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પ્રતિ,

1. યુનિવર્સિટીના ભવનોના ડાયરેક્ટરશ્રીઓ...
2. યુનિવર્સિટીના વિભાગોના વડાશ્રીઓ...
3. યુનિવર્સિટીના વહીવટી વિભાગોના વડાશ્રીઓ...
4. યુનિવર્સિટી સંલગ્ન કોલેજોના આચાર્યશ્રીઓ...
5. યુનિવર્સિટી સંલગ્ન માન્ય સંસ્થાઓનાં વડાશ્રીઓ...
6. યુનિવર્સિટી સંલગ્ન માન્ય અનુસ્નાતક કેન્દ્રોના વડાશ્રીઓ...

વિષય : “THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2016” અને
“Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for Higher Education
Institutions and Universities” ના સમયમર્યાદામાં ચુસ્ત અમલીકરણ બાબત.
સંદર્ભ : UGC, New Delhiનો ઈ-મેલ, તા. 30/06/2023

શ્રીમાન,

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બિડાણ : ઉપર મુજબ

THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2016

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THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2016

ACT NO. 49 OF 2016

[27th December, 2016]

An Act to give effect to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

WHEREAS the United Nations General Assembly adopted its Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on the 13th day of December, 2006.

AND WHEREAS the aforesaid Convention lays down the following principles for empowerment of persons with disabilities,—

- (a) respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- (b) non-discrimination;
- (c) full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- (d) respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- (e) equality of opportunity;
- (f) accessibility;
- (g) equality between men and women;
- (h) respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities;

AND WHEREAS India is a signatory to the said Convention;

AND WHEREAS India ratified the said Convention on the 1st day of October, 2007;

AND WHEREAS it is considered necessary to implement the Convention aforesaid.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Sixty-seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. Short title and commencement.—(1) This Act may be called the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

(2) It shall come into force on such ¹date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint.

2. Definitions.—In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) “appellate authority” means an authority notified under sub-section (3) of section 14 or sub-section (1) of section 53 or designated under sub-section (1) of section 59, as the case may be;

(b) “appropriate Government” means,—

(i) in relation to the Central Government or any establishment wholly or substantially financed by that Government, or a Cantonment Board constituted under the Cantonments Act, 2006 (41 of 2006), the Central Government;

(ii) in relation to a State Government or any establishment, wholly or substantially financed by that Government, or any local authority, other than a Cantonment Board, the State Government.

(c) “barrier” means any factor including communicational, cultural, economic, environmental, institutional, political, social, attitudinal or structural factors which hampers the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society;

1. 19th April, 2017, *vide* notification no. S.O. 1215 (E) dated 19th April, 2017, *see* Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3 (ii).

(d) “care-giver” means any person including parents and other family Members who with or without payment provides care, support or assistance to a person with disability;

(e) “certifying authority” means an authority designated under sub-section (1) of section 57;

(f) “communication” includes means and formats of communication, languages, display of text, Braille, tactile communication, signs, large print, accessible multimedia, written, audio, video, visual displays, sign language, plain-language, human-reader, augmentative and alternative modes and accessible information and communication technology;

(g) “competent authority” means an authority appointed under section 49;

(h) “discrimination” in relation to disability, means any distinction, exclusion, restriction on the basis of disability which is the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field and includes all forms of discrimination and denial of reasonable accommodation;

(i) “establishment” includes a Government establishment and private establishment;

(j) “Fund” means the National Fund constituted under section 86;

(k) “Government establishment” means a corporation established by or under a Central Act or State Act or an authority or a body owned or controlled or aided by the Government or a local authority or a Government company as defined in section 2 of the Companies Act, 2013 (18 of 2013) and includes a Department of the Government;

(l) “high support” means an intensive support, physical, psychological and otherwise, which may be required by a person with benchmark disability for daily activities, to take independent and informed decision to access facilities and participating in all areas of life including education, employment, family and community life and treatment and therapy;

(m) “inclusive education” means a system of education wherein students with and without disability learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities;

(n) “information and communication technology” includes all services and innovations relating to information and communication, including telecom services, web based services, electronic and print services, digital and virtual services;

(o) “institution” means an institution for the reception, care, protection, education, training, rehabilitation and any other activities for persons with disabilities;

(p) “local authority” means a Municipality or a Panchayat, as defined in clause (e) and clause (f) of article 243P of the Constitution; a Cantonment Board constituted under the Cantonments Act, 2006 (41 of 2006); and any other authority established under an Act of Parliament or a State Legislature to administer the civic affairs;

(q) “notification” means a notification published in the Official Gazette and the expression “notify” or “notified” shall be construed accordingly;

(r) “person with benchmark disability” means a person with not less than forty per cent. of a specified disability where specified disability has not been defined in measurable terms and includes a person with disability where specified disability has been defined in measurable terms, as certified by the certifying authority;

(s) “person with disability” means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others;

(t) “person with disability having high support needs” means a person with benchmark disability certified under clause (a) of sub-section (2) of section 58 who needs high support;

(u) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(v) “private establishment” means a company, firm, cooperative or other society, associations, trust, agency, institution, organisation, union, factory or such other establishment as the appropriate Government may, by notification, specify;

(w) “public building” means a Government or private building, used or accessed by the public at large, including a building used for educational or vocational purposes, workplace, commercial activities, public utilities, religious, cultural, leisure or recreational activities, medical or health services, law enforcement agencies, reformatories or judicial foras, railway stations or platforms, roadways bus stands or terminus, airports or waterways;

(x) “public facilities and services” includes all forms of delivery of services to the public at large, including housing, educational and vocational trainings, employment and career advancement, shopping or marketing, religious, cultural, leisure or recreational, medical, health and rehabilitation, banking, finance and insurance, communication, postal and information, access to justice, public utilities, transportation;

(y) “reasonable accommodation” means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments, without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise of rights equally with others;

(z) “registered organisation” means an association of persons with disabilities or a disabled person organisation, association of parents of persons with disabilities, association of persons with disabilities and family members, or a voluntary or non-governmental or charitable organisation or trust, society, or non-profit company working for the welfare of the persons with disabilities, duly registered under an Act of Parliament or a State Legislature;

(za) “rehabilitation” refers to a process aimed at enabling persons with disabilities to attain and maintain optimal, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychological environmental or social function levels;

(zb) “Special Employment Exchange” means any office or place established and maintained by the Government for the collection and furnishing of information, either by keeping of registers or otherwise, regarding—

(i) persons who seek to engage employees from amongst the persons with disabilities;

(ii) persons with benchmark disability who seek employment;

(iii) vacancies to which persons with benchmark disabilities seeking employment may be appointed;

(zc) “specified disability” means the disabilities as specified in the Schedule;

(zd) “transportation systems” includes road transport, rail transport, air transport, water transport, para transit systems for the last mile connectivity, road and street infrastructure, etc;

(ze) “universal design” means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design and shall apply to assistive devices including advanced technologies for particular group of persons with disabilities.

CHAPTER II

RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS

3. Equality and non-discrimination.—(1) The appropriate Government shall ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy the right to equality, life with dignity and respect for his or her integrity equally with others.

(2) The appropriate Government shall take steps to utilise the capacity of persons with disabilities by providing appropriate environment.

(3) No person with disability shall be discriminated on the ground of disability, unless it is shown that the impugned act or omission is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

(4) No person shall be deprived of his or her personal liberty only on the ground of disability.

(5) The appropriate Government shall take necessary steps to ensure reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.

4. Women and children with disabilities.—(1) The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take measures to ensure that the women and children with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others.

(2) The appropriate Government and local authorities shall ensure that all children with disabilities shall have right on an equal basis to freely express their views on all matters affecting them and provide them appropriate support keeping in view their age and disability.”.

5. Community life.—(1) The persons with disabilities shall have the right to live in the community.

(2) The appropriate Government shall endeavour that the persons with disabilities are,—

(a) not obliged to live in any particular living arrangement; and

(b) given access to a range of in-house, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living with due regard to age and gender.

6. Protection from cruelty and inhuman treatment.—(1) The appropriate Government shall take measures to protect persons with disabilities from being subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

(2) No person with disability shall be a subject of any research without,—

(i) his or her free and informed consent obtained through accessible modes, means and formats of communication; and

(ii) prior permission of a Committee for Research on Disability constituted in the prescribed manner for the purpose by the appropriate Government in which not less than half of the Members shall themselves be either persons with disabilities or Members of the registered organisation as defined under clause (z) of section 2.

7. Protection from abuse, violence and exploitation.—(1) The appropriate Government shall take measures to protect persons with disabilities from all forms of abuse, violence and exploitation and to prevent the same, shall—

(a) take cognizance of incidents of abuse, violence and exploitation and provide legal remedies available against such incidents;

(b) take steps for avoiding such incidents and prescribe the procedure for its reporting;

(c) take steps to rescue, protect and rehabilitate victims of such incidents; and

(d) create awareness and make available information among the public.

(2) Any person or registered organisation who or which has reason to believe that an act of abuse, violence or exploitation has been, or is being, or is likely to be committed against any person with disability, may give information about it to the Executive Magistrate within the local limits of whose jurisdiction such incidents occur.

(3) The Executive Magistrate on receipt of such information, shall take immediate steps to stop or prevent its occurrence, as the case may be, or pass such order as he deems fit for the protection of such person with disability including an order—

(a) to rescue the victim of such act, authorising the police or any organisation working for persons with disabilities to provide for the safe custody or rehabilitation of such person, or both, as the case may be;

(b) for providing protective custody to the person with disability, if such person so desires;

(c) to provide maintenance to such person with disability.

(4) Any police officer who receives a complaint or otherwise comes to know of abuse, violence or exploitation towards any person with disability shall inform the aggrieved person of—

(a) his or her right to apply for protection under sub-section (2) and the particulars of the Executive Magistrate having jurisdiction to provide assistance;

(b) the particulars of the nearest organisation or institution working for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities;

(c) the right to free legal aid; and

(d) the right to file a complaint under the provisions of this Act or any other law dealing with such offence:

Provided that nothing in this section shall be construed in any manner as to relieve the police officer from his duty to proceed in accordance with law upon receipt of information as to the commission of a cognizable offence.

(5) If the Executive Magistrate finds that the alleged act or behaviour constitutes an offence under the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), or under any other law for the time being in force, he may forward the complaint to that effect to the Judicial or Metropolitan Magistrate, as the case may be, having jurisdiction in the matter.

8. Protection and safety.—(1) The persons with disabilities shall have equal protection and safety in situations of risk, armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters.

(2) The National Disaster Management Authority and the State Disaster Management Authority shall take appropriate measures to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities in its disaster management activities as defined under clause (e) of section 2 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (53 of 2005) for the safety and protection of persons with disabilities.

(3) The District Disaster Management Authority constituted under section 25 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 (53 of 2005) shall maintain record of details of persons with disabilities in the district and take suitable measures to inform such persons of any situations of risk so as to enhance disaster preparedness.

(4) The authorities engaged in reconstruction activities subsequent to any situation of risk, armed conflict or natural disasters shall undertake such activities, in consultation with the concerned State Commissioner, in accordance with the accessibility requirements of persons with disabilities.

9. Home and family.—(1) No child with disability shall be separated from his or her parents on the ground of disability except on an order of competent court, if required, in the best interest of the child.

(2) Where the parents are unable to take care of a child with disability, the competent court shall place such child with his or her near relations, and failing that within the community in a family setting or in exceptional cases in shelter home run by the appropriate Government or non-governmental organisation, as may be required.

10. Reproductive rights.—(1) The appropriate Government shall ensure that persons with disabilities have access to appropriate information regarding reproductive and family planning.

(2) No person with disability shall be subject to any medical procedure which leads to infertility without his or her free and informed consent.

11. Accessibility in voting.—The Election Commission of India and the State Election Commissions shall ensure that all polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities and all materials related to the electoral process are easily understandable by and accessible to them.

12. Access to justice.—(1) The appropriate Government shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise the right to access any court, tribunal, authority, commission or any other body having judicial or quasi-judicial or investigative powers without discrimination on the basis of disability.

(2) The appropriate Government shall take steps to put in place suitable support measures for persons with disabilities specially those living outside family and those disabled requiring high support for exercising legal rights.

(3) The National Legal Services Authority and the State Legal Services Authorities constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 (39 of 1987) shall make provisions including reasonable accommodation to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to any scheme, programme, facility or service offered by them equally with others.

(4) The appropriate Government shall take steps to—

(a) ensure that all their public documents are in accessible formats;

(b) ensure that the filing departments, registry or any other office of records are supplied with necessary equipment to enable filing, storing and referring to the documents and evidence in accessible formats; and

(c) make available all necessary facilities and equipment to facilitate recording of testimonies, arguments or opinion given by persons with disabilities in their preferred language and means of communication.

13. Legal capacity.—(1) The appropriate Government shall ensure that the persons with disabilities have right, equally with others, to own or inherit property, movable or immovable, control their financial affairs and have access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit.

(2) The appropriate Government shall ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life and have the right to equal recognition everywhere as any other person before the law.

(3) When a conflict of interest arises between a person providing support and a person with disability in a particular financial, property or other economic transaction, then such supporting person shall abstain from providing support to the person with disability in that transaction:

Provided that there shall not be a presumption of conflict of interest just on the basis that the supporting person is related to the person with disability by blood, affinity or adoption.

(4) A person with disability may alter, modify or dismantle any support arrangement and seek the support of another:

Provided that such alteration, modification or dismantling shall be prospective in nature and shall not nullify any third party transaction entered into by the person with disability with the aforesaid support arrangement.

(5) Any person providing support to the person with disability shall not exercise undue influence and shall respect his or her autonomy, dignity and privacy.

14. Provision for guardianship.—(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, on and from the date of commencement of this Act, where a district court or any designated authority, as notified by the State Government, finds that a person with disability, who had been provided adequate and appropriate support but is unable to take legally binding decisions, may be provided further support of a limited guardian to take legally binding decisions on his behalf in consultation with such person, in such manner, as may be prescribed by the State Government:

Provided that the District Court or the designated authority, as the case may be, may grant total support to the person with disability requiring such support or where the limited guardianship is to be granted repeatedly, in which case, the decision regarding the support to be provided shall be reviewed by the Court or the designated authority, as the case may be, to determine the nature and manner of support to be provided.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this sub-section, “limited guardianship” means a system of joint decision which operates on mutual understanding and trust between the guardian and the person with disability, which shall be limited to a specific period and for specific decision and situation and shall operate in accordance to the will of the person with disability.

(2) On and from the date of commencement of this Act, every guardian appointed under any provision of any other law for the time being in force, for a person with disability shall be deemed to function as a limited guardian.

(3) Any person with disability aggrieved by the decision of the designated authority appointing a legal guardian may prefer an appeal to such appellate authority, as may be notified by the State Government for the purpose.

15. Designation of authorities to support.—(1) The appropriate Government shall designate one or more authorities to mobilise the community and create social awareness to support persons with disabilities in exercise of their legal capacity.

(2) The authority designated under sub-section (1) shall take measures for setting up suitable support arrangements to exercise legal capacity by persons with disabilities living in institutions and those with high support needs and any other measures as may be required.

CHAPTER III EDUCATION

16. Duty of educational institutions.—The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall endeavour that all educational institutions funded or recognised by them provide inclusive education to the children with disabilities and towards that end shall—

- (i) admit them without discrimination and provide education and opportunities for sports and recreation activities equally with others;
- (ii) make building, campus and various facilities accessible;
- (iii) provide reasonable accommodation according to the individual's requirements;
- (iv) provide necessary support individualised or otherwise in environments that maximise academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion;
- (v) ensure that the education to persons who are blind or deaf or both is imparted in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication;
- (vi) detect specific learning disabilities in children at the earliest and take suitable pedagogical and other measures to overcome them;
- (vii) monitor participation, progress in terms of attainment levels and completion of education in respect of every student with disability;
- (viii) provide transportation facilities to the children with disabilities and also the attendant of the children with disabilities having high support needs.

17. Specific measures to promote and facilitate inclusive education.—The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take the following measures for the purpose of section 16, namely:—

- (a) to conduct survey of school going children in every five years for identifying children with disabilities, ascertaining their special needs and the extent to which these are being met:
Provided that the first survey shall be conducted within a period of two years from the date of commencement of this Act;
- (b) to establish adequate number of teacher training institutions;
- (c) to train and employ teachers, including teachers with disability who are qualified in sign language and Braille and also teachers who are trained in teaching children with intellectual disability;
- (d) to train professionals and staff to support inclusive education at all levels of school education;
- (e) to establish adequate number of resource centres to support educational institutions at all levels of school education;
- (f) to promote the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes including means and formats of communication, Braille and sign language to supplement the use of one's own speech to

fulfil the daily communication needs of persons with speech, communication or language disabilities and enables them to participate and contribute to their community and society;

(g) to provide books, other learning materials and appropriate assistive devices to students with benchmark disabilities free of cost up to the age of eighteen years;

(h) to provide scholarships in appropriate cases to students with benchmark disability;

(i) to make suitable modifications in the curriculum and examination system to meet the needs of students with disabilities such as extra time for completion of examination paper, facility of scribe or amanuensis, exemption from second and third language courses;

(j) to promote research to improve learning; and

(k) any other measures, as may be required.

18. Adult education.—The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take measures to promote, protect and ensure participation of persons with disabilities in adult education and continuing education programmes equally with others.

CHAPTER IV

SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

19. Vocational training and self-employment.—(1) The appropriate Government shall formulate schemes and programmes including provision of loans at concessional rates to facilitate and support employment of persons with disabilities especially for their vocational training and self-employment.

(2) The schemes and programmes referred to in sub-section (1) shall provide for—

(a) inclusion of person with disability in all mainstream formal and non-formal vocational and skill training schemes and programmes;

(b) to ensure that a person with disability has adequate support and facilities to avail specific training;

(c) exclusive skill training programmes for persons with disabilities with active links with the market, for those with developmental, intellectual, multiple disabilities and autism;

(d) loans at concessional rates including that of microcredit;

(e) marketing the products made by persons with disabilities; and

(f) maintenance of disaggregated data on the progress made in the skill training and self-employment, including persons with disabilities.

20. Non-discrimination in employment.—(1) No Government establishment shall discriminate against any person with disability in any matter relating to employment:

Provided that the appropriate Government may, having regard to the type of work carried on in any establishment, by notification and subject to such conditions, if any, exempt any establishment from the provisions of this section.

(2) Every Government establishment shall provide reasonable accommodation and appropriate barrier free and conducive environment to employees with disability.

(3) No promotion shall be denied to a person merely on the ground of disability.

(4) No Government establishment shall dispense with or reduce in rank, an employee who acquires a disability during his or her service:

Provided that, if an employee after acquiring disability is not suitable for the post he was holding, shall be shifted to some other post with the same pay scale and service benefits:

Provided further that if it is not possible to adjust the employee against any post, he may be kept on a supernumerary post until a suitable post is available or he attains the age of superannuation, whichever is earlier.

(5) The appropriate Government may frame policies for posting and transfer of employees with disabilities.

21. Equal opportunity policy.—(1) Every establishment shall notify equal opportunity policy detailing measures proposed to be taken by it in pursuance of the provisions of this Chapter in the manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

(2) Every establishment shall register a copy of the said policy with the Chief Commissioner or the State Commissioner, as the case may be.

22. Maintenance of records.—(1) Every establishment shall maintain records of the persons with disabilities in relation to the matter of employment, facilities provided and other necessary information in compliance with the provisions of this Chapter in such form and manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

(2) Every employment exchange shall maintain records of persons with disabilities seeking employment.

(3) The records maintained under sub-section (1) shall be open to inspection at all reasonable hours by such persons as may be authorised in their behalf by the appropriate Government.

23. Appointment of Grievance Redressal Officer.—(1) Every Government establishment shall appoint a Grievance Redressal Officer for the purpose of section 19 and shall inform the Chief Commissioner or the State Commissioner, as the case may be, about the appointment of such officer.

(2) Any person aggrieved with the non-compliance of the provisions of section 20, may file a complaint with the Grievance Redressal Officer, who shall investigate it and shall take up the matter with the establishment for corrective action.

(3) The Grievance Redressal Officer shall maintain a register of complaints in the manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government, and every complaint shall be inquired within two weeks of its registration.

(4) If the aggrieved person is not satisfied with the action taken on his or her complaint, he or she may approach the District-Level Committee on disability.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL SECURITY, HEALTH, REHABILITATION AND RECREATION

24. Social security.—(1) The appropriate Government shall within the limit of its economic capacity and development formulate necessary schemes and programmes to safeguard and promote the right of persons with disabilities for adequate standard of living to enable them to live independently or in the community:

Provided that the quantum of assistance to the persons with disabilities under such schemes and programmes shall be at least twenty-five per cent. higher than the similar schemes applicable to others.

(2) The appropriate Government while devising these schemes and programmes shall give due consideration to the diversity of disability, gender, age, and socio-economic status.

(3) The schemes under sub-section (1) shall provide for,—

(a) community centres with good living conditions in terms of safety, sanitation, health care and counselling;

(b) facilities for persons including children with disabilities who have no family or have been abandoned, or are without shelter or livelihood;

(c) support during natural or man-made disasters and in areas of conflict;

(d) support to women with disability for livelihood and for upbringing of their children;

(e) access to safe drinking water and appropriate and accessible sanitation facilities especially in urban slums and rural areas;

(f) provisions of aids and appliances, medicine and diagnostic services and corrective surgery free of cost to persons with disabilities with such income ceiling as may be notified;

(g) disability pension to persons with disabilities subject to such income ceiling as may be notified;

(h) unemployment allowance to persons with disabilities registered with Special Employment Exchange for more than two years and who could not be placed in any gainful occupation;

(i) care-giver allowance to persons with disabilities with high support needs;

(j) comprehensive insurance scheme for persons with disability, not covered under the Employees State Insurance Schemes, or any other statutory or Government-sponsored insurance schemes;

(k) any other matter which the appropriate Government may think fit.

25. Healthcare.—(1) The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take necessary measures for the persons with disabilities to provide,—

(a) free healthcare in the vicinity specially in rural area subject to such family income as may be notified;

(b) barrier-free access in all parts of Government and private hospitals and other healthcare institutions and centres;

(c) priority in attendance and treatment.

(2) The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take measures and make schemes or programmes to promote healthcare and prevent the occurrence of disabilities and for the said purpose shall—

(a) undertake or cause to be undertaken surveys, investigations and research concerning the cause of occurrence of disabilities;

(b) promote various methods for preventing disabilities;

(c) screen all the children at least once in a year for the purpose of identifying “at-risk” cases;

(d) provide facilities for training to the staff at the primary health centres;

(e) sponsor or cause to be sponsored awareness campaigns and disseminate or cause to be disseminated information for general hygiene, health and sanitation;

(f) take measures for pre-natal, perinatal and post-natal care of mother and child;

(g) educate the public through the pre-schools, schools, primary health centres, village level workers and *anganwadi* workers;

(h) create awareness amongst the masses through television, radio and other mass media on the causes of disabilities and the preventive measures to be adopted;

(i) healthcare during the time of natural disasters and other situations of risk;

(j) essential medical facilities for life saving emergency treatment and procedures; and

(k) sexual and reproductive healthcare especially for women with disability.

26. Insurance schemes.—The appropriate Government shall, by notification, make insurance schemes for their employees with disabilities.

27. Rehabilitation.—(1) The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall within their economic capacity and development, undertake or cause to be undertaken services and programmes of rehabilitation, particularly in the areas of health, education and employment for all persons with disabilities.

(2) For the purposes of sub-section (1), the appropriate Government and the local authorities may grant financial assistance to non-Governmental Organisations.

(3) The appropriate Government and the local authorities, while formulating rehabilitation policies shall consult the non-Governmental Organisations working for the cause of persons with disabilities.

28. Research and development.—The appropriate Government shall initiate or cause to be initiated research and development through individuals and institutions on issues which shall enhance habilitation and rehabilitation and on such other issues which are necessary for the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

29. Culture and recreation.—The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take measures to promote and protect the rights of all persons with disabilities to have a cultural life and to participate in recreational activities equally with others which include,—

(a) facilities, support and sponsorships to artists and writers with disability to pursue their interests and talents;

(b) establishment of a disability history museum which chronicles and interprets the historical experiences of persons with disabilities;

(c) making art accessible to persons with disabilities;

(d) promoting recreation centres, and other associational activities;

(e) facilitating participation in scouting, dancing, art classes, outdoor camps and adventure activities;

(f) redesigning courses in cultural and arts subjects to enable participation and access for persons with disabilities;

(g) developing technology, assistive devices and equipments to facilitate access and inclusion for persons with disabilities in recreational activities; and

(h) ensuring that persons with hearing impairment can have access to television programmes with sign language interpretation or sub-titles.

30. Sporting activities.—(1) The appropriate Government shall take measures to ensure effective participation in sporting activities of the persons with disabilities.

(2) The sports authorities shall accord due recognition to the right of persons with disabilities to participate in sports and shall make due provisions for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their schemes and programmes for the promotion and development of sporting talents.

(3) Without prejudice to the provisions contained in sub-sections (1) and (2), the appropriate Government and the sports authorities shall take measures to,—

(a) restructure courses and programmes to ensure access, inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in all sporting activities;

(b) redesign and support infrastructure facilities of all sporting activities for persons with disabilities;

(c) develop technology to enhance potential, talent, capacity and ability in sporting activities of all persons with disabilities;

(d) provide multi-sensory essentials and features in all sporting activities to ensure effective participation of all persons with disabilities;

(e) allocate funds for development of state of art sport facilities for training of persons with disabilities;

(f) promote and organise disability specific sporting events for persons with disabilities and also facilitate awards to the winners and other participants of such sporting events.

CHAPTER VI
SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR PERSONS WITH BENCHMARK DISABILITIES

31. Free education for children with benchmark disabilities.—(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (35 of 2009), every child with benchmark disability between the age of six to eighteen years shall have the right to free education in a neighbourhood school, or in a special school, of his choice.

(2) The appropriate Government and local authorities shall ensure that every child with benchmark disability has access to free education in an appropriate environment till he attains the age of eighteen years.

32. Reservation in higher educational institutions.—(1) All Government institutions of higher education and other higher education institutions receiving aid from the Government shall reserve not less than five per cent. seats for persons with benchmark disabilities.

(2) The persons with benchmark disabilities shall be given an upper age relaxation of five years for admission in institutions of higher education.

33. Identification of posts for reservation.—The appropriate Government shall—

(i) identify posts in the establishments which can be held by respective category of persons with benchmark disabilities in respect of the vacancies reserved in accordance with the provisions of section 34;

(ii) constitute an expert committee with representation of persons with benchmark disabilities for identification of such posts; and

(iii) undertake periodic review of the identified posts at an interval not exceeding three years.

34. Reservation.—(1) Every appropriate Government shall appoint in every Government establishment, not less than four per cent. of the total number of vacancies in the cadre strength in each group of posts meant to be filled with persons with benchmark disabilities of which, one per cent. each shall be reserved for persons with benchmark disabilities under clauses (a), (b) and (c) and one per cent. for persons with benchmark disabilities under clauses (d) and (e), namely:—

(a) blindness and low vision;

(b) deaf and hard of hearing;

(c) locomotor disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy;

(d) autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability and mental illness;

(e) multiple disabilities from amongst persons under clauses (a) to (d) including deaf-blindness in the posts identified for each disabilities:

Provided that the reservation in promotion shall be in accordance with such instructions as are issued by the appropriate Government from time to time:

Provided further that the appropriate Government, in consultation with the Chief Commissioner or the State Commissioner, as the case may be, may, having regard to the type of work carried out in any Government establishment, by notification and subject to such conditions, if any, as may be specified in such notifications exempt any Government establishment from the provisions of this section.

(2) Where in any recruitment year any vacancy cannot be filled up due to non-availability of a suitable person with benchmark disability or for any other sufficient reasons, such vacancy shall be carried forward in the succeeding recruitment year and if in the succeeding recruitment year also suitable person with benchmark disability is not available, it may first be filled by interchange among the five categories and only when there is no person with disability available for the post in that year, the employer shall fill up the vacancy by appointment of a person, other than a person with disability:

Provided that if the nature of vacancies in an establishment is such that a given category of person cannot be employed, the vacancies may be interchanged among the five categories with the prior approval of the appropriate Government.

(3) The appropriate Government may, by notification, provide for such relaxation of upper age limit for employment of persons with benchmark disability, as it thinks fit.

35. Incentives to employers in private sector.—The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall, within the limit of their economic capacity and development, provide incentives to employer in private sector to ensure that at least five per cent. of their work force is composed of persons with benchmark disability.

36. Special employment exchange.—The appropriate Government may, by notification, require that from such date, the employer in every establishment shall furnish such information or return as may be prescribed by the Central Government in relation to vacancies appointed for persons with benchmark disability that have occurred or are about to occur in that establishment to such special employment exchange as may be notified by the Central Government and the establishment shall thereupon comply with such requisition.

37. Special schemes and development programmes.—The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall, by notification, make schemes in favour of persons with benchmark disabilities, to provide,—

(a) five per cent. reservation in allotment of agricultural land and housing in all relevant schemes and development programmes, with appropriate priority to women with benchmark disabilities;

(b) five per cent. reservation in all poverty alleviation and various developmental schemes with priority to women with benchmark disabilities;

(c) five per cent. reservation in allotment of land on concessional rate, where such land is to be used for the purpose of promoting housing, shelter, setting up of occupation, business, enterprise, recreation centres and production centres.

CHAPTER VII

SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES WITH HIGH SUPPORT NEEDS

38. Special provisions for persons with disabilities with high support.—(1) Any person with benchmark disability, who considers himself to be in need of high support, or any person or organisation on his or her behalf, may apply to an authority, to be notified by the appropriate Government, requesting to provide high support.

(2) On receipt of an application under sub-section (1), the authority shall refer it to an Assessment Board consisting of such Members as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

(3) The Assessment Board shall assess the case referred to it under sub-section (1) in such manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government, and shall send a report to the authority certifying the need of high support and its nature.

(4) On receipt of a report under sub-section (3), the authority shall take steps to provide support in accordance with the report and subject to relevant schemes and orders of the appropriate Government in this behalf.

CHAPTER VIII

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENTS

39. Awareness campaigns.—(1) The appropriate Government, in consultation with the Chief Commissioner or the State Commissioner, as the case may be, shall conduct, encourage, support or promote awareness campaigns and sensitisation programmes to ensure that the rights of the persons with disabilities provided under this Act are protected.

(2) The programmes and campaigns specified under sub-section (1) shall also,—

(a) promote values of inclusion, tolerance, empathy and respect for diversity;

(b) advance recognition of the skills, merits and abilities of persons with disabilities and of their contributions to the workforce, labour market and professional fee;

(c) foster respect for the decisions made by persons with disabilities on all matters related to family life, relationships, bearing and raising children;

(d) provide orientation and sensitisation at the school, college, University and professional training level on the human condition of disability and the rights of persons with disabilities;

(e) provide orientation and sensitisation on disabling conditions and rights of persons with disabilities to employers, administrators and co-workers;

(f) ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are included in the curriculum in Universities, colleges and schools.

40. Accessibility.—The Central Government shall, in consultation with the Chief Commissioner, formulate rules for persons with disabilities laying down the standards of accessibility for the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, including appropriate technologies and systems, and other facilities and services provided to the public in urban and rural areas.

41. Access to transport.—(1) The appropriate Government shall take suitable measures to provide,—

(a) facilities for persons with disabilities at bus stops, railway stations and airports conforming to the accessibility standards relating to parking spaces, toilets, ticketing counters and ticketing machines;

(b) access to all modes of transport that conform the design standards, including retrofitting old modes of transport, wherever technically feasible and safe for persons with disabilities, economically viable and without entailing major structural changes in design;

(c) accessible roads to address mobility necessary for persons with disabilities.

(2) The appropriate Government shall develop schemes programmes to promote the personal mobility of persons with disabilities at affordable cost to provide for,—

(a) incentives and concessions;

(b) retrofitting of vehicles; and

(c) personal mobility assistance.

42. Access to information and communication technology.—The appropriate Government shall take measures to ensure that,—

(i) all contents available in audio, print and electronic media are in accessible format;

(ii) persons with disabilities have access to electronic media by providing audio description, sign language interpretation and close captioning;

(iii) electronic goods and equipment which are meant for every day use are available in universal design.

43. Consumer goods.—The appropriate Government shall take measures to promote development, production and distribution of universally designed consumer products and accessories for general use for persons with disabilities.

44. Mandatory observance of accessibility norms.—(1) No establishment shall be granted permission to build any structure if the building plan does not adhere to the rules formulated by the Central Government under section 40.

(2) No establishment shall be issued a certificate of completion or allowed to take occupation of a building unless it has adhered to the rules formulated by the Central Government.

45. Time limit for making existing infrastructure and premises accessible and action for that purpose.—(1) All existing public buildings shall be made accessible in accordance with the rules formulated by the Central Government within a period not exceeding five years from the date of notification of such rules:

Provided that the Central Government may grant extension of time to the States on a case to case basis for adherence to this provision depending on their state of preparedness and other related parameters.

(2) The appropriate Government and the local authorities shall formulate and publish an action plan based on prioritisation, for providing accessibility in all their buildings and spaces providing essential services such as all primary health centres, civil hospitals, schools, railway stations and bus stops.

46. Time limit for accessibility by service providers.—The service providers whether Government or private shall provide services in accordance with the rules on accessibility formulated by the Central Government under section 40 within a period of two years from the date of notification of such rules:

Provided that the Central Government in consultation with the Chief Commissioner may grant extension of time for providing certain category of services in accordance with the said rules.

47. Human resource development.—(1) Without prejudice to any function and power of Rehabilitation Council of India constituted under the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 (34 of 1992), the appropriate Government shall endeavour to develop human resource for the purposes of this Act and to that end shall,—

(a) mandate training on disability rights in all courses for the training of Panchayati Raj Members, legislators, administrators, police officials, judges and lawyers;

(b) induct disability as a component for all education courses for schools, colleges and University teachers, doctors, nurses, para-medical personnel, social welfare officers, rural development officers, ashra workers, *anganwadi* workers, engineers, architects, other professionals and community workers;

(c) initiate capacity building programmes including training in independent living and community relationships for families, members of community and other stakeholders and care providers on care giving and support;

(d) ensure independence training for persons with disabilities to build community relationships on mutual contribution and respect;

(e) conduct training programmes for sports teachers with focus on sports, games, adventure activities;

(f) any other capacity development measures as may be required.

(2) All Universities shall promote teaching and research in disability studies including establishment of study centres for such studies.

(3) In order to fulfil the obligation stated in sub-section (1), the appropriate Government shall in every five years undertake a need based analysis and formulate plans for the recruitment, induction, sensitisation, orientation and training of suitable personnel to undertake the various responsibilities under this Act.

48. Social audit.—The appropriate Government shall undertake social audit of all general schemes and programmes involving the persons with disabilities to ensure that the scheme and programmes do not have an adverse impact upon the persons with disabilities and need the requirements and concerns of persons with disabilities.

CHAPTER IX

REGISTRATION OF INSTITUTIONS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND GRANTS TO SUCH INSTITUTIONS

49. Competent authority.—The State Government shall appoint an authority as it deems fit to be a competent authority for the purposes of this Chapter.

50. Registration.—Save as otherwise provided under this Act, no person shall establish or maintain any institution for persons with disabilities except in accordance with a certificate of registration issued in this behalf by the competent authority:

Provided that an institution for care of mentally ill persons, which holds a valid licence under section 8 of the Mental Health Act, 1987 (14 of 1987) or any other Act for the time being in force, shall not be required to be registered under this Act.

51. Application and grant of certificate of registration.—(1) Every application for a certificate of registration shall be made to the competent authority in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government.

(2) On receipt of an application under sub-section (1), the competent authority shall make such enquiries as it may deem fit and on being satisfied that the applicant has complied with the requirements of this Act and the rules made thereunder, it shall grant a certificate of registration to the applicant within a period of ninety days of receipt of application and if not satisfied, the competent authority shall, by order, refuse to grant the certificate applied for:

Provided that before making any order refusing to grant a certificate, the competent authority shall give the applicant a reasonable opportunity of being heard and every order of refusal to grant a certificate shall be communicated to the applicant in writing.

(3) No certificate of registration shall be granted under sub-section (2) unless the institution with respect to which an application has been made is in a position to provide such facilities and meet such standards as may be prescribed by the State Government.

(4) The certificate of registration granted under sub-section (2),—

(a) shall, unless revoked under section 52 remain in force for such period as may be prescribed by the State Government;

(b) may be renewed from time to time for a like period; and

(c) shall be in such form and shall be subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the State Government.

(5) An application for renewal of a certificate of registration shall be made not less than sixty days before the expiry of the period of validity.

(6) A copy of the certificate of registration shall be displayed by the institution in a conspicuous place.

(7) Every application made under sub-section (1) or sub-section (5) shall be disposed of by the competent authority within such period as may be prescribed by the State Government.

52. Revocation of registration.—(1) The competent authority may, if it has reason to believe that the holder of a certificate of registration granted under sub-section (2) of section 51 has,—

(a) made a statement in relation to any application for the issue or renewal of the certificate which is incorrect or false in material particulars; or

(b) committed or has caused to be committed any breach of rules or any conditions subject to which the certificate was granted,

it may, after making such inquiry, as it deems fit, by order, revoke the certificate:

Provided that no such order shall be made until an opportunity is given to the holder of the certificate to show cause as to why the certificate of registration shall not be revoked.

(2) Where a certificate of registration in respect of an institution has been revoked under sub-section (1), such institution shall cease to function from the date of such revocation:

Provided that where an appeal lies under section 53 against the order of revocation, such institution shall cease to function,—

(a) where no appeal has been preferred immediately on the expiry of the period prescribed for the filing of such appeal; or

(b) where such appeal has been preferred, but the order of revocation has been upheld, from the date of the order of appeal.

(3) On the revocation of a certificate of registration in respect of an institution, the competent authority may direct that any person with disability who is an inmate of such institution on the date of such revocation, shall be—

(a) restored to the custody of his or her parent, spouse or lawful guardian, as the case may be; or

(b) transferred to any other institution specified by the competent authority.

(4) Every institution which holds a certificate of registration which is revoked under this section shall, immediately after such revocation, surrender such certificate to the competent authority.

53. Appeal.—(1) Any person aggrieved by the order of the competent authority refusing to grant a certificate of registration or revoking a certificate of registration may, within such period as may be prescribed by the State Government, prefer an appeal to such appellate authority, as may be notified by the State Government against such refusal or revocation.

(2) The order of the appellate authority on such appeal shall be final.

54. Act not to apply to institutions established or maintained by Central or State Government.—Nothing contained in this Chapter shall apply to an institution for persons with disabilities established or maintained by the Central Government or a State Government.

55. Assistance to registered institutions.—The appropriate Government may within the limits of their economic capacity and development, grant financial assistance to registered institutions to provide services and to implement the schemes and programmes in pursuance of the provisions of this Act.

CHAPTER X

CERTIFICATION OF SPECIFIED DISABILITIES

56. Guidelines for assessment of specified disabilities.—The Central Government shall notify guidelines for the purpose of assessing the extent of specified disability in a person.

57. Designation of certifying authorities.—(1) The appropriate Government shall designate persons, having requisite qualifications and experience, as certifying authorities, who shall be competent to issue the certificate of disability.

(2) The appropriate Government shall also notify the jurisdiction within which and the terms and conditions subject to which, the certifying authority shall perform its certification functions.

58. Procedure for certification.—(1) Any person with specified disability, may apply, in such manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government, to a certifying authority having jurisdiction, for issuing of a certificate of disability.

(2) On receipt of an application under sub-section (1), the certifying authority shall assess the disability of the concerned person in accordance with relevant guidelines notified under section 56, and shall, after such assessment, as the case may be,—

(a) issue a certificate of disability to such person, in such form as may be prescribed by the Central Government;

(b) inform him in writing that he has no specified disability.

(3) The certificate of disability issued under this section shall be valid across the country.

59. Appeal against a decision of certifying authority.—(1) Any person aggrieved with decision of the certifying authority, may appeal against such decision, within such time and in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government, to such appellate authority as the State Government may designate for the purpose.

(2) On receipt of an appeal, the appellate authority shall decide the appeal in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government.

CHAPTER XI

CENTRAL AND STATE ADVISORY BOARDS ON DISABILITY AND DISTRICT LEVEL COMMITTEE

60. Constitution of Central Advisory Board on Disability.—(1) The Central Government shall, by notification, constitute a body to be known as the Central Advisory Board on Disability to exercise the powers conferred on, and to perform the functions assigned to it, under this Act.

(2) The Central Advisory Board shall consist of,—

(a) the Minister in charge of Department of Disability Affairs in the Central Government, Chairperson, *ex officio*;

(b) the Minister of State in charge dealing with Department of Disability Affairs in the Ministry in the Central Government, Vice Chairperson, *ex officio*;

(c) three Members of Parliament, of whom two shall be elected by Lok Sabha and one by the Rajya Sabha, Members, *ex officio*;

(d) the Ministers in charge of Disability Affairs of all States and Administrators or Lieutenant Governors of the Union territories, Members, *ex officio*;

(e) Secretaries to the Government of India in charge of the Ministries or Departments of Disability Affairs, Social Justice and Empowerment, School Education and Literacy, and Higher Education, Women and Child Development, Expenditure, Personnel and Training, Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Health and Family Welfare, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Industrial Policy and Promotion, Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Science and Technology, Communications and Information Technology, Legal Affairs, Public Enterprises, Youth Affairs and Sports, Road Transport and Highways and Civil Aviation, Members, *ex officio*;

(f) Secretary, National Institute of Transforming India (NITI) Aayog, Member, *ex officio*;

(g) Chairperson, Rehabilitation Council of India, Member, *ex officio*;

(h) Chairperson, National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities, Member, *ex officio*;

(i) Chairman-cum-Managing Director, National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation, Member, *ex officio*;

(j) Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation, Member, *ex officio*;

(k) Chairman, Railway Board, Member, *ex officio*;

(l) Director-General, Employment and Training, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Member, *ex officio*;

(m) Director, National Council for Educational Research and Training, Member, *ex officio*;

(n) Chairperson, National Council of Teacher Education, Member, *ex officio*;

(o) Chairperson, University Grants Commission, Member, *ex officio*;

(p) Chairperson, Medical Council of India, Member, *ex officio*;

(q) Directors of the following Institutes:—

(i) National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun;

(ii) National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad;

(iii) Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Institute for the Physically Handicapped, New Delhi;

(iv) Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped, Mumbai;

(v) National Institute for the Orthopaedically Handicapped, Kolkata;

(vi) National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research, Cuttack;

(vii) National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities, Chennai;

(viii) National Institute for Mental Health and Sciences, Bangalore;

(ix) Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre, New Delhi, Members, *ex officio*;

(r) Members to be nominated by the Central Government,—

(i) five Members who are experts in the field of disability and rehabilitation;

(ii) ten Members, as far as practicable, being persons with disabilities, to represent non-Governmental Organisations concerned with disabilities or disabled persons organisations;

Provided that out of the ten Members nominated, at least, five Members shall be women and at least one person each shall be from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes;

(iii) up to three representatives of national level chambers of commerce and industry;

(s) Joint Secretary to the Government of India dealing with the subject of disability policy, Member-Secretary, *ex officio*.

61. Terms and conditions of Service of members.—(1) Save as otherwise provided under this Act, a Member of the Central Advisory Board nominated under clause (r) of sub-section (2) of section 60 shall hold office for a term of three years from the date of his nomination:

Provided that such a Member shall, notwithstanding the expiration of his term, continue to hold office until his successor enters upon his office.

(2) The Central Government may, if it thinks fit, remove any Member nominated under clause (r) of sub-section (2) of section 60, before the expiry of his term of office after giving him a reasonable opportunity of showing cause against the same.

(3) A Member nominated under clause (r) of sub-section (2) of section 60 may at any time resign his office by writing under his hand addressed to the Central Government and the seat of the said Member shall thereupon become vacant.

(4) A casual vacancy in the Central Advisory Board shall be filled by a fresh nomination and the person nominated to fill the vacancy shall hold office only for the remainder of the term for which the Member in whose place he was so nominated.

(5) A Member nominated under sub-clause (i) or sub-clause (iii) of clause (r) of sub-section (2) of section 60 shall be eligible for renomination.

(6) The Members nominated under sub-clause (i) and sub-clause (ii) of clause (r) of sub-section (2) of section 60 shall receive such allowances as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

62. Disqualifications.—(1) No person shall be a Member of the Central Advisory Board, who—

(a) is, or at any time has been, adjudged insolvent or has suspended payment of his debts or has compounded with his creditors, or

(b) is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court, or

(c) is, or has been, convicted of an offence which, in the opinion of the Central Government, involves moral turpitude, or

(d) is, or at any time has been, convicted of an offence under this Act, or

(e) has so abused his position in the opinion of the Central Government as a Member so as to render his continuance in the office prejudicial interests of the general public.

(2) No order of removal shall be made by the Central Government under this section unless the Member concerned has been given a reasonable opportunity of showing cause against the same.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1) or sub-section (5) of section 61, a Member who has been removed under this section shall not be eligible for renomination as a Member.

63. Vacation of seats by Members.—If a Member of the Central Advisory Board becomes subject to any of the disqualifications specified in section 62, his seat shall become vacant.

64. Meetings of the Central Advisory Board on disability.—The Central Advisory Board shall meet at least once in every six months and shall observe such rules of procedure in regard to the transaction of business at its meetings as may be prescribed.

65. Functions of Central Advisory Board on disability.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Central Advisory Board on disability shall be the national-level consultative and advisory body on disability matters, and shall facilitate the continuous evolution of a comprehensive policy for the empowerment of persons with disabilities and the full enjoyment of rights.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing provisions, the Central Advisory Board on disability shall perform the following functions, namely:—

(a) advise the Central Government and the State Governments on policies, programmes, legislation and projects with respect to disability;

(b) develop a national policy to address issues concerning persons with disabilities;

(c) review and coordinate the activities of all Departments of the Government and other Governmental and non-Governmental Organisations which are dealing with matters relating to persons with disabilities;

(d) take up the cause of persons with disabilities with the concerned authorities and the international organisations with a view to provide for schemes and projects for the persons with disabilities in the national plans;

(e) recommend steps to ensure accessibility, reasonable accommodation, non-discrimination for persons with disabilities *vis-a-vis* information, services and the built environment and their participation in social life;

(f) monitor and evaluate the impact of laws, policies and programmes to achieve full participation of persons with disabilities; and

(g) such other functions as may be assigned from time to time by the Central Government.

66. State Advisory Board on disability.—(1) Every State Government shall, by notification, constitute a body to be known as the State Advisory Board on disability to exercise the powers conferred on, and to perform the function assigned to it, under this Act.

(2) The State Advisory Board shall consist of—

(a) the Minister in charge of the Department in the State Government dealing with disability matters, Chairperson, *ex officio*;

(b) the Minister of State or the Deputy Minister in charge of the Department in the State Government dealing with disability matters, if any, Vice-Chairperson, *ex officio*;

(c) secretaries to the State Government in charge of the Departments of Disability Affairs, School Education, Literacy and Higher Education, Women and Child Development, Finance, Personnel and Training, Health and Family Welfare, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Industrial Policy and Promotion, Labour and Employment, Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Science and Technology, Information Technology, Public Enterprises, Youth Affairs and Sports, Road Transport and any other Department, which the State Government considers necessary, Members, *ex officio*;

(d) three Members of the State Legislature of whom two shall be elected by the Legislative Assembly and one by the Legislative Council, if any, and where there is no Legislative Council, three Members shall be elected by the Legislative Assembly, Members, *ex officio*;

(e) Members to be nominated by the State Government:—

(i) five Members who are experts in the field of disability and rehabilitation;

(ii) five Members to be nominated by the State Government by rotation to represent the districts in such manner as may be prescribed;

Provided that no nomination under this sub-clause shall be made except on the recommendation of the district administration concerned;

(iii) ten persons as far as practicable, being persons with disabilities, to represent non-Governmental Organisations or associations which are concerned with disabilities;

Provided that out of the ten persons nominated under this clause, at least, five shall be women and at least one person each shall be from the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes;

(iv) not more than three representatives of the State Chamber of Commerce and Industry;

(f) officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary in the Department dealing with disability matters in the State Government, Member-Secretary, *ex officio*.

67. Terms and conditions of service of Members.—(1) Save as otherwise provided under this Act, a Member of the State Advisory Board nominated under clause (e) of sub-section (2) of section 66, shall hold office for a term of three years from the date of his nomination:

Provided that such a Member shall, notwithstanding the expiration of his term, continue to hold office until his successor enters upon his office.

(2) The State Government may, if it thinks fit, remove any Member nominated under clause (e) of sub-section (2) of section 66, before the expiry of his term of office after giving him a reasonable opportunity of showing cause against the same.

(3) A Member nominated under clause (e) of sub-section (2) of section 66 may at any time resign his office by writing under his hand addressed to the State Government and the seat of the said Member shall thereupon become vacant.

(4) A casual vacancy in the State Advisory Board shall be filled by a fresh nomination and the person nominated to fill the vacancy shall hold office only for the remainder of the term for which the Member in whose place he was so nominated.

(5) A Member nominated under sub-clause (i) or sub-clause (iii) of clause (e) of sub-section (2) of section 66 shall be eligible for renomination.

(6) The Members nominated under sub-clause (i) and sub-clause (ii) of clause (e) of sub-section (2) of section 66 shall receive such allowances as may be prescribed by the State Government.

68. Disqualification.—(1) No person shall be a Member of the State Advisory Board, who—

(a) is, or at any time has been, adjudged insolvent or has suspended payment of his debts or has compounded with his creditors, or

(b) is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court, or

(c) is, or has been, convicted of an offence which, in the opinion of the State Government, involves moral turpitude, or

(d) is, or at any time has been, convicted of an offence under this Act, or

(e) has so abused in the opinion of the State Government his position as a Member as to render his continuance in the State Advisory Board detrimental to the interests of the general public.

(2) No order of removal shall be made by the State Government under this section unless the Member concerned has been given a reasonable opportunity of showing cause against the same.

(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1) or sub-section (5) of section 67, a Member who has been removed under this section shall not be eligible for renomination as a Member.

69. Vacation of seats.—If a Member of the State Advisory Board becomes subject to any of the disqualifications specified in section 68 his seat shall become vacant.

70. Meetings of State Advisory Board on disability.—The State Advisory Board shall meet at least once in every six months and shall observe such rules or procedure in regard to the transaction of business at its meetings as may be prescribed by the State Government.

71. Functions of State Advisory Board on disability.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the State Advisory Board shall be the State-level consultative and advisory body on disability matters, and shall facilitate the continuous evolution of a comprehensive policy for the empowerment of persons with disabilities and the full enjoyment of rights.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing provisions, the State Advisory Board on disability shall perform the following functions, namely:—

(a) advise the State Government on policies, programmes, legislation and projects with respect to disability;

(b) develop a State policy to address issues concerning persons with disabilities;

(c) review and coordinate the activities of all Departments of the State Government and other Governmental and non-Governmental Organisations in the State which are dealing with matters relating to persons with disabilities;

(d) take up the cause of persons with disabilities with the concerned authorities and the international organisations with a view to provide for schemes and projects for the persons with disabilities in the State plans;

(e) recommend steps to ensure accessibility, reasonable accommodation, non-discrimination for persons with disabilities, services and the built environment and their participation in social life on an equal basis with others;

(f) monitor and evaluate the impact of laws, policies and programmes designed to achieve full participation of persons with disabilities; and

(g) such other functions as may be assigned from time to time by the State Government.

72. District-level Committee on disability.—The State Government shall constitute District-level Committee on disability to perform such functions as may be prescribed by it.

73. Vacancies not to invalidate proceedings.—No act or proceeding of the Central Advisory Board on disability, a State Advisory Board on disability, or a District-level Committee on disability shall be called in question on the ground merely of the existence of any vacancy in or any defect in the constitution of such Board or Committee, as the case may be.

CHAPTER XII

CHIEF COMMISSIONER AND STATE COMMISSIONER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

74. Appointment of Chief Commissioner and Commissioners.—(1) The Central Government may, by notification, appoint a Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the “Chief Commissioner”) for the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Central Government may, by notification appoint two Commissioners to assist the Chief Commissioner, of which one Commissioner shall be a persons with disability.

(3) A person shall not be qualified for appointment as the Chief Commissioner or Commissioner unless he has special knowledge or practical experience in respect of matters relating to rehabilitation.

(4) The salary and allowances payable to and other terms and conditions of service (including pension, gratuity and other retirement benefits) of the Chief Commissioner and Commissioners shall be such as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

(5) The Central Government shall determine the nature and categories of officers and other employees required to assist the Chief Commissioner in the discharge of his functions and provide the Chief Commissioner with such officers and other employees as it thinks fit.

(6) The officers and employees provided to the Chief Commissioner shall discharge their functions under the general superintendence and control of the Chief Commissioner.

(7) The salaries and allowances and other conditions of service of officers and employees shall be such as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

(8) The Chief Commissioner shall be assisted by an advisory committee comprising of not more than eleven members drawn from the experts from different disabilities in such manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

75. Functions of Chief Commissioner.—(1) The Chief Commissioner shall—

(a) identify, *suo motu* or otherwise, the provisions of any law or policy, programme and procedures, which are inconsistent with this Act and recommend necessary corrective steps;

(b) inquire, *suo motu* or otherwise, deprivation of rights of persons with disabilities and safeguards available to them in respect of matters for which the Central Government is the appropriate Government and take up the matter with appropriate authorities for corrective action;

(c) review the safeguards provided by or under this Act or any other law for the time being in force for the protection of rights of persons with disabilities and recommend measures for their effective implementation;

(d) review the factors that inhibit the enjoyment of rights of persons with disabilities and recommend appropriate remedial measures;

(e) study treaties and other international instruments on the rights of persons with disabilities and make recommendations for their effective implementation;

(f) undertake and promote research in the field of the rights of persons with disabilities;

(g) promote awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and the safeguards available for their protection;

(h) monitor implementation of the provisions of this Act and schemes, programmes meant for persons with disabilities;

(i) monitor utilisation of funds disbursed by the Central Government for the benefit of persons with disabilities; and

(j) perform such other functions as the Central Government may assign.

(2) The Chief Commissioner shall consult the Commissioners on any matter while discharging its functions under this Act.

76. Action of appropriate authorities on recommendation of Chief Commissioner.—Whenever the Chief Commissioner makes a recommendation to an authority in pursuance of clause (b) ¹[of subsection (1)] of section 75, that authority shall take necessary action on it, and inform the Chief Commissioner of the action taken within three months from the date of receipt of the recommendation:

Provided that where an authority does not accept a recommendation, it shall convey reasons for non-acceptance to the Chief Commissioner within a period of three months, and shall also inform the aggrieved person.

77. Powers of Chief Commissioner.—(1) The Chief Commissioner shall, for the purpose of discharging his functions under this Act, have the same powers of a civil court as are vested in a court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (5 of 1908) while trying a suit, in respect of the following matters, namely:—

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of witnesses;

(b) requiring the discovery and production of any documents;

(c) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office;

(d) receiving evidence on affidavits; and

(e) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses or documents.

(2) Every proceeding before the Chief Commissioner shall be a judicial proceeding within the meaning of sections 193 and 228 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) and the Chief Commissioner shall be deemed to be a civil court for the purposes of section 195 and Chapter XXVI of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974).

1. Ins. by Act 4 of 2018, s. 3 and the second Schedule (w.e.f. 5-1-2018).

78. Annual and special reports by Chief Commissioner.—(1) The Chief Commissioner shall submit an annual report to the Central Government and may at any time submit special reports on any matter, which, in his opinion, is of such urgency or importance that it shall not be deferred till submission of the annual report.

(2) The Central Government shall cause the annual and the special reports of the Chief Commissioner to be laid before each House of Parliament, along with a memorandum of action taken or proposed to be taken on his recommendations and the reasons for non-acceptance the recommendations, if any.

(3) The annual and special reports shall be prepared in such form, manner and contain such details as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

79. Appointment of State Commissioner in States.—(1) The State Government may, by notification, appoint a State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as the “State Commissioner”) for the purposes of this Act.

(2) A person shall not be qualified for appointment as the State Commissioner unless he has special knowledge or practical experience in respect of matters relating to rehabilitation.

(3) The salary and allowances payable to and other terms and conditions of service (including pension, gratuity and other retirement benefits) of the State Commissioner shall be such as may be prescribed by the State Government.

(4) The State Government shall determine the nature and categories of officers and other employees required to assist the State Commissioner in the discharge of his functions and provide the State Commissioner with such officers and other employees as it thinks fit.

(5) The officers and employees provided to the State Commissioner shall discharge his functions under the general superintendence and control of the State Commissioner.

(6) The salaries and allowances and other conditions of service of officers and employees shall be such as may be prescribed by the State Government.

(7) The State Commissioner shall be assisted by an advisory committee comprising of not more than five members drawn from the experts in the disability sector in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government.

80. Functions of State Commissioner.—The State Commissioner shall—

(a) identify, *suo motu* or otherwise, provision of any law or policy, programme and procedures, which are in consistent with this Act, and recommend necessary corrective steps;

(b) inquire, *suo motu* or otherwise deprivation of rights of persons with disabilities and safeguards available to them in respect of matters for which the State Government is the appropriate Government and take up the matter with appropriate authorities for corrective action;

(c) review the safeguards provided by or under this Act or any other law for the time being in force for the protection of rights of persons with disabilities and recommend measures for their effective implementation;

(d) review the factors that inhibit the enjoyment of rights of persons with disabilities and recommend appropriate remedial measures;

(e) undertake and promote research in the field of the rights of persons with disabilities;

(f) promote awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities and the safeguards available for their protection;

(g) monitor implementation of the provisions of this Act and schemes, programmes meant for persons with disabilities;

(h) monitor utilisation of funds disbursed by the State Government for the benefits of persons with disabilities; and

(i) perform such other functions as the State Government may assign.

81. Action by appropriate authorities on recommendation of State Commissioner.—Whenever the State Commissioner makes a recommendation to an authority in pursuance of clause (b) of section 80, that authority shall take necessary action on it, and inform the State Commissioner of the action taken within three months from the date of receipt of the recommendation:

Provided that where an authority does not accept a recommendation, it shall convey reasons for non-acceptance to the State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities within the period of three months, and shall also inform the aggrieved person.

82. Powers of State Commissioner.—(1) The State Commissioner shall, for the purpose of discharging their functions under this Act, have the same powers of a civil court as are vested in a court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908 (5 of 1908) while trying a suit, in respect of the following matters, namely:—

- (a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of witnesses;
- (b) requiring the discovery and production of any documents;
- (c) requisitioning any public record or copy thereof from any court or office;
- (d) receiving evidence on affidavits; and
- (e) issuing commissions for the examination of witnesses or documents.

(2) Every proceeding before the State Commissioner shall be a judicial proceeding within the meaning of sections 193 and 228 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) and the State Commissioners shall be deemed to be a civil court for the purposes of section 195 and Chapter XXVI of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974).

83. Annual and special reports by State Commissioner.—(1) The State Commissioner shall submit an annual report to the State Government and may at any time submit special reports on any matter, which, in its opinion, is of such urgency or importance that it shall not be deferred till submission of the annual report.

(2) The State Government shall cause the annual and the special reports of the State Commissioner for persons with disabilities to be laid before each House of State Legislature where it consists of two Houses or where such Legislature consist of one House, before that House along with a memorandum of action taken or proposed to be taken on the recommendation of the State Commissioner and the reasons for non-acceptance the recommendations, if any.

(3) The annual and special reports shall be prepared in such form, manner and contain such details as may be prescribed by the State Government.

CHAPTER XIII SPECIAL COURT

84. Special Court.—For the purpose of providing speedy trial, the State Government shall, with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the High Court, by notification, specify for each district, a Court of Session to be a Special Court to try the offences under this Act.

85. Special Public Prosecutor.—(1) For every Special Court, the State Government may, by notification, specify a Public Prosecutor or appoint an advocate, who has been in practice as an advocate for not less than seven years, as a Special Public Prosecutor for the purpose of conducting cases in that Court.

(2) The Special Public Prosecutor appointed under sub-section (1) shall be entitled to receive such fees or remuneration as may be prescribed by the State Government.

CHAPTER XIV
NATIONAL FUND FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

86. National Fund for persons with disabilities.—(1) There shall be constituted a Fund to be called the National Fund for persons with disabilities and there shall be credited thereto—

(a) all sums available under the Fund for people with disabilities, constituted *vide* notification No. S.O. 573 (E), dated the 11th August, 1983 and the Trust Fund for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, constituted *vide* notification No. 30-03/2004-DDII, dated the 21st November, 2006, under the Charitable Endowment Act, 1890 (6 of 1890).

(b) all sums payable by banks, corporations, financial institutions in pursuance of judgment dated the 16th April, 2004 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Civil Appeal Nos. 4655 and 5218 of 2000;

(c) all sums received by way of grant, gifts, donations, benefactions, bequests or transfers;

(d) all sums received from the Central Government including grants-in-aid;

(e) all sums from such other sources as may be decided by the Central Government.

(2) The Fund for persons with disabilities shall be utilised and managed in such manner as may be prescribed.

87. Accounts and audit.—(1) The Central Government shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts of the Fund including the income and expenditure accounts in such form as may be prescribed in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

(2) The accounts of the Fund shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India at such intervals as may be specified by him and any expenditure incurred by him in connection with such audit shall be payable from the Fund to the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

(3) The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India and any other person appointed by him in connection with the audit of the accounts of the Fund shall have the same rights, privileges and authority in connection with such audit as the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India generally has in connection with the audit of the Government accounts, and in particular, shall have the right to demand production of books of account, connected vouchers and other documents and papers and to inspect any of the offices of the Fund.

(4) The accounts of the Fund as certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India or any other person appointed by him in this behalf, together with the audit report thereon, shall be laid before each House of Parliament by the Central Government.

CHAPTER XV
STATE FUND FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

88. State Fund for persons with disabilities.—(1) There shall be constituted a Fund to be called the State Fund for persons with disabilities by a State Government in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government.

(2) The State Fund for persons with disabilities shall be utilised and managed in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government.

(3) Every State Government shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records of the State Fund for persons with disabilities including the income and expenditure accounts in such form as may be prescribed by the State Government in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

(4) The accounts of the State Fund for persons with disabilities shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India at such intervals as may be specified by him and any expenditure incurred by him in connection with such audit shall be payable from the State Fund to the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.

(5) The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India and any person appointed by him in connection with the audit of the accounts of the State Fund for persons with disabilities shall have the same rights, privileges and authority in connection with such audit as the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India generally has in connection with the audit of the Government accounts, and in particular, shall have right to demand production of books of accounts, connected vouchers and other documents and papers and to inspect any of the offices of the State Fund.

(6) The accounts of the State Fund for persons with disabilities as certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India or any other person appointed by him in this behalf together with the audit report thereon shall be laid before each House of the State Legislature where it consists of two Houses or where such Legislature consists of one House before that House.

CHAPTER XVI

OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

89. Punishment for contravention of provisions of Act or rules or regulations made thereunder.—Any person who contravenes any of the provisions of this Act, or of any rule made thereunder shall for first contravention be punishable with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees and for any subsequent contravention with fine which shall not be less than fifty thousand rupees but which may extend to five lakh rupees.

90. Offences by companies.—(1) Where an offence under this Act has been committed by a company, every person who at the time the offence was committed, was in charge of, and was responsible to, the company for the conduct of the business of the company, as well as the company, shall be deemed to be guilty of the offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly:

Provided that nothing contained in this sub-section shall render any such person liable to any punishment provided in this Act, if he proves that the offence was committed without his knowledge or that he had exercised all due diligence to prevent the commission of such offence.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), where an offence under this Act has been committed by a company and it is proved that the offence has been committed with the consent or connivance of, or is attributable to any neglect on the part of any director, manager, secretary or other officer of the company, such director, manager, secretary or other officer shall also be deemed to be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this section,—

(a) “company” means any body corporate and includes a firm or other association of individuals; and

(b) “director”, in relation to a firm, means a partner in the firm.

91. Punishment for fraudulently availing any benefit meant for persons with benchmark disabilities.—Whoever, fraudulently avails or attempts to avail any benefit meant for persons with benchmark disabilities, shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years or with fine which may extend to one lakh rupees or with both.

92. Punishment for offences of atrocities.—Whoever,—

(a) intentionally insults or intimidates with intent to humiliate a person with disability in any place within public view;

(b) assaults or uses force to any person with disability with intent to dishonour him or outrage the modesty of a woman with disability;

(c) having the actual charge or control over a person with disability voluntarily or knowingly denies food or fluids to him or her;

(d) being in a position to dominate the will of a child or woman with disability and uses that position to exploit her sexually;

(e) voluntarily injures, damages or interferes with the use of any limb or sense or any supporting device of a person with disability;

(f) performs, conducts or directs any medical procedure to be performed on a woman with disability which leads to or is likely to lead to termination of pregnancy without her express consent except in cases where medical procedure for termination of pregnancy is done in severe cases of disability and with the opinion of a registered medical practitioner and also with the consent of the guardian of the woman with disability,

shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than six months but which may extend to five years and with fine.

93. Punishment for failure to furnish information.—Whoever, fails to produce any book, account or other documents or to furnish any statement, information or particulars which, under this Act or any order, or direction made or given there under, is duty bound to produce or furnish or to answer any question put in pursuance of the provisions of this Act or of any order, or direction made or given thereunder, shall be punishable with fine which may extend to twenty-five thousand rupees in respect of each offence, and in case of continued failure or refusal, with further fine which may extend to one thousand rupees for each day, of continued failure or refusal after the date of original order imposing punishment of fine.

94. Previous sanction of appropriate Government.—No Court shall take cognizance of an offence alleged to have been committed by an employee of the appropriate Government under this Chapter, except with the previous sanction of the appropriate Government or a complaint is filed by an officer authorised by it in this behalf.

95. Alternative punishments.—Where an act or omission constitutes an offence punishable under this Act and also under any other Central or State Act, then, notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, the offender found guilty of such offence shall be liable to punishment only under such Act as provides for punishment which is greater in degree.

CHAPTER XVII MISCELLANEOUS

96. Application of other laws not barred.—The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to, and not in derogation of, the provisions of any other law for the time being in force.

97. Protection of action taken in good faith.—No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the appropriate Government or any officer of the appropriate Government or any officer or employee of the Chief Commissioner or the State Commissioner for anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act or the rules made thereunder.

98. Power to remove difficulties.—(1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order, published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions or give such directions, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as may appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty:

Provided that no such order shall be made under this section after the expiry of the period of two years from the date of commencement of this Act.

(2) Every order made under this section shall be laid as soon as may be, after it is made, before each House of Parliament.

99. Power to amend Schedule.—(1) On the recommendations made by the appropriate Government or otherwise, if the Central Government is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient so to do, it may, by notification, amend the Schedule and any such notification being issued, the Schedule shall be deemed to have been amended accordingly.

(2) Every such notification shall, as soon as possible after it is issued, shall be laid before each House of Parliament.

100. Power of Central Government to make rules.—(1) The Central Government may, subject to the condition of previous publication, by notification, make rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(a) the manner of constituting the Committee for Research on Disability under sub-section (2) of section 6;

(b) the manner of notifying the equal opportunity policy under sub-section (1) of section 21;

(c) the form and manner of maintaining records by every establishment under sub-section (1) of section 22;

(d) the manner of maintenance of register of complaints by grievance redressal officer under sub-section (3) of section 23;

(e) the manner of furnishing information and return by establishment to the Special Employment Exchange under section 36;

(f) the composition of the Assessment Board under sub-section (2) and manner of assessment to be made by the Assessment Board under sub-section (3) of section 38;

(g) rules for person with disabilities laying down the standards of accessibility under section 40;

(h) the manner of application for issuance of certificate of disability under sub-section (1) and form of certificate of disability under sub-section (2) of section 58;

(i) the allowances to be paid to nominated Members of the Central Advisory Board under sub-section (6) of section 61;

(j) the rules of procedure for transaction of business in the meetings of the Central Advisory Board under section 64;

(k) the salaries and allowances and other conditions of services of Chief Commissioner and Commissioners under sub-section (4) of section 74;

(l) the salaries and allowances and conditions of services of officers and staff of the Chief Commissioner under sub-section (7) of section 74;

(m) the composition and manner of appointment of experts in the advisory committee under sub-section (8) of section 74;

(n) the form, manner and content of annual report to be prepared and submitted by the Chief Commissioner under sub-section (3) of section 78;

(o) the procedure, manner of utilisation and management of the Fund under sub-section (2) of section 86; and

(p) the form for preparation of accounts of Fund under sub-section (1) of section 87.

(3) Every rule made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

101. Power of State Government to make rules.—(1) The State Government may, subject to the condition of previous publication, by notification, make rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act, not later than six months from the date of commencement of this Act.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of foregoing powers, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(a) the manner of constituting the Committee for Research on Disability under sub-section (2) of section 5;

(b) the manner of providing support of a limited guardian under sub-section (1) of section 14;

(c) the form and manner of making an application for certificate of registration under sub-section (1) of section 51;

(d) the facilities to be provided and standards to be met by institutions for grant of certificate of registration under sub-section (3) of section 51;

(e) the validity of certificate of registration, the form of, and conditions attached to, certificate of registration under sub-section (4) of section 51;

(f) the period of disposal of application for certificate of registration under sub-section (7) of section 51;

(g) the period within which an appeal to be made under sub-section (1) of section 53;

(h) the time and manner of appealing against the order of certifying authority under sub-section (1) and manner of disposal of such appeal under sub-section (2) of section 59;

(i) the allowances to be paid to nominated Members of the State Advisory Board under sub-section (6) of section 67;

(j) the rules of procedure for transaction of business in the meetings of the State Advisory Board under section 70;

(k) the composition and functions of District Level Committee under section 72;

(l) salaries, allowances and other conditions of services of the State Commissioner under sub-section (3) of section 79;

(m) the salaries, allowances and conditions of services of officers and staff of the State Commissioner under sub-section (3) of section 79;

(n) the composition and manner of appointment of experts in the advisory committee under sub-section (7) of section 79;

(o) the form, manner and content of annual and special reports to be prepared and submitted by the State Commissioner under sub-section (3) of section 83;

(p) the fee or remuneration to be paid to the Special Public Prosecutor under sub-section (2) of section 85;

(q) the manner of constitution of State Fund for persons with disabilities under sub-section (1), and the manner of utilisation and management of State Fund under sub-section (2) of section 88;

(r) the form for preparation of accounts of the State Fund for persons with disabilities under sub-section (3) of section 88.

(3) Every rule made by the State Government under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of the State Legislature where it consists of two Houses, or where such State Legislature consists of one House, before that House.

102. Repeal and savings.—(1) The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunity Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (1 of 1996) is hereby repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding the repeal of the said Act, anything done or any action taken under the said Act, shall be deemed to have been done or taken under the corresponding provisions of this Act.

THE SCHEDULE

[See clause (zc) of section 2]

SPECIFIED DISABILITY

1. Physical disability.—

A. Locomotor disability (a person's inability to execute distinctive activities associated with movement of self and objects resulting from affliction of musculoskeletal or nervous system or both), including—

(a) “leprosy cured person” means a person who has been cured of leprosy but is suffering from—

(i) loss of sensation in hands or feet as well as loss of sensation and paresis in the eye and eye-lid but with no manifest deformity;

(ii) manifest deformity and paresis but having sufficient mobility in their hands and feet to enable them to engage in normal economic activity;

(iii) extreme physical deformity as well as advanced age which prevents him/her from undertaking any gainful occupation, and the expression “leprosy cured” shall construed accordingly;

(b) “cerebral palsy” means a Group of non-progressive neurological condition affecting body movements and muscle coordination, caused by damage to one or more specific areas of the brain, usually occurring before, during or shortly after birth;

(c) “dwarfism” means a medical or genetic condition resulting in an adult height of 4 feet 10 inches (147 centimeters) or less;

(d) “muscular dystrophy” means a group of hereditary genetic muscle disease that weakens the muscles that move the human body and persons with multiple dystrophy have incorrect and missing information in their genes, which prevents them from making the proteins they need for healthy muscles. It is characterised by progressive skeletal muscle weakness, defects in muscle proteins, and the death of muscle cells and tissue;

(e) “acid attack victims” means a person disfigured due to violent assaults by throwing of acid or similar corrosive substance.

B. Visual impairment—

(a) “blindness” means a condition where a person has any of the following conditions, after best correction—

(i) total absence of sight; or

(ii) visual acuity less than 3/60 or less than 10/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with best possible correction; or

(iii) limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of less than 10 degree.

(b) “low-vision” means a condition where a person has any of the following conditons, namely:—

(i) visual acuity not exceeding 6/18 or less than 20/60 upto 3/60 or upto 10/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with best possible corrections; or

(ii) limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of less than 40 degree up to 10 degree.

C. Hearing impairment—

(a) “deaf” means persons having 70 DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears;

(b) “hard of hearing” means person having 60 DB to 70 DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears;

D. “speech and language disability” means a permanent disability arising out of conditions such as laryngectomy or aphasia affecting one or more components of speech and language due to organic or neurological causes.

2. Intellectual disability, a condition characterised by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behaviour which covers a range of every day, social and practical skills, including—

(a) “specific learning disabilities” means a heterogeneous group of conditions wherein there is a deficit in processing language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself as a difficulty to comprehend, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations and includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and developmental aphasia;

(b) “autism spectrum disorder” means a neuro-developmental condition typically appearing in the first three years of life that significantly affects a person's ability to communicate, understand relationships and relate to others, and is frequently associated with unusual or stereotypical rituals or behaviours.

3. Mental behaviour,—

“mental illness” means a substantial disorder of thinking, mood, perception, orientation or memory that grossly impairs judgment, behaviour, capacity to recognise reality or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life, but does not include retardation which is a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind of a person, specially characterised by subnormality of intelligence.

4. Disability caused due to—

(a) chronic neurological conditions, such as—

(i) “multiple sclerosis” means an inflammatory, nervous system disease in which the myelin sheaths around the axons of nerve cells of the brain and spinal cord are damaged, leading to demyelination and affecting the ability of nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord to communicate with each other;

(ii) “parkinson's disease” means a progressive disease of the nervous system marked by tremor, muscular rigidity, and slow, imprecise movement, chiefly affecting middle-aged and elderly people associated with degeneration of the basal ganglia of the brain and a deficiency of the neurotransmitter dopamine.

(b) Blood disorder—

(i) “haemophilia” means an inheritable disease, usually affecting only male but transmitted by women to their male children, characterised by loss or impairment of the normal clotting ability of blood so that a minor wound may result in fatal bleeding;

(ii) “thalassemia” means a group of inherited disorders characterised by reduced or absent amounts of haemoglobin.

(iii) “sickle cell disease” means a hemolytic disorder characterised by chronic anemia, painful events, and various complications due to associated tissue and organ damage; “hemolytic” refers to the destruction of the cell membrane of red blood cells resulting in the release of hemoglobin.

5. Multiple Disabilities (more than one of the above specified disabilities) including deaf blindness which means a condition in which a person may have combination of hearing and visual impairments causing severe communication, developmental, and educational problems.

6. Any other category as may be notified by the Central Government.



शिक्षा मंत्रालय

Ministry of Education

Government of India

Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for Higher Education Institutions and Universities



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग

University Grants Commission

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Disclaimer

These guidelines are intended as a comprehensive source for achieving accessibility and inclusion in higher education institutions/universities. For specific interventions, other accessibility guidelines and standards issued by the government of India shall also be applicable.



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग

University Grants Commission

quality higher education for all



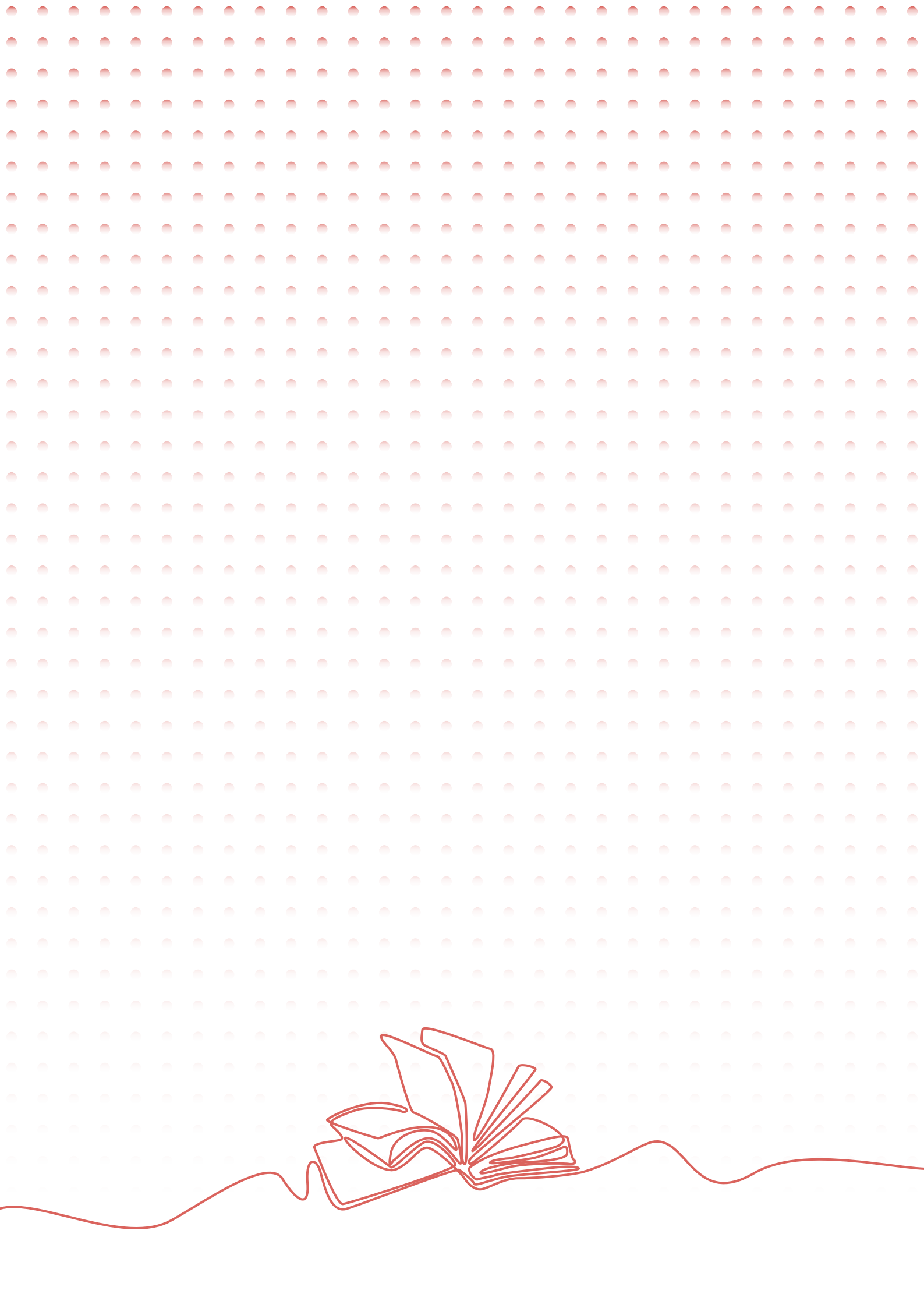
सत्यमेव जयते

शिक्षा मंत्रालय

Ministry of Education

Government of India

Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for Higher Education Institutions and Universities





MESSAGE

I am glad to inform you that UGC is bringing out its Comprehensive Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for Higher Education Institutions and Universities. These guidelines will play very significant role in making our HEIs accessible and shall be accordingly adhered to by the HEIs. The NEP 2020 has also envisioned the provisions for extensive use for technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students, and educational planning and management including full equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the system of modern education.

The Government of India launched the Accessible India Campaign (*Suganya Bharat Abhiyan*) in 2015 to facilitate barrier-free urban development for persons with disabilities in three broad domains i.e., Built Environment, Information Technology, and Transportation. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (Govt. of India) remains the nodal agency for successful implementation of the Campaign. It has been a nationwide flagship campaign to achieve universal access and development for persons with disabilities.

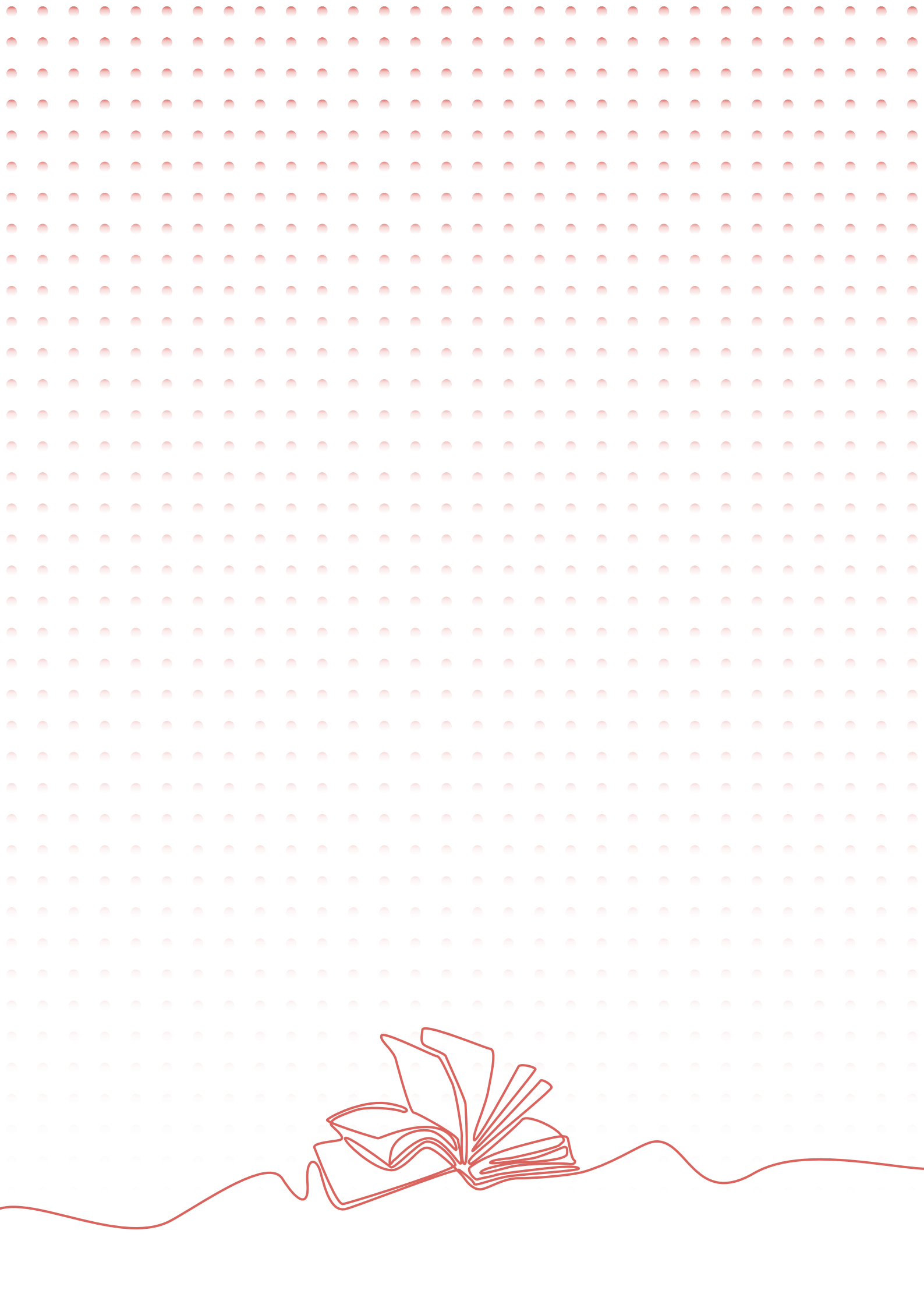
Inclusive practices in education ensure quality education without discrimination to any learner. It fulfils diverse needs in a responsive and supportive manner. Higher education institutions (HEIs) need to create a common learning platform that is flexible and accessible for all the students to learn together including those from varied backgrounds and diverse abilities. Such an inclusive environment will not only be beneficial for the learners but will also form a strong foundation for social inclusion and accessible environments as a whole. Thus, it should result in removing barriers by bringing necessary changes in infrastructure, curriculum, teaching-learning process, and all such components for equal and quality participation in both academic and social aspects of campus life.

University Grants Commission (UGC) aims at improving the participation and learning experiences of persons with disabilities in HEIs. UGC has made several provisions in Higher Education for persons with disabilities including those with Special Needs. This promotes greater accessibilities and a barrier-free environment in HEIs and universities. From time to time, UGC has always been committed to facilitate inclusive practices in all HEIs for the equal participation and academic achievement of persons with disabilities.

The aim of education is to create a learning platform for students from different backgrounds. The world is changing at a very fast pace. Diverse opportunities and innumerable changes and main responsibility of Higher Education System is to shape individuals who perform for common welfare.


(Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar)

4th July, 2022



Preamble

The University Grants Commission has introduced various initiatives to provide the facilities required by persons with disabilities to ensure their equal participation and inclusion in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). With an increase in the number of benchmark disabilities and recognizing their needs, it has become imperative to prepare the guidelines to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in HEIs and Universities in an effective manner.

An expert committee has been constituted by the Chairman, UGC to prepare the Accessibility Guidelines and Standards for Higher Educational Institutions and Universities for persons with disabilities are intended to suggest the HEIs make provisions for persons with disabilities and to provide them an accessible environment for their barrier-free participation in all respect. Each HEI is required to develop an effective accessible mechanism at their premises for the persons with disabilities ranging from the admission process till the completion of the course.

To effect the United Nations Convention, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 was enacted replacing the erstwhile Act, the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995. Section 16, 17, and 18 of its Chapter III (Education) pertains to the duty of the educational institutions and specific measures to promote and facilitate inclusive education; and adult education respectively.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also envisages that education is the foremost primary measure to achieve economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. It highlights the inclusive practices by making corresponding changes in curriculum, pedagogies, continuous assessment, and student support systems to ensure quality education.

Taking a comprehensive view of the inclusion of persons with disabilities in HEIs, these guidelines cover the parameters such as the need assessment and support provision for diverse benchmark disabilities; accessible information, communication and learning resources; inclusive mobility infrastructure; universal accessibility in built infrastructure; accessible curriculum, teaching and learning systems, accessible assessment and examination system, accessibility of resources and services, inclusive campus life; and Governance and Monitoring of Accessibility and Inclusive Practices. Nevertheless, the HEIs may include provisions apart from these to provide equal participation in all respect.

It is hoped that the provisions covered under these guidelines will help the HEIs develop an inclusive mechanism to provide an accessible environment for persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all respects of their educational life.





प्रो. रजनीश जैन
सचिव

Prof. Rajnish Jain
Secretary



विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग
University Grants Commission

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Rajnish Jain

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1

Accessibility in Higher Education Institutions : An Introduction





Accessibility in Higher Education Institutions : An Introduction

Higher education delivery in India needs to orient and accelerate its reach to persons with disabilities and several others who couldn't be included for reasons of inaccessibility or inadequacies. The new India and new education policy both commit themselves towards an inclusive development of education sector ensuring access for all.

1.1 Introduction to Accessibility and Inclusive Policy Perspectives

- a) Inclusive practices in education ensure quality education without discrimination to any learner. It fulfils diverse needs in a responsive and supportive manner. Higher education institutions (HEIs) need to create a common learning platform that is flexible and accessible for all the students to learn together including those from varied backgrounds and diverse abilities. Such an inclusive environment benefits not only the learners but also forms a strong foundation of social inclusion and accessible environments as a whole. Thus, it should result in removing barriers by bringing necessary changes to infrastructure, curriculum, teaching-learning process, and all such components for equal and quality participation in both academic and social aspects of campus life. Needless to say, **accessibility and inclusion** as a concept and culture in HEIs would eventually benefit everyone.
- b) University Grants Commission (UGC) aims to improve the participation and learning experience of persons with disabilities in HEIs. During the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07), it provisioned the Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs (HEPSN) scheme that promotes greater accessibility and a barrier-free environment. Further, consequent upon the striving need of making the system inclusive, 'Scheme of Equal Opportunity Centre for Colleges' in Twelfth Plan (2012-17) was made available to make the HEIs more responsive to the needs and constraints of the disadvantaged

social groups including persons with disabilities. From time to time, UGC has always been committed to facilitate **inclusive practices** in all HEIs for an equal participation and academic progress of persons with disabilities.

- c) Effective guidelines are required to create inclusive HEIs duly supported by the existing acts and policies. Pursuant to the continuum of educational provisions for the persons with disabilities, a remarkable transformation in the welfare perspective of education to cater to the needs of the persons with disabilities has been acknowledged by the Government of India, *where* it has become the signatory and ratified the convention of the United Nations on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), in which the inclusive education has been conceptualized at para 11, p. 4 as *“a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences”* (United Nations, 2016).
- d) To give effect to the United Nations Convention, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 was enacted replacing the earlier Act, the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995. Section 16, 17, and 18 of its Chapter III (Education) pertains to the duty of the educational institutions and specific measures **to promote and facilitate inclusive education** and adult education respectively. Also, Section 19 of Chapter IV (Skill Development and Employment) of the Act specifies certain provisions of imparting vocational training and self-employment. Moreover, the provisions such as reservation in employment and admissions at educational institutions have also been implemented and adherence to the provisions/directions has been emphasized from time to time. Hence, with the emergence of the Act, it has become imperative for the HEIs to comply with such provisions of the Act to safeguard the interest of the persons with disabilities.
- e) Moreover, the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019** was also enacted to safeguard the rights of transgender persons and their welfare and the matters connected therewith and incidental thereto *wherein* as per Section 13 and 14 of Chapter VI (Education, Social Security, and Health of Transgender Persons) educational institutions funded or recognized by the relevant governments shall provide inclusive education, sports and recreational facilities for transgender persons, without discrimination on the equal basis with others.
- f) The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** envisages that education is the foremost primary measure to achieve economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. It highlights the inclusive practices by making corresponding changes in curriculum, pedagogies, continuous assessment, and student support systems to ensure quality education. The policy acknowledges that students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) including persons with disabilities need help and

support to make an effective transition to higher education *wherein* there is a need for incorporating high-quality support centres with adequate funds and academic resources to carry out these effectively and efficiently.

- g) Thus, as per NEP (2020), the HEIs are required to adopt measures to make the admission process and curriculum inclusive as well as develop technology tools for better participation and learning outcomes. They also need to provide adequate financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs and conduct outreach on higher education opportunities and scholarships among SEDGs. They must ensure that all buildings and infrastructure facilities **are accessible** and **disabled-friendly for all**; develop bridge courses for those students who may come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds, and provide socio-emotional and academic support for all such students through suitable counselling and mentoring programs.
- h) Enabling Higher Education environments must facilitate that all students who experience disability have the right to access and participate in education, the ability to learn, and the right to exercise their voice, choice, and control in managing their own educational experiences. Their right to develop to their fullest potential and to be an active, valued citizen in the community and their right to an appropriate and adequate allocation of resources to access and participate meaningfully in education need to be fully protected. The HEIs must consider their right to be safe- physically, emotionally, culturally, and socially and be treated respectfully.
- i) Ensuring equal participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all activities are the priority goals of the nation. Hence, UGC commits itself to support HEIs in all possible manners so that persons with disabilities become part of various academic programs of universities and colleges in good numbers. Making HEIs accessible to all students remains one of the significant goals of the Commission.

1.2 Making Higher Education Institutions Accessible : A Holistic Approach

- a) The Government of India launched the Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan) in 2015 to facilitate barrier-free and universally accessible development for persons with disabilities in three broad domains i.e., Built Environment, Information & Communication Technologies, and Transportation. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment remains the nodal agency for successful implementation of the Campaign. It has been a nationwide flagship campaign to achieve universal access and enablement for persons with disabilities through infrastructure ecosystems involving built environment, transportation, and Information & Communication technologies.

- b) Different Nodal Ministries of Government of India have framed the accessibility guidelines for persons with disabilities to ensure equitable, universal access to persons with disabilities concerning the physical environment, transportation, and information and communications, which are important from the perspective of higher education set ups - such as '**Harmonised Guidelines for Universal Accessibility for India, 2021**' by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Education among others on Built Environment, Information and Communication Technology and e-content guidelines respectively. These guidelines shall play a very significant role in making our HEIs accessible and shall be accordingly adhered to by the HEIs.
- c) The higher education systems not only comprises built environments like classrooms, laboratories or libraries, etc. but also of learning and social environments where students from various social and diverse backgrounds participate and become productive and responsible citizens of the country. Hence each environment needs to be accessible to all students irrespective of their abilities and disabilities. Effective guidelines and policies can support HEIs to achieve this important goal. **Inclusive policies** lead to inclusive practices and that ultimately further leads to an inclusive culture in HEIs by creating an atmosphere where everybody feels valued and supported. It is a mandate to provide accessible environment and inclusive services to diverse range of students, faculty and staff in all typologies of higher education institutions and universities ensuring that no one is excluded, denied or discriminated access to education in the HEIs in India, esp. on the basis of their special needs, functional limitations or disabilities.
- d) Recognizing, accommodating, and meeting the needs of the persons with disabilities coming from diverse backgrounds, it becomes the primary responsibility for the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) / universities to provide the facilities or environment that enables persons with disabilities having diverse socio-economic backgrounds to **live independently and participate fully** in all aspect of their educational life at HEIs.
- e) To provide an accessible environment to persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of their educational life, HEIs shall be committed to promoting inclusive practices by (i) ensuring a barrier-free and an inclusive mechanism to help in the admission process, (ii) taking appropriate measures to ensure universal accessibility in it's infrastructure systems, (iii) making adequate provisions and facilities for teaching so that all students including those having disabilities undertake their studies in an inclusive manner (iv) developing and supporting technology tools for better participation

and learning outcomes and (v) facilitating participation in corporate life on an equal basis with others.

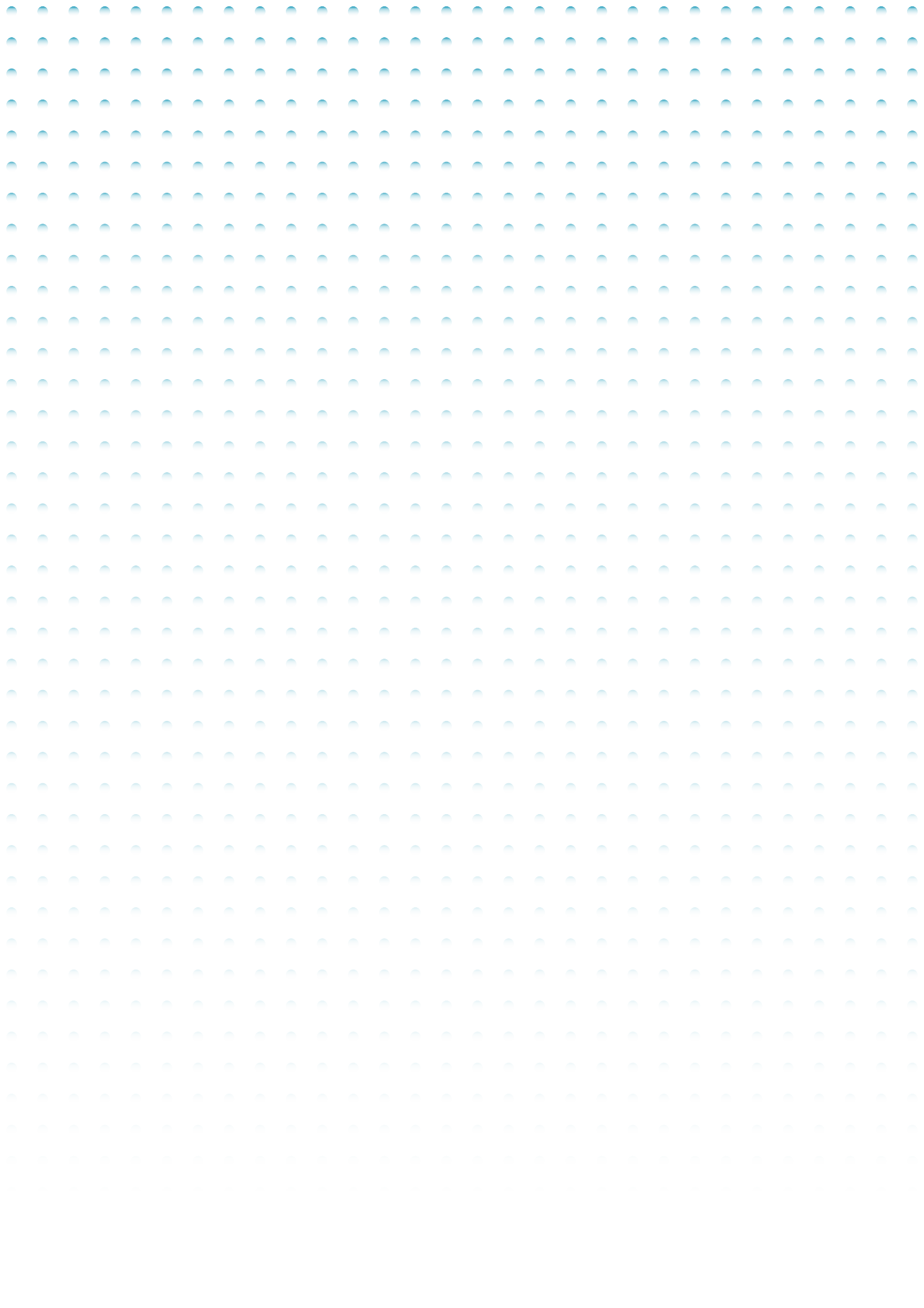
- f) Accessibility requires to be considered at priority as a significant issue of concern for all HEIs / universities to plan and implement in their respective campuses. These guidelines as issued by the UGC have been broadly structured under ten sections for developing a holistic perspective and understanding towards accessibility in the world of higher education. The sections are :
- (i) Accessibility in Higher Education Institutions: An Introduction
 - (ii) Need Assessment and Support Provisions
 - (iii) Accessible Information, Communication and Learning Resources
 - (iv) Inclusive Mobility Infrastructure
 - (v) Universal Accessibility in Built Infrastructure
 - (vi) Accessible Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Systems
 - (vii) Accessible Assessment and Examination Systems
 - (viii) Accessibility of Resources/Services
 - (ix) Inclusive Campus Life, and
 - (x) Governance and Monitoring of Accessibility and Inclusive Practices.
- g) Deaf and hard of hearing students must be provided with the opportunity to learn Indian sign language (ISL) and measures taken to recognise and promote the linguistic identity of the deaf community in India. The Committee draws the attention of State parties to UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education which establishes the right of children to be taught in their own language, and reminds State parties that Article 30(4) requires that persons with disabilities are entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition of and support for their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign language and deaf culture. In addition, hard-of-hearing students must also have access to quality speech therapy services, induction loop technology and captioning.
- h) Creation of partnerships and coordination between all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities through Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), different agencies, development organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGO), and with parents/caregivers.

United Nations. (2016). General Comment No.4, Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education. www.refworld.org/docid/57c977e34.html

2

Need Assessment and Support Provisions





2

Need Assessment and Support Provisions

The various aspects of access and need assessment in higher education include: Curriculum & Instruction; On & Off-Campus Services; Physical Spaces; and Information & Communication Technologies(ICTs). From policies and evaluation of specific needs; to planning and reviewing of curriculum, delivery methods, feedback, individualized modifications, assistive technology, safety, campus climate, events, residential and non-residential facilities and capacity building of stakeholders are major areas for evolving our HEIs towards an inclusive future. One of the most critical aspects however is to understand the specific needs of persons with disabilities by all stakeholders of HEIs including peer groups so that appropriate measures for accessibility and inclusion can be initiated by each institution in information, infrastructure and the overall learning of academic research, campus culture and systems. This section provides an overarching insight into specific needs of different types of disabilities and diversities; and provisions that can ensure accessibility for everyone in all aspects of higher education institutions.

Need Assessment Process for reasonable accommodation shall be duly followed in each HEI / university to ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities. The intent is to holistically assess the needs of persons with disabilities and make supportive provisions for them as reasonable accommodations to facilitate their education in the HEIs / universities. Some of the indicative steps shall include :

Step 1 : Application in a prescribed format to be received from user.

Step 2 : Assessment by internal committee and granting of reasonable accommodation.

Step 3 : Wherever internal committee is not able to arrive at a conclusion, it may take support from external collaborator such as CRCs / DDRCs, etc. and grant reasonable accommodation to

internal committee or in collaboration with an external committee.

Universities / HEIs to connect with the nearest rehabilitation / reasonable accommodation support such as CRCs / DDRCs for need assessment from time to time. This may be done at the beginning of the admission process to clearly assess health or medical / rehabilitation needs and education / campus living needs of persons with disabilities.

Step – 1 Health / Medical & Rehabilitation needs

At the time of joining the institution / university need assessment shall be carried out by a formal board i.e. Need Assessment Board, which shall conduct an assessment of the specific needs of the persons with disabilities.

Step – 2 Education & Campus living needs

Once the person is admitted to the university / HEIs, they may then conduct a thorough assessment to identify the specific needs for education or inclusive campus living.

Reasonable Accommodation

2.1 Disability Specific Needs

Persons with disabilities may have functional limitations due to their respective disabilities which could be well supported through appropriate provisions that address their needs.

Broadly, the aspects that may require accessibility considerations include Mobility; Hand manipulations; Therapy and Medication; Speech & Communication; Vision; Emotional – Behavioral support; Psycho-Social support; Cognitive and Intellectual skills; Self-Care & Daily Living Skills; Healthcare needs; Use of Infrastructure; Use of Information and Communication Technologies, etc.

The specific needs listed below in each category of disability may not be exhaustive. It, however, provides a broad and a generic understanding of diverse needs for various disability types. Further, it is to be ensured that these needs are not reflected as limitations but as domains of support to be provided by the various HEIs / universities to ensure access to education. In other words they may be considered as accessibility considerations or provisions required by diverse disabilities.

2.1.1 Physical Disability – I

- a. Permanent Physical Disability (PPD) to Upper Extremities
- b. PPD to Lower Extremities
- c. PPD of the Spine
- d. PPD in persons with Amputation
- e. PPD of congenital conditions of the extremities & other conditions

Specific Needs

- May need support in motor and/or fine-motor functioning, locomotor and non-locomotor functioning.
- May need assistance with sitting, mobility, transfers and ambulation.
- May need support to manipulate objects, turn pages, write with a pen or pencil, type on a keyboard, and/or retrieve study material.
- May require frequent therapy, surgery, or medication.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.

2.1.2 Physical Disability – II

2.1.2.1 Acid Attack Survivors

Specific Needs:

- May have limitations in speech and communication
- May need support in hand manipulations.
- May have limitations in visual acuity hence would have additional needs as applicable to vision disabilities
- May require frequent therapy, surgery, or medication.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.

2.1.2.2 Cerebral Palsy

Specific Needs:

- May need assistance with sitting, mobility, transfers, and ambulation.

- May need support to manipulate objects, turn pages, write with a pen or pencil, type on a keyboard, and/or retrieve study material.
- May need preferential or adapted seating to participate in ongoing activities.
- May have associated intellectual or behavioral conditions and may need adaptations as applicable to intellectual disabilities.
- May need support in self-care and daily living skills.
- May experience vision or hearing disabilities and hence would have additional needs as applicable to vision, hearing and speech disabilities.
- May need specific seating furniture to assist in pain relief and postural control.
- May need support in speech and communication.
- May require frequent therapy, medical interventions, surgery, or medication.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.

2.1.2.3 Leprosy Cured Persons

Specific Needs:

- May experience difficulty in hand manipulations and thus may need support to manipulate objects, turn pages, write with a pen or pencil, type on a keyboard, and/or retrieve study material.
- May have limitations in visual acuity hence would have additional needs as applicable to vision disabilities
- May have limitations in mobility, speech and communication hence would have additional needs as applicable to physical and speech disabilities.
- May require frequent therapy, surgery, or medication.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.

2.1.2.4 Short Stature/Dwarfism

Specific Needs:

- May need support with seating and mobility.
- May have specific needs related to associated vision, physical, hearing and speech disabilities.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.

2.1.2.5 Muscular Dystrophy

Specific Needs:

- May need assistance with sitting, mobility, transfers and ambulation.
- May experience difficulty in breathing.
- May have limitations in speech and communication.
- May experience difficulty in hand manipulations.
- May require frequent therapy, surgery, or medication.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities.

2.1.3 Visual Disabilities

2.1.3.1 Blindness and Low Vision

Specific Needs:

- May access information in a variety of ways: braille, audio, enlarged print, digital formats, screen reading softwares or other tactile and sensory systems
- May need assistance with orientation and mobility.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May need support in concept development.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.

- May require frequent therapy or medication.

2.1.4 Hearing Disabilities

2.1.4.1 Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Specific Needs:

- May need support in speech and communication.
- May need to learn Indian Sign Language (ISL) and communication with all.
- May need assistance in understanding verbal information/directions e.g. difficulty to hear sounds like a class bell, announcements etc.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May require frequent therapy or surgery.
- May need to use devices like hearing aids and cochlear implants.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May require note taking assistance through technology or alternative means such as through peers, etc.
- Providing transition support from school to college or graduation to post graduation, etc.
- Offering clear instructions or demonstrations

2.1.5 Speech & Language Disability

Specific Needs:

- May have trouble with: Articulation – production of speech sounds; Fluency, rhythm & flow of speech; or Voice, quality of pitch, resonance, or loudness.
- May need support in speech and communication.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT
- May require frequent speech therapy or other medical interventions.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities.

2.1.6 Intellectual Disability

Specific Needs:

- May need support in speech, communication and social skills.
- May need support in cognitive functioning (decision making, reasoning, problem-solving etc.)
- May need assistance with seating and mobility.
- May need support in hand manipulations.
- May need support to understand information.
- May need support in self-care and daily living skills.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May require frequent therapy or other medical interventions.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities.

2.1.7 Specific Learning Disability

Specific Needs:

- May need support in speech, communication and social skills.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May need support to comprehend, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations.
- May need assistance in understanding verbal and written information/directions.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.

2.1.8 Autism Spectrum Disorder

Specific Needs:

- May need support in speech, communication and social skills.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May have associated intellectual or behavioral conditions.

- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities.
- May need support in cognitive functioning (reasoning, problem-solving, etc)
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May be sensitive to bright lights, loud noises, busy hallways, textures, smells etc
- May require frequent therapy or medication.

2.1.9 Mental Illness

Specific Needs:

- May need support in speech, communication and social skills.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May have associated intellectual or behavioral conditions.
- May need assistance in academic activities due to difficulties in concentration, memory, distractibility, impulsiveness, irritability, fear, anxiety etc.
- May need support in cognitive functioning (reasoning, problem-solving etc.) due to disorders of Thinking, Mood, Perception, Orientation, Memory that grossly impairs judgment, behaviour, capacity to recognize reality, or ability to meet ordinary demands of life.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May be sensitive to bright lights, loud noises, busy hallways, textures, smells etc.
- May require frequent therapy or medication.

2.1.10 Chronic Neurological Condition – Multiple Sclerosis

Specific Needs:

- May need support in motor and/or fine-motor functioning, locomotor and non-locomotor functioning.
- May need assistance with sitting and mobility.

- May need support in hand-functioning to manipulate objects, turn pages, write with a pen or pencil, type on a keyboard, and/or retrieve study material.
- May require frequent therapy, surgery, or medication.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.

2.1.11 Chronic Neurological Condition – Parkinson’s disease

Specific Needs:

- May need support in motor and/or fine-motor functioning, locomotor and non-locomotor functioning.
- May need assistance with sitting and mobility.
- May need support in hand-functioning to manipulate objects, turn pages, write with a pen or pencil, type on a keyboard, and/or retrieve study material.
- May require frequent therapy, surgery, or medication.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.

2.1.12 Blood Disorder – Sickle Cell Disease

Specific Needs:

- May need support in motor and/or fine-motor functioning.
- May need assistance with seating and mobility.
- May have limitations in visual acuity.
- May need support in hand-functioning to manipulate objects, turn pages, write with a pen or pencil, type on a keyboard, and/or retrieve study material.
- May require frequent therapy, surgery, or medication.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities

- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.

2.1.13 Blood Disorder – Thalassemia

Specific Needs:

- May require frequent therapy or other medical interventions.
- May need support in motor and/or fine-motor functioning.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.

2.1.14 Blood Disorder – Haemophilia

Specific Needs:

- May require frequent therapy or other medical interventions.
- May need support in motor and/or fine-motor functioning.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.

2.1.15 Multiple Disabilities

Specific Needs:

- May need support in speech, tactile sign language, communication and social skills.
- May need support in cognitive functioning (reasoning, problem-solving etc.)
- May experience vision or hearing disability
- May have associated intellectual or behavioral conditions.
- May need specific seating to assist in pain relief and postural control.
- May need assistance with seating and mobility.
- May need support in motor and/or fine-motor functioning, locomotor and non-locomotor functioning.

- May need assistance with sitting, mobility, transfers and ambulation.
- May need support to understand information.
- May need support in self-care and daily living skills.
- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May require assistance in the use of infrastructure or ICT.
- May require frequent therapy, surgery or other medical interventions.
- May need preferential seating to participate in ongoing activities.

2.1.16 High Support Needs

Specific Needs:

- In terms of accessing higher education, a person with high support needs may require intensive support, in the form of an attendant/ carer for assistance in activities of daily living (ADLs), other physical, psychological support and otherwise to take independent and informed decisions to access facilities and participate in all areas of life including education, family & community life, treatment/therapy and employment.

2.1.17 Gender Needs for inclusion

- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.

2.1.18 Transgender Persons

Specific Needs:

- May need emotional-behavioral & psycho-social support.
- May need support in campus records and documents.
- May require assistance in participation of activities or use of facilities.

The needs enlisted above across all disabilities are not comprehensive and every individual or group/sub-group of disability may demonstrate further diverse needs as it is a contextual and dynamic concept. Hence proper assessment of needs and documentation of the same is important. The needs may be changing with time and it may be necessary to repeat the need assessment on request of a person with disability or on the basis of observations made by the faculty/ stakeholders of HEIs.

2.2 Specific Needs : Designing Accessible and Inclusive Curriculum

Universities and HEIs shall require to design accessible and inclusive curriculum in view of the specific needs of persons with disabilities. Considerations while designing and developing programmes / courses must include support provisions in Curricular Aspects that address specific needs at the level of Curricular Design and Development; Curricular Planning and Implementation; Academic Flexibility; Curriculum Enrichment; and Feedback Systems.

- Curriculum flexibility with a choice of subjects (both theory & practical).
- Planning for reduced course load, subject waiver, or subject substitutions.
- Offering plus-curriculum or expanded-core curriculum subjects.
- Flexibility in course schedules and academic calendar.
- Flexibility in the pace of the course content to allow for multiple speeds for learners.
- Flexibility in attendance requirements.
- Specify overall learning goals and specific learning objectives relevant to each diversity.
- Ensuring learning objectives cover cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains.
- Offering multiple means of instruction to address a range of learning styles.
- Suggesting multiple options for students to demonstrate learning (e.g. assignments that are writing-based, problem-based etc.)
- Offering a variety of pedagogical choices in each discipline for diverse learning styles and functional needs (e.g. lecture, team-based learning, problem-based learning, Socratic method, simulations, role-play, debate, service-learning etc.)
- Developing clear rubrics and grading criteria.
- Flexibility in good quality assessment and evaluation methods.
- Availability of syllabus in various accessible formats as per the need of the student (digital copy, hard-copy, braille, large-print, images with verbal descriptions, Indian Sign Language formats, appropriate colour schemes, etc.)
- Include a list of reference material, reading material and textbooks that are available in accessible formats (eg. Visual media with subtitles, digital material compatible with screen readers etc.)
- Include a clear statement of how it addresses issues of diversity, inclusion and overall engagement.
- Developing a checklist for resources or accommodations that students may need to maximize their learning (both offline and online classroom).

For details in relation to curriculum development and implementation, Chapter 6 be referred.

2.3 Special Needs : Admission and Promotional Activities

All promotional activities including advertisement and surveys to measure/analyze the effectiveness of courses/campus activities. These will also include support in: Admission Processes; Advertisement Notification; Filling of Admission Forms; Processing for Admission; Counselling; Admission; Induction & Orientation.

- Ensure admission announcements and advertisements are circulated in accessible formats.
- Ensure that the content on the website, email and social media campaigns can be read by various assistive technologies; enlarged; meets color and contrast ratio requirements; includes alternatives for visual content; videos use closed-captioning and description.
- Encourage the translation of e-content in Indian Sign Language formats progressively.
- Ensure events and interviews (in-person or virtual) are offered in accessible venues and formats.
- Offer alternative communication support at all stages/processes of admission.
- Offer multiple formats for program information, such as large print, audio or video information.
- Offer multiple formats for Application Forms, such as digital, large print, braille, etc. also include a sample filled-in form.
- Make sure online materials and tools meet WCAG compliance.
- Include diversity and inclusion statements and information about how to access accessibility resources throughout admission materials.
- Include information on resources on campus providing student support that is not stated in the syllabus such as counselling center, LGBT resource center, etc.
- Make it clear that you value and respect their diverse backgrounds and identities.
- Work collaboratively with student support services to ensure an easy transition for enrolled students.

2.4 Special Needs : Administrative and Support Aspects

Universities and HEIs shall facilitate the provision of accessibility in administrative and other supports needed by diverse individuals with disabilities. The HEIs / universities shall ensure proper need assessment through their Disability / Equal opportunity Cell.

Provision of support at all activities for effective transition of students into the system, including Registration; Academic Support; Facilitating Stay & Conveyance; Fee Submission; Sponsorship; Time Table, Schedules and Academic Almanac; Grievance Redressal; Release/Delivery of Marksheet, Certification, Diploma, Transcript, Migration etc.; Counselling (Pre-exam, post-exam, career-planning etc.); Fellowship and Scholarships; and Capacity Building of Staff.

If the HEI / University has medical facilities on campus, further facilitation of medical / therapeutic support be extended.

For each category of disability, accessibility considerations include measures for supporting: Mobility; Hand manipulations; Therapy and Medication; Speech & Communication; Vision; Emotional-Behavioral support; Psycho-Social Support; Cognitive and Intellectual Skills; Self-Care & Daily Living Skills; Healthcare needs; Use of Infrastructure; Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) etc. Some examples of measures may include:

- Creating a universally accessible environment at campus & it's various facilities ranging from administrative to academic, mobility to residential facilities.
- Offering course waivers or substitutions or option of reduced course load.
- Flexibility with attendance, timetable/schedule etc.
- Allowing the use of assistive aids and technology.
- Providing conveniently located parking.
- Providing an opportunity to reschedule classes to an accessible location.
- Allowing service animals in facilities.
- Providing priority registration facility.
- Providing advance notice of class schedule and/or room changes.
- Familiarizing the student with the layout of the campus, classroom, laboratory & all facilities, noting the closest exits and locating emergency equipment etc.
- Facilitating raised line campus maps and tactile models of graphic materials.
- Offering advance notice of class schedule and/or room changes.
- Releasing results and documents in accessible formats like large-print, braille, a digital format supported by technology etc.

- Providing assistive lab equipment eg. Talking calculators, light probes, tactile timers etc.
- Releasing results and documents in accessible formats like large-print, braille, a digital format supported by technology etc.
- Ensuring accessible websites, social media, online materials/tools with WCAG compliance.
- Establishing diversity-friendly communication benchmarks.
- Safety, privacy and confidentiality measures.
- Assigning teaching assistants.
- Measures to showcase access, enrolment, retention, participation and achievement.
- Formation of alliance clubs etc.

Other specific considerations for Visual Disabilities (Blindness & Low-Vision)

- Providing academic support through Plus-Curricular (Expanded Core-Curriculum) Activities
 - Braille Reading & Braille Writing
 - Orientation & Mobility
 - Independent Living Skills
 - Sensory Training –Efficiency skills to use hearing/touch/smell/taste, optical devices.
 - Use of mathematical devices such as Taylor’s Frame & Abacus
 - Compensational skills are necessary for accessing core curriculum like concept development, organization & study skills, tactile graphics, audio material etc.
 - Social Interaction Skills
 - Recreation and Leisure Skills
 - Career Education
 - Assistive Technology
 - Self Determination skills like choice-making, decision-making, problem-solving, personal advocacy, goal setting, conflict resolution etc.

Other specific considerations for Hearing Disabilities (Deaf & Hard of Hearing) & Speech and Language Disability

- Making sign language interpreters available.

- Providing visual alternatives for sound-based information like class-bell or verbal announcements.
- Providing academic support through Plus-Curricular (Expanded Core-Curriculum) activities:
 - Audiology
 - Career Education
 - Communication (Oral/Auditory-Oral; Verbal Uni-Sensory; Sign Language; Total communication)
 - Functional Skills like study and organization, concept development, cultural awareness etc.
 - Self-Determination and Advocacy
 - Social-Emotional Skills
 - Using interpreters and transliterators
 - Technology

Other specific considerations for Intellectual Disability, Specific Learning Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Mental Illness, Multiple Disabilities and High-Support Needs:

- Providing Transition support from school-to-college or graduation-to-post graduation etc.
- Providing Scaffolding or step-by-step guidelines of each administrative aspect.
- Offering highly structured instructions or demonstrations to be presented in more than one way.
- Providing academic support through Plus-Curricular (Expanded Core-Curriculum) Activities
 - Self-Help and Independent Living Skills
 - Therapeutic support for speech, physio, occupational or sensory needs
 - Compensational skills are necessary for accessing core curriculum like concept development, organization & study skills, tactile graphics, audio material etc.
 - Social Interaction Skills
 - Recreation and Leisure Skills
 - Career Education
 - Assistive Technology

- Self Determination skills like choice-making, decision-making, problem-solving, personal advocacy, goal setting, conflict resolution etc.

2.5 Specific Needs : Teaching and Learning

Provision of support at all processes linked to learning and skill development, including:

- Student Enrolment and Profile
- Catering to Student Diversity
- Teaching-Learning Process
- Teacher Profile and Quality
- Evaluation Process
- Student Performance and Learning Outcomes
- Student Satisfaction Survey
- Getting along with the Theory curriculum
- Getting along with Practical curriculum
- Availability of Accessible Learning Resources
- Assignments, Projects & Course Works
- Participating in learning programs of other Departments
- Participating in Campus Life Activities
- Participating in Competitions and Events
- Participating in Excursions and Tours
- Considerations during Holidays
- Library & Reading resources
- Digital accessibility

Some examples of support for Physical Disability-I

- Use of note-takers and appropriate assistive technology
- Provide digital copies of the text (along with a complete list of accessible reference documents)
- Ensuring all off-desk activities are physically accessible or provide alternate assignment options
- Including the students while forming study/ work groups
- Giving extra time for assignments/presentations
- Modification in seating / furniture

Some examples of support for Physical Disability-II

- Extra time to reach the class, complete assignments/projects etc.
- Permission to record lectures in audio/video mode.
- Permission to briefly leave or move about during the class
- Giving multiple options to demonstrate learning (e.g. assignments that are writing-based, problem-based etc.)

Some examples of support for Visual Disabilities (Blindness & Low-Vision)

- Allowing the students to determine the ideal sitting location to see, hear and if possible, touch the presented material.
- Assisting the students in labelling lab materials so that they are easily identifiable.
- Verbal description of class activity, such as when a show of hands is requested, stating how many hands were raised.
- Voice recorders, computers, digital slates, styluses for note-taking.
- Permission to audio/video record lectures.

Some examples of support for Hearing Disabilities (Deaf & Hard of Hearing)

- Seating which allows a clear view of the instructor, interpreter and the board.
- Visual aids including captioned videos.
- Access to word-processor, use of an ISL interpreter for directions.
- Supplement with written instructions, assignments and directions.
- Providing unfamiliar vocabulary in written form, on the board, or in the handout.
- Permission to audio/video record lectures

Some examples of support for Speech & Language Disability

- Permit time to speak without unsolicited aid in filling the gaps in their speech.
- Modification in assignments such as a one-to-one presentation or use of the computer with voice synthesizers.
- Alternative assignments for an oral class report
- Use of assistive devices and alternative communication methods

Some examples of support for Intellectual Disability, Specific Learning Disability & Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Allow students to focus on parts of a topic /project; rather than the entire concept.
- Word processor with spell-check and/or voice output to provide auditory feedback
- Transition support during time-table
- Allow for choice in assignments
- Provide breaks during classes (if needed)

Some examples of support for Mental Illness

- Preferential seating arrangement (near or door or at the back of classroom etc)
- Assistance with time-management and study skills
- Pre-arranged or frequent breaks
- Personal and private feedback

Some examples of support for Chronic Neurological Conditions and Blood Disorders

- Allow frequent breaks to go to drink water, washroom, medical room/take medicine during class.
- Allow occasional rest from curricular activities.
- Providing recorded lectures/course material
- Extreme care for hygiene and cleanliness

Some examples of support for Multiple Disabilities and High Support Needs [such as Deafblindness, etc.]

Persons with deafblindness shall be provided support through

- Study material in braille
- Tactile sign language interpretation and
- Provision of Assistive Technologies like braille note takers.

However, persons with multiple disabilities including deafblindness shall also be supported through

- Scaffolding or step-by-step guidelines for each task/activity contextualised for their specific needs
- Assistance in performing classroom and personal care activities
- Support in classroom mobility and communication
- Sensitivity for challenges in concentration, distractibility, time management, cognitive abilities, social skills etc.

Some examples of support for Gender needs and Transgender Persons

- Gender friendly classroom environment and transactions
- Develop positive self-concept and self-esteem among students.

2.6 Special Needs : Assessment, Examination and Evaluation

Provision of specific need support at all academic procedures pertaining to continuous assessment and examination, including:

- Preparation for examinations
- Availing additional coaching & training for competitive examinations
- Continuous Support for examination and evaluation
- Appearing examinations
- Evaluation
- Access to results & related procedures of re-evaluation, re-totalling etc.

Some examples of support for sub-categories of Physical Disability – I & II

- Alternate test formats such as use of readers, written exams etc.
- Use of scribe or speech-to-text software to record answers to an exam
- Extended time for examination
- Alternate test locations
- Use of computers/ aids/ devices during exams etc.

Some examples of support for Visual Disabilities (Blindness & Low-Vision)

- Compensatory time for examination.
- Provision of braille/large-print question paper or alternate test formats such as audio, use of readers etc.
- Use of computer or assistive technology

Some examples of support for Hearing Disabilities (Deaf & Hard of Hearing) and Speech & Language Disability

- Substitute oral exams/ viva etc with written or any other alternative modality.
- Providing an alternate non-verbal way for exam bell or announcements.
- Allow use of hearing aids, cochlear implants and communication devices.
- Compensatory time for examination.
- Learners with communication impairments must be provided with the opportunity to express themselves and learn using alternative or augmentative communication. This may include but is not limited to provision of Indian sign language, low- or high-tech communication aids such as tablets with speech output, voice output communication aids (VOCAS) or communication books.
- State parties should invest in developing expertise, technology and services in order to promote access to appropriate technology and alternative communication systems to facilitate learning. Substitute oral exams/ viva etc with written or any other alternative modality such as Indian Sign Language.

Some examples of support for Intellectual Disability, Specific Learning Disability & Autism Spectrum Disorder, Multiple Disabilities and High Support Needs

- Alternate modalities for examination and evaluation; or alternate/adapted question papers
- Quiet, distraction-free examination area
- Breaks during exam
- Exam given by page or by section
- Scaffolding or step-by-step guidelines for examination.

Some examples of support for Mental Illness

- On-demand examinations
- Extended time for exams or breaks during exams.
- Quiet, distraction-free examination area
- Exams given by page or by section

Some examples of support for Chronic Neurological Conditions and Blood Disorders

- Extended time for exams
- Use of scribes
- Exam modifications eg. Shorter exam duration, on-demand exams etc.
- Allow breaks during exams for washroom, taking medication, moving around etc.

2.7 Specific Needs : Student Activities

Provision of specific need support at major students' activities which will be conducted and facilitated by the student council, including Student Support and Progression; Campus Life; Student Participation and Activities; Alumni Support and Engagement; Peer Group Development; Campus Recruitment etc.

The student council must engage with the diverse group of students, and work closely towards accessibility considerations for:

- Promoting an environment conducive to educational and personal development
- Enhance communication between students, management and staff
- Promote friendship and respect among pupils
- Represent views and concerns of students
- Assist with induction and/or mentoring for the first year of study
- Contributing to the development of college policy etc.

2.8 Specific Needs : Additional Considerations

While modifications will always be necessary for some capacity for improving and ensuring accessibility; and it can only be improved if we listen openly to hear from the experiences of fresh applicants and persons with disabilities.

We must also update ourselves to learn from disability scholars on the latest research and best practices, and critically think about existing traditional processes and practices.

While a host of resources already exist for improving accessibility, that has been developed by the National Institutes, NCERT, NGOs, DPOs, State and Central level organizations, UGC etc; there is an urgent need for convergence to develop a comprehensive document.

Additionally, to ensure full and equal access to university programs and facilities, a holistic approach must include considerations for providing:

- Additional Health-Care Support
- Support for Remedial Education
- Support for Plus Curriculum
- Therapeutic Support
- Mental Health Support
- Wellness Support
- Support during Pandemic and Disaster
- Access to online education
- Accessible web/video conferencing platforms that support assistive technologies etc.

Accessibility considerations must cover all aspects of assuring that persons with disabilities can participate and have the same choices as their typical peers. It must be ensured to remove any barrier that stops, impedes, prevents or causes difficulty for an individual to fully participate in all aspects of higher education. Considerations above will help design an environment that is free from architectural/physical; systemic/organizational, information/communication, attitudinal and technology barriers.

HEIs are encouraged to invest in developing expertise, technologies and services in order to promote access to appropriate technology and alternative communication systems to facilitate learning for all kinds of disabilities.



Accessible Information, Communication and Learning Resources





Accessible Information, Communication and Learning Resources

Access to information principally implies a focus to create and provide information for diverse purposes in higher education including moving to and around the campus, interacting with administrative systems, participating and engaging in learning activities and anything else that's considered part of a higher education environment. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a vital role in today's learning environments and in enhancing accessibility to information. As a guideline, it is recommended that all HEIs and universities shall strive to integrate the best possible ICTs and other means of communication to ensure access to information to diverse users including ones with visual and hearing impairments. This chapter shares further insights into various dimensions of accessibility provisions through ICTs for implementation across HEIs and universities across the nation.

3.1. Procurement Guidelines to ensure ICT Accessibility

Similar to the accessibility of the built environment, it is essential to ensure accessibility of information and communication technology infrastructure for full participation of persons with disabilities as employees or as students of higher education institutions and universities. For example, if the biometrics and software-based attendance system of the institution are not usable with speech or haptics output, then persons with blindness will not be able to mark their attendance.

Section 16 and 17 (Chapter 3 on Education) and Section 42 on Access to Information and Communication Technology of the RPWD Act 2016 make it mandatory for all educational institutions to make their environment including ICT infrastructure accessible for persons with disabilities.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has notified standards on ICT accessibility, namely IS 17802. These standards define what accessible ICT products and services mean. It is essential that all ICT products or services procured or created by institutions affiliated with the UGC adhere to these standards.

For example, if the institution hires services or creates its website, it must follow clauses related to the websites within the BIS standard and the conformance requirements of the standard (these conform to W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Level AA). The ICT products and services would include websites, apps, learning management systems, office equipment, software, etc.

Similarly, the specifications drawn for inviting quotations or issuing tenders on ICT products and services such as computers, software, etc., would need to mention the clause adhering to the BIS standard ETSI ES 200 381-2 as provided under the IS 17802. In other words, the institution shall not purchase any ICT devices or services that are not usable by persons with disabilities.

Accessibility shall be ensured at the time of procurement of any ICT, hardware / software or services.

3.2. Accessibility of instructional material and learning resources

Instructional materials, written correspondence, circulars, or any other official documents need to be in a format readable and understandable by all, including by persons with disabilities. It is the responsibility of the institution that if the content in its original format is not accessible, then the same is converted to a format that is usable by persons with disabilities. Section 52(1)(zb) of the Indian Copyright Amendment Act (2012) allows for such conversion of the copyrighted materials without seeking prior permission of the copy-right owner.

3.2.1 Standards to be followed for digital content

All education institutions shall ensure that following the universal design principles, all e-content (online or offline) adheres to the e-content accessibility guidelines issued by the Department of Education, Government of India^[1].

For example, a scanned image of a document is not readable with screen reading software. Similarly, if an Indian language digital document is prepared using a font that does not comply with Unicode standards, then such document is also not accessible with Assistive Technologies. Therefore, it is essential that digital documents have editable text in fonts compliant to Unicode standards. For ease of reference, the table below provides a list of accessibility guidelines and their validation tools for different digital content formats:

Table 3.1 Accessibility Guidelines and their Validation Tools for Digital Content

| Content Type | Standard | Validator |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|
| Microsoft Word Document | Office Accessibility Guidelines | Word accessibility checker |
| PDF | PDF-UA | PDF Accessibility checker |
| EPUB | EPUB Accessibility Guidelines | ACE (Accessibility Checker for EPUB) |
| Websites, Videos and apps | WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) or GIGW | AXE, WAVE, Etc. |
| Audio | DAISY | DAISY Validator |
| Fonts for Indian languages in all above types | Unicode | --- |

3.2.2 Content to Be Born Accessible

It is not possible to recreate and republish all digital content in accessible formats after first creating inaccessible versions of it, such as use of non-Unicode fonts for Indian languages. Thus, it is essential to follow e-content guidelines right at the stage of creation of any digital content by the institution, including for creating handouts, correspondence, instructional materials, question papers, and any other documents and publications. This saves duplication of effort and resources. At the same time, digital content adhering to the e-content accessibility guidelines provides a rich reading experience for everyone, not just for persons with disabilities.

For this purpose:

- Organize awareness events and training for content producers and publication divisions
- Issue clear guidelines for content creators regarding accessibility practices

- Ensure accessibility guidelines form part of all processes drawn for content creation and production

3.2.3 Service to convert instructional materials into an accessible format

Instructional materials such as prescribed books, recommended readings, books suggested by faculty to their students or the handouts provided by them, etc. need to be in a format that persons with disabilities could read themselves. It is the responsibility of the institution to convert the instructional materials into accessible format if the original format of the materials is not accessible. For example, hard copy print books or photocopied materials are not readable by persons with blindness, low vision, dyslexia, etc. If such learners are in the classroom, then institutions need to provide a service to make all required instructional materials in accessible formats such as accessible EPUB, braille, large print, audio, easy to read, plain language, and sign language, etc. Choice of the format would depend not only on the disability but also on the availability of assistive technology or skill level of persons who need such accessible materials or the choice of learners with disabilities.

Note: If instructional materials are converted to the accessible digital format described above, then the same can be delivered in multiple formats such as braille, audio, or large print as per the requirements of the persons with disabilities. Thus, in most cases, providing instructional materials in accessible format involves the conversion of hard copy materials into accessible digital format.

It is also preferable that persons with disabilities are provided with assistive technology such as computer/smart phone with screen reading software, refreshable braille display, DAISY player, etc. so that institutions can focus on the conversion of materials in accessible digital format. This digital document will then become audio, braille, or large print on the device of the person with disability. For example, if a person with blindness needs his/her materials in braille, then, it would be preferable to provide such students with a refreshable braille display along with the digital text readable on it. Similarly, for persons with hearing disabilities, the material should be provided through sign language or evolving technologies for Indian sign language translation.

Suggested workflow for institutions is:

1. Faculty and students with disabilities determine required instructional materials in an accessible format
2. Requirement is given to the designated person of the institution
3. Designated person organizes accessible format copy of the instructional material through

- a. Searching resources of accessible format books and if not available in an accessible format already, then:
 - (i) Get material converted to accessible format through book conversion facility within the institution or
 - (ii) Get the book converted through external resources such as conversion companies or NGOs providing such services on paid or voluntary contributions.
- b. Upload the accessible book on Sugamya Pustakalaya (national repository of accessible format books)
- c. Deliver the book in the desired format to persons with disabilities or inform them that their book has been made available on Sugamya Pustakalaya from where they can download the book.

3.2.4. Sugamya Pustakalaya

Sugamya Pustakalaya is a shared online library of accessible format books created jointly by the Government of India and Non-government organizations. It can be accessed online through **www.sugamypustakalaya.in**. The key objective of this online repository of accessible format books is to avoid duplication of conversion of books in an accessible format. Conversion of instructional materials in accessible format needs a lot of financial and human resources. Instructional materials required in one institution would be useful for many institutions all across the country. When there is a need for any book in an accessible format, institutions need to search for the book on Sugamya Pustakalaya. If the book is not available there, then only the conversion of the book in accessible format should be done and then uploaded on Sugamya Pustakalaya to add the same to the national collection.

Sugamya Pustakalaya has been created as a secure distribution system of accessible format materials produced under copyright exception for persons with print disabilities. It is part of the Accessible Book Consortium (ABC), Global Book Service hosted by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Partner libraries across the globe contribute their collections of accessible digital books to the ABC catalogue under the framework set out in the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled.

Thus, institutions are required to:

- Subscribe to Sugamya Pustakalaya
- Upload instructional materials and books converted to accessible format on it
- Provide membership of it to all students and faculty with print disabilities

3.3 Accessible Communication

Communication is vital for any learning environment and particularly for students with hearing impairments. To take advantage of their residual hearing, amplification systems such as loop induction and/or FM system are recommended to be installed as they are beneficial to access acoustic information including alerts.

To further enhance inclusion, videos in Indian Sign Language (ISL) should be developed for certain topics, where a deaf educator explains certain concepts in detail in sign language. It should be an additional link for those who may need it.

The HEIs / universities shall advocate the development of Total Communication Strategies as part of their academic systems along with digital technological support through hearing enhancement systems, close captioning, sign language interpretation and relay services.

3.4 Assistive Technologies for Diverse Needs

Assistive Technology plays an important role in overcoming limitations caused by disability, especially in education. For example, a computer loaded with screen reading software enables students with blindness to read and write independently in the same format or mainstream script as everyone else, making them independent for all their reading and writing needs.

As part of reasonable accommodation, the institution must ensure that every student or faculty or employee with a disability associated with them is provided the Assistive Technology required by them. The device must be accompanied with appropriate training so that they can fully utilize the Assistive Technology devices. Where relevant this must be accompanied by awareness-raising activities and sensitization programmes for different stakeholders such as teachers, family members etc. so that they are made aware of the usefulness of these solutions and the changes are sustainable and long-term. It is also essential to create awareness about the latest developments in the field of Assistive Technology solutions so that associated persons with disabilities can take full benefit of these solutions and acquire skills to use them for furthering their quality education and livelihood prospects.

For this, institutions of higher education shall:

- a) Organise at least one awareness and orientation seminar or workshop per year on the latest Assistive Technology solutions relevant for quality education and livelihood prospects.
- b) Create or associate with Assistive Technology resource centers where persons with disabilities could experience and choose appropriate Assistive Technology solutions with the help of Assistive Technology experts.
- c) Provide appropriate Assistive Technology devices to the associated persons with disabilities at subsidized rates or free of cost.
- d) Organise training for persons with disabilities to use Assistive Technology solutions.
- e) Organise awareness and orientation events for the teachers and family members of persons with disabilities about Assistive Technology solutions so that capabilities developed through these solutions could be fully utilized and made part of teaching and learning methodologies. For example events for teachers, students with disabilities, and their peers on how to create accessible formats of documents.
- f) HEIs would maintain a suggestive list of Assistive Technology solutions that may be provided under the subsidy scheme to persons with disabilities. A specific scheme may be formulated for this purpose.
- g) Work with persons with disabilities to provide the best service at their visit, consult local communities and empanelled vendors to integrate assistive technology into their usage to meet the requirement of a varied range of disabilities.

https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/CWSN_E_Content_guidelines.pdf

4

Inclusive Mobility Infrastructure





Inclusive Mobility Infrastructure

Mobility is critical to all forms of life including education. It is therefore extremely relevant and important to enhance accessibility to HEIs through inclusive mobility infrastructures keeping in view mobility to, from and in HEIs. This includes physical infrastructure for mobility like streets, kerbs, side walks, etc. along with para transit systems that a campus provides for mobility on its premises.

All HEIs should get a mobility audit survey conducted of the campus to identify the needs of accessibility and sustainable mobility infrastructure for the diversity of students and staff and prepare a 'mobility action plan' to implement the same in a time-bound manner.

4.1 Mobility to Campuses of HEIs (Public Transit Systems)

The absence of reliable and accessible mobility options to and from the Higher Educational Institutions can be a huge barrier for enrolment and retention of students with disabilities but also staff with disabilities in the higher education system. The HEIs need to network with the public or state transport agencies to provide sustainable and accessible public transport facilities to the HEIs campus and back. These public transport means should respect the travel passes /concessional students passes provided by the Central or State governments. Until accessible public transport facilities have been organized, the HEIs should provide suitable accessible transport for attending the HEIs to persons with disabilities. The accessible vehicles so provided may be either low floor or with lift facilities and shall have wheelchair restraint systems for enhanced safety besides other support systems.

Besides the above mentioned focus to evolve campus mobility systems, it is equally important to ensure that HEIs / universities provide accessible connectivity with diverse means of transport.

4.2 Inclusive Mobility on Campus

The universities / HEIs shall ensure first to last mile connectivity on their campuses to ensure inclusive mobility for all. The HEIs shall provide wheelchair-accessible battery-run shuttle service vehicles or other appropriate alternates to move within campus to specific destinations enhancing connectivity . This may also include provision of accessible mobility services from nearest mobility hubs to the HEI campus. Inclusive mobility within campus such as from the hostels to the departments, classrooms, libraries etc. shall require to cater to diverse disability types including invisible disabilities related to hearing, vision, cognition, etc. The personal mobility for persons with disabilities shall be enhanced by offering need-based personal mobility devices such as wheelchairs, battery-run adaptations to wheelchairs, adapted scooters, smart canes and other assistive technologies as deemed fit by utilizing the existing government schemes or by introducing new schemes at the level of HEIs. While assessing the needs, persons with disabilities shall be consulted for their preference and suitability of the mobility device.

4.3 Street infrastructure within HEI campuses

4.3.1 The HEI campus must develop street infrastructure with accessible pedestrian pathways that are at least 1800 mm wide for two-way movement. The pathways should be continuous without breaks and have a firm, level, and non-slip surface and be well lit for use in low light conditions. Level crossings, traffic calming measures at appropriate junctions, accessible bollards, tactile pathways, appropriate seating heights in street furniture and a whole range of elements of mobility infrastructure needs to adhere to various relevant codes including Harmonised Guidelines & Standards for Universal Accessibility in India, 2021 issued by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Govt. of India.

4.3.2 There should be accessible seating facilities provided along the street in the campus every 30 meters that don't block the pedestrian access facility. Enhancing walkability and making walkways wheelchair friendly is highly recommended as a priority for all HEIs. Not only this shall promote higher accessibility, but also advance measures for environmental sustainability. It is therefore important that street and mobility infrastructures are well designed, regularly monitored and maintained, audited for accessibility to ensure inclusive mobility for all. Where feasible, mobility alternatives such as cycling and related infrastructure such as bike-sharing systems should also be developed in the HEI campus. Similarly, parking spaces including accessible parking spaces for cars and adapted vehicles shall be earmarked near all important buildings expecting students and staff with disabilities.

4.3.3 Accessible Drop off and boarding points should be provided on the campus where users can safely board and deboard the public / HEIs transport options near the facilities, units, or departments. Besides the above, accessible parking provisions for adapted scooters or other mobility devices of persons with disabilities and creation of reserved car and two wheeler parking be adopted across all HEIs.

4.3.4 Further details for various elements of accessible street infrastructure like kerbs, kerb ramps, street furniture, tactile pathways etc. may be referred from the Harmonised Guidelines & Standards for Universal Accessibility in India, 2021 issued by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Govt. of India.

4.4 GPS Mapping or Bluetooth beacon-based technologies to enhance orientation in the campus

While an allocentric understanding of the environment is aided by constructing tactile and visual maps and by walking through the environment, accessible GPS mapping is a wonderful means to develop and reinforce an allocentric perspective and aid in easy mobility and orientation of persons with disabilities particularly those with vision disabilities within the HEI campus.

The HEIs should enhance the accessibility of the campus by GPS mapping or using Bluetooth beacon-based technologies so that persons with disabilities can locate different departments, buildings, services, etc. through the use of technology.

4.5 Signage and Wayfinding

HEIs / Universities need to strengthen the infrastructure for accessible information systems through appropriate wayfinding systems, digital systems integrations and other measures across the campuses. For better orientation within the campus, accessible signage – informative and directional shall be provided in compliance with accessibility regulations. Visual and Tactile Maps shall be provided uniformly across HEIs / universities to enhance way finding within the campus and buildings. Raised kerbs or tactile pavers shall be installed along with the pathways to guide users with vision disabilities for improved outdoor navigation in a holistic way. Electronic and Digital Signage Systems embedded with audio support and high visual contrast are also increasingly used to enhance accessibility for the diversity of users. Font type size of text, and illumination levels should comply with approved accessibility standards (Refer Chapter 5, Harmonised Guidelines & Standards for Universal Accessibility in India, 2021)

Signage for emergency systems and alarms needs to be ensured at high priority, especially guiding to the nearest exits and accessible public assembly areas.

It is also to be ensured that all signage and information systems are adequately illuminated and well maintained to facilitate mobility and wayfinding for all.

4.6 Provision of Repair/Maintenance of Mobility infrastructure and devices

The HEIs should make provisions for constant upkeep and maintenance of mobility infrastructure created and mobility devices given to persons with disabilities, through annual maintenance programs. Repair Counters can be established for smaller repairs that do not require replacements and in that case, an alternate device be provided to the persons with disabilities to continue to take part in the campus activities. It would be vital to ensure appropriate quality checks for ensuring minimum maintenance issues while strengthening the maintenance services on each educational campus.

Persons with disabilities should also be given prior training to use the various assistive devices and equipment.



5

Universal Accessibility in Built Infrastructure





Universal Accessibility in Built Infrastructure

Higher Education Institutes and universities require to not only envision but also ensure the idea of universal accessibility implemented in all campuses in a time bound manner across its entirety. Each campus of HEI or a university under future planning shall ensure strict compliance to accessibility norms as issued from time to time by the Government with a spirit of creating best practices of inclusive infrastructure on each campus. For all existing campuses, it is recommended to get them evaluated for accessibility through proper access audits carried out by competent access auditors leading to an action plan of implementing accessibility in various aspects of built infrastructure of HEIs. Eventually, a proper certification of “accessibility for persons with disabilities” be attained to be classified as an accessible campus.

The Access Audit Reports and the prioritized action plan should be placed on the website of the HEIs. For accessibility of built infrastructure, the standards provided under Rule 15 of the RPWD Rules along with the National Building Code (as updated from time to time) shall be followed. It shall be mandatory for HEIs/ universities and colleges to adhere to built environment accessibility standards as above for **recognition from UGC**.

It is vital to understand that accessibility is a dynamic concept and not a static one. An accessible built infrastructure if not well maintained or serviced can also become inaccessible in temporary terms. It is, therefore, crucial that the maintenance and service of built environment of each HEI is strengthened appropriately to ensure accessibility at all times and not just at the inception stage. This section focuses on key aspects of campus accessibility for their built environments and guides the various elements to be made accessible.

5.1 Site Planning of Campuses

5.1.1. Site planning of HEIs and their campuses involves the overall planning of educational environments which needs to sensitively respond to a human centric approach incorporating the principles of universal design from the beginning itself. Universal accessibility needs to start from the point of campus entrance to the total experience of being on campus in every facet of it, be it mobility, be it learning, be it recreation or any other form of activities. Site planning is one of the first steps to ensure

the holistic implementation of accessibility in the campus built and unbuilt environment including enclosed and open space planning.

5.1.2 A wide range of elements require to be designed and planned for accessibility through site planning. Some of them include kerbs, kerb ramps, side walks, open spaces, walkways, parking, levels, signage and campus maps, street crossings, street furniture, tactile pathways, public washrooms, drinking water, etc. Harmonised guidelines for universal accessibility for India, 2021 may be followed to understand the various accessibility aspects of these elements.

5.1.3 However, in specific to education environments, it is crucial to sensitively plan and design for accessible learning and interactive spaces in outdoor environments. For eg. Provision of all weather spaces for interaction with proper access route for pedestrians and wheelchairs should be planned for inclusion in the campus sites. Tactile pathways through use of appropriate materials shall be continuous on these access routes and make proper interconnections to support independent mobility of persons with visual impairments.

5.1.4 Site planning needs to ensure access to sports infrastructure for all including persons with diverse or limited functional abilities or impairments. Access to outdoor and indoor sports complexes shall ensure equal opportunities for participation in the overall campus life of a student.

5.1.5 Considering diverse geographical and climatic contexts of India for various HEIs, appropriate measures need to be taken to ensure access in extreme climatic conditions like in heavy rainfall led areas, snow contexts or extremely high temperatures, etc. Design of built forms, their elements and material specifications need to respond to the above mentioned situations to ensure accessibility at all times.

The HEI campuses should be planned and designed as an integral unit from the very beginning of the design process incorporating accessibility and universal design and planning each facility/component from alighting points, pathways, parking, ramps, tactile ground surface indicators, toilets, and urinals for ambulant and non-ambulant users, lifts, stairs, signages, etc. The accessibility is not a one-time affair and should be maintained as universally accessible for the life of the facility or product.

5.1.6 The minute access features, such as stable, firm, level, slip-resistant, and preferably matt finish surfaces on all kinds of floors, walkway, ramps, and stairs; installation of circular handrails on both sides for required load-bearing; doors – their lever handles, widths, opening forces, vision panels and kick plates; heights of washbasins, controls, commode seats, bevelling thresholds and addressing level changes, mirrors, TGSi placements, ergonomics, wall signage with raised tactile and

braille in good colour contrast, etc need to be ensured meeting the requisite design standards in the approved national guidelines above.

5.1.7 Pedestrian pathways should be smooth, hard, and have a leveled surface suitable for walking and wheeling. Irregular surfaces such as cobble stones, coarsely exposed aggregate concrete, bricks, etc. often cause bumpy rides and should be avoided. The minimum walkway width for two-way traffic should be 1800 mm. The pathway should have a tactile orientation to enhance orientation for users with visual disabilities and have kerb ramps at the crossings. The pathway should connect all sub buildings and elements in the campus.

5.1.8 Access routes/ Floor surfaces should not have any projections, drops, or an unexpected variation in level. A vertical clearance of 2100 mm should be ensured on the accessible pathway and there should be no obstacles protruding into the pathway or access route. Where unavoidable, protruding objects should not reduce the clear width of an accessible route or manoeuvring space. Free-standing columns and posts within an access route should incorporate a band of 200 mm, between heights of 1400 mm and 1600 mm from the walkway floor surface. Lighting should illuminate the walkway and lighting fixtures not exceeding a height of 4m from ground level should be provided. White lighting at an average 35-40 lux be provided to ensure colour contrast of tactile pavers and visible at night to persons with low vision. Ensure that the lighting poles are located in tree planting zones and do not reduce the width clearance of pathways.

5.2 Academic Buildings and Learning Spaces

[Classrooms, Libraries, Laboratories, and other learning environments]

5.2.1 Academic & Learning Spaces

Academic purpose infrastructure extending into other learning spaces as an integrated whole shall be made universally accessible focusing on spaces like classrooms, lecture theatres, seminar rooms, tutorial rooms, laboratories of all kinds, along with all interactive spaces (both indoor and outdoor) across HEIs.

The academic spaces shall provide easy access to different levels in the built environment through ramps and lifts and sufficient circulation spaces to manoeuvre and turn for people using mobility devices or assistive technologies and equipment such as walkers, wheelchairs, etc. Various controls should be provided at reachable heights and seating, working and learning tables providing knee clearances of 680-700mm, and space for approach and use of 900mm x 1350mm.

5.2.2 Library Facilities

The teaching boards shall be preferably with an adjustable height feature or low height so that a teaching faculty using a wheelchair or one with a short stature could also easily use it. Raised Platforms for faculty should be avoided where possible and provided safe and convenient ramped access, where unavoidable. The seating in the class should be designed to accommodate students of varied learning styles and abilities. It needs to ensure adequate manoeuvring space for wheelchairs in the aisles of the classroom furniture. A typical wheelchair turning diameter is assumed in the range of 1500 to 1800 mm for all general purposes of spatial planning.

The library and knowledge resource centres shall ensure access for all. This involves having an accessible entrance features along with other aspects of the library facilities and equipment should be accessible and all open book stacks should be placed at or able to be pulled down to accessible heights for persons with disabilities. Aisle spaces shall ensure wheelchair manoeuvrability in library spaces. Inclusive infrastructure and spatial arrangement should be made for people with hearing and vision disabilities who need assistance while reading. Wherever library infrastructure poses limitations to reasonable accommodations, it needs to be ensured that library services are then rendered to the students / persons with disabilities.

5.2.3 Hybrid Education Accessibility

The built environment of the HEIs should facilitate hybrid and blended modes of education. Necessary equipment, technology should be deployed in the classroom that allows hybrid learning possible to include students with diverse abilities. Where students need support in terms of equipment, data connectivity etc, the same may be provided by the HEIs under different schemes. Procurement of such equipment and technologies shall be complying with procurement guidelines referred hereafter.

5.2.4 Illumination in the learning spaces

To improve the education environment, classrooms and learning spaces need good lighting. Good lighting makes the students feel safe, improves learning. A lighting level of 250-300 lux is appropriate in a classroom where students spend most of their time and focus on learning. To draw attention to the area where the teacher is located, to contribute to the students' concentration, higher illumination levels of 500-750 lux are preferable. Lighting should be positioned in a way to provide sufficient lighting on the face of the faculty so that lip reading is possible for students with hearing disabilities. Adults require 500 lux as visual acuity decreases with age. Shielded luminaires prevent irritating glare, keeping eyes fresh for longer.

For both - a classic blackboard or a modern whiteboard, the area should receive 500 lux, with a high degree of uniformity to ensure optimum perception and legibility even from the back of the room. For projection systems, presentations, or use of smart boards, it should be possible to dim the lighting system or only illuminate parts of the room as per the requirements and such controls should be accessible.

Flicker and glare is a critical issue in classroom lighting and must be avoided in all cases as they may cause eye strain and headache beyond disturbing students negatively impacting the teaching-learning process. LED lighting systems should be used which are not only energy-efficient but also reduce shadows and improve visibility.

It is encouraged to orient buildings to suit the best possible daylight features with climate responsive design and ensuring adequate contrast with classroom or space interiors. Responsive lighting to suit the contemporary needs of projector and digital based

5.2.5 Classroom Acoustics

Hearing and understanding are important parts of the learning process. A noisy classroom or a learning environment can make these tasks difficult. The class design should incorporate elements to ensure that the background noise can be kept to a minimum to facilitate the teaching-learning. Students with hearing disabilities can struggle even in rooms with the best acoustics. Good acoustic environment in classrooms requires to be created through

- (a) architectural design of classroom
- (b) use of appropriate materials for indoor surface treatment (preferably sound absorbing materials like soft boards, etc.).
- (c) use of appropriate technologies for sound emission like speaker systems, microphones, etc.

especially for large classrooms or lecture theatres. To ensure inclusion of persons with hearing impairments in classrooms, HEIs should therefore install and provide for

- a.) Appropriate state of the art technologies to augment hearing loss. For eg. Loop Induction Systems, Digital Interfaces with transcriptions, Speech to Text translations, etc.
- b.) Sign Language Interpretation for all activities academic or non- academic in learning spaces like classrooms, laboratories, auditoriums, meeting halls, conference rooms, etc.

5.2.6 Vertical Circulation

HEIs shall ensure that all buildings including their different floors that are open to use by faculty, staff, or students are accessible through ramp/lifts and all level changes are addressed for universal accessibility. For vertical rise or level difference up to 150 mm, kerb ramps or slope ramps without the need of handrails will be provided.

For level differences over 150 mm, ramps shall accompany handrails on both sides at two levels (700mm, 900mm) that provide the continuous grip/ hold during the entire incline including at landings.

Many ambulant persons with disabilities negotiate steps more easily and safely. Hence, it is preferable to provide accessibility by both steps and ramps. Where the horizontal run of the approach ramp exceeds 9000 mm length, an alternative stepped approach, in addition to the ramp approach, should be provided for people with ambulatory disabilities. The ramp gradients (ranging between 1:12 to 1:20) and width (ranging between 1200mm-1800mm) shall be in accordance with the vertical rise being addressed by the ramp, as per the approved standards.

Steps/stairs provided shall have a uniform tread and riser of 300mm and 150mm respectively with handrails on both sides at two levels to cater to people with different heights. The stair edges shall be provided with a 40mm colour contrasting band to make the level change discernible to people with vision disabilities. Tactile warning pavers shall be provided 300mm before and after the ramp/stair run.

Where there is a large change in elevation that requires multiple ramps and landing combinations, accessible lifts/ elevators shall be provided. A lift that accommodates 1500mm x 1500mm space for 90 degrees turn of a wheelchair inside the lift car shall be provided, with a preference to a 13-passenger lift. The clear door width of 900mm and lift controls inside the car and in the lift lobby shall be at reachable heights and other accessibility features such as braille, tactile controls, audio visual announcements, handrails, view mirrors, and signage to identify the accessible lift, etc. complying with the approved standards.

5.3 Assembly Areas / Auditoriums

Large congregational spaces in HEIs or universities like assembly halls, auditoriums, open air theatres, convention centres, convocation halls or senate halls, etc. have specific purpose at different times of an year to facilitate various activities. It is essential that all such spaces known by different terminologies in different campuses to ensure universal accessibility in their design, layout and in their operations as well.

This includes accessible parking provisions (reserved) outside these spaces, accessible entrances, accessible seating including access to stage / backstage areas ensuring equity for all.

It should be possible for persons with impaired mobility to access both – the stage and floor seating area. The floor for a wheelchair viewing space should be connected to an accessible path of travel and have an unobstructed view at eye level up to 1200mm and should not be reduced by standing members of the audience. The rows and seat number identification signs should be in braille and tactile to be legible for visual disability users.

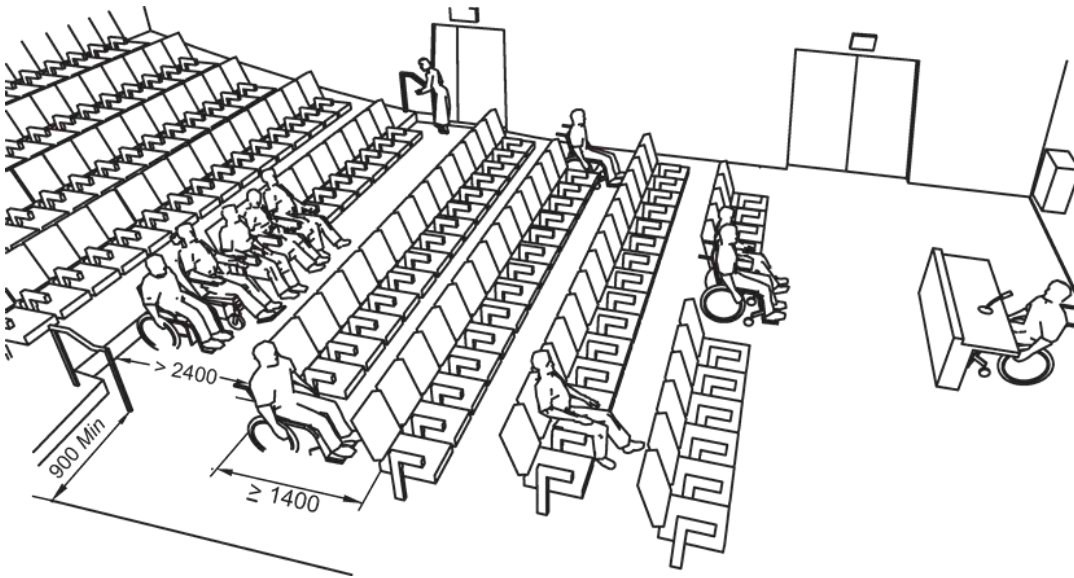


Fig.5.1 Examples of viewing spaces for wheelchair users in assembly areas/ auditoriums (source: NBC 2016)

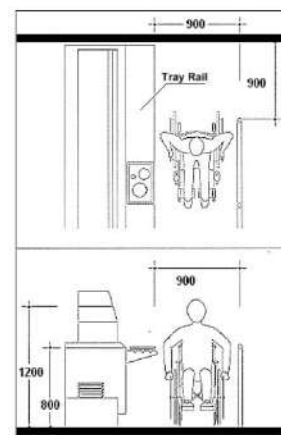
5.4 Hostels and Guest Houses

Hostels and Guest Houses in the HEIs should be designed based on universal design and accessibility and have wider doors, controls on reachable heights, and circulation spaces among other access features. 10% hostel rooms should be made friendly for wheelchair users and have attached accessible toilets complying with the approved standards. Guest houses in the HEIs should also have **atleast two rooms** accessible with attached accessible washrooms in them. Where student dormitories are provided, provision of accessible unisex washroom and bathing/shower areas should be provided on each floor complying with approved standards.

5.5 Mess, Canteens and Common Dining Facilities

Mess and canteen services provided in the HEIs should be accessible based on universal design and accessibility and existing ones should be retrofitted. In self-service canteens/ mess, tray slides and counters should be mounted at 800mm from the floor for wheelchair users.

Food shelves should be mounted at a maximum height of 1200 mm and aisle space of a minimum 900 mm should be provided. Cantilevered tables or tables with straight legs at each corner are preferable to central pedestals that might restrict wheelchair access. Stools and high tables are not suitable for wheelchair users.



Therefore, accessible tables should be provided as well. (see figure: Height of food shelf and aisle space for easy access (source: United Nations - <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/designm/AD3-01.htm>))

5.6 Accessible Sanitary Provisions

Sanitation systems and their adequacy remains one of the critical aspects of accessibility in Institutions of higher education across the nation. In all HEIs/Universities, it needs to be ensured that an accessible unisex toilet is made available at all strategic locations wherever the washrooms for both genders are also made available. Accessible toilets should always be signposted with international signage of accessibility.

The accessible toilets and others shall follow the Harmonised Guidelines 2021 for the same. Further, it needs to be ensured that persons with sensory disabilities (visual or hearing), persons with neuro diverse conditions and several other disabilities may also require to use the general washrooms with adaptive features like low height washbasin, low height urinal with grab rails, adapted Indian wc with grab rails and other supporting features including baby changing stations.

Independent entry and door opening outside should be provided at all locations where a general toilet is provided. The unisex toilet should be designed to also meet the needs of persons with high support needs and those with multiple disabilities).

It is recommended to use double action doors which can open in both directions especially for the accessible unisex toilets.

In the single-sex toilets (male and female), one toilet cubicle meeting the requirements for ambulant disabled users should be provided (with an internal dimension of 900mm x 1500mm) with a door opening outside.

In male toilets, one urinal should be provided for ambulant disabled with front handrail support with no steps/level difference to access. The law also requires an independent toilet unit for transgender persons.

The Unisex toilet and Female toilets should have bins to collect used sanitary napkins and incineration facilities. The toilet facilities in general should have a high level of hygiene and should be regularly maintained.

(For details, see Harmonized Guidelines 2021)

5.7 Administrative Spaces

The administrative spaces in the HEIs / universities should also be accessible to Persons with Disabilities. Means of access through step free entrances or through ramps and /lifts complying with the gradients and specifications should be made. Accessible reception counters alongwith assistance and accessible seating and desks should be provided in administrative offices among other things. Further, offices of administrative staff shall also ensure accessibility through doorways, maneuvering spaces, furniture types, etc. besides sensitivity to administrative staff towards persons with disabilities and others with diverse needs.

5.8 Recreational Spaces, Common rooms, Activity Rooms, Gyms/Yoga Halls,

All recreational spaces, common rooms, activity halls or rooms, gymnasium, yoga halls, etc in the HEIs should have easy access and be built on the Universal Design and accessibility parameters with step-free wider access doors. Sports and recreational equipment should be accessible and space for approach and use be ensured. Where needed, persons with disabilities be consulted for the installation of specialized exercise/sports equipment.

5.9 Accessible Parking Facilities

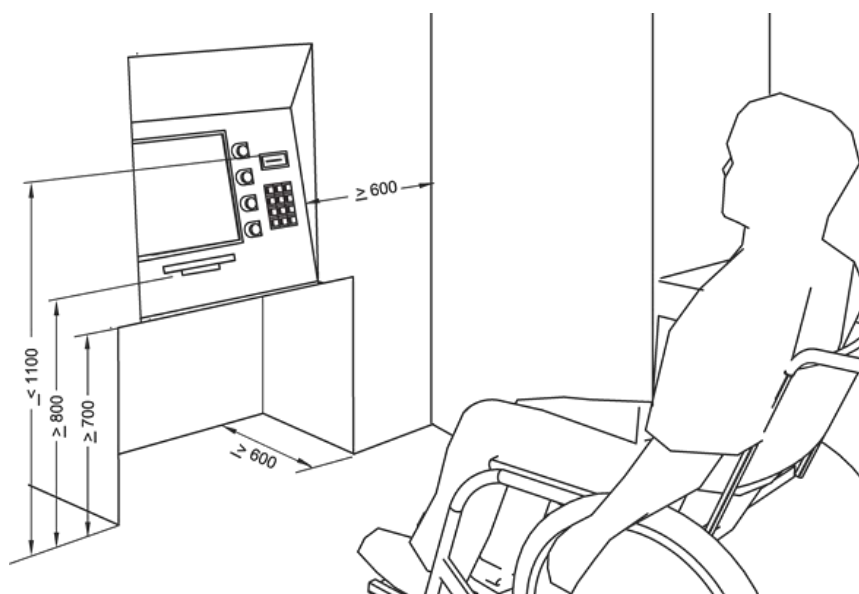
Dedicated accessible parking facilities should be earmarked, signposted within 30 meters of various departments, buildings for cars, and adapted four-wheelers and two-wheelers with side wheels. Misuse of these facilities by non-disabled users should be prevented through regulatory means and be progressively monitored.

Parking facilities shall connect with the main entrances of the buildings through a proper access route facilitating access for all. Tactile pathways to facilitate persons with visual impairments shall be ensured across all such access pathways.

5.10 Campus Amenities: Banks, ATMs, Post Office, Shops, etc.

Amenities provided on the campus shall ensure physical accessibility for persons with disabilities. Banks and ATMs will have ramps with handrails, wider doors for easy access. The counter height shall be dual so that standing and sitting users could easily transact in the banks. The ATM/ vending machines installed in the HEIs shall be of low height with knee clearance, with space for approach and use, and safety features complying with the approved guidelines. These should be braille enabled and have a jack or alternative mechanisms for hearing output for people with vision disabilities.

(see figure below. Accessible Vending Machine (source: NBC))



5.11 Accessible Signage in the campus/buildings

People need clear information about the purpose and layout of spaces to maintain a sense of direction and independent use of a building. Often visual and tactile information is reinforced by audible information. Information may take the form of visual information (e.g. signs, notice boards), audible information (e.g. public address and security systems, induction loops, telephones, and infrared devices), or tactile information (e.g. signs with embossed lettering or Braille).

To enhance orientation and wayfinding on campus, all HEIs, should get a signage audit done for their campus covering the following areas:

- a. the location, accessibility, layout, and height of signs;
- b. the type of fonts, size of lettering, symbols, and their reading distances;
- c. the use of tactile letters and symbols and braille;
- d. visual contrast and lighting/signage illumination;
- e. the finished surfaces of materials used for signs and symbols;
- f. the simultaneous use of audible cues;
- g. integration with any other communication systems.
- h. tactile maps and models for orientation.

The International Symbol of Accessibility must be displayed at all accessible entrances. If an entrance is not accessible, directions to an accessible route, including the symbol, must be provided. Similar guidelines refer to elevators, evacuation and refuge areas, restrooms and bathing facilities, etc.

Tactile maps or models should be provided to help the visual disabilities users who may be unable to read signs, and people with hearing disabilities who may not be able to understand verbal directions for navigating around a building.

The signage material should be non-reflective, preferably a matt finish. It should have a non-glary and non-glossy surface. Natural and artificial light should be such so as not to produce a glare on the signage surface. The material of all signage should be chosen to reduce wear and tear and possible damage by vandalism and at the same time easy to maintain.

5.12. Accessible Emergency Preparedness

In all HEIs, accessible fire exits should be marked by placing signages. Fire escape plan, emergency alarm both audio (hooter type) and visual (flashing bulb) to be provided at strategic locations to be accessible to the users with vision and hearing disabilities. The evacuation route should be free of any level difference and should be kept free from obstacles such as furniture, coolers, AC units, flower pots, etc. Signage should be placed at various important locations. Exit Routes should be at least 1200 mm wide, to ensure that a person using a wheelchair and a non-disabled person can pass each other along the route. Fire extinguishers may be placed at strategic locations in the building, preferably recessed so as not to become protruding barriers beyond the detection range of white cane in circulation spaces. Assembly points for the area of rescue assistance/refuge area for persons with disabilities should be earmarked and be made

accessible through the route that connects them. The earmarked area should preferably be open to the sky and easily accessible and should also be easy to evacuate from by the emergency responders.

A communication system that allows two-way communications – both visual & auditory should be available at the assembly point/ refuge point. Many persons with disabilities can be active contributors to disaster mitigation such as fire & other emergencies. They should not be always presumed to be passive recipients of assistance. A fire extinguisher should be placed at a height of 750-900 mm from the ground so that in case of emergency, persons with disability can also operate the same. Persons with a disability should also be trained to use such tools so that they can help themselves and others in case of emergency. *For further details approved accessibility standards such as the Harmonised Guidelines 2021 and National Building Code may be referred.*



6

Accessible Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Systems





6

Accessible Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Systems

6.1. Equitable Access to Curriculum

All students can learn. Disability inclusion in education needs to build systems of support. Access to education only can be possible with an accessible curriculum. Self-esteem and learning process is impaired if the curriculum and teaching are not accessible to some of the students.

- 6.1.1 Equitable access to education is safeguarded by reducing inequality by eliminating issues related to curriculum design, teaching and learning. Accessible curriculum and effective instructional practices bring quality education for students with disabilities. This leads to a change in people's beliefs about what such students know and can do. Inclusive policies lead to inclusive practices and that ultimately further lead to an inclusive culture in HEIs by creating an atmosphere where everybody feels valued and supported.
- 6.1.2. Accessibility is relevant to all individuals and processes associated with curriculum design, teaching, assessment as well as student support. An accessible curriculum should be supported by an accessible infrastructure of student support services and interfaces across the higher education institutions.

6.2. Delivering Accessible Curriculum

Delivering an accessible curriculum is more of a process by means of anticipating diverse preferences, needs, abilities among students and providing in-built flexibility and anticipatory adjustment. An accessible curriculum contributes to equality, inclusion, participation and engagement among students that leads to students' optimum learning outcome, satisfaction and wellbeing. The accessible curriculum not only anticipates and expects diverse needs, abilities and preferences among its students but also teachers and assessors. Hence accessibility is a marker of quality in curriculum and a legal requirement.

Diverse learners are resources, not deficits in the classroom. To ensure equitable participation in learning, the students should be able to benefit in a meaningful way from the curriculum and teaching-learning process. Presentation of

materials, engagement with material and assessment of learning should be flexible with required accommodation and adaptations/modifications.

6.2.1. **Accommodation** is a specific tool or a device or a strategy designed to support the needs of persons with disabilities. The use of specific language or media to accommodate the specific needs of a student such as Braille, screen reading devices, Indian sign language, or Alternative Augmentative Communication (AAC) are a few examples that ensure equitable participation.

6.2.2. Furthermore, **adaptations or modifications** are changes in the level or method of instruction that a student receives as a result of his or her specific disability. Additional teaching time, personalized learning support, reduced difficulty level are a few examples of adaptation. It should be designed in such a way that accommodation and modifications do not affect full access to the curriculum.

6.3. Provision of Flexibility and Adjustment in an Accessible Curriculum

An accessible curriculum uses formats, processes and language which anticipate the need for choices, flexibility and reasonable adjustment in teaching and assessment. Thus, higher education institutions need to develop their accommodation policy and procedure to avail these. This would clearly state about the accommodation plan and its implementation. Accommodation should include alternate formats and instructional materials.

6.3.1. The **alternate formats** should be made available by conversion of one format into another to make the content accessible. The common converted formats are: electronic version of print material, print to Braille or audio or large print, captioning of video, transcription of video or audio materials.

6.3.2. **Choices for instruction materials** need to be broadened. Reasonable efforts should be made by the faculty and institutions to make resources available such as course text books/e-books, audio/visual multimedia materials, online course contents. Additional efforts need to be made to prepare class handouts, a list of required and recommended reading, assignment information, grading rubrics, test and examination-related materials.

6.3.3. **Difficulty level** may be decided as per the learning profile of the student. The faculty needs to (i) adapt skill level, problem type or rules on how the learner may approach the work, (ii) allow the use of a calculator, (iii) set up word bank for weekly vocabulary words, spelling words, (iii) provide page numbers and paragraph to help students find answers, (iv) simplify written

directions by limiting words and numbering steps and pages, (v) simplify task directions. The faculty should make homework relevant to what has been covered in class.

6.4. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Besides structured learning, incidental learning in higher educational institutions (observation, social interaction, Problem-solving) also contributes greatly to the educational outcomes of the students with disabilities. Equitable access reduces stress and improves opportunities as well as the capability of the student with diverse needs to learn from the environment. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) plays a significant role. SEL focuses on students' needs for motivation, social connectedness, and self-regulation as prerequisites for learning. The development of a safe social and emotional learning climate is a must and also considered as a prerequisite for SEL through positive acceptance and interactions by peers and teachers. Students must feel that they have somebody to speak to when they are worried or upset. The teachers make themselves available to talk to them privately. The teaching-learning environment needs to provide opportunities to diverse students to improve their social skills too.

6.5. Adaptations in Teaching-Learning Process

As per need, the faculty may bring modifications or adaptations in the teaching-learning process in terms of volume of work, time, support, level of difficulty, participation and physical adaptation.

- 6.5.1. **Reduce the volume of work** by considering to; (i) optimise the amount of copying, (ii) optimise the number of problems, (iii) optimise the number of terms that the student must learn at one time, (iv) optimise the number of concepts that need to be introduced in a given time. The teacher needs to coordinate assignments with other teachers to avoid overload on the part of the student and reduce homework assignments or modify them when students get stressed.
- 6.5.2. Faculty needs to **adjust the time** in respect of (i) allowing extra time in class or outside for completion, (ii) providing additional time on task with an overview of the lesson before actual teaching, (iii) allowing extra time to complete a project, (iv) allow the student to take short breaks. Personalized support may be given by individualizing a timeline for a student for completing a task.
- 6.5.3. Students need **support** from time to time. Provide the support by (i) increasing the amount of personal assistance with a specific learner, (ii) assigning peer buddies or peer tutors, (iii) providing cooperative work in a

small group, (iv) copying notes from the presentation so the student who cannot write well or listen effectively can have notes to study. The faculty may prepare additional materials that the student can use at home.

6.6. Accessible Library Resources

The library also needs to follow a reasonable accommodation policy to make the library resources available in alternate formats, procure multimedia/video resources and make arrangements to provide alternate and accessible format materials to the persons with disabilities. Library facilities and services should include talking books library networked through '**Talking Book Libraries in India**'. Also, the facility should have a print-accessible library so that any content of the library can be accessible to all including users having disabilities. 'Bookshare International', the world's largest online library offers an accessible e-Book for people with reading barriers.

6.7. Universal Design for Learning for Creating an Equitable Classroom

No single method can reach all learners; hence there is a need of having multiple pathways to achieve the goals of instruction. Universal Design is not just a technique for special education; rather it is a technique to enhance learning of all students in an inclusive manner. The faculty needs to consider **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** for the following key .

- 6.7.1. It follows universality and equity. Planning of learning opportunities must cover the learning of all students, whatever their level of achievement, and help each one reach his or her potential.
- 6.7.2. It follows flexibility and inclusiveness. The planning of teaching and the time teachers allocate to students' activities must be sufficiently flexible to provide real learning experiences for all students, regardless of their performance level. Students are accommodated through different teaching strategies and learning materials that are relevant, engaging, and responsive to their learning needs; that makes use of all the senses; and that vary in form, level of difficulty, and manner of presentation;
- 6.7.3. It considers appropriately designed space. A learning environment should ensure that for example: (i) all students have a clear line of sight, (ii) all learning materials, including print, electronic, and interactive texts, are within comfortable reach of all students, (iii) there is adequate space for assistive devices.
- 6.7.4. It follows the principle of simplicity. Teachers can avoid unnecessary complexity and minimize distracting information by (i) Communicating consistent and achievable expectations, (ii) collaborating with students to

construct learning goals, using clear, student-friendly language, (iii) arranging information sequentially to clarify its relative importance, (iv) breaking instructions down into small steps, (v) providing descriptive feedback during the learning.

- 6.7.5. Safety is a precondition for learning. Classrooms must be safe both physically and emotionally. They must provide a caring and safe environment that is engaging, inclusive, and respectful of all students and promotes student achievement and well-being, allowing every student to learn to the best of his or her ability.

6.8. Applying Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as an approach shall be encouraged in higher education institutions by using a variety of teaching and learning materials that represent all modalities (i.e., that make use of all the senses, that employ different media, and so on). Use of multiple means of presentation, at various levels of difficulty, as deemed appropriate for the students in the class (e.g., present information using visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic formats during instruction; this includes auditory as well as a visual mode of language including Sign Language). Make varied use of space ensuring flexible models of learning. Ensure access to various types of information and communication technology tools to facilitate learning and adequate space and a minimum of distractions, so that students can concentrate on instructional elements. It is important to ensure that the classroom is a caring and safe learning environment. Teachers need to act as facilitators and are encouraged to move out of their comfort zone and concentrate on (i) listening to the learners from diverse needs, (ii) reflecting on experience while doing teaching-learning adjustment for all students means 'all' including students with diverse needs, (iii) Rethinking for improving the teaching-learning process on a regular basis.

6.9. Designing Accessible Course Materials

Developing accessible courses/ course materials is the key task for any higher education institution to support inclusion. It is important to ensure that the students with disabilities can engage and interact with the content in a way similar to the students without disabilities.

6.9.1. Content developers must leverage Assistive Technology to design accessible courses. For example, videos should be available with captions for those who have hearing disabilities and there should be audio support for the students with visual disabilities. Students with visual disabilities should be able to access content using screen reader technology. If the PDF is simply a scanned image, the screen reader technology will not be able to read it. Then students with

reading difficulties (Dyslexia) have limited abilities to read the printed word and need access to assistive technologies that allow them to view the word and also hear it at the same time.

6.9.2. While designing accessible courses, the teachers must consider (i) easy-to-read fonts, (ii) colour contrast for the text, (iii) simple formatting, (iv) adding of audio/video files. Avoid unnecessary use of bold and italics. The audio contents should be prepared to have no background noise. It is important to include transcripts of audio and video lectures which students can access with assistive technologies.

6.10. Formulating Internal Policy for Inclusive Curricula and Teaching by HEIs

The HEIs/Universities need to prepare their own detailed internal policy and procedures for their curriculum along with teaching and learning process by including the following guiding points.

6.10.1. Curriculum should provide advanced information to students about how they will be taught, what type of activities they will need to undertake and how and why they will be assessed.

6.10.2. New teaching and learning strategies should highlight the commitment to designing and delivering accessible curricula.

6.10.3. Existing curriculum needs to be updated by including teaching methods, learning outcomes and assessment design to ensure support for diverse student abilities, needs and preferences.

6.10.4. Expert committee for approval of curriculum or courses should routinely include an individual who can address matters of accessibility in curriculum design.

6.10.5. Institutions should develop a code of practice on teaching and learning that requires lecture notes, slides or other course materials to be made available to the students in advance. Sign language support services (like sign language interpreters, relay services, training, technology solutions as services, etc.) also should be made available wherever required.

6.10.6. HEIs/Universities should organize training of its faculty members on accessible curriculum and inclusive teaching-learning process (for eg. Use of appropriate pedagogy, augmentative and alternative modes, diverse means and formats of communication, etc.) or encourage faculty members to receive similar training from appropriate resources.





Accessible Assessment and Examination Systems





Accessible Assessment and Examination Systems

Access to education only can be possible with an accessible curriculum and provisions for accessible assessment or examination systems. Diversification of assessment helps students having different abilities and disabilities to demonstrate their learning. Traditional and non-flexible assessment methods favour students with particular skills and preferences; and it works well for a particular group of students who have good recall under pressure and have no disability. Hence HEIs must adopt a range of assessment methods across a course/program that allows a greater number of students to show their abilities. An accessible examination system contributes to equality, inclusion, participation and engagement among students that leads to students' optimum learning outcome, satisfaction and wellbeing.

7.1. Need for Accessible Assessment

Providing an accessible assessment is more of a process through anticipating diverse preferences, needs, abilities among students and providing in-built flexibility and anticipatory adjustment. It provides equal footing and allows testing of students' knowledge, not their disability. Any modification that is used in the regular classroom that helps the person with a disability, the same should be provided during testing also.

- 7.1.1. **Assessment of learning should be flexible** and it would use required accommodation, adaptations, or modifications. For accommodating the diverse needs of a student, a specific tool or a device or a strategy should be used. The use of Braille, large print, screen reading devices, are a few examples that ensure equitable participation in the assessment process. Furthermore, adaptations or modifications are changes in the level or method of instruction that a student receives as a result of his or her specific disability.
- 7.1.2. **Accessible assessment should be an integral or inbuilt** feature of any assessment. For example, students with visual disabilities have access to the test

using a screen reader or students can personalize their view of the questions (eg. Font type, sizes or colours) or text to speech software can read out questions loud. This may help students who are dyslexic or with vision disabilities who can independently access the meaning of questions or accompanying resources.

7.2. Enabling Assessment Process Accessible

To make the assessment process accessible, change in test procedure or material, timing, setting, scheduling, presentation or response format is required. The use of assistive devices should be permitted and encouraged. Modifications used cannot change the meaning or comparability of scores of the tests.

The assessment of students with disabilities needs to consider several conditions for a realistic assessment.

- 7.2.1. If the test taker is yet to master the target skill due to insufficient or inadequate instruction, then the test taker needs to go through an extended or adapted learning process before the assessment.
- 7.2.2. If the students lack the necessary capabilities to have access to test items, then due to certain disabilities they may not be able to respond to the task. So, the students should be provided training on how to develop accessing skills.
- 7.2.3. If the student performs poorly due to limited accessibility, then develop the accessing skill or modify the test item. For example, assessment of mathematics may place a high burden on reading skills and subsequently cause access problems due to reading difficulties rather than math skills.
- 7.2.4. If the student performs poorly due to inappropriate task presentation itself due to the design flaws related to an error in a test item, inconsistencies, omission or insufficient instruction, then assessment/test should have been properly vetted/moderated for flawless design and accessibility.

To make assessment more realistic, sufficient attention must be given so that the test has (i) accessible test items, (ii) items amenable to accommodation, (iii) simple, clear and intuitive instructions and procedure, (iv) maximum readability and comprehension-ability, (v) maximum legibility.

7.3. Existing Provisions for Concessions in Examinations for Students with Disabilities

UGC Notification F.No. 6-2/2013 (SCT) dated 14 January 2019 has made the following provisions for conducting written examinations for persons with benchmark disabilities as per the guidelines issued on 29th August 2018 by DoEPwD of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

- 7.3.1. The facility of Scribe/Reader/Lab Assistant should be allowed to any persons with benchmark disabilities as defined under section 29(r) of RPwD Act, 2016 and has limitations in writing including that of speed if so desired by him/her (Blindness, Locomotor Disability [both arms affected-BA and cerebral palsy]).
- 7.3.2. Persons with benchmark disabilities should be given as far as possible, the option for choosing the mode for taking an examination, i.e., in Braille, or the computer or in large print or even by recording the answers as the examining bodies can easily make use of technology to convert question paper in large print, e-text, or Braille, can also convert the Braille text in English or regional languages.
- 7.3.3. Compensatory time (i.e., extra/additional time) should not be less than 20 minutes per hour of examination for the candidates who are allowed to use Scribe/Reader/Lab Assistant.
- 7.3.4. Candidates should be allowed to use assistive devices like talking calculators in examination (in a case where calculators are allowed), tailor frame, Braille slate, abacus, geometry kit, Braille measuring tape and AAC devices like communication chart and electronic devices.
- 7.3.5. Proper sitting arrangements (preferable on the ground floor) should be made before the commencement of the examination to avoid confusion or distraction during the day of the examination. Examination center also should be accessible to persons with disabilities.
- 7.3.6. Examining body should also provide reading materials in Braille or e-text or on a computer having suitable screen reading software for open book examination. Similarly, online examination should be in accessible format i.e., websites, question papers and all other study materials should be accessible as per the international standards laid down in this regard.
- 7.3.7. Alternate objective questions in lieu of descriptive questions should be provided for candidates with hearing disabilities in addition to the existing policy of giving alternate questions in lieu of questions requiring visual inputs for candidates with visual disabilities.

(For details, the complete guideline may be referred at UGC website or https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/7348678_Guidelines_Exam-Divyangjan-JAN-2019.pdf)

7.4. Considering Accessible and Flexible Assessment Process

Universities/HEIs may consider further support for the candidates with disabilities to make the assessment process maximum accessible and flexible. It may be noted that the support provided or reasonable accommodation extended to a person with disabilities will be on a case to case basis and will be based on the specific need of the person and not on the degree or percentage of disability of the person. This means a person who may not be a benchmark disability (above 40% disability) may be extended such reasonable accommodation / relaxation based on their specific assessed needs.

7.4.1. Assessor may consider reducing the volume of work by reducing the number of test items. While doing so the assessor may consult the candidate with disability.

7.4.2. Review frequently the student's needs and preferences for any accommodations during the test. Individual students may require an adjustment to their assessment. The student should have been familiar and availed the similar accommodations and modifications in the class tests prior to the term-end or final examinations.

7.4.3. If Possible, prepare the student for the examination by giving a pre-test one or two days before the final test. To make the student confident and comfortable for an examination, practise similar tests in pairs or small groups. He or she may dictate answers to a test to a peer or adult (scribe) Allow additional time to complete the test. Provide the opportunities to the students to describe their issues and challenges by means of self-evaluation conferences regarding the test accommodations and modifications.

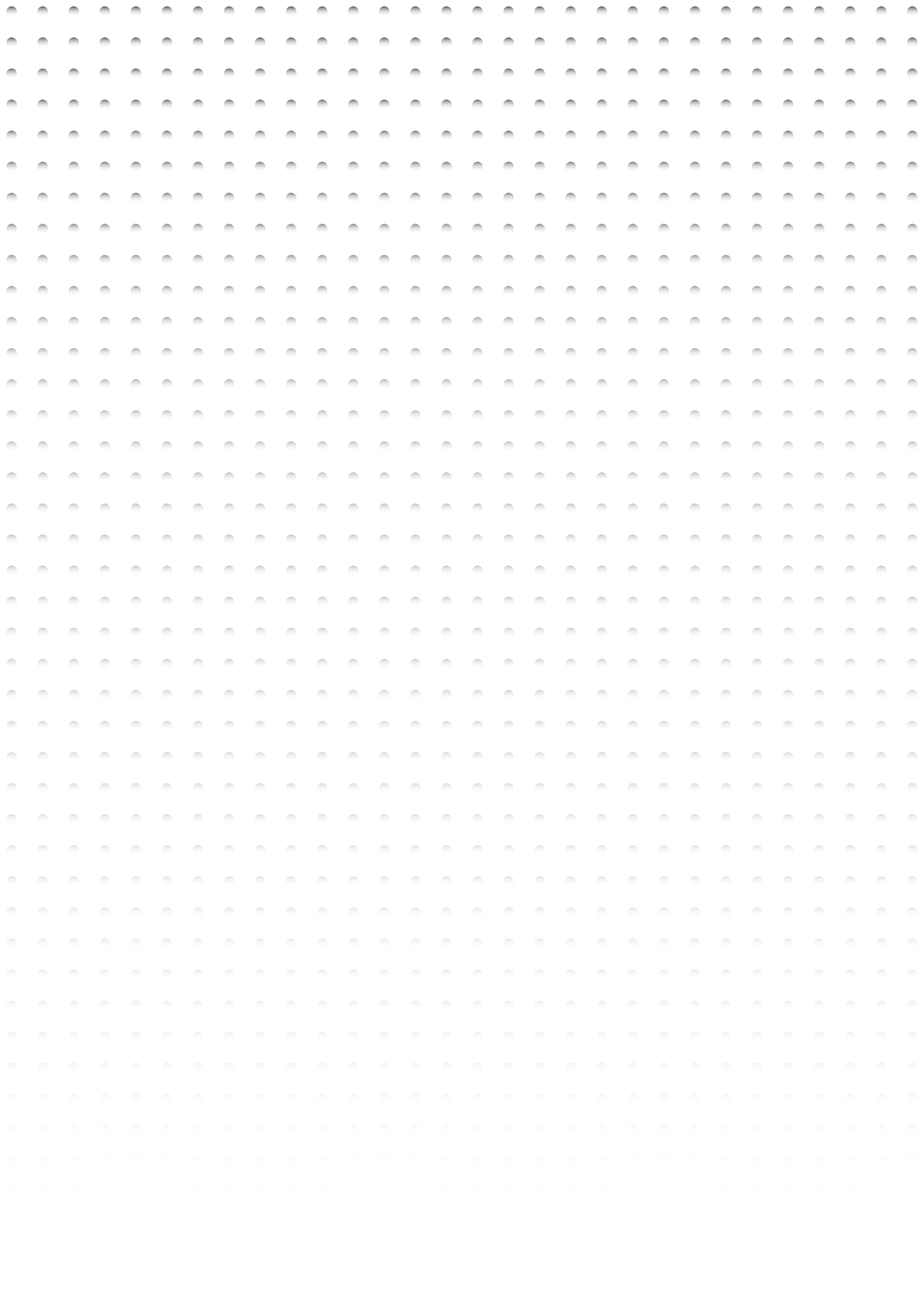
7.4.4. While giving an MCQ test requiring a, b, c, d answers, use capital letters and ask students to give answers as A, B, C, D to avoid confusion of b and d that may look alike to a student having a specific learning disability. Eliminate the choices of 'All of the above' or 'None of the above' in such tests. Vary formats such as True/False, MCQs, matching, short answers or essay type questions. If possible, give alternate tests.



8

Accessibility of Resources and Services





8

Accessibility of Resources and Services

Making provisions of equipment/resources will not serve the purpose unless due emphasis is given to provide the services and operationalization of the system effectively. Therefore, all the units under the HEIs need to be integrated to cater to the needs of the persons with disabilities to achieve the sustainable development goal of imparting quality education without any barrier and to ensure accessibility on an equitable basis without any discrimination. Where the persons with disabilities face barriers, mechanisms for addressing the same should be provided at every level in a transparent manner. An effective grievance redressal mechanism especially to ensure accessibility and inclusion must also be created at the HEIs level.

8.1 Integration of Resources and Services in an inclusive way

Resource integration refers to a mechanism that embraces deployment, grouping, sharing, and exchange of resources within the units of the establishment or with other establishments involved where proper coordination amongst the units is involved to obtain the desired result. The different units in the HEIs may integrate various resources such as physical, teaching-learning, knowledge, software, etc. to attain the desired goal. Such integration of resources would help the person with disability to have universal access in all the units along with the movement and the services.

The creation of enabling units for persons with disabilities, equal opportunity cells etc. are the initiatives that UGC has already undertaken with the notion of resolving the issues pertaining to providing barrier-free access, provision of coordination services and assistive technologies, creating awareness and addressing the challenges or difficulties faced. However, the following measures may also be adopted by the HEIs in this regard:

8.1.1 Integration of resources/services prior to the admission

A pro-active comprehensive system may be developed to accommodate the admission formalities considering the identified needs of the persons with disability. The guidelines must be developed with an appropriate mechanism to

assist the students with disabilities (physically and/or online) and be published on the website of the HEIs with fully-operative-communication systems. The HEIs may designate the officials who will assist or attend to the queries raised and resolve their problems in the admission process. The admission information must be displayed on the website with a full description of the process in audio/video mode with a separate column along with contact details of designated officials.

8.1.2 Availability of the Resources

After the need identification, all the required equipment/services need to be made available at all the units (e.g. library, photocopying services area, labs, resource centers, etc.). The above mentioned resources and services shall be made available promptly with a minimum lag time.

8.1.3 Remedial Classes

The HEIs shall support the persons with disabilities to cope up with their studies. All the issues pertaining to teaching-learning aspects shall be resolved timely. Remedial classes shall be provided to the persons with disabilities in formats and methods based on their specific needs. However, faculty members may also voluntarily come forward to provide remedial classes. The HEIs shall make a record of the number of persons with disabilities opted for the remedial classes after issuance of present guidelines. (Ref: UGC scheme for funding remedial classes may be referred to.)

8.1.4 Integration of E-contents

HEIs shall integrate the various technology-based platforms such as SWAYAM/DIKSHA etc. with teaching-learning considering the diverse needs of the persons with disabilities. Wherever the e-contents have been made available or being made available, it shall be provided in different formats accessible to all the persons with disabilities.

8.1.5 Scholarships & Beneficiary Schemes

Students with disabilities shall be provided with an appropriate and accessible information along with support regarding applications to various government, private or other scholarships or beneficiary schemes from time to time.

8.1.6 Internships, Training and Placement Services

HEIs must assist and support students with disabilities to gain successful employment in the public as well as private sectors after completing their degree programmes. The various notifications regarding employment schemes, important dates, application processes, etc. shall be made available in accessible

formats to diverse students with disabilities. HEIs must play a proactive role in engaging with various industry partners, bodies and various other agencies for the field or practical learning through internships or training programmes alongwith possibilities for final placements in them.

Creating awareness of inclusive employment and potentials of persons with disabilities across both prospective employers and also amongst student communities shall remain a regular activity across all HEIs and universities.

8.2 Healthcare and Para-Medical facilities

HEIs must prepare the necessary guidelines and adopt mechanisms to provide healthcare and para-medical facilities to persons with diverse disabilities in accordance with Section 25(1) and (2) of The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Compliance with these provisions would entail the operationalization of the system. The paras and sub-paras of 8.1 may be made applicable to take care of the health facilities of persons with disabilities.

Accessible communication support systems be incorporated in health care systems for diverse disabilities such as Indian Sign Language interpretation, Speech to Text conversion facilities, Tactile sign language support for deaf blind, etc.

8.3 Library Facilities

A library plays a significant role in building the knowledge base of the students. The persons with disability must be facilitated with library services as per their needs by providing them with well-structured library building ensuring barrier-free accessibility, reading material in alternative formats, assistive technologies, besides having the provision of sensitizing the existing staff to support the readers with disability in the libraries. In the case of multiple libraries in an establishment, it should encourage information exchange, resource-sharing among libraries to meet the varying needs of the readers with disabilities. The following resources/services considering the varied disabilities that should be made available to the students with disabilities and these should be read in conjunction with provisions of Chapter 2 and 3 of these guidelines.

8.3.1 Library services for persons with physical disabilities

Persons with a physical disability may require assistance in performing some of the physical tasks that may require while accessing the library. The library shall provide helping hands, adjustable furniture, self-service circulation stations, accessible toilets, signages for easy movements to assist the reader with a

physical disability. Nevertheless, the HEIs shall remain committed to provide library services for the readers with a physical disability, if not covered herein.

8.3.2 Library Services for the persons with visual disabilities

To cater to the needs of persons with visual disabilities and person with print disabilities, libraries need to provide the service of magnifiers, digital accessible information system, digitized catalogue, web-braille system, screen readers and screen magnifiers support with appropriate software such as JAWs, NVDA, Super OVA, Kurzweil etc., large-print books, scanners, converting documents via OCR reader, alternate format services, talking notice boards, provision of tactile maps at conspicuous places, accessible websites and digital libraries.

8.3.3 Library services for persons with deafness or hearing disabilities

The libraries should also provide the services to persons with deafness or hearing disabilities with assistive listening devices, augmentative and alternative communication devices, closed or open captioning videos; loop systems, audio loop and counter loop; Indian Sign Language and telecommunication devices etc. to facilitate the needs of such readers at libraries.

8.3.4 Library services for persons with cognitive disabilities

Additionally, the persons with cognitive and intellectual disabilities should also be given due care at libraries and their needs be attended to as per their requirements. The libraries after admitting the students at HEIs must assess the needs of such students and provide the services such as content in 'easy to read' or 'plain language', enlarged print, audio material, spoken-word collection, audio & video in daisy format to enhance learning and understanding.

8.4 Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM)

The University Grant Commission has issued the regulations titled as the University Grants Commission (Redress of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2019 vide its Gazette Notification on May 06, 2019, wherein the provision of constituting Students Grievance Redressal Committee (SGRC) at the collegiate, departmental, institutional and university level has been introduced. Also, an appointment of an Ombudsman to hear appeals thereupon has also been made a statutory requirement. Since the grievances lodged by persons with disability need immediate attention, the HEIs should make specific provisions to resolve the grievances of persons with disability routed through SGRC particularly around

issues addressed in these guidelines. HEIs must ensure an active and accessible grievance handling mechanism for persons with disabilities. Information about the GRM should be provided on the website of the HEIs and grievances should be accepted by email as well. All the grievances must be resolved within 15 days of the submission of such grievances. Efforts must ensure that the grievances of a particular type should not come again in observation. The record of such grievances must be maintained and be made available to the higher authorities on demand. The regulations shall be updated to include the provisions related to persons with disabilities during the next revision. [Ref: UGC (Redress of Grievances of Students) Regulations 2019].

Non-compliance of any provisions of the present guidelines shall invite punitive action under the relevant provisions of law including the UGC Act, 1956.

8.5 General Provisions

8.5.1 Repair/Maintenance of the Equipment or devices

The HEIs shall have a proper record of the equipment, devices etc. provided to the persons with a disability and the know-how of such devices/equipment. Persons with disabilities should be trained on effectively using the equipment. These need to be repaired and maintained timely without any delay. A list of empanelled vendors must be prepared so that different departments can use the same.

8.5.2 Record Maintenance

All the specific needs required by the persons with a disability must be recorded by the HEIs through a designated cell/unit/person at the time of admission. The persons with disabilities must be assisted in preparing such submissions. It would help the institutions to identify the needs and the action plan to assist such a student in need. A proper consolidated record of facilities provided and other information related thereof must be maintained by the establishments.

8.5.3 Capacity building of the Staff/Faculty/Students

The designated Staff must be provided with proper training workshops to understand the needs of students with disabilities and should be sensitive towards providing the required resources/services at the time of entering the particular unit.

9

Inclusive Campus Life





Inclusive Campus Life

Achieving an inclusive campus life in an HEI requires a comprehensive approach that considers how to fully embrace the students, faculty and staff with disability by changing the culture and not only ensuring accessibility and providing need-based specific accommodations but also creating an environment of respect and dignity for effective inclusion of diversity.

Besides meeting various statutory compliances, creating a feedback system from the students, staff and faculty with disabilities on various barriers will greatly help in strengthening the inclusive campus life of the persons with disabilities.

9.1 Guiding Principles for an Inclusive Campus

Each HEI should adopt and declare guiding principles of inclusion that promote equity, access, opportunity and the rights of persons with disability in higher education and contribute to reducing discrimination against them.

The HEIs should be guided by the principle that all persons who experience disability have:

- the right to access and participate in education.
- the ability to learn and
- the right to exercise their voice, choice and control in managing their own educational experiences.
- the right to develop to their fullest potential and to be active valued citizens in the community.
- the right to an appropriate and adequate allocation of resources to enable their right to access and participate meaningfully in education.
- the right to be safe – physically, emotionally, culturally and socially and to be treated respectfully.

9.2 Preparing HEIs campus for inclusion

The leadership at HEIs / universities should focus on the following to prepare for larger inclusive life on the campus:

9.2.1 Right attitudes to disability

Campus culture is shaped by the attitudes of administration and faculty and the lens through which disability is viewed by the various stakeholders of HEIs. Even when students do not experience outright hostility, many continue to face barriers such as generalizations and stigma. HEIs leadership at all levels needs to get involved to counteract common biases against persons with disabilities while creating an inclusive campus climate.

9.2.2 Creating a climate of inclusion

Students benefit from a diverse, inclusive campus climate, which helps prepare them for the world of work and civic and community engagement. Creating a fully inclusive climate is an ongoing journey of enhancing the understanding of disability inclusion thus it will always be evolving and changing and requires constant dialogue and involvement of persons with disabilities.

9.2.3 Constant reinforcement of inclusive culture

The HEI leadership at all levels shall be engaged in leading, messaging, and measuring improvements in inclusion. All staff should see their role in, and contribution to, inclusiveness. On-the-ground action among faculty, staff, and students need to happen in tandem with support at the level of the President, Director, Dean, Vice chancellor, or Provost who embrace disability diversity and the spirit of inclusion consistently and publicly.

9.2.4 Use of right language in the campus

The language used to refer to disability and people with disabilities can be limiting. One way to change detrimental attitudes or stigma toward disability is to intentionally use more inclusive language that dignifies people's images and expectations. Using positive images of students with disabilities from different backgrounds can also help to familiarize disabilities. Talking about disability and using inclusive language starts with how we define socially constructed concepts such as disability, diversity, and inclusion.

9.3 Accessibility in Residential Accommodation / Hostels

The HEIs should incorporate accessibility based on universal design in the campus residential accommodation and hostels such as step-free entrance, wider doors, accessible toilets, lowered controls. Existing accommodation should be made accessible by retrofitting and preference be given to allot ground floor accommodation to persons with disabilities on the campus. Faculty with disabilities, staff having a spouse with disabilities, or children with disabilities should also be allocated accessible accommodation in that preference.

It is equally important to ensure an inclusive model for room allotments in hostels for persons with such disabilities that they are well distributed into the hostel environments. This shall, however, be possible only when a hostel is designed or retrofitted for universal accessibility features.

9.4 Guest Houses

All Guest Houses or guest accommodation facilities in the HEIs shall be designed/ retrofitted and managed with universal design-based access features so that it remains accessible to the diversity of guests with disabilities. It implies developing accessibility and inclusion as core concepts in the delivery of the same.

9.5 Conference Facilities / Common Facilities

All common facilities and conference facilities in the HEI campus should be accessible complying with architectural accessibility and ICT accessibility so that all persons with disabilities can participate in them without any discrimination on an equal basis with others.

9.6 Physical / Cultural / Sports Promotion in universities

HEIs should not only ensure accessibility in physical spaces for culture, leisure and sports but also ensure inclusion of various sports disciplines for persons with disabilities for preparation and organize events in partnership with national sports bodies such as Blind Cricket, Paralympic Committee etc. This has the potential to shatter myths about disabilities and provide an opportunity for persons with disabilities to express themselves in disciplines other than education. HEIs could also run sports courses at various levels.

9.7 Inter college/ inter-university activities

HEIs should promote, support and organize inter-college and inter-university, inter-institution activities involving persons with disabilities in different subjects.

Such activities, competitions should not always be among persons with disabilities but persons with disabilities should be encouraged and given opportunities to participate in all such activities and competitions on an equal basis with others.

9.8 International University Exchange Program.

Persons with disabilities shall be encouraged and given opportunities to participate in and travel for international university / academic exchange programs. For undertaking travel, reasonable accommodation, accompanying person/carer support where needed and other specific support sought by persons with disabilities should be included as part of the program and be funded so that they also can utilize such opportunities as available to non-disabled persons on the campus.





Governance and Monitoring of Accessibility and Inclusive Practices





Governance and Monitoring of Accessibility and Inclusive Practices

The governance and monitoring of accessibility and inclusive practices in HEIs shall be done in two folds. Firstly, the institutions / universities shall develop its administrative framework for planning and implementation through an expert/advisory committee vis-a-vis through a designated cell or unit inside the institute. Secondly, accessibility and inclusive practices should gain further impetus as significant parameters in the assessment for ranking and accreditation purposes.

Self certification for accessibility in compliance of the provisions of the RPWD Act 2016 followed by third party assessment shall be carried out periodically (on an annual basis) by the respective HEIs and reports / certification thereof shall be uploaded on their official websites.

For an overall governance and monitoring of progress of implementation of accessibility and inclusive approaches, the University Grants Commission shall review the same twice an year through a competent committee constituted under it's mandate.

10.1 Accessibility and Inclusive Practices through Institutional Governance

- a) HEIs need to create inclusive institutional culture by framing suitable accessibility and inclusive policies internally and implement these policies for inclusive practices. The process needs to ensure whether the initiatives are in the right direction and achieving the desired results and also suggesting necessary modifications and adaptations. Precisely, some of the primary best practices consist of constituting a competent advisory board, aligning strategies with goals, being accountable and responsible, following the code of ethics, defining roles and responsibilities, and dealing with grievances effectively (as detailed out in 8.4 above). Therefore, to facilitate the students with disabilities effectively, there is a requirement of a unit that may oversee the effective implementation of the policies and programs for their benefit.

- b) Considering the need of having a resource centre cum implementation unit in HEIs, the University Grant Commission has already undertaken certain initiatives to empower the students with disabilities. The initiatives include schemes of assistance to universities/colleges for Higher Education for Persons with Special Needs (Differently-abled Persons) (HEPSN) and the creation of Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC). With the passing of RPWD Act 2016, the responsibilities of the HEIs have been increased beyond the activities and facilities that were part of HEPSN and EOC scheme. Now the HEIs have to strengthen the unit that is responsible for implementing accessibility and inclusive practices on the campus. For strengthening the Equal Opportunity Cells/Enabling Units, the HEIs shall follow the guidelines prescribed by UGC from time to time in strict compliance to the role and functions defined for such cells/units. A person with disability should preferably be the coordinator/convenor of such a cell/unit.
- c) Each HEI must develop its own action plan preferably for five years with a clear vision and a year-wise accomplishment. An expert, advisory or coordination committee must be appointed that meets on a regular basis under the chairpersonship of the head of the institution/university. The committee shall include students and faculties/staff with diverse disabilities, parents/caregivers, Organisations of Persons with Disabilities, NGOs, disability / accessibility experts and others as deemed fit. The activities of the committee along with the goals achieved must be highlighted on the HEI / University websites/social media with evidence.
- d) The cell/unit responsible for implementing accessibility and inclusive practices would also serve as a resource centre. As per the need of the persons with disabilities, whether they are students or faculty or staff, the unit serving as a resource centre should provide additional rehabilitation services as much as possible under the guidance of the expert/advisory committee. This centre may train volunteers to support persons with disabilities as buddies in the area of sign language, use of assistive devices and technologies or support them as a reader to a person with a visual disability or assist them in their mobility in case a person with a locomotor disability needs support. The cell/unit should facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in all activities of the institution including participation in sports, social, cultural and corporate life of the campus.
- e) Each HEI needs to develop its own administrative framework to undertake action in this area. This must include the procurement policies (ICT, AT, Civil Infrastructure). It is expected that HEIs undertake self-assessment on an annual basis of their inclusive practices and accessibility audit.

10.2 Accessibility Assessment for Accreditation and Ranking of HEIs / Universities

This section focuses on accessibility and inclusive practices as parameter in Assessment Framework for Accreditation and Ranking of HEIs. Besides the pursuit of rankings, accessibility assessment is required to be an integral part of an enabling framework for creating inclusivity for education.

10.2.1 Institutions of higher education in India are required to respond for their quality of teaching, research and facilities through various assessment frameworks. The government effort at quality assessment in the education sector at the national level was first initiated with the creation of the **National Assessment and Accreditation Council** (NAAC – for colleges and universities) and the **National Board of Accreditation** (NBA – for technical and professional institutions) in 1994. Further, The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was approved by the government in 2015 to rank institutions across the country. Several criteria and indicators have been developed to provide a base for assessment and accreditation. Most of these indicators reflect academic, administrative, infrastructural, financial and human resources. For example, NIRF broadly covers “Teaching, Learning and Resources,” “Research and Professional Practices,” “Graduation Outcomes,” “Outreach and Inclusivity,” and “Perception”.

10.2.2 It is noted that inclusivity and accessibility dimensions are still an evolving aspect and will get greater emphasis with awareness and understanding in the assessment, accreditation and ranking process of HEIs. NAAC has a small weightage to this aspect and it covers (i) built environment with ramps/lifts for easy access to classrooms, (ii) Divyangjan friendly washrooms, (iii) Signage including tactile path, lights, display boards, and signposts, (iv) Assistive technology and facilities for Divyangjan accessible website, screen-reading software, mechanized equipment, and (v) Provision for enquiry and information: Human assistance, reader, scribe, soft copies of reading material, screen reading, font enlargement, etc.

Whereas, NIRF covers a few aspects having three questions only under 'Facilities for Physically Challenged Students' such as

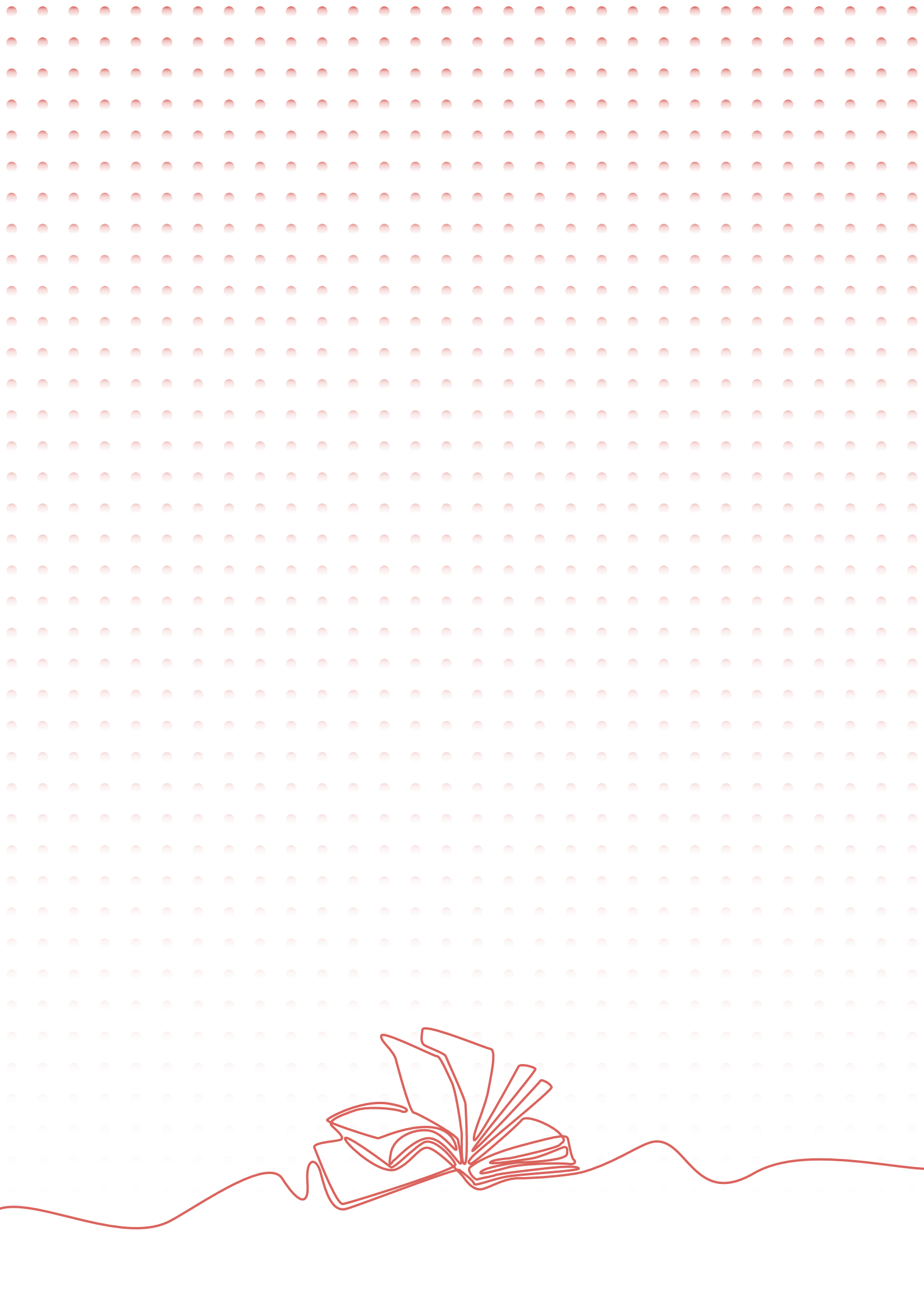
- (i) Do your institution buildings have Lifts/Ramps?
- (ii) Does your institution have provision for walking aids, including wheelchairs and transportation from one building to another for students with disabilities?
- (iii) Do your institution buildings have universally accessible toilets for students with disabilities?

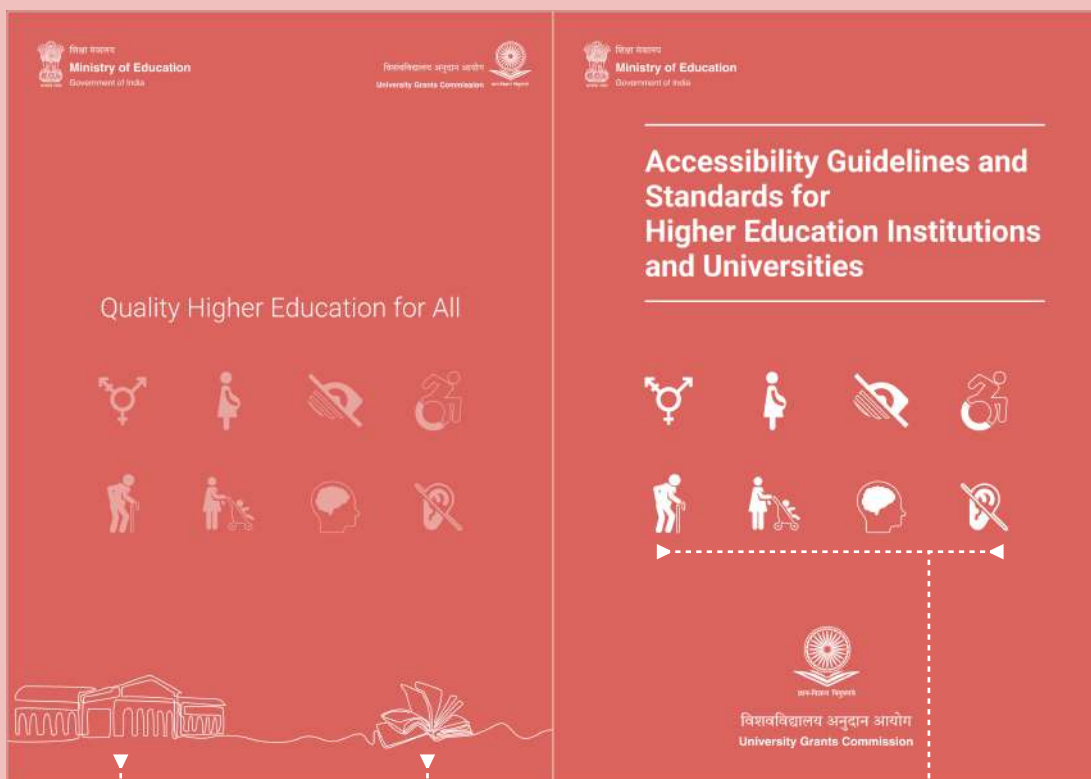
The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) is yet to consider accessibility components as an important parameter for assessment. The accessibility and inclusive practices in the HEIs are beyond the current parameters included in their assessment process.

10.2.3 Thus, NAAC, NBA and NIRF need to consider broad aspects of accessibility and include them in their assessment, accreditation and ranking process. It may be recommended to include Accessible ICT, Use of Assistive Technology, Mobility Infrastructure, Built Infrastructure, Accessible Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Accessible Assessment and Examinations, Resources and Services to promote Inclusive Campus Living. This guideline document may be referred to for this purpose.

10.2.4 Each HEI / University shall exert to get itself assessed and certified for accessibility for its information systems, infrastructure systems and services rendered by itself. Accessibility assessment mechanisms shall continue to be developed and standardised for diverse category and scale of institutions.

10.2.5 The present guidelines shall be treated and considered as supplementing the existing guidelines, acts, ordinances, statutes issued from time to time to make the system robust and inclusive for persons with disabilities.





Higher Education Institute/University

An Open Book

Symbolic representation for diverse disabilities and human diversity

Cover Design Concept

The cover conceptualises the theme of simplicity, clarity and inclusivity in higher education institutions/universities.

The eight icons in the front and back cover represents the idea of diverse disabilities and human diversities as a key drivers to inclusion on educational campuses.

The open book at the rear side reflects an idea of openness as an approach to embrace accessibility and inclusion in the institutions/universities as represented through a connecting built form.

The pastel red shade of the background embeds the philosophy of warmth and groundedness as the base to support inclusivity.



शिक्षा मंत्रालय

Ministry of Education

Government of India

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग
University Grants Commission



Quality Higher Education for All

