



THE ACHIEVEMENT OF NIEPVD FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF STUDENTS WITH VISUAL DISABILITIES.

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ABSTRACT :

The paper discusses the results of a study which explored achievement of NIEPVD for the empowerment of students with visual disabilities. To advancing the rights and dignity of students with visual disabilities and to provides quality education, vocational training, and rehabilitation services to people, who are visually impaired. The data were collected from 70 students by means of a semi-structured interview. The gathered data were subjected to qualitative and quantitative analysis. The results of the study demonstrated that, institute is providing accessibility, vocational skills and enhancing their abilities and providing quality education and overall empowering them.

Keywords: empowerment of visually impaired students, quality education, vocational training, rehabilitation services, qualitative and quantitative analysis

Introduction :

In India, there are nine premier Institutes working in the field of disability. Under the administrative control of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India these institutes work in up lifting the life of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). The National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities (Divyangjan) is one of the nine premier Institute working in the field of disability. The Institute is dedicated to advancing the rights and dignity of those who are visually impaired. The Institute produces trained manpower which provides quality education, vocational training, and rehabilitation services to people, who visually impaired in order to fulfill this goal. Additionally, it conducts research and develops programmes and policies that are inclusive of people with disabilities. The institute has made significant contributions to enabling technologies and practical instruments for the equal participation of people with visual impairments in various spheres of life through its extensive research and development efforts. The Institute is the nation's leading manufacturer and distributor of Braille media, including talking books. The NIEPVD's headquarter is located at 116 Rajpur Road in Dehradun, and two regional chapters—one in Kolkata, West Bengal, and the other in Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh—were established in 1997 and 1988, respectively. (H.P.)

DEPARTMENTS UNDER NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH VISUAL DISABILITIES:

Special Education and Research

The Department of Special Education and Research activities comprise Degree courses i.e. Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), Master of Education (M.Ed.), Diploma (D.Ed.) courses in Special Education. Some of these courses are being conducted also at the institute's Regional Centre, Chennai and CRC Sundernagar while others are being conducted in collaboration with State Governments and reputed NGOs in the field of visual disability either with full or partial funding. The Institute's Department of Special Education has set example of academic excellence throughout the country, its alumni are rendering services to the visually impaired school children and trainee teachers across the length and breadth of the country. Many are serving country's leading Universities and many are serving in reputed schools of the country. They have been instrumental in promoting research in various aspects of special education. Since its inception (1984), the department has contributed more than 6,500 teachers and 402 Mobility Instructors which comprise approximately 70% of the trained teachers for the blind available in the country (ANNUAL REPORT NIEPVD, 2021).

Skill Development (TCAB)

The St. Dunstan's Hostel for the War Blind, formerly known as the Training Centre for the Adult Blind, was founded in 1943 to offer rehabilitation services to the soldiers and sailors who lost their eyesight during World War II. It is now known as the Department of Skill Development and Economic Empowerment. St. Dunstan's Hostel for the War Blind was taken up by the Indian government after independence, and the Training Centre for the Adult Blind was created. To ensure the reintegration of blind soldiers and other blind people, on January 1, 1950. The Institute's Training Centre for the

Adult Blind is its oldest division. It is responsible for providing people with visual disabilities with training and employment possibilities, as well as meeting their various requirements.

In 1950, the institute started offering vocational training in the following 4 trades:

- Re-canning of Chairs (Single and Double)
- Braille (Hindi and English)
- English Typing
- Instrumental Music

Soon as the time moves forward, training opportunities were expanded. As per new global and national needs, and the latest market trends, new training programmes are developed and introduced for the empowerment of persons with visual impairment for bringing them into the mainstream society. The Department currently provides vocational training programmes like "Computer Operator and Programming Assistant (COPA) affiliated with the National Council of Vocational Training (NCVT), Stenographer and Secretarial Assistant (Hindi) affiliated with NCVT, Training in the Use of Assistive Technologies for Persons with Visual Impairment, Training in Coping Skills for Adjustment at Work and in Social Life for Adventitious Blind Persons, as well as Music (Vocal and Instrumental)" These courses can be completed in three months to a year. The vocational programmes being provided are consistently updated to reflect the most recent market trends and to meet the demands of the modern workplace. Some of these programmes are in compliance with the National Skill Standards and are associated with the National Council of Vocational Training.

Apart from imparting training in the vocational subjects, the trainees selected are also equipped with special core skills "Braille, Orientation and Mobility and Smart Phone Operation" all across the trades including Stenographer and Secretarial Assistant (Hindi). Other multi-skills are also developed in order to empower them socially, economically, and emotionally so they can live their lives independently and with dignity. These skills include basic computer operation, computer typing (English & Hindi), daily living skills, home management skills (cooking, washing, ironing, and personal grooming), and use of kitchen equipment and utensils. People with visual impairments in the age range of 18 to 40 are eligible for admission to vocational programmes if they meet the requirements and possess the necessary credentials.

Facilities offered:

- No tuition fee is charged from the candidates selected for the course.
- Free board and lodging during the training period.
- Uniform and the pocket money of Rs. 450/- per month to meet out their daily expenses.
- Medical facilities through the Institute's Dispensary.
- Accessible Course Materials, Assistive Devices and Equipments during their training at the Centre to overcome barriers to communication and to access their reading materials.

Selection Process:

Applications received for the courses are first scrutinized by the duly constituted Scrutiny Committee. On the scheduled test date, only the shortlisted candidates are contacted. A Selection Committee properly constituted by the Director, NIEPVD, selects students for the vocational programmes solely based on their performance in an entrance exam and a trade and aptitude test. Reservation: The Government of India firmly abides by its reservation policy. Applications must be accompanied by the following documents: a proof of date of birth; a certificate of disability; a certificate of membership in the SC/ST/OBC category, if applicable; and any other supporting documentation. Aadhaar Cards and Income Documents.

Model School for the Visually Handicapped

The Model School for the Visually Handicapped (MSVH) was established by the Indian government on January 4, 1959, on marking the 150th year of Louis Braille's birth. This co-ed residential school is located at 116, Rajpur Road, Dehradun, on the campus of the NIEPVD, and currently has ___ students enrolled. One of the leading co-educational boarding institutions affiliated to CBSE Board. Students, there come from a wide range of backgrounds and regions of the nation. The school's main goal is to help visually challenged pupils to learn and get quality education, for which it has all the necessary resources and qualified staff. The motive of the school is to enable students to be self-dependent in their life in spite of their visual impairment. Every effort is made for all round personality development of students.

National Accessible Library (NAL)

The purpose of the National Accessible Library is to provide accommodations for and to make reading accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired as well as to scholars, researchers, and professionals in the field of visual disability. The three library sections' bookshelves are decorated with a sizable selection of general and disability-specific literature in print, braille, and talking book formats. The National Talking Book Library was developed in 1990 from the National Library for the Print Handicapped, which was founded in 1963. These libraries serve its member throughout the country. Keeping in view the limited access of the visually impaired people to public libraries & others & to realize the aim of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan the Braille & Talking Book Library has done his job in giving educational support to persons with visual disabilities.

Rehabilitation Psychology & Research

The Department of Clinical and Rehabilitation Psychology and Research (DCRPR) provides extensive and integrative clinical psychology services in the areas of psycho diagnosis and psychotherapy. A committee of experts from the Government of India recommended the creation of a Crisis Intervention Unit at the National Centre for the Blind (now NIEPVD) during the National Centre for the Blind's formative years. From that point on, the Psychology Department for civilians and military personnel with visual impairments was opened. The department's outreach and OPD programming were initially designed with people with vision impairments in mind. The unit's main research interests were the management of newly blinded individuals' emotional crises, which aimed to provide adjustment training by beginning psychological therapy, acquiring daily living skills, orientation and mobility training, as well as vocational training and placement. The Department's present organisational design is founded on the goal of treating a broad spectrum of psychiatric problems in both the general population and people with disabilities. The Department has a fully operational, cutting-edge psychology laboratory where considerable, top-notch research is routinely carried out. The Department developed, adapted, and standardized a variety of psychological tests and instruments for adults and children with visual impairment. These tests are widely used for academic, research, and diagnostic purposes across the nation.

The Department for Clinical Psychological and Rehabilitation Services is a resource for the CBSE, KVS, and other academic boards, colleges, universities, Government Doon Medical College and Hospital, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Coronation Hospital, women and child welfare departments, police, courts, and state administration. Additionally, almost in every district of the state Department hosts assessment and certification camps for people with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, mental illnesses, and other mental disabilities. As the first institution in Uttarakhand to offer RCI-approved courses in clinical and rehabilitative psychology, the department is in charge of human resource development. This is the only college in the country to offer these many courses in clinical psychology and rehabilitation. The department provides a five-year M.Sc. in Applied Psychology as well as an M.Phil. in Clinical Psychology, an M.Phil. in Rehabilitation Psychology, a Post Graduate Diploma in Rehabilitation Psychology (PGDRP), and other graduate degrees.

Technology Application & Research

One of the primary objectives of the Institute is to conduct, co-ordinate with different organizations to research into various dimensions of education, rehabilitation and empowerment of the persons with visually impairment. The Institute worked on many small and large research projects over last 3 decades. The Institute's research activities have not only sparked discussion on a number of policy issues vital to the integration of people with visual impairments into society at large, but they have also made a sizable contribution to the development and implementation of a number of developmental programmes and schemes. 15 unique devices have been invented and developed as part of R&D programmes, giving visually impaired people more flexibility to participate in a variety of activities. The current projects can be categorised conceptually into four primary groups: education, employment, rehabilitation, and instruments for assessment and independent living. The Institute has established itself as a leading organisation in the field of Braille development during the past year. The R&D initiatives of this Unit are recognised far and wide.

Central Braille Press (CBP)

The Institute has established its own printing facility for Braille books. It includes the Central Braille Press, which was founded in 1951, the Regional Braille Press, which was founded in 2008 in Chennai, three Small Scale Printing Units, which were founded in 2009–10 in Shillong, Aizawl, and Agartala, and a fourth Small Scale Braille Printing Unit, which was founded in 2013 in Guwahati, Assam. The combined efforts of these Braille Presses have resulted in the publication of Braille literature in the following 14 languages:

1. Assamese 2. Bangla 3. English 4. Garo 5. Hindi 6. Kannad 7. Khasi 8. Lusai 9. Nagamese 10. Punjabi 11. Sanskrit 12. Tamil 13. Telugu 14. Urdu

Large Print Unit

On March 31, 2012, the Institute opened the first substantial Print Press in the nation. Children with low vision in the States of Uttarakhand, Haryana, the Union Territory of Chandigarh, and Delhi can purchase school textbooks from this unique Press in large print typefaces. According to information from the NIEPVD annual report for 2021, this unit had created 29,549 large print volumes while serving 22,527 people and organizations.

Summary of facilities and initiatives by National Institute of Empowerment of Persons with Visual Disabilities

- School education
- Adult training
- Teacher training
- Hostel for boys and girls
- Publication of Braille material
- Publication of large print material
- Early intervention centre
- Braille press scheme
- UDID Help desk
- NBER
- NHFDC

- ADIP SCHEME

2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

According to Creswell (2005), a review of the literature “is a written summary of journal articles, books and other documents that describes the past and current state of information, organizes the literature into topics and documents a need for a proposed study.”

1. **(Maity, 2022)** Social security concerns for visually challenged persons a study of selected districts of West Bengal. Have researched about the issues of social security for the visually challenged persons and understand the basic economic needs and requirement along with proper health care services for the visually challenged persons.
2. **(NIEPVD) Annual report of NIEPVD 2020-21** The annual report of National Institute for the Empowerment of Person with Visual Disabilities (NIEPVD) helped in collecting information about institute. To know more about the work of NIEPVD and to signify the importance of NIEPVD in strengthen the life of persons with visual disabilities.
3. **(SAHOO, 2021)** Visually Impaired students in Higher Education Institutions A Sociological Study in the Cities of Hyderabad. The researcher attempted to provide a clear picture of the current real reality, demonstrating the gap between expectations and outcomes, with a focus on Visually Impaired students (VISs) in higher education institutions. The researcher attempted to investigate the social and academic challenges of students with visual impairments in different higher education institutions, with a focus on their socio-cultural and economic backgrounds.
4. **(Devi, 2019)** have studied the Roles and Responsibility of the National Institute for the Empowerment of Person with Visual Disabilities in India. To understand the significance role of NIEPVD in India and to explore the principle functions and responsibility of NIEPVD in India.
5. **(<http://nivh.gov.in/index.php/about-us>)** <http://nivh.gov.in/index.php/about-us> The official website has stated about different department and their functions which made their contribution in uplifting the persons with visual disabilities. □□ To explore the principle functions and responsibility of NIEPVD and to understand about the role of NIEPVD.
6. **(Gupta, 2018)** The study tried to find out the various barriers encountered by the SWDs in higher education institutions. The study was descriptive and exploratory in nature. The study attempted to find out the current status of equitable participation of SWDs in higher education, problems faced by SWDs, teachers’ awareness, teaching methods and teachers perception about Students with Disabilities in higher education, measures taken by the higher education institutions administrators.
7. **(PALAN, 2017)** Disabled Students In Higher Education. He had researched Understanding, particularly via the social model and social relational viewpoint, how impaired students experience various phases of higher education, from course selection to ambitions and fears about their future when the course is over. To comprehend the difficulties faced by disabled students in various academic and non-academic areas, the support available to them from teachers and higher education institutions, the coping strategies that they employed in the absence of necessary support, and the nature of support that they expected from teachers and higher education institutions.
8. **(Pawar, 2016)** The study has been conducted to address the gap of the vocational rehabilitation facilities available and needed. Survey was conducted with 408 respondents. The research was focused on to record people’s demographic distribution, type of jobs which can be taken up for vocational training to make persons with disabilities independent and motivate them to get employed, identify those factors which will influence PWDs to go for work after training themselves and be independent and live a happier life.
9. **(T, 2010)** Role of voluntary organisations in the welfare of physically handicapped persons in Salem district. To describe the profile of Salem District and the volunteer organizations involved in the care of the physically and mentally disabled in Salem District. To examine the role of volunteer organizations in the welfare of the physically and mentally challenged through Centrally Sponsored Schemes in Salem District. To examine the role of volunteer groups in the welfare of the physically and mentally challenged through State Sponsored Schemes in Salem District. To investigate the inmates' perceptions of the different welfare amenities provided by the Central and State Governments through volunteer organizations in Salem District.
10. **Pandey; R.K “ (PANDEY & R.K, 2010) Pandey; R.K “A Comparative Study of Adjustment of Visually impaired and Sighted Adolescence** Unpublished M.Ed.(Spl.VI) Dissertation Faculty of Education Banaras Hindu University Varanasi. Investigator investigated to evaluate how differently visually impaired children adjusted in integrated and special settings. to contrast visually impaired pupils' personal space adjustments in integrated and unique setups.
11. **Gowda and Shivalingaiah (2009)** conducted a study about the attitude of research scholars towards usage of electronic information resources in University Libraries in Karnataka. The study relates to examine the preference of research scholars towards print and electronic resources and effectiveness of the usage of e-resources among users. The result shows that 58.12% respondents indicated their preference towards print resources over electronic resources. The 38 preferences of users depend upon the nature of resources available in libraries, while usage of electronic resources depends upon the type of IT infrastructure available in libraries.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 METHOD

In the present **study descriptive – cum research method** is used by the researcher. This method is essentially a fact-finding approach related to the present and abstracting generalizations by the cross-sectional study of the current situation.

3.2 PARTICIPANTS

The participants were comprises of 70 students studying in the departments of higher education in NIEPVD. Out of which 40 were from department of special education and research, 27 from training centre for adult blind and 3 from department of clinical research and psychology rehabilitation.

4. FINDINGS :

- Students with visual disabilities are also enrolled in M.Phil. course.
- Low number of students with visual disabilities in Department of clinical Rehabilitation and psychological research (DCRPR).
- The students with visual disability get exempted of fee for having UDID card.
- Maximum student with Visual Disabilities of NIEPVD gets benefited by braille books, audio books and large print books. But still DCRPR student with Visual Disabilities have less availability of such study material.
- NIEPVD learning environment is appropriate for student with Visual Disabilities. They feel comfortable in NIEPVD.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS :

National Institutes and organizations play vital roles in addressing various aspects of disability, including education, rehabilitation, vocational training, research, and advocacy in India. They contribute significantly to the empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities across the country. NIEPVD contributes in enhancing the educational opportunities for students with visual disabilities. NIEPVD promotes inclusive education and vocational activities for students. The present study tried to find out the various barriers encountered by the SWDs in higher education institutions. The present study was descriptive and exploratory in nature. In the present study, population constituted all the Students with Disabilities who are getting higher education in different departments of NIEPVD Investigator have taken the sample of 70 students from 3 departments of higher education. A self-made questionnaire tool was prepared by investigator to took details about institute by interviewing the students with visual disabilities. A percentage method was applied for analysis of data. The data revealed that NIEPVD is ensuring the quality education, accessibility, vocational skills, and empowering the students with visual disabilities.

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