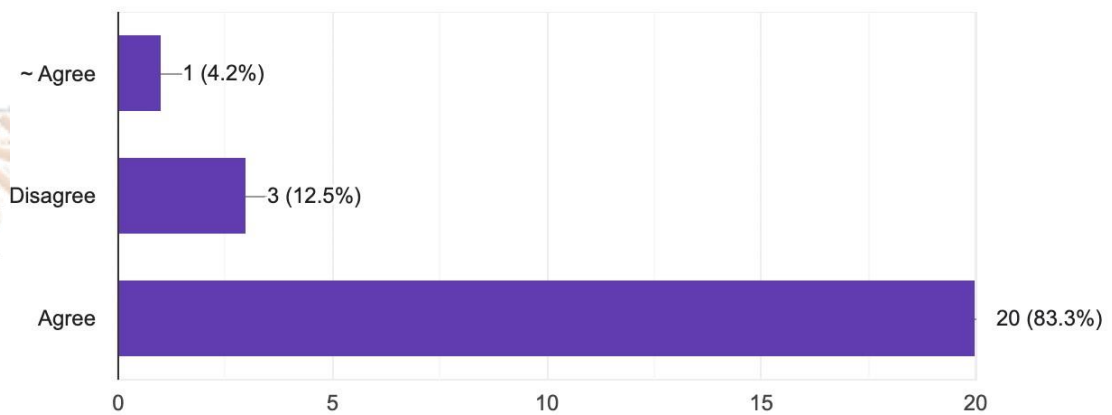


Figure 8

In this question the "Does our education system catered with learning needs of the differently abled"

29.2% of the respondents have agreed to the statement but 70.8% have disagreed, this may be due to the different circumstances and experiences the individual may have faced.

the other 12.5 disagree.

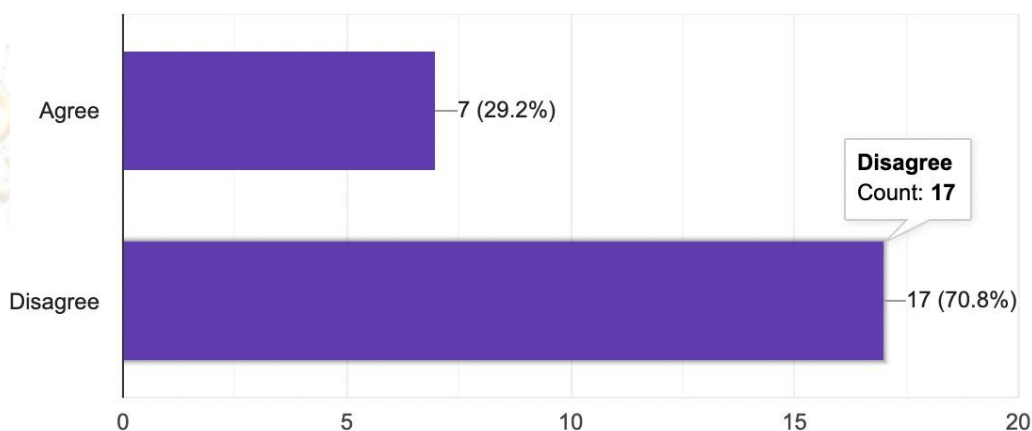


Figure 9

"Do you think main streaming is beneficial for the differently abled students"

54.2% of the respondents have agreed this may be due to the differently abled wanting to lead amore normal life. Whereas 45.8% have disagreed this may be due to their need not being met

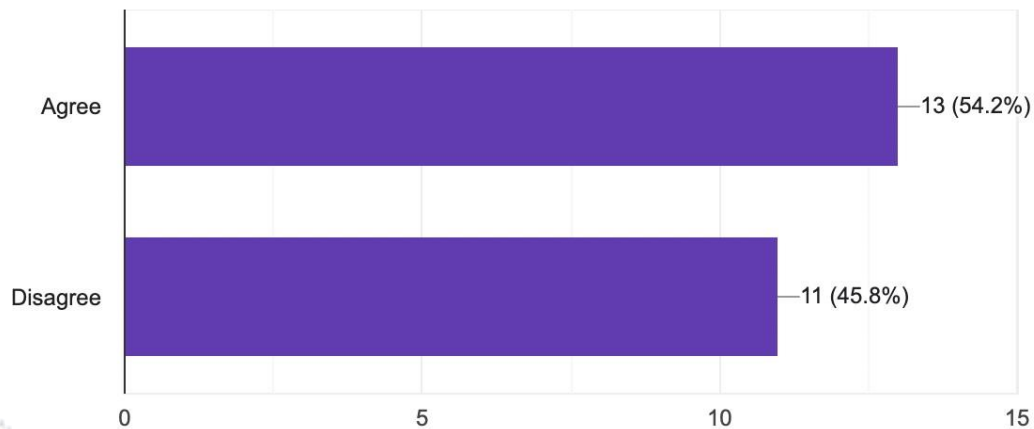


Figure 10

8. Findings of the study:

1. Two-third of the students feel that there is unavailability of adequate infrastructure for differently abled students in educational institutions such as ramps, railings, special restrooms.

2. 66.7% of the students feel that the teachers are under qualified to teach and deal with the differently abled students.

3. Even though mainstreaming is included in educational institutions, 45.8% of the students feel that it is not implemented properly. Teachers need to be trained properly to incorporate mainstreaming effectively otherwise the students with disabilities find it hard to cope with the pace of other students.

4. Government policies are not clearly defined which gives educational institutions to take advantage of the loopholes. The term 'Inclusive education' needs to be defined under the RTE act. The act should be amended and brought in line with the RPWD act to update norms and standards to become more inclusive and guidelines should be issued under it for student and parent preparedness.

5. Educational institutions don't feel obligated to extend their support to the differently abled students despite the existence of rules to protect the CWD. The government needs to address issues of inclusive learning in institutions. For example, schools deny admission to CWD, despite the existence of regulations that prohibit denial of admissions.

6. Majority of the differently abled students struggle with social interactions which makes them feel isolated.

7. 48% of the differently abled students feel like they are treated differently from their peers. That also has a negative impact on their academics and other extracurricular activities.

8. Majority of the differently abled students are unaware of the benefits and provisions that are offered by the government in order to support them.

9. Teachers and differently-abled don't share a personal connect hence the students are not able to grow in different areas.

10. There are many startups which engage in business ideas that facilitate inclusive learning for differently abled students.

10. Suggestions:

To offer college students with disabilities with a gaining knowledge of an improvement environment this is supportive, faculties should adopt inclusive practices.

A few pointers for making faculties more inclusive are as follows:

- (i) **Infrastructure:** provide students with disabilities with the vital hotels to allow them to take part in all faculty sports. These are available sources, adjustments to the classroom, and assistive generation.
- (ii) **Available facilities:** make sure that every one student, such as people with bodily disabilities, can get right of entry to faculty facilities like classrooms, restrooms, and playgrounds.
- (iii) **Individualized education:** support and lodges tailor-made to every pupils. Necessities must be made available. This can require adjusting the curriculum or teaching strategies to house various gaining knowledge of patterns.
- (iv) **Continuing expert boom:** help teachers and workforce recognize the desires of students with disabilities and the way to provide the perfect guide and lodges via providing training and support.
- (v) **Consideration in extracurricular sporting activities:** Urge distinctively abled understudies to take part in extracurricular sporting events and guarantee that those sporting activities are open to them.
- (vi) **Technique based on cooperation:** so that it will ensure that colleges are welcoming and consisting of all college students, collaborate with families, individuals of the network, and disability advocacy businesses.
- (vii) **Superb ecosystem:** inspire students to embody their differences and cultivate a positive and accepting college tradition that celebrates range.
- (viii) **Personal care:** it's particularly important for the teacher to have sympathy and empathy toward children's that will make them more comfortable, and they can cope up with the mainstream students

(ix) Colleges can create an environment in which all college students, no matter their abilities, can thrive and reach their complete capability via implementing these practices.

11. Conclusion:

According to the research conducted we can conclude that, it is abundantly clear that many Indian universities still lack adequate infrastructure for students with disabilities. Even though there has been some progress in recent years, like the installation of ramps and buses that are accessible, many universities still lack essential facilities like elevators, accessible restrooms, and specialized software and hardware for students with hearing, visual, or motor impairments.

Not only does this lack of infrastructure limit the opportunities that students with disabilities have, but it also reinforces attitudes in society that view disability as a personal burden rather than a systemic problem. Indian universities must take proactive steps to identify and remove barriers to accessibility in order to deal with these issues. One way to better understand the needs and concerns of differently abled students is to talk to them.

In the end, all stakeholders, including government officials, university administrators, faculty, and students themselves, will need to commit for a long time to making a university environment that is more welcoming to all students. We can create a society that is more just and equitable by cooperating with one another and valuing and supporting the diversity of all its members, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

Diverse and intricate perceptions of the Indian educational system are held by students with disabilities. While certain understudies feel upheld and obliged, others battle with obstructions and segregation.

On the plus side, there are policies and laws in place to safeguard the rights of students with disabilities, and efforts are being made to make education more accessible. To make their campuses more accessible, some schools and universities have installed ramps and elevators, and national-level exams have special provisions for students with disabilities.

However, many students with disabilities continue to face significant barriers to education. Accessible physical infrastructure, inadequate support and resources, and hostile attitudes from peers and teachers are all examples of these. Additionally, poverty and a lack of resources prevent many students with disabilities from receiving a high-quality education.

Research states, it is critical that the Indian educational system continue to strive for increased accessibility and inclusivity for students with disabilities. This can be accomplished by altering attitudes and perceptions about disability, allocating resources, and changing policies.

During this research, we found that majority students perceive that their disability restricts their ability to achieve something noteworthy. Students feel demotivated and this reduces their chances of having successful professional careers.

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