

Right to Education & Importance of Technical Aids to help PWD in Easy Learning

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Abstract

Article 45 of our constitution provides equal rights over education to all the natives of its state irrespective of their gender, class, culture, ethnicity or disabled. People with disabilities (PWD) has been given similar rights by the constitution and no one can devoid them from getting a good education. Every citizen of any nation has every right to be educated and to live like everyone else. Societies are built with the very purpose of people living together and helping each other whenever required. We always support and help our family members whenever required. Likewise, we must also help those who are really in need in our surroundings without making them feel inferior and by showing empathy towards them. As per the constitution, every citizen has equal rights to live in harmony. So we must always respect the rights of other individuals. We must not discriminate against anyone, especially someone who is weaker than us in any manner. In modern times, technology has advanced a lot and we are now having many technical aids to help those with utter need. The role of technical aids in assisting the PWD in their education and other work is also very crucial to make their life easier. This paper aims at exploring the use of "assistive technology" or "the technical aids," which are there to assist PWD in education and at work.

Keywords: Person with Disabilities (PWD), Assistive Technology, Right to Education

Introduction

The constitution of India gives equal rights to all its citizens for education and liberty, irrespective of their class, caste, ethnicity, or any sort of disability. As per the directive principles, every state has to act positively for the welfare of those whose freedom rights are being hampered in any manner. Article 41 of the Indian Constitution declares that every state in India has to make effective policies for the safety of the fundamental rights of its people, whether it is the right to education, to work, lack of employability, or any type of physical or mental disability. Sagar & Amrin (2016) even direct the state to take extra care of the rights of weaker sections of society and to protect them from any sort of discrimination or exploitation of their legal rights.

State and central governments have also made many policies for people with disabilities so that no one can exploit their rights. As a responsible citizen or human being, it is also one's moral obligation to help those in need instead of exploiting their rights. We, humans, are social beings, and our true existence depends upon our cooperation among others. As Bhatt (2018)

suggests, "Human identity, therefore, cannot be determined by any one of these facets alone in isolation from others; it is constituted by the totality and intricate unity of all of them." Basic education is the right of every citizen of a nation and is essential for the magnification of the character of any individual.

New age technology has eased the learning system a lot with the help of some technical aids, which help the PWD learn something in a hassle-free manner. According to the standards of education, people with learning disabilities must be given opportunities to reach their full potential. They ought to be able to participate in learning and skills on the same terms as peers without disabilities, and they should not face discrimination. Because of advancements in the technology sector, technological advances are now readily available and pervasive, allowing them to be used to provide people with learning opportunities (Dikumar, 2018). It is practically impossible to have a solitary technique that fulfils the expectations of all special education students. Therefore, it is important to choose the right technology as per the requirements of the PWD. Because of the wide range of disabilities, the greatest potential scenario could be ensured by using handmade solutions tailored to the needs of a group of adolescents (Dikumar, 2018). There are a large number of PWDs in the world who need proper care and the right use of technology to aid in their learning. As Laabidi et al. (2014) point out, "The World Report on Disability affirms that over one billion people in the world live with some disability, and there are about 150 million school-aged children with disabilities."

Most of such students remain devoid of proper education, which is their right as per the constitution, without the help of technology. "Disabilities are an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions" (Maurya, 2017, p. 36). An individual with some sort of shortcoming in any of their senses is regarded as a PWD. These imperfections sometimes make it quite difficult for that individual to live and interact normally with others in their surroundings. Concerning the United Nations General Assembly, "People with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, or hinder their equal and full participation in society. These impairments may interact with various barriers" (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2007). Disabilities that don't allow a person to contribute properly towards society are:

- Any sort of physical disability, like being unable to move limbs, restricts the person from acting physically as a normal human being.
- It can be related to slowness, such as blindness, partial-blindness, colour-blindness, etc., which acts as a barrier to a person's working effectiveness.
- Lastly, the issues related to the hearing of a person can also affect their other activities.

The disability can be a little or to a larger extent, but it can affect the effectiveness of the individual as compared to others who are absolutely devoid of any. Therefore, to protect the rights of PWD, it is very important to use the technical aids meant for that purpose in the correct manner, and sometimes it becomes very important to instruct the person properly on how to

use the technical device to help with their problem easily. In the modern education system, there is the inclusion of a lot of technical aids to assist the PWD in their education so that they can learn things in an effective way that otherwise would have been very difficult or impossible for them. Therefore, "assistive technology" plays a very vital role in the enhancement of effective learning for people with any sort of disability.

Technical Aids for Visually Impaired Individuals

For individuals suffering from partial or complete visual disabilities, assistive technologies like magnified text, optical magnifiers, Braille, audio and digital textbooks, etc., can assist in their reading skills. Multiple window telescope, Braille and stylus, manual and electric braille writer, handheld digital recorder, Braille note taker, etc. for writing Tactile geometric kits, Braille cube and protector, adaptive calculators to aid in math and colour detectors, large print cards, Braille chess, etc for entertainment. The simplest technique for pupils with some visual acuity is to provide textual content in an enlarged manner.

Children with low vision can use handheld magnifiers to see not just text but also other things in their surroundings. They come in a variety of magnifications, are reasonably priced, and do not require any material alteration. Braille is an important method for learning reading skills for individuals who haven't had enough vision and have to completely rely on others for assistance. It is also a lifelong skill. Braille offers a vital basis for written communication by allowing children to explore features of writing that include spelling, syntax, and phrasing. Audiobooks are recorded texts in human voices, which can be used for those who are blind.

Technical Aids for Physically Impaired Individuals

Physical activity and mobility can be affected by a number of ailments, some of which are lifelong while some are temporary or recurrent. Disabled people struggle each day to complete activities that others take for granted and for which they have no worries. Technological tools are methods and gadgets that focus on making things easier for people with disabilities by removing obstacles and improving their cognitive and emotional skills. Some of the adaptive tools like utensils, keyboards, eye trackers, speech generation, and many other devices assist people with physical disabilities. An individual may use any device based on the intensity and type of their physical impediment. An adaptive switch is a device that enables every switch-enabled gadget, such as mobile phones, iPods, or laptops, to be activated and operated.

Such switches could be pressed with any part of the body that is appropriate for the individual with the physical impairment. Mobility aids like wheelchairs, walkers, canes, crutches, and orthotic devices enable a person who is unable to move. Other technological tools for individuals with sensory limitations who can't even enter information into PCs with keypads or touchpad screens include voice assistants and speech creation tools. By using the voice recognition feature, a user can explore the internet by instructing through the microphone. This is quite a helpful feature for those who have less or no front limb mobility. Likewise, eye tractors are the tools that help any individual when speech recognition fails. It works with the movement of the eyes of the user.

Technical Aids for Mentally Retarded Individuals

Mental retardation is defined by the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Act of 1995 as "a state of halted or inadequate growth of an individual's mind, marked by the impaired intellect." Intermediate psychopathy, mild cognitive retardation, substantial intellectual disabilities, serious psychological cognitive impairment, and extreme emotional disturbance are all examples of this syndrome. All across the technological screening and selection approach, it is critical to consider the information demands of people with intellectual impairment and their communities. First and foremost, parents and individuals with psychological impairment should be informed of the several sorts of assistive technologies that are used to compensate for neurological limitations and disabilities. There are a variety of technical devices which assist people with intellectual disabilities. These include picture boards, pencil or pen gripping skills for writing, workbooks, charts, blocks, worksheets, educational games and toys, and other special gadgets that can help mentally retarded individuals in their learning.

Pros and Cons of Assistive Technology

The development in technology has made the lives of many people easier by assisting them in their assignments. Therefore, as far as pros are concerned, there are many advantages to assistive technology if the person knows how to operate any particular device effectively. The use of technology is very helpful for every individual, but especially those who can't work effectively without the assistive tools; it's a lifeline for them. Especially for PWDs, technology enables them to learn or do things at their own pace. For those who have visual imparities, technical aids like Braille, audiobooks, optical magnifiers, etc., make the task easier for them. Moreover, they can learn at their own speed as per their imparity level, and they should be able to achieve more than their normal capacity. For students with any sort of disorder, assistive technology helps them to achieve great educational goals and they can enhance their various types of skills to a greater extent. Students who previously struggled with their listening ability should now be capable of hearing more clearly and precisely. With the use of technical aids, Learners are encouraged to listen to and communicate with everyone else in an effective manner, which helps their progress and development.

The major concern of technical aids is that it is not possible for each and every individual due to the cost factor that is involved there. The majorities of assistive aids are extremely expensive and are out of reach even for ordinary middle-class people. Further, a lot of training is required to be given to every individual with imparity so that they can use the technical gadgets in the right manner and maximize their effectiveness. Therefore, this training part can be so time-consuming and hectic. There can always be a possibility of technical failure at any stage of the usage of any assistive aid, as technical flaws can occur at any time, so you can't extensively rely on the use of assistive devices. Artificial intelligence is still a privilege that might not be available to all people. It thus implies that people all around the globe may need technological aids yet can't get them because of availability issues. This is all due to the cost factor related to it, as most of the technical aids are quite expensive to make. Therefore, most of the gadgets are not readily available to all in need, especially those who are below the poverty line. So,

technology is a blessing for everyone, especially for those who totally rely on it, but due to its expensive nature, it is not easily accessible to every individual who needs it.

Conclusion

Education is essential for the natural growth and progress of an individual as well as the state or nations in which he resides. Therefore, every individual despite any sort of hurdles or disabilities should get adequate chances for good education opportunities for the overall growth of the individual and the nation. As per our constitutional acts like the PWD Act 1995, Mental Health Act 1987, the Rehabilitation Act 1992 and so on, it is the birthright of every citizen to get a good education. Due to the advancement of technologies, now we are having apt devices for helping the PWD. For a visually impaired person, there is Braille script, audiobooks, worksheets, optical magnifiers, stylus, digital recorder etc. to assist them in their learning. For physically and intellectually impaired ones there are assistive devices like picture boards, wheelchairs, learning games, charts, blocks, eye tractors etc. to assist the working of those individuals. The advancement in technology has become a blessing for those who are extensively dependent on it for normal working in all aspects but there are also some shortcomings of technology as well. The first and foremost is the accessibility of the assistive aids to every individual who needs it isn't available because of the cost factor related to it. As most of the technical devices are costly, therefore, they are absolutely out of reach to most of the individuals who badly needs them. So this is the one aspect which we must take care of otherwise technology is always there to assist those who need it and can make the life functioning of the individual with ease.

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