

**Status of Women with Disabilities in India: A Socio
Legal Study of Higher Educational Institutions
in Lucknow City of Uttar Pradesh**

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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ABSTRACT

1. Introduction

“Being disabled should not mean being disqualified from having access to every aspect of life”

-Emma Thompson¹

In India, women with disabilities hold a unique and often neglected position among marginalized groups. They encounter a dual form of discrimination due to both their gender and their disability, which significantly limits their access to vital resources and opportunities. Disability is an inherent aspect of the human experience and refers to the socially constructed interpretations of various physical and mental impairments that occur throughout different cultural contexts and life stages. The concept of disability is understood and defined by social thinkers, social workers, and legal experts, reflecting the philosophical and practical dimensions of the term. While "disability" generally implies a lack or deficiency—whether physical, mental, or sensory—it is crucial to recognize the broader social and cultural interpretations of this term². In simple terms, it refers to people who are unable to participate in everyday activities due to physical or intellectual disabilities³. Thus, disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.⁴ Disability is an aspect of the human experience that encompasses various physical and mental impairments. The concept of disability involves the socially assigned meanings attached to these diverse conditions, which can vary across different cultures and throughout an individual's life⁵. When a woman suffers from disability, she faces greater difficulties than men because of the differences assigned to female and male roles in society⁶. Physical

¹Sangeeta Singh, Women with Disabilities in India: Issues and Concerns, vol.14, *International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences*, 139(2023), available at: <https://ndpublisher.in/>

²Rajib Bhattacharya, “Disability laws in India: A study”, Vol. 1, *International Journal of Research* 99 (2018), available at: [https://www.superabile.it/superabile repository/ disability-laws-in-India](https://www.superabile.it/superabile/repository/disability-laws-in-India), (last visited on March 5, 2021)

³ Dr. Anuja Trivedi, *Women Rights and Duties*, 32-33(Jnanada Prakashan, New Delhi, 2017)

⁴Ganesh Kumar, Gautam Roy, and Sitanshu Sekhar “Disability and Rehabilitation Services in India: Issues and Challenges” vol.1, *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 69(2012), available at: <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers>. (Last visited on April 10, 2019)

⁵ Nilika Mehrotra, *Disability, Gender & State Policy*, 15 (Rawat publication, New Delhi, 2013)

⁶ Sangeeta Singh, “Women with Disabilities in India: Issues and Concerns”, vol.14, *International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences*, 139(2023), available at: <https://ndpublisher.in/> (last visited on January 12, 2023)

barriers are structural impediments in both natural and built environments that hinder or obstruct mobility and access. Transportation barriers arise from insufficient or inadequate transportation options, which can affect a woman with a disability's ability to be independent. For individuals who cannot drive due to vision or cognitive impairments, the absence or inaccessibility of public transportation—whether due to its unavailability or inconvenient locations—can further complicate their mobility⁷. Women with disabilities continue to face significant challenges in accessing education due to inadequate infrastructure and support services in both public and private spaces, including educational institutions and workplaces. These barriers limit their ability to obtain quality education, as inaccessible facilities and societal biases impede their academic and professional opportunities.

Education, essential for personal empowerment and social inclusion, continues to pose a significant challenge for these women. It is closely linked to their ability to build equal social relationships and attain the crucial social benefit of self-respect⁸. It is important, as well, to mobility through access to jobs and the political process, to health and life through the connection to bodily integrity⁹. It is a lifelong process, an essential tool for developing the personality of a person to survive once life in a better manner. It has been a critical demand for women, who make up half of the world's population, as it empowers them to make decisions that benefit their families, societies, and countries¹⁰. Education holds central importance in the progress of human society. It serves as the foundation for individual knowledge, information, and awareness, as well as a comprehensive approach to fostering development and transformation¹¹. It can be the beginning, not only of individual knowledge, information and awareness, but also a holistic strategy for development and change¹². For women it is very important but if she is suffering from disability the role of education becomes even more important as it allows disabled women to

⁷ Supra Note, at. 414.

⁸Dr. Rita Khatri, "The Role of Education Towards Women Empowerment in India", Vol 4(11) International Journal of Advanced Research, 550 (2016), available at http://www.journalijar.com/uploads/739_IJAR-13367.pdf (last visited on April 7, 2022)

⁹Prof. Dr. Asha Hans & Ms. Reena Mohanty "Inclusion of Disability and Gender in Disaster Management and Response", 2020, available at https://www.preventionweb.net/files/9661_InclusionofDisabilityGender.pdf (last visited on June 3, 2021)

¹⁰ Nilika Mahotra, Disability, *Gender and state Policy: Exploring margins*, 23 (Rawat Publications, Jaipur, 2013)

¹¹ Sahiba Chahal "Women with disabilities in India", Vol.9, *International journal of creative research thoughts*, 193(2021), available at: <https://ijcrt.org/> (last visited on June 4, 2022)

¹² Sangeeta Singh, "Women with Disabilities in India: Issues and Concerns", Vol.14, *International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences*, 139(2023), available at: <https://ndpublisher.in/> (last visited on February 6, 2023)

develop their skills and knowledge, enabling them to participate in all areas of life and achieve their goals more effectively. If you educate a man, you educate an individual; however, if you educate a woman, you educate a whole family¹³.

Women and girls with disabilities face substantial challenges compared to their male counterparts without disabilities. According to UN Women, they are three times more likely to be illiterate. The UN DPI fact sheet highlights that fewer than 5% of children and young people with disabilities have access to education and training, with girls and young women experiencing significant barriers to social participation and development. Globally, the literacy rate for adults with disabilities is approximately 3%, and for women with disabilities, it is just 1%. UNDP reports reveal that nine out of ten children with disabilities in developing countries are excluded from formal education, with girls being particularly affected. These figures indicate that girls with disabilities are more likely to be out of school than both boys with disabilities and girls without disabilities. Despite having the right to education, girls with disabilities face the highest levels of exclusion due to overlapping forms of discrimination related to both gender and disability¹⁴. Globally, the literacy rate for adults with disabilities is 3%, and for women with disabilities, just 1%¹⁵.

In India the Census of 2011 updated in 2021 provides insights into the literacy status of the disabled population in India. Among all disabled individuals, 45% are illiterate, while 13% have completed matric/secondary education but are not graduates, and 5% are graduates and above. Interestingly, 8.5% of disabled individuals who are literate have achieved graduate-level education. When examining gender disparities, the data shows that among male disabled individuals, 38% are illiterate, 16% have matric/secondary education but are not graduates, and 6% are graduates and above. Additionally, 9% of literate male disabled individuals have attained graduate-level education. On the other hand, among female disabled individuals, 55% are illiterate, 9% have matric/secondary education but are not graduates, and 3% are graduates and above. Furthermore, 7.7% of literate female disabled individuals have completed graduate-level education. These figures highlight the educational challenges faced by the disabled population in India, particularly

¹³ Dr. Meenu Agarwal, *Women Education and Social Development*, 66 (Kanishka Publishers, Bombay, 2015)

¹⁴ “Still left behind: Pathways to inclusive education for girls with disabilities”, available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/> (last visited on April 14, 2022)

¹⁵ “Unwoman, Facts and figures: Women and girls with disabilities”, available at <https://www.unwomen.org/> (last visited on February 15, 2023)

among females, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to improve literacy and educational outcomes for this demographic. The gap in the male-female literacy rate is just a simple indicator, while the male literacy rate is more than the female¹⁶.

Higher education remains challenging for women with disabilities. Like men with disabilities, they encounter issues with accessibility, reluctance from educational institutions to provide necessary accommodations, and a lack of specialized services such as readers for visually impaired students. In addition to these shared challenges, women with disabilities face extra barriers unique to their gender¹⁷. As a result, they are deprived of even the basic human rights. They have lived experiences distinct from those of non-disabled women and boys and men with disability. However, such experiences have remained largely invisible in law and policy making, consequently, the policies and programmes for the disabled women and girls are not even countable on fingers. One of such areas where the discrimination and special needs of these women are given least consideration is Education¹⁸. Despite the progress made in recognizing the rights of disabled women, there is still a need for stronger legal support and enforcement mechanisms. Laws such as the PWD Act, 1995, and the RPWD Act, 2016, have been instrumental in protecting the rights of disabled individuals, including women.

However, there is a need for greater awareness and implementation of these laws to ensure that disabled women are not only protected but also provided with equal opportunities for education, employment, and social participation. The role of law in supporting disabled women cannot be overstated. Strong legal frameworks can help in addressing issues such as accessibility, discrimination, and social exclusion faced by disabled women. Additionally, legal provisions for reservation in education and employment, as well as incentives for employers, can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for disabled women. Overall, while education is crucial for empowering disabled women, the role of law in providing legal protection and ensuring their rights cannot be ignored¹⁹.

¹⁶ Disabled Population in India as per census 2011 (2016 updated), Government of India, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, available at: <https://enabled.in/wp/disabled-population-in-india-as-per-census-2011-2016-updated> (last visited on June 22, 2022)

¹⁷Janardan Prasad and Kaushik, *Women Education and Development*, 63(New Delhi Kanishka, New Delhi ,2012)

¹⁸ Dr. Meenu Agarwal, *Women Education and Social Development*, 66 (Kanishka Publishers, New Delhi, 2015)

¹⁹Shetalben B. Khair, "Women's Education in India: Reality and Statistics" vol. 7, *International Journal of Research in Humanities & Soc. Sciences*, 4 (2019), available at <https://www.raijmr.com/ijrhs> (last visited on May 14, 2021)

The gap in the male-female literacy rate is just a simple indicator, while the male literary rate is more than the female. Higher education continues to be a challenge for women with disabilities. Like men with disabilities, they face accessibility problems, unwillingness on behalf of educational institutions to provide accommodations for disabilities, and lack of special services such as readers for blind students. In addition to the problems women with disabilities share with their male counterparts, they face additional barriers²⁰. As a result, they are deprived of even the basic human rights. However, such experiences have remained largely invisible in law and policy making, consequently, the policies and programmes for the disabled women and girls are not even countable on fingers. One of such areas where the discrimination and special needs of these women are given least consideration is Education²¹. Despite the progress made in recognizing the rights of disabled women, there is still a need for stronger legal support and enforcement mechanisms. The main aim of this study is to thoroughly investigate the educational status, challenges, and opportunities for women with disabilities in India. It aims to understand how historical, societal, and legal factors have shaped their access to education. By empirical research this study will analyze and identifies barriers that hinder educational access, such as physical obstacles, societal biases, and systemic issues. It also examines the impact of legal frameworks like the PWD Act, 1995, and the RPWD Act, 2016, in promoting inclusive education. The study emphasizes the intersectional discrimination faced by women with disabilities and underscores the vital role of education in their empowerment. It advocates for stronger legal protections, inclusive policies, and support systems to improve educational outcomes and calls for increased awareness and advocacy to ensure their full participation in educational and social life²².

2. Need of the Study

Women with disabilities face multiple layers of discrimination based on gender, disability, and often socio-economic status. This study helps to highlight and address these inequalities within higher education and the challenges faced by disabled women in higher education can inform policymakers, leading to the

²⁰Janardan Prasad and Kaushik, *Women Education and Development*, 63(New Delhi Kaniskha, 2012)

²¹Dr. Meenu Agarwal, *Women Education and Social Development*,66 (Kanishka Publishers ,2015)

²²Syed Salma Jameel, "Disability in the context of higher Education: Issues and Concerns in India", vol.2 (7), *Electronic Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19-21, (2011), available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/> (last visited on May 16, 2021)

development of more effective and inclusive educational policies and practices, identifying barriers to accessibility in higher educational institutions can lead to the implementation of necessary changes, ensuring that facilities and resources are inclusive and accommodating for disabled women. Education is a key tool for empowerment, and a study focused on disabled women in higher education can help promote strategies that support their independence and self-sufficiency. By highlighting the gaps in support systems for disabled women in higher education can lead to improvements in academic advising, counselling, and peer support networks and through Conducting and publishing such studies can raise awareness about the specific needs and challenges of disabled women, fostering a more inclusive and empathetic educational environment.

By understanding the experiences of disabled women, educational institutions can adopt more inclusive practices, promoting diversity and ensuring that all students have equal opportunities to succeed. Identifying the factors that hinder or support the academic success of disabled women will help institutions create targeted interventions to improve their educational status. Studies can ensure that higher educational institutions comply with national and international legal frameworks protecting the rights of disabled individuals, ensuring ethical standards are met.

3. Objectives

The present study has been initiated to achieve the following objectives.

1. To explore and understand the concept and theoretical framework of disability
2. To analyse the intersectionality on gender and disability in the context of education.
3. To explore and assess the effectiveness and implementation of existing national and international legal frameworks, policies aimed at promoting inclusivity for women with disabilities in education.
4. To identify the barriers and challenges faced by women with disabilities in accessing higher education and examining socio cultural attitude, institutional practices and systematic factors.
5. To investigate the socio legal landscape surroundings of the access and participation of women with disabilities in higher education institution within Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh.

6. To propose recommendations for legal reform policies interventions and institutional practices to enhance the participation of women with disabilities in higher education in India in general and in Lucknow city, U.P in particular.

4. Research Questions

For the research the researcher has made following research questions on the basis on the research.

1. What are the barriers and challenges within higher education institutions that limit the inclusion of disabled persons, particularly women in Lucknow city?
2. What are the effects of limited access to transportation and inaccessible campus infrastructure on the educational opportunities of disabled women in higher educational institution?
3. How do policy gaps and implementation issues contribute to the exclusion of disabled women from higher education in Lucknow city?
4. What strategies and interventions can be implemented to improve the inclusivity of higher education institutions for disabled women in India in general and in Lucknow city in particular?

5. Hypotheses

The present work has been done under the following hypotheses.

1. Despite existing legislations, the implementation of disability laws in India is inadequate resulting insufficient protection and support for individuals with disability.
2. Women with disabilities experience heightened social exclusion which increased their vulnerability to various forms of crime, including violence and exploitation.
3. Women with disabilities face significant barriers that hinder their access to education and employment opportunities to their non-disabled counterparts.
4. Women with disabilities in Lucknow encounter pervasive discrimination within higher educational institutions which negatively impact their overall academic outcome and opportunities for success.

6. Research Methodology

The present research work is doctrinal as well as empirical. To meet the objectives of the study, data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data includes legislative materials, judgments, government reports, international documents, and questionnaires. This data was used to determine the actual status of women with disabilities in higher educational institutions in Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh. Secondary data was gathered from textbooks, research articles, journals, magazines, newspapers, and to enrich the research the use of internet sources has also been done. In addition to descriptive analysis, analytical, critical, and quantitative approaches were employed to examine legal provisions, judicial decisions, and the implementation mechanisms.

6.1 Universe of the Study

The universe of the present study is confined to the Lucknow City of Uttar Pradesh where the presence of disabled women in higher educational institutions is sufficient in number for the purpose of research. Research is confined only to the disabled women who are in higher educational institutions of Lucknow City in Uttar Pradesh. For the purpose of collection of data researcher has selected eight higher educational institutions situated in Lucknow City of Uttar Pradesh. eight selected higher educational institutions are

1. Babasaheb BhimRao Ambedkar University , Lucknow (Central University)
2. Dr.Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow (State University)
3. University of Lucknow, Lucknow (State University)
4. Dr. Shakuntala Misra National Rehabilitation University, Lucknow (State University)
5. Amity University Lucknow, Lucknow (Private University)
6. Integral University Lucknow , Lucknow (Private University)
7. Babu Banarasi Das University, Lucknow (Private University)
8. Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University, Lucknow (Private University)

6.2 Sample Size & Method

The sample size for this research is 500 respondents. This includes disabled women students from eight different higher educational institutions in Lucknow city, providing a substantial data set to analyse the challenges and needs faced by these women in accessing education. For the purpose of research, the purposive sampling method was applied to select the universities and respondents, based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, ensuring that the sample includes disabled women from various types of higher educational institutions in Lucknow. The entire data set was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

6.3 Tools for Data Collection

The category of data collected and the size of data collection depends upon the nature of the study and the research objectives behind the study. In this study, the researcher has used primary and secondary source of data collection. The primary source of data collection comprises the interview through closed and open-ended structured questionnaire, of the head of the department and disabled women of the eight different selected higher educational institutions in Lucknow

Researcher has also prepared an interview and questionnaire which was close and open ended. The questions were framed on keeping in mind the needs and challenges faced by disabled women in higher educational institutions, in accessing basic facilities necessary for their education.

For the research the researcher has filed RTI in 3 different universities to know the status of disabled women in higher educational institution. Out of 3 universities one university is Disabled University.

Additionally the researcher visited all the selected universities to collect the data through questionnaire which were close ended and were filled by the disabled women.

Furthermore the researcher has also taken interview of Heads of Department of different universities. The interview questionnaire was open ended. These interviews aimed to uncover institutional policies, practices, and initiatives designed to support disabled women students.

7. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The present study focuses on the socio-legal status of women with disabilities in higher educational institutions in Lucknow City, Uttar Pradesh. This study aims to inform policymakers about the effectiveness of current policies and practices in these institutions, assessing how well they support the educational aspirations and rights of disabled women. Findings of the research can raise awareness about the challenges faced by disabled women in higher education, leading to increased advocacy and support for their rights and needs. Institutions can use the study's recommendations to implement changes that make their campuses more accessible and inclusive for disabled women, improving their overall educational experience. By highlighting the experiences and voices of disabled women, the study can empower them to advocate for their rights and access resources that enhance their educational opportunities. Insights from the study can inform the development of training programs for educators and staff to better support disabled women in higher education, enhancing their learning experiences. By addressing the barriers faced by disabled women in higher education, the study can have a long-term impact on their lives, leading to improved employment prospects, social inclusion, and overall well-being. This study has certain limitations that must be acknowledged. The research is confined to Lucknow city and may not fully represent the broader population of disabled women in higher education across Uttar Pradesh or other regions. Further the research is confined only to the study of disabled women. It does not analyze the status of all the women, present in higher educational institutions of Lucknow city. Further it only covers 8 higher educational institutions of Lucknow city.

8. Scheme of Chapters

This study comprises of following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter discusses the importance of education for Women with Disabilities, emphasizing its role in empowering them to participate fully in society. It highlights the challenges faced by women and girls with disabilities in accessing education, citing statistics that show their higher rates of illiteracy compared to men without disabilities. Despite having the same rights to education, girls with disabilities are the most excluded group of learners due to multiple forms of

discrimination. The chapter also explores the concept of disability, explaining it as a complex interaction between a person's body and societal features. The researcher has also discussed the statement of problem, literature review, objectives along with research questions, hypothesis, research methodology, scope and limitations and chapter details.

Chapter 2: Conceptual and Theoretical Understanding of Disability

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the theoretical framework surrounding disability, shedding light on its historical context and contemporary understanding. It outlines how persons with disabilities have long been marginalized and subjected to neglect, poverty, and isolation globally, including in India. The chapter emphasizes the shift from viewing disabilities solely as medical conditions to understanding them as social constructs influenced by cultural, environmental, and attitudinal factors. It discusses various models of disability, such as the traditional, medical, and social models, and their impact on societal perceptions and responses to disability. Moreover, the chapter delves into the complex issue of defining disability, highlighting the lack of consensus across disciplines and contexts. It explores the evolving nature of the term 'disability' and its different meanings over time. The social model of disability emerges as a key framework, emphasizing that disability is the result of environmental barriers rather than individual impairments. The chapter also examines various definitions of disability from legal and policy perspectives. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the importance of a human rights approach to disability, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). It underscores the significance of recognizing and safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities, including their right to full and equal participation in society. The chapter concludes by advocating for a more inclusive and rights-based approach to disability that challenges societal norms and promotes the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

Chapter 3: Intersectionality and the Complexity of Women's Education and Disability

This chapter explores the intersectionality of gender, disability, and education in India, focusing on the unique challenges faced by women with disabilities. It highlights their multiple layers of discrimination due to gender, disability, and

economic status, and the exacerbating effects of poverty on accessing education and resources. The chapter reviews historical and current educational opportunities for women in India, noting gaps in inclusion for women with disabilities. It underscores the importance of integrating disabled women's voices into the broader women's rights discourse and calls for more inclusive feminist perspectives. Statistical data on literacy rates and educational disparities are presented, advocating for targeted interventions to achieve genuine equality and inclusive education for all. Overall, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex issues surrounding the intersectionality of gender, disability, and education, advocating for a more inclusive and equitable society.

Chapter 4: International Perspective on Disability

This chapter examines the international framework on disability, emphasizing human rights to ensure the integration and empowerment of disabled individuals, particularly women, who face compounded challenges due to gender and disability. It discusses various international conventions and declarations that promote equitable treatment, access to education, healthcare, employment, and societal participation for disabled women. Despite these efforts, significant barriers and discrimination persist, especially in developing nations, due to cultural biases and limited resources. The chapter highlights key international instruments and conventions, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which promotes full inclusion and equal participation of disabled individuals in all aspects of life. It also references regional instruments like the African Charter of Human and People's Rights and the European Social Charter that protect the rights of disabled persons, including women. Furthermore, the chapter focuses on the international framework for the education rights of disabled women, grounded in conventions like the UNCRPD, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Chapter 5: National Legal Framework on Disability

This chapter examines the national framework in India concerning the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities, particularly focusing on women. It outlines the constitutional provisions that ensure equality, prohibit discrimination, and

promote equal opportunities, including for disabled individuals. The chapter discusses various legislative acts like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, and others that protect the rights of women, including those with disabilities. It also covers the history of educational policies, highlighting a shift towards inclusive education for children with disabilities, beginning with the 1968 National Educational Policy and continuing through recent initiatives like the 2021 Draft National Policy for Persons with Disabilities. The chapter details key legislative frameworks such as the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, which aim to protect the rights and promote the full participation of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, the chapter discusses the role of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) in implementing schemes and initiatives to promote the welfare and empowerment of persons with disabilities. This includes various schemes for rehabilitation, education, employment, and creating accessible environments, as well as specific projects like the Accessible India Campaign and the Unique Disability ID Project. The overarching goal of these efforts is to create an inclusive society that values and empowers individuals with disabilities.

Chapter 6: Socio Legal Analysis of Disabled Women in Higher Educational Institution in Lucknow City, Uttar Pradesh

The chapter 6th presents the empirical study which focuses on the educational experiences of disabled women in higher educational institutions within Lucknow city. For the purpose of research work the researcher has collected data from 8 different universities. For data collection out of 8 universities 1 of them is Central and 3 universities is State universities and 4 of them is private universities. From all these 8 universities the researcher has taken data from 500 respondents. For the purpose of research work the researcher has collected data from 8 different universities. The name of eight selected higher educational institutions are as: 1. Dr. Shakuntala Misra National Rehabilitation University, Lucknow, 2. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Lucknow, 3. Dr. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University, Lucknow, 4. Amity University, Lucknow, 5. University of Lucknow, Lucknow, 6. Integral University, Lucknow, 7. Babu Banarasi Das University, Lucknow, 8. Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University, Lucknow.

For the collection of data, the researcher has prepared set of close ended questionnaire which is divided into 5 parts basically deals with the general, professional information with the needs and challenges faced by disabled women in accessing basic facilities necessary for their education in higher educational institution. For the purpose of research, data was collected from a total of 500 respondents, including faculty, non-faculty, and disabled women in higher educational institutions. Of the 500 data points, 430 were collected from Dr. Shakuntala Misra National Rehabilitation University, and the remaining 70 were collected from seven other universities. The data collection spanned across eight different universities, comprising both public and private institutions in Lucknow.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes all the previous chapters and presents findings based on the research work. It tests the hypotheses against these findings and offers suggestions for improving the educational experiences of disabled women in higher educational institutions, both in India generally and in Lucknow City, Uttar Pradesh specifically.

The study underscores the significant challenges faced by disabled women in India, particularly in accessing education and public transport. Despite legal frameworks and international conventions aimed at improving their rights, systemic barriers persist, including physical limitations, societal stigma, and inadequate facilities. Key issues include low awareness of disability rights legislation, insufficient accommodations in educational institutions, and dissatisfaction with essential amenities. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to enhance accessibility, raise awareness, and improve the implementation of existing laws. Addressing these barriers is crucial for empowering disabled women, promoting their full participation in society, and ensuring equitable opportunities in education and beyond.

9. Findings of Study

9.1. General Findings Regarding the Educational Status of Disabled Women in India

On the basis of the research work under the scheme of various chapters the researcher has found some significant findings that can be discussed as follows:

1. Many disabled individuals face challenges in accessing public transport, including

physical limitations, financial constraints, and sensory impairments.

2. There is uncertainty about the disabled-friendliness of university buildings, with many respondents believing they are not accessible.

3. Awareness of the Disability Act 2016 is lacking, highlighting the need for more education on disability rights.

4. Information about reservation policies for persons with disabilities is insufficient, indicating a need for better dissemination of rights and entitlements.

5. Disability is perceived as a significant factor in the exclusion of disabled women from education, affecting their educational opportunities.

6. Disabled persons in higher education face various barriers, including lack of awareness, attitudinal barriers, physical barriers, and poverty.

7. Many disabled individuals experience discrimination in academic settings, reflecting the prevalence of biased attitudes and practices.

8. There are issues with interaction and access within educational institutions, including limited engagement with teachers and peers, restricted access to buildings and learning resources, and a lack of social connections.

9. Restroom facilities often do not meet the needs of disabled individuals, with widespread dissatisfaction reported.

10. While ramps and railings are generally available, there is a need for better communication and assessment of these features. Additionally, there is mixed satisfaction with the availability of Braille print and electronic devices, indicating areas for improvement in accessibility measures and communication.

9.2. Specific Findings Regarding the Educational Status of Disabled Women in Lucknow

On the basis of the research work under the scheme of various chapters the researcher has found some specific findings on status of disabled women in relation with Lucknow city that can be discussed as follows:

1. There is a significant lack of awareness among disabled individuals in Lucknow about the specific accessibility features available in the city's public

transportation system. This lack of information contributes to uncertainty and hesitation in using public transport.

2. The majority of disabled individuals in Lucknow are not well-informed about their rights under the Disability Act 2016 and other related legislation. This gap in knowledge suggests a need for targeted awareness campaigns and educational programs to inform disabled persons about their legal rights and available support systems.
3. While physical barriers such as inadequate infrastructure are a significant concern, the data also highlights non-physical barriers such as a lack of social integration and supportive interactions with peers and educators in educational institutions in Lucknow. This suggests the need for comprehensive inclusion strategies that address both physical and social aspects of accessibility.
4. Disabled individuals in Lucknow report mixed perceptions of support from educational institutions, with some expressing satisfaction with certain facilities like ramps and electronic devices, while others point out gaps in areas like manual wheelchair amenities and tricycle availability. This indicates a need for institutions to review and improve their support systems holistically.
5. Beyond infrastructural issues, there are significant cultural and attitudinal barriers faced by disabled individuals in Lucknow. These include societal stigma and discrimination, which contribute to the exclusion of disabled women from educational opportunities and broader social participation.
6. There appears to be an underutilization of available resources, such as Braille materials and electronic devices, possibly due to a lack of awareness or inadequate communication about their availability. This indicates the necessity for better outreach and support mechanisms to ensure that disabled individuals can fully benefit from the resources provided.
7. Disabled women in Lucknow face additional challenges compared to their male counterparts, particularly in accessing education and public spaces. These challenges are compounded by societal expectations and norms, which further restrict their opportunities and mobility.

10. Hypothesis Testing

10.1. Despite existing legislations, the implementation of disability laws in India is inadequate resulting insufficient protection and support for individuals with disability.

This hypothesis is partially proved. The analysis of **chapter IV, V** shows that the existing national and international laws are not much efficient to tackle the present problems and issues relating to status of disabled women. Under **chapter VI** the data gathered strongly supports the hypothesis that despite the presence of legislations, the implementation of disability laws in India remains inadequate, resulting in insufficient protection and support for individuals with disabilities. This is evident from the survey question regarding awareness of the Disability Act 2016, where only 19.2% of respondents indicated awareness of the legislation, while 41.4% was not aware and 39.4% were unsure. This lack of awareness indicates a significant gap in the dissemination of information about the rights and protections afforded by the Disability Act 2016. As a consequence, individuals with disabilities may not be fully aware of their rights or how to access the support and services provided by the law. This lack of awareness could lead to their marginalization and exclusion from society, highlighting the urgent need for increased efforts to educate the public about disability laws and ensure their effective implementation.

10.2. Women with disabilities experience heightened social exclusion which increased their vulnerability to various forms of crime, including violence and exploitation

This hypothesis is wholly proved. The data collected strongly supports the hypothesis that women with disabilities in Lucknow face significant discrimination within higher educational institutions, which has a negative impact on their academic outcomes and opportunities for success. The survey revealed that 17.2% of respondents feel that their colleagues have discriminative attitudes towards them, indicating the presence of discriminatory behavior among peers. Additionally, 28.4% of respondents reported feeling some form of discrimination at the university, highlighting the prevalence of discriminatory experiences among women with disabilities. While only 0.2% of respondents have experienced harassment in the

university, even a single instance of harassment is concerning and indicative of a hostile environment for individuals with disabilities.

10.3. Women with disabilities face significant barriers that hinder their access to education and employment opportunities to their non-disabled counterparts

This hypothesis is wholly proved. The data collected strongly supports the hypothesis that women with disabilities face significant barriers that hinder their access to education and employment opportunities compared to their non-disabled counterparts, particularly in the context of transportation accessibility and it also revealed that 41.2% of respondents feel that public transport is not easily accessible to them, highlighting a lack of accessible transportation options for women with disabilities. Additionally, women with disabilities reported facing various challenges during transportation, including difficulty in walking (20.8%), financial problems (23.0%), and the need for help from another person (23.6%), sight problems (24.6%), and difficulty in learning or understanding things (8.0%). These challenges can act as significant barriers to accessing education and employment opportunities, as transportation is often a crucial factor in attending school or work.

10.4 Women with disabilities in Lucknow encounter pervasive discrimination within higher educational institutions which negatively impact their overall academic outcome and opportunities for success

This Hypothesis is wholly proved. The data collected strongly supports the hypothesis that women with disabilities in Lucknow encounter pervasive discrimination within higher educational institutions, which negatively impacts their overall academic outcomes and opportunities for success. The survey revealed that 30.0% of respondents believe that disability is one of the main causes of exclusion of disabled women from education, indicating a widespread perception of the role of disability in educational exclusion. Additionally, respondents identified several barriers faced by disabled persons in higher educational institutions, with 47.0% citing attitudinal barriers, 19.8% citing physical barriers, and 14.4% citing a lack of awareness. These barriers contribute to the discrimination and exclusion faced by women with disabilities in educational institutions, limiting their access to academic buildings, learning resources, and social interactions. This is further supported by the

data showing that 51.6% of respondents face a lack of interaction with teachers and peer groups, and 38.6% lack access to academic buildings and learning resources.

SUGGESTIONS:

Following certain suggestions which are provided by the researcher from the empirical and theoretical framework:

1. Public transportation ought to be improved to ensure accessibility for all disabled individuals by retrofitting existing vehicles with necessary features such as ramps, reserved seating, and audible/visual announcements. Financial support or subsidies should be provided to reduce transportation costs for disabled persons, and transportation personnel could be trained to assist disabled passengers effectively.
2. University buildings must undergo regular accessibility audits to identify and address barriers. New buildings ought to adhere to universal design principles, including ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and tactile paving. The availability and maintenance of manual and powered wheelchairs, tricycles, and impaired sticks need be increased.
3. Awareness about disability rights legislation needs to be raised through workshops, seminars, and information sessions that educate students, staff, and faculty about the Disability Act 2016 and other relevant laws. Informational materials ought to be distributed both digitally and physically to ensure widespread understanding of disability rights and entitlements.
4. Information about reservation policies must be communicated clearly through university websites, notice boards, and student handbooks. Orientation sessions for disabled students are duty-bound to be held to inform them about available resources and support systems.
5. Programs should be developed to support disabled women in accessing education, including scholarships, mentorship, and academic support services. Policies need to be implemented to eliminate attitudinal barriers and promote inclusivity through diversity training and awareness campaigns.
6. Grievance redressal mechanisms ought to be established and strengthened to address instances of discrimination promptly and effectively. A culture of

inclusivity and respect is recommended to be fostered through regular sensitivity training for faculty, staff, and students.

7. Interactions between disabled students and their peers and teachers could be encouraged through inclusive events, group activities, and collaborative projects. Social inclusion is important to be promoted by creating disability-friendly social spaces and support networks within the university.
8. Restroom facilities must be upgraded to meet accessibility standards, ensuring they are fully equipped for disabled individuals and regular maintenance and monitoring of restroom facilities are recommended to be conducted to ensure they remain clean, functional, and accessible.
9. The availability of amenities for manual and powered wheelchairs, tricycles, and impaired sticks ought to be ensured and regularly assessed to address any gaps in provision.
10. The availability of Braille print materials should be increased, and they should be easily accessible to visually impaired students. Communication regarding the availability of electronic devices and assistive technologies should be enhanced to ensure all students are aware of the resources available to them.
11. A system for on-going feedback from disabled students is advisable to be implemented to continuously assess the effectiveness of accessibility measures and make necessary adjustments and a dedicated committee must ensure that the on-going improvement of accessibility and inclusivity within the university.
12. Training sessions are advisable to be provided for disabled students on how to use various assistive technologies, including screen readers, speech-to-text software, and other educational tools, to enhance their learning experience and help them fully utilize available resources.
13. A dedicated office or unit have to be established within the university to address the specific needs and concerns of disabled students which provide guidance, coordinate support services, and ensure compliance with accessibility standards and administrative processes, such as registration and course selection, should be streamlined and accessible for disabled students, potentially through dedicated support staff or online platforms.

14. Faculty should be encouraged to adopt inclusive teaching practices that accommodate diverse learning needs. This can include offering course materials in multiple formats (e.g., audio, Braille, digital), providing lecture notes in advance, and using accessible teaching aids. Disability studies are recommended to be integrated into the curriculum to promote awareness and understanding among all students about the challenges faced by disabled individuals and the importance of inclusivity.
15. Peer mentoring programs are advisable to be established where disabled students can receive support and guidance from their peers. This can help build a sense of community, reduce feelings of isolation, and provide practical assistance in navigating university life and all student organizations should be encouraged to create inclusive clubs and societies that actively engage disabled students in extracurricular activities, fostering social integration and personal development.
16. National fellowships are advisable to be promoted through comprehensive awareness campaigns, clear and accessible information about eligibility and application processes, and guidance in completing applications. Streamlining application procedures and ensuring transparency in the selection process can encourage more students to apply and benefit from the fellowship.
17. Awareness programs must be conducted to inform disabled students about their entitlements under reservation policies. Accessible communication channels and feedback mechanisms should be utilized to promote understanding and empathy, reduce stigma and misconceptions about these policies, and refine them for greater effectiveness and inclusivity.
18. In Lucknow City, public transportation should be improved by retrofitting vehicles with ramps, reserved seating, and audible/visual announcements. Financial support or subsidies should be provided to reduce transportation costs for disabled individuals, and transport personnel should receive training to assist disabled passengers effectively.
19. University buildings in Lucknow are necessary to undergo regular accessibility audits to identify and address barriers. All new buildings ought to adhere to universal design principles, including ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms,

and tactile paving. The availability and maintenance of manual and powered wheelchairs, tricycles, and impaired sticks should be increased.

20. Awareness about disability rights legislation is recommended to be raised in Lucknow through workshops, seminars, and information sessions. Informational materials should be distributed both digitally and physically to improve understanding of disability rights and entitlements.