

## ISSUE AND CHALLENGES OF LIS PROFESSIONALS IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA: A CASE STUDY

**Dalip Singh**

Assistant Professor, Dept of Lib. & Info. Science, Central University of Haryana

---

### ABSTRACT

*The PWD act 1995, emphasizes that differently abled person should have access to education at all level in education system. To implement the PWD act, an inclusive education has been started at all level of education in India, all necessary equipments were provided, special budget was allocated, special educators were appointed and required training was provided to teachers at block level, district level, and state level. The inclusive education is an initiative which enables differently abled children to attend a school near to their home with normal children without any differences. In spite of this, full inclusion is still awaited because libraries and information centers either are in initial stage of inclusion or following the traditional approaches to serve the users. The library and information center is the heart of the institute, and without their inclusion, a complete inclusive education system cannot be imagined. So far, no special training was provided to LIS professionals to understand and handle information needs of differently abled person. Like normal people, differently abled persons also require latest information to update, to educate, to empower, to employ and to be independent. But, only few libraries and information centers open their door for differently abled and result of that it creates a wide gap between information need and library services available for differently abled. This study discusses the issue and challenges faced by LIS professional in inclusive education system in India. It also focuses on information needs, impact of right information and how information need of differently abled person can be fulfilled by LIS professionals.*

**Keywords:** *Inclusive, Society, Education, Differently abled, Professionals, Challenges, India, library, Information.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Today, we are living in an inclusive society in which each and every member of the society has its own importance and plays a decisive role in overall development of the society and nation. The inclusive society is a framework where everybody has an equal opportunity, equal right and equal responsibilities, and there is no differences based on social background, social status and physical & mental capabilities of the person. Since independence, Government of India has launched many programs to fill up social, cultural and geographical gaps so that formal education and required information are accessible to all in timely manners without any difference between abled and differently abled persons. Like normal people, differently abled persons also require latest information to update, to educate, to empower, to employ and to be independent. The differently abled are valuable resource of our nation and deserve the same opportunities as normal persons. So, to enable them independent and include them in main stream of education, inclusive education had been started at all level of education in India since 2010.

Despite of this, 26.8 million or 2.21 % of the total population of India is still deprived of required information or not getting latest information in timely manners, they are called differently abled persons. Out of which 5% of the total population of differently abled people is children and they comprise a largest minority group of the India. Moreover, as per guidelines of Government of India, information is a primary and fundamental right of all people of the country, including differently abled persons and required information should be accessible in timely manners without any difference between abled and differently abled persons. Like normal people, access of required information is a primary and fundamental right for differently abled and their information need must be fulfilled by LIS Professionals. But, only few libraries and information centers open their door for differently abled and result of that it creates a wide gap between information need and library services available for differently abled.

The disability is defined as physical or mental conditions the person that limits his/her ability to function, to move and to act. The disability means physical and mental impairment, such as Visual Impairment (VI), Speech Impairment (SI), Hearing Impairment (HI), Orthopedically Impairment (OI), and Mental Challenged (MR). It can be an in-born disability, an acquired disability, or a developed disability. As the population rises, the disabled minority group is also expected to rise in number. According to the UN Development Program 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries such as India, China, Bangladesh, Brazil, Hungary,

South Africa etc. So, their information need, Educational need and Medical need cannot be neglected at any cost because it affects hundreds of millions of families where differently abled is only earner. The World Bank estimates that 20 per cent of the world's poorest people have some kind of disability. It is also estimated that in the next thirty years, the number of disabled people will increase in some countries.

The Persons with Disabilities Act 1995, emphasizes that differently- abled should have access to education and library at all levels in education system and it is responsibility of LIS professionals to enable them to access both physical libraries as well as digital libraries. But, as discussed above, there are many categories of differently abled person and for each and every category; different types of reading materials is required. For example, visually impaired persons traditionally read books written in Braille language, Audio-Books and Large Print books. Therefore, LIS professionals play a vital role for making libraries inclusive which is very important for the growth of differently abled as well as our society and our nation. To do this, there should be inclusive libraries at school level, college level, university level, public or private level. Moreover, at all level libraries should be managed by highly qualified library professionals. Thereby, through the libraries we can make a large impact on the education of persons with disabilities. By making libraries accessible and inclusive, we can address information needs of the differently abled persons.

## **2. SCOPE OF STUDY**

This study evaluates the library services provided to differently abled persons by LIS Professionals in India and also point out the key challenges faced by LIS professionals while serving to the differently abled persons. Its main objective is to provide a critical overview of the presence of library and information centers and services provide for differently abled, while pointing out their strengths and weak points. This study will examine a few cases of libraries that have taken steps to make their buildings accessible to differently abled users. Finally, based on this study, I will list out few challenges faced by LIS professionals in inclusive education system.

## **3. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Since independence, Government of India has launched many programs to fill the gaps in their education system and to build up a strong system of inclusive education. Inclusive education is an initiative which enables the differently abled children to attend a school near to their home with normal children without any differences. It also emphasizes that every child is valuable

resource of our nation and deserves the same opportunities and experiences. Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes and same school. Research shows that when a child with disabilities attends classes alongside peers who do not have disabilities, good things happen. Inclusive education also allows children with disabilities to stay with their family and to go to the nearest school, just like all other children.

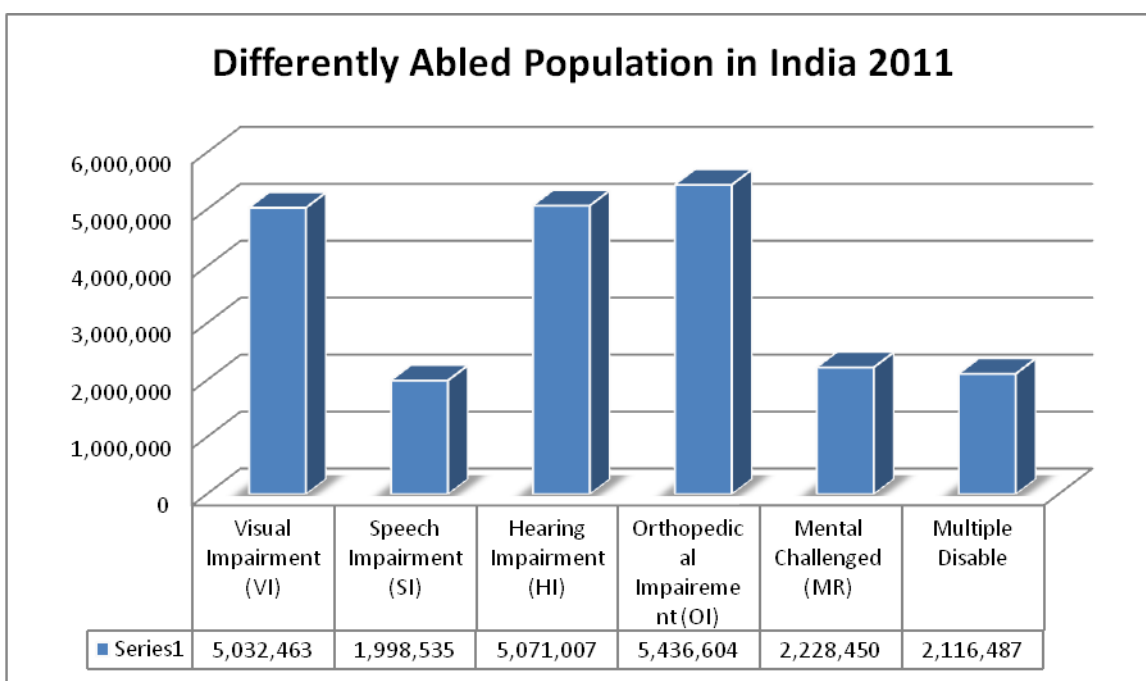
According to PWD act, differently-abled persons have equal right to access the social, political and economic life which includes not only physical access but access to the same tools, services, organizations and facilities for which everyone is entitled. As per guidelines of Government of India, information is a primary and fundamental right of all people of the country, including differently-abled persons and their information need must be fulfilled. On the 1st of January 1996, Government of India passed the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act 1995 which ensures equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals and implicitly mandates an inclusive society for all including the persons with disabilities. Adhere to the guidelines of Government of India and successful implementation of PWD act, inclusive education has been started at all level of education in India and to do so, all necessary equipments were provided, special budget was allocated, special educators were appointed, required training was provided to teachers at block level, district level, and state level. In spite of this, full inclusion is yet to come because libraries and information centers either are in initial stage of inclusion or following the traditional approaches to the serve the users.

To implement the full inclusion, Libraries and Information Centers (LIC) play a crucial role. The LICs are considered as the most authentic sources of information for all users including differently-abled person. Like normal people, differently-abled persons also require latest information to update, to educate, to empower, to employ and to be independent. So to empower differently-abled persons, LIS professionals play a vital role in making libraries inclusive which is very important for overall development of differently-abled as well as for our society and for our nation.

#### **4. DIFFERENTLY ABLED IN INDIA**

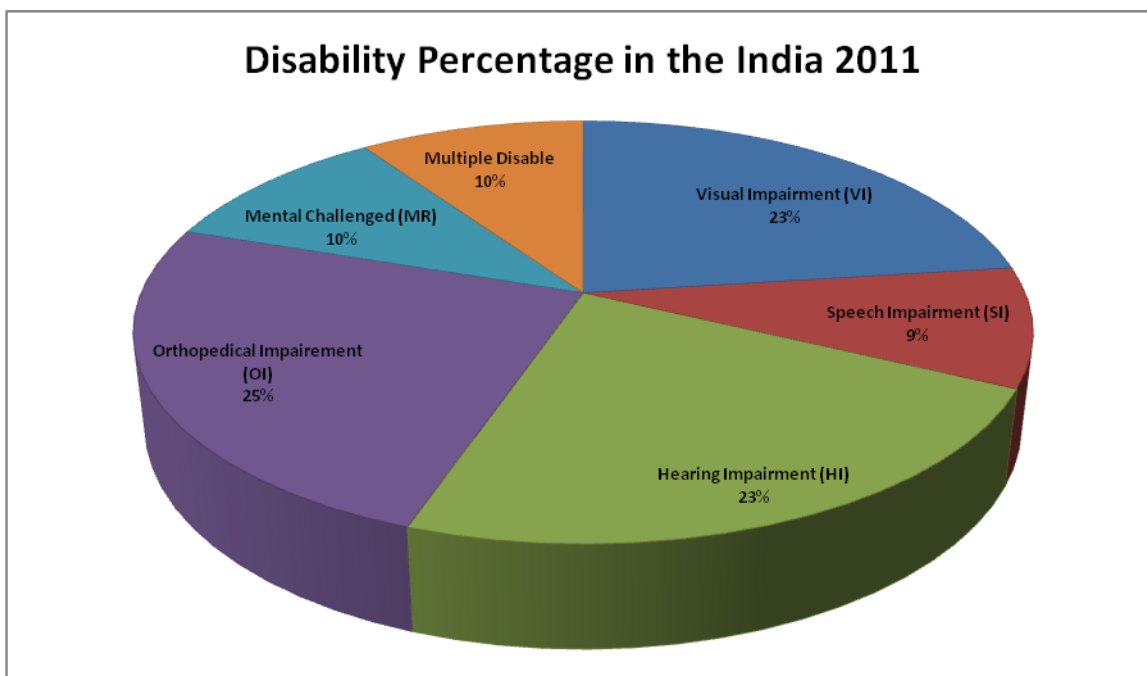
According to the census 2011, it was analyzed that population of differently-abled is increasing constantly. In 2001 census, it was found that there are 21 million or 2.13 % of the total population of India is persons with disability which increased remarkably and in 2011 census, it

crossed to 26 million that is 2.21 % of the total population. It is also estimated that number of differently abled people in India increases by about 5 million every year. As per National Statistical Survey (NSS), disability transition in India is predicted to be most rapid. The survey reveals that estimated 2,897,096 children in the age group 6-13 are physically or mentally challenged. Out of which, 38% suffered from orthopedic disability, whereas the percentage of children who suffered from hearing, speech, visual, mental and multiple disabilities was 7.72%, 13.05%, 13.59%, 17.95% and 9.70% respectively. Although, this represents a small percentage of the estimated 5 million visually challenged in India. The below chart indicates the category wise population of differently abled persons in India.



In India, disability is categorized into five main classes that are Visual Impairment (VI), Speech Impairment (SI), Hearing Impairment (HI), Orthopedically Impairment (OI), and Mental Challenged (MR) in which orthopedically impairment is very common disability followed by visually impairment and hearing impairment. Out of total population of differently abled persons, 25 percent of disabled population comprises of orthopedically impaired followed by 23 percent of visually impaired and hearing impaired.

As per 2011 census, below chart indicates the percentage of differently abled persons in India.



### 5. INFORMATION NEED OF DIFFERENTLY ABLED

As per UNESCO, ninety per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school due to lack of basic amenities such as library services, special educators, non-availability of desired reading materials and skilled library/information professionals. The differently abled persons have the same information needs as non disabled and they are valuable part and parcel of our society. Therefore, their information needs cannot be ignored at any cost and without improving them socially, intellectually and morally, overall development of our society is not imagined or incomplete.

The Government of India and UGC have strongly recommended that information is accessible for all without any differences. The libraries and information center is an integral part of any academic institution whether at school or university level, and without their full inclusion, the students would not be able to completely reap the benefits of the educational system. The below table, shows that information need of differently abled persons is increasing with the passage of time:

Information Need of Differently Abled Children															
Year	Total Differently Abled Identified	Differently Abled Enrolled in Schools	% Enrolled in Schools	Differently Abled Enrolled in EGS/AIE Centers	Differently Abled provided Home Based Edu.	Total Coverage of Differently Abled	% Differently Abled covered against Identified Differently Abled	No. of NGOs involved	1-day Teacher training on IE	3-6 day training	90 day training	Aids & Appliances Required	Aids & Appliances Provided	% of Aids & appliances	Barrier Free Access
2007 - 08	2637076	2216326	84.04	100833	100139	2417803	91.68	775	2519479	1675898	66231	1207791	893784	74.00	590337
2008 - 09	2914853	2442098	83.78	69904	114745	2622336	89.96	916	2793790	1808029	108606	2033956	1451137	71.35	751450
2009 - 10	3042053	2595673	85.33	51565	138133	2780107	91.39	1139	2616249	1913729	124990	2274602	1646611	72.39	727356

Differently abled such as blind people and those visually impaired traditionally read books written in Braille language, Audio Books and large print books. But, only a few libraries in India are equipped with these reading materials and having facilities to serve the personal with differently abled. So to get the required information or material to abreast their knowledge, differently abled persons have to wait for long time or have to visit to a special library which is very difficult and costly for differently abled persons. Moreover, the differently abled persons face barriers to the information, education, employment and public services.

## **6. ISSUE AND CHALLENGES OF LIS PROFESSIONALS**

In order to provide right information to the differently abled users, at right time, in right amount and in right professional manners, it is important to be aware of the information needs of this group of people, as well has how their information needs was fulfilled in past. In order to provide access to the required library materials, it is important that library facilities themselves must be physically accessible for differently abled. Moreover, libraries should develop its collection keeping in mind the present and future requirements of its users. The library collection should be a mix of the books/journals and other materials required by disabled as well non-disabled users. But, still numbers of Library and information centers are very less in comparison to the population of differently abled in India. On top of that, number of trained LIS professionals are very less who can fulfill information need of differently abled in timely manners.

So, in order to, meet the information need of differently abled in right professional way and to develop the inclusive library, LIS professionals are facing following key challenges:

- As per guidelines of Government of India, information is a primary and fundamental right of all people of the country, including differently abled persons. So, to assess information need of differently abled requires trained staffs or special skill sets which are not available with library and information centers presently. Therefore, to provide the required information in least span of time is a big challenge for LIS professionals.
- The Persons with Disabilities Act 1995 indicates that differently- abled persons should have access to education at all levels. To implement this act, at each level in education system there should be an inclusive library so that differently abled person can access the library easily. But, to develop an inclusive library is a challenge for LIS professionals.
- It is estimated that number of differently abled children will increases over the next 30 years, particularly in the India. So, to develop the library collection for differently abled

children and to facilitate them with latest information in desired format is a herculean task because libraries are facing shortage of trained LIS professionals.

- As a study (Varian and Lyman), it is estimated that information is growing at the rate of 66% percent per year and every year almost 1.5 Exabyte new information is added. As per, second law of S.R. Ranganathan, required information should be accessible to all users. So, to facilitate differently abled users and providing access to all information to their nearest end is challenging job for LIS Professionals.
- There are many categories of differently abled persons and for each and every category different format of reading materials are required. Moreover, required tools and techniques for each category are different. For example, blind people or visually impaired traditionally read information written in Braille, Audio Tape -Books and large print books. So, to develop collection for visually impaired only requires lot of fund and currently, library and information centers are facing financial crisis. Therefore, to develop the collection for different group of differently able in a limited budget is big challenge for LIS staffs.
- To provide independent access to library and information centers, LIS professional needs to modify their existing infrastructure such entrance, book racks height, spacing between racks and other ambience of libraries. So, to develop differently abled friendly ambience is very tough task for LIS professionals.
- The second law reminds us to be impartial in our dealings with users. So to provide required information to differently abled in least span of time and in desired format as compare to normal users is challenging job.
- The principal of library emphasizes that library collection should be a mix of old and rare material as well as of the latest material. But, availability of old and rare material in Braille language is very hard to find.
- To provide required information to differently abled person, library and information centers should equipped with Assistive Technology which enables differently people to access the information and to perform their tasks that they were unable to perform, or had great difficulty to do so. But, to purchase the assistive technology requires lot of fund which is not so easily available for library.



- Developing an efficient library service for print-disabled people is extremely important, because there are significantly fewer books available commercially in accessible formats compared to what is published in print for the general public. Therefore, to develop collections in alternative formats and make them available for differently able is big challenge for LIS professionals.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

To sum up, we say that differently abled persons are valuable resources of our society and having same information needs as non disabled. Therefore, their information needs cannot be ignored by LIS professionals because without their empowerment complete development of our society is not imagined. Moreover, they have equal right to access information in timely manner. Therefore, it is moral duty of LIS staff to treat the differently abled as valuable patrons of library and enable them to access the library materials and services offered by library without any differences.

## **REFERENCES**

- An Overview of the Sustainable Development Goals. (n.d.). Retrieved from NITI Aayog :  
<http://niti.gov.in/content/overview-sustainable-development-goals>
- Chakraborty, H. (2013). Redefining the Role of LIS Professionals with changing dimension of library & information Centre. *International Journal of Information Library & Society*, 1 – 5.
- Disability division of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. (n.d.). Retrieved from National Portal of India: <https://india.gov.in/disability-division-ministry-social-justice-and-empowerment>.
- Educational, N. C. (2006). *Education Of Children With Special Needs*. New Delhi: Publication Department by the Secretary, National Council of Educational Research and Training.
- General Reports. (n.d.). Retrieved from Planning commission, Government of India: [http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/genrep/index.php?repts=b\\_repgen.htm](http://planningcommission.gov.in/reports/genrep/index.php?repts=b_repgen.htm)
- Gupta, K. (2009). Towards an Inclusive Knowledge Society: Role of Joint Use Libraries in Indian Academic and Public Library Sectors. *ICAL 2009 – Library Services*, 467 -475.
- Inclusive Education. (n.d.). Retrieved from Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan: [http://ssa.nic.in/page\\_portletlinks?foldername=inclusive-education](http://ssa.nic.in/page_portletlinks?foldername=inclusive-education)

- India, C. o. (2011). *Census of India 2011: Provisional Population Totals*. New Delhi: Office of the Registrar General & Census Commission.
- India, G. o. (2001). *CENSUS OF INDIA 2001*. New Delhi: Registrar General & Census Commissioner.
- Institute, S. &. (2014). *All India Survey Of Out-Of-School Children Of Age 6-13 Years And Age 5*. Educational consultants india ltd. (edcil) .
- Law, M. O. (1996). *Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act*. New Delhi: Legislative Department.
- Library Scenario in India. (n.d.). Retrieved from National Mission on Libraries:  
<http://www.nmlindia.nic.in/pages/display/24>
- National Policy on Skill Development. (n.d.). Retrieved from Directorate General of Employment and Training: <http://www.dget.nic.in/content/innerpage/national-policy-on-skill-development.php>
- Organisation, N. S. (2003). *Disabllled Perrsons iin Hindiia*. New Delhi: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.
- Organization, W. H. (2011). *WORLD REPORT ON DISABILITY*. Switzerland: WHO Press.
- Policy. (n.d.). Retrieved from Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities :  
<http://www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/page/policy.php>
- PWD ACT. (n.d.). Retrieved from Office of the Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities: [http://www.ccdisabilities.nic.in/page.php?s=reg&t=def&p=pwd\\_act](http://www.ccdisabilities.nic.in/page.php?s=reg&t=def&p=pwd_act)
- Recomendation. (n.d.). Retrieved from Rehabilitation Council of India :  
<http://www.rehabcouncil.nic.in/forms/Sublink1.aspx?lid=826>
- Schemes. (n.d.). Retrieved from National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation:  
<http://www.nhfdc.nic.in/schemes>
- SHANIMON.S, & HAMEEDU, M. S. (2014). The Emerging Development Model in India Differently-Abled Entrepreneurs. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 1 – 11.
- Singal, N. (2009). *Education of children with disabilities in India*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge.
- Team, D. D. (2002). *Schools for All: Including disabled children in education*. London: Save the Children.

Technologies, B. B. (2013). *Inclusive Libraries - A step towards making libraries disabled friendly*. Retrieved from <http://barrierbreak.com/aboutbarrierbreak/press-releases/inclusive-libraries-a-step-towards-makinglibraries-disabled-friendly>