

Challenges in Teaching and Learning for Visually Impaired

Dr. Saranjit Kaur

*Ph.D(Computer Science), Professional Assistant(Library) Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce,
Pitampura, University of Delhi, Delhi – 110034.*

Abstract:*The basis of the present study is to identify the problems faced by visually impaired students and teachers. The main purpose of this research is to find out the hindrances in teaching and learning in college / university, availability of teaching and learning material, software, human help etc. The paper not only presents challenges faced by for visually impaired students but also provides suggestion / recommendations to overcome those problems. The paper also explains the efforts taken by University, Colleges and parent body to help visually impaired in teaching and learning. To carry on this works the data is obtained through visually impaired student and Associate Professor from Delhi University College.*

Keywords:*Visually impaired, digital, education, software, audio*

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I. Introduction

Every student has the right to receive education within the regular education environment. In India formal education for children with disability began in 1869. Delhi University (DU) along with Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC) is doing efforts by giving admission to disabled students, providing study material in various forms, various software, laptops, scanners and various other digital devices for their study and also employment opportunities in the college or university at different levels.

The meaning of visually impairments means “partially or completely blind”. Visually impaired people face difficulties in normal day to day activities such as driving, reading, walking, socializing etc.

According to newspaper, “**The Economic Times**” : Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 28th December, 2016 in his address in “Mann Ki Baat” suggested that we should use the term Divyaang instead of Viklang. He further added that while interacting with a visually impaired person we find that there is an extra power in that person. So, disabled people have divine power which the normal people don’t have, therefore, they should be called divyaang.

There are so many councils, NGO, government and non government associations, institutions, providing help to visually impaired for their study, teaching and growth but still many brilliant students, teachers, researchers and scholars needs more resources for further growth.

This is known fact that students / teachers with visual impairments have different educational needs which can be fulfilled only with team efforts of parents, teachers, students and professionals. To fulfill their unique educational needs they require specialized services, other instructional material such as audio material, Braille books, software, headphones, computer / laptops, other digital devices etc. Colleges and other educational institutions should include Braille, audio material, software and other digital devices etc. for visually impaired students.

II. Literature Survey

The brief description of literature studied from 2008 to 2015 is given below.

Lowenfeld, emphasis on special education for visually impaired students with specialized trained staff and teachers. It also states that there should be special residential school with special instructional services, food services, extracurricular and recreational services, health care services, maintenance and administrative services for them. **J. Sheela(2008)**, describe in details about the problems faced by visually impairment school children. The paper also explains in detail about problems faced by them in daily life, house school, mode of transport to reach school, person helping in school in writing notes and other daily school activities. **Sharma and Deppeler (2005)** presented challenges for integrated education, brief history of special education in India, number of current challenges faced by Indian administrators and educators in providing special education and other services to disabled students. **Sahasrabudhe and Palvia (2013)**, focuses on academic challenges faced by visually impaired students in high school and college, their resolution strategy, use of technology to resolve their problems, their knowledge of Braille, availability of alternative formats or human assistance reader / scribe, etc.

III. Data Collection

The methodology used to collect data for this research is through interview method. A direct face to face interaction with the visually impaired student of B.Com and Associate Professor- Economics is taken to illicit response about the problems faced by them. The frequency of sample organization and responses collected from one Delhi University College as given in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Organization and Response

Organizations	Response
Delhi University College	2

The demographic data collected for this purpose is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Demographic profile

	Male	Female
Gender	1	1
	<20	40+
Age	1	1
	B.Com 3rd year	M.Phil,Ph.D
Qualification	1	1
	3-10	3-10
Experience	3	10

IV. Objectives

The objective of this study is to find our problems faced by Delhi University visually impairment students or teacher in teaching and studying and the possible solutions for their problems

Challenges for Visually impaired students:

1. Books in brail or in audio form are not available for commerce and science stream students. If available then old material is available which is of no use in the current semester.
2. Even if the books are requested by student or teacher in Braille or audio form then it took one or more months and by the time their semester is getting over.
3. Every Delhi University College has scanner, laptop, software, printers and other digital devices provided by DU for disabled students but then again the student has to scan the book himself / herself and at times scanning is not proper and at times it is even not readable.
4. At times no description is given for images or pictures or mathematics equations / problems etc. so when scanned it is useless for disabled person
5. If student or teacher wants audio book then they don't get volunteer or they have to hire outside volunteer and pay from their own pocket or they have to take help from family member.
6. Some Delhi University colleges have either no audio visual room or no recording or listening facility for visually impairment students.
7. Moreover, the software JAWS (Job Access with Speech) used by visually impaired to listen is not available free of cost. It is provided by Delhi University in colleges but is very expensive. One licensed version costs approximately Rs.75,000/- per original copy so the students and teachers are compelled to use the pirated version for their personal use.
8. Again Hindi language reading is a problem and its study material is also not available. Hindi OCR, for one licensed user costs approximately Rs.12,000/- to Rs.15,000/- and it is available in the college or university only. Moreover, outside agency AICB (All India Confederation of Blind) costs approximately Rs.15,000/- for editing one book and poor students can't afford it.
9. Moreover, some disabled students coming after completing schooling or from poor background are not aware of computer, digital or online resources, software available for them and how to operate and use them.
10. The disabled students wants to enjoy and pass their time by listening story books and other material which is available online but according to them very few material is available online in audio form which is free of cost.
11. Moreover, most of the journal, books, thesis and other study material which is available free and online is available through intranet i.e. within the campus only so teachers and students cannot study it at home on weekends and holidays.
12. Universities and colleges are lacking in providing facilities to visually impairment due to limited funding and insufficient staff.

13. Visually impaired don't get volunteer to write exams or they need to hire their own volunteer.

Recommendation and Suggestions

1. As soon as the course is revised it is the duty of the University / college to make extra efforts and depute extra staff to get a copy of that in Braille and audio course material prepared and as soon as it is demanded by any college teacher or student other copies can be made available to them.
2. Due to semester system time is short so university should hire staff or resources for on-time availability of study material in different forms.
3. In colleges, disabled students should be given facility to get the required books scanned or get audio prepared again for that purpose trained or digital staff should be available for that.
4. The software's which are available in the college should be made available to visually impaired student for their home also because few students can't afford the software and all the study is not possible in the college only.
5. In some DU Colleges audio visual room is not there which should be constructed so that disabled students can sit comfortably, study, and enjoy and utilize their free time.
6. At college level orientation program or workshop should be organized for visually impaired or special students to learn how to operate computers and install and use software useful for them for their study and recreation.
7. The online study material should be available offline to all the teaching and learning community so that they can sit at home and study, as it is available only within the campus or on intranet.
8. Training should be given to teachers and other staff to learn technical and other skills for teaching and helping visually impaired student.
9. There should be adequate personnel to give training to college or university staff, students, teachers, parents to fulfill academic and non-academic needs of the students with visual impairments.
10. College or university should arrange volunteer for visually impaired students for writing examination.

V. Conclusion

There are many problems faced by the disabled students and teachers in their teaching and learning activities. Many efforts and facilities is given by Delhi University to the colleges by providing laptops, scanners and software for disabled and audio visual room and other digital facility for disabled. But still much more efforts are required this field to help them to proceed further to achieve their needs, goals and dreams for higher studies. The main reason Universities and Colleges not fulfilling the requirement in providing facility to visually impaired teacher, student, researcher is due to insufficient staff and fund. This is a team effort (parents, teachers, staff, students and society) to help the visually impaired student for his/her overall growth.

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