

Students with Disabilities at Higher Educational Institutes

India accounts for over 26 million persons with Disabilities in India (2.21% of country's population). Of the same 44.97% is in the age group of 0-29, which counts for a huge section of the disabled population in the age group that access education services according to Census of India, 2011.

We have observed that Educational institutes in our country don't know how to support students with disabilities despite best intentions. This has led to several universities closed off to this community or students dropping out once enrolled due to lack of support.

Whilst there has been growing legal mandate in India for Inclusive Education through various legislations, access to equal and quality education and access to all streams of education remains the real challenge. This challenge is even more acute at Higher Education. Whilst the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 in India mandates a 5% reservation for students with disabilities due to lack of awareness towards persons with disabilities and sensitization, financial resources and also skilled manpower institutes of Higher Education are often at a loss in delivering inclusive education services to students enrolled.

Existing disability offices are understaffed and overwhelmed as the No. of people with disabilities is increasing due to increased awareness around invisible disabilities. This has created a big gap between people with disabilities and employers. Only 16% of people with disabilities are employed in India despite several incentives from the Government to hire people with disabilities and several disability-specific hiring programs. Thus, to understand this challenge better at your institute; I would like to request information for the following:

1. How many students with disabilities have enrolled in your institution since 2011-2019. (Please provide year wise data).
2. What are the process(es) does your institute use for identifying the number of people with disabilities.
3. How many students with disabilities have graduated every year from 2011-2019.
4. Please provide the number of students with different disabilities in your institute from 2011-2019.
5. How do you provide support to students with disabilities e.g. providing extra time to write their exams, allowing them to use a scribe to write their exams ETC.
6. Do you have a disability office or a similar setting to provide support to students with disabilities.
7. What are the list of services that this support system provides to students with disabilities.
8. If there is no support system like a disability office, what systems do you have to support students with disabilities.
9. What is the registration process for students to receive these services.
10. How many students are registered with this support system e.g. disability office.

11. What is the cost incurred by your institution to support students with disabilities?
12. Of this cost, what portion of it is spent on acquiring software specific to a student's access needs e.g. screen reader licenses.
13. Of this cost, what portion of it is spent to acquire software for accessibility services to be offered e.g. licenses to convert text.
14. What support services do you have to support student employees with disabilities e.g. teaching and research assistants.