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Students' Perception on Existing Facilities For Physically Challenged Students in Higher Education Institution: A Comparative Study on Khulna University and Govt. BL College, Khulna

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ABSTRACT

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Extra facilities are essential to the success of physically challenged students in higher education. In a study of 67 general and 13 physically challenged students of Khulna University and Govt. BL College, Khulna, the participant responded to interviews on existing facilities for physically challenged students in higher education institutions. This study also compares inequalities among physically challenged and general students. Findings show that physically challenged students can achieve success in higher education through special facilities. To ensure human rights for all and to develop human resources through an educated workforce, inclusive education is must for physically challenged students. Higher education is considered as a way to gain much knowledge where the institution's environment plays an important role in the amplification of knowledge. The study obtained students' perception of existing facilities for physically challenged students in higher education institutions and essential measures that should be taken to make them human resources. Students indicated that teachers' and friends' attitudes are satisfied in both two institutions but, a little more concern for administrative authority is needed for environmental and service facilities as well as inclusive education.

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INTRODUCTION

Students with physical challenge are increasing in numbers in higher education. To meet the demand for a better educated workforce it is necessary to improve the overall conditions of physically challenged students. For the development of a country human resource plays the most vital role whereas education is considered as an important indicator. Education is also a fundamental right for any individual in spite of having physical challenge. School, college and university settings are the primary ways for students to gain access to knowledge. Faculties are directly responsible for understanding the situation of physically challenged students. Different scholars have expressed their opinion in this regard. Disability studies examine barriers-physical, social, political, cultural, and economic-that exists for individuals with impairment (Cory et al., 2010). Academic success for students with disabilities is therefore significantly influenced by the attitudes of teachers and their willingness to provide accommodations along with other special facilities (Baker et al., 2012). Further, general students' perceptions and behavior to their fellow classmates and spontaneous acceptance and support of those who are different from themselves are equally important for their success, confidence and self-satisfaction within their college and university environment (Kuh et al. 2006). The prevailing characteristics of the environment (climate), particularly in the classroom, buildings affect students' success, especially for students with disabilities (Baker et al., 2012).

According to the United Nations convention, Disability is seen as a socially created problem. United Nations focuses on the elimination of barriers created by society that hinder persons with differences from enjoying their human rights on equal basis in education (UNCRPD, 2018). Negative attitudes, discriminative policies, inaccessible environment etc. limits a person full participation in education especially students with physical impairment. Inclusion is a dynamic approach of supporting positively to pupil who have diversity and of seeing individual differences not as a problem but as opportunity for ensuring learning (Acedo et al., 2009). The aim of inclusive education is to remove stereotype behavior within and outside of the school through successful implementation or modification of legislation, policies and educational management practices in order to promote the redesign of the educational systems and the acceptance of all students independently of their differences (Kochung, 2011). Effective inclusive education identifies barriers in education systems that hinder full participation of students with disabilities and come up with solutions (Bibiana, 2020). Inclusive education constitutes a paradigm based on the concept of human rights and social model that ensure equality, justice and removes discrimination from society (Kochung, 2011). For inclusive education it is required to provide sufficient facilities by considering the needs of a specific group of students. The study was undertaken to explore the existing facilities for physically challenged students in higher education institution by focusing their rights and to develop human resource.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Different models can be related to the study of students' perception on existing facilities for physically challenged students in higher education institution. The following models are mostly related to physical challenge or disability.

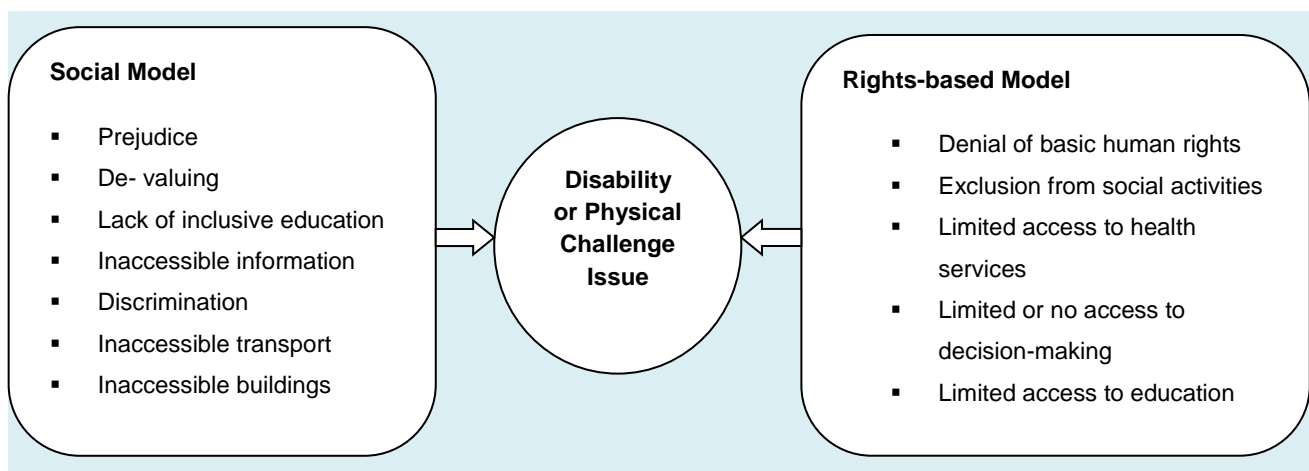


Figure. 1 Conceptual Framework

Social Model

A disabled academician Mike Oliver in 1983 originated the term "Social Model" considering physical challenge or disability. Social model has concern on equality and strongly believes on the phrase – "Nothing about us without us" (Bampi et. al., 2010). From a social model perspective, disability is therefore considered as a socially produced injustice and it is possible to challenge and reduce through radical social change (Lawson and Beckett, 2021). The social model has made a realistic decision to identify and address issues and barriers that can be changed through collective action rather than medical or professional treatment (Barnes C and Mercer G, 1996). The anti-discrimination legislations like The UN (2006) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities support the social model. The social model represents difference and disadvantages by prioritizing what social change are required to ensure equality and justice for all.

Human Rights Model

Human rights are phenomenon of twentieth century which emerged with the response of the cruelty of World War II. The human rights model describes physical impairment or disability is an important dimension of human culture and all individual have certain rights in spite of their physical impairment. This model builds upon the generous of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. As disability or physical challenge is a part of human variation, all human being has full and equal access to enjoy human rights (Waddington and Priestley, 2020). Negative attitudes and discrimination towards physical challenged violate human rights. Inclusive development will be happened only when all people have a chance to develop their potential and contribute to society according to their skills and abilities. The human rights approach focuses not only on prevention and rehabilitation but also on equal rights to participation. To ensure human rights and to develop human resource and to prevent inequalities of general and physically challenged students' special facilities is required for student with physical challenge. The above two models (social model and human rights model theory) are closely related to provide facilities and inclusion of impaired students in academic affairs through ensuring their human rights.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

Khulna University, Khulna and Government BL College, Khulna were selected as study area. These areas were selected because there had been no study done previously on students' perception on existing facilities for physically challenged students in higher education institution.

Population and Sample Size

The study considered the population as all physically challenged student of under graduation and post-graduation level in the study area. As there were limited numbers of respondents having physical challenge. So whole population was considered as sample random and purposive sampling was used to collect data.

Data Collection

The study was conducted through survey method with a semi-structured questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were placed to capture qualitative responses to enhance and enrich quantitative data. Physically challenged students were asked questions contained 5 items on their opinion about existing facilities for them in educational institutions rated on a 5-point likert scale. In the likert scale 1 equaled "strongly disagree", 2 equaled "disagree" 3 equaled "neutral", 4 equaled "agree" and 5 equaled "strongly agree".

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed and interpreted by using different software's like SPSS, Excel etc. Here descriptive (frequency distribution, percentage) analysis were used. Findings were presented through written research report.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study surveyed a total of 13 physically challenge students and they had been trying to make them human resources. Based on age group, table 1 reveals that majority of the respondent (76.92%) belonged to the group 21 to 24 and most of them were male. The study found that maximum number of students (10) was in 2nd year.

Table 1. Demographic information of the respondents

Characteristics / Variables	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Age group		
17-20	2	15.38
21-24	10	76.92
25-28	1	7.69
Gender		
Male	12	92.31
Female	1	7.69
Educational status of the respondent		
1 st year	2	15.38
2 nd year	10	76.92
3 rd year	0	0.0
4 th year	1	7.69

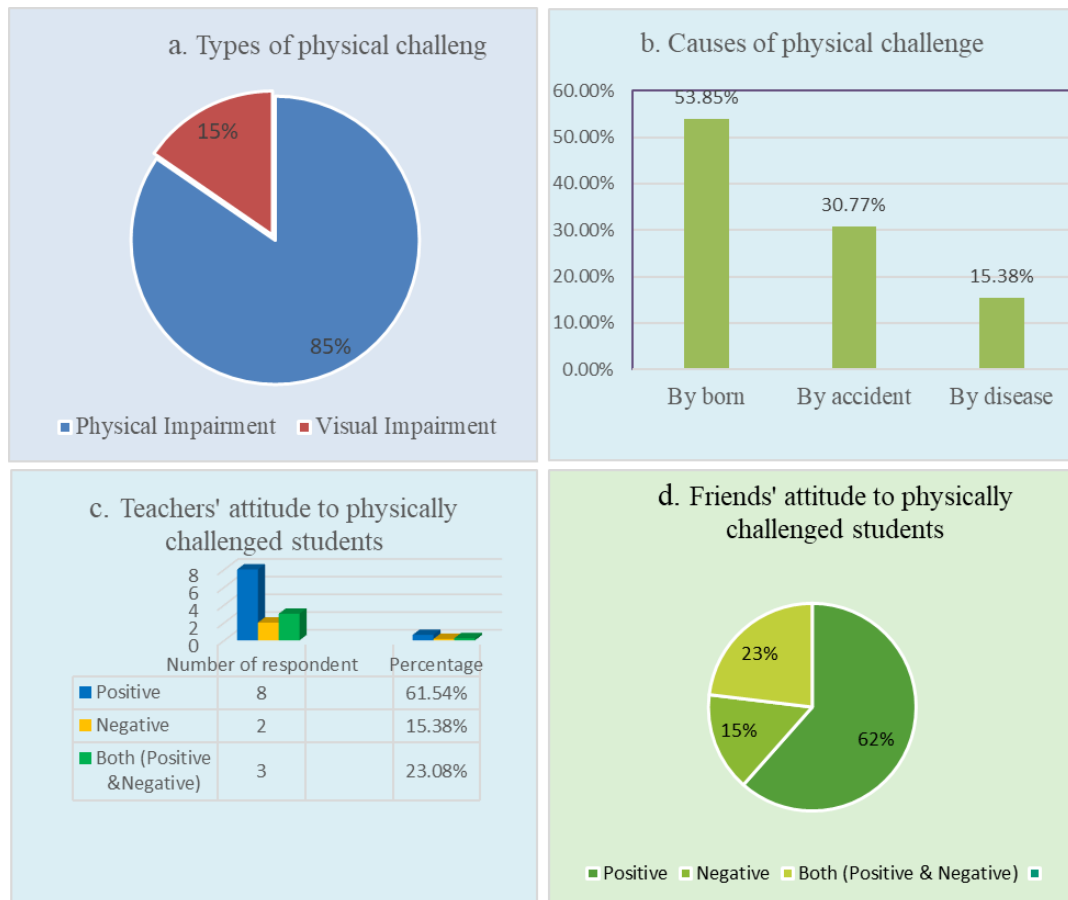


Figure 2. Physical impairment types and attitudes to physically challenged students

As there were different types of physical challenge exists in society. The study mainly found two types of physical impairment. Figure (2.a) shows that 85% had physical impairment and 15% had visual impairment. Data in figure (2.b) indicates respondents had experienced physical challenge by different causes. Figure (2.b) reveals that above half of the respondents had physical challenge by born and rest of the respondents had physical challenge by accident and by disease. Respondents also answered some questions which was regarding teachers' and friends' attitude towards them. Figure (2.c) represents their teacher attitude to them. Above half of the teachers were positive to the physically challenged students and they were conscious for making human resources. 15.38% showed negative attitude and they did not provide any special facility during their class time and in examination hall. 23.08% replied they experienced both positive and negative attitude from their teachers. Figure (2.d) reveals that respondents had experience both positive and negative attitudes from their friends but majority of them had experienced positive attitude from their friends.

Data contained in table 2 reveals that in the study area there were not any physical facilities for students with disability. There was no inclusive educational equipment, lift or escalator for physically challenged students. In two educational institutions, educational allowance was provided from BL College but there was no educational allowance facility from Khulna University. Khulna University had Physical challenged inclusive toilet but that facility was absent in BL College.

Table 2. Environmental, educational and medical facilities for the respondents

Educational institution	Facilities for physically Challenged Students								Total respondent
	Inclusive educational equipment/Braille facility		Lift/ escalator / ramp / fire alarm in buildings		Special educational allowance		Inclusive toilet/ washroom		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Khulna University	0	3	0	3	0	3	3	0	3
BL College	0	10	0	10	10	0	0	10	10
Total	13		13		13		13		13

Respondents were asked various questions using a likert scale questionnaire. Data of figure 2 provides frequencies and percentages of responses for 6 additional items. Result from the opinion of physically challenged students, it can be seen that, about 53.80% student strongly agreed to the question about the existence of reluctance to reveal physical challenge because they expressed the condition of physical challenge willingly. 76.90% student disagreed that facilities are sufficient for them. About 69.20% student agreed that they are satisfied to their teachers' attitude where 30.80% student remained neutral. In here it can be seen that 76.90% student agreed about friends' positive attitude and 7.70% disagreed in this matter. About the discrimination among general students and physically challenged students 38.59% respondents agreed where 15.40% disagreed. About 62% respondent strongly agreed that environment (physical) creates barrier on the way of their learning.

Physically disorder students can make themselves as human resources through education which is possible through successful implementation of inclusive education and special facilities for them in higher educational institution. The study found that participants have a diverse range of experiences, beliefs and attitudes relevant to facilities of physically challenged students. The Convention on the Rights of Peoples with Disabilities [CRPD] (UN, 2006) is now a legal obligation, and must be reflected in education contexts. Article 3 '*General Principles*' and Article 24 on education, strongly advocates for inclusive education and rejects all other forms of education for students with disabilities (UNCRPD, 2018). To ensure human rights and to develop human resources, the more focus must be given to ensure sufficient facilities for physically challenged students. There were some differences in providing facilities for physically challenged students in two institutions. But in the most cases opportunities were same for them. Physical infrastructures were not inclusive in BL College and the same condition also exists in Khulna University. There was no lift or ramp or special walkway for challenged students in buildings. In each building of Khulna University there is high commode for physically challenged students like student with spinal disease. But it is difficult for a wheelchair user to move in toilets because of border in front of the door. There were arrangements of special educational allowance in regard to help students with physical challenge of BL College but there was no such arrangement in Khulna University. Further, there exists quota facility in BL college (which is under national university) but this extra facility was absent in Khulna university. It is was a matter of great sorrow that there was no special walkway in shahid minar to attach physically challenged students especially a wheelchair user with national days.

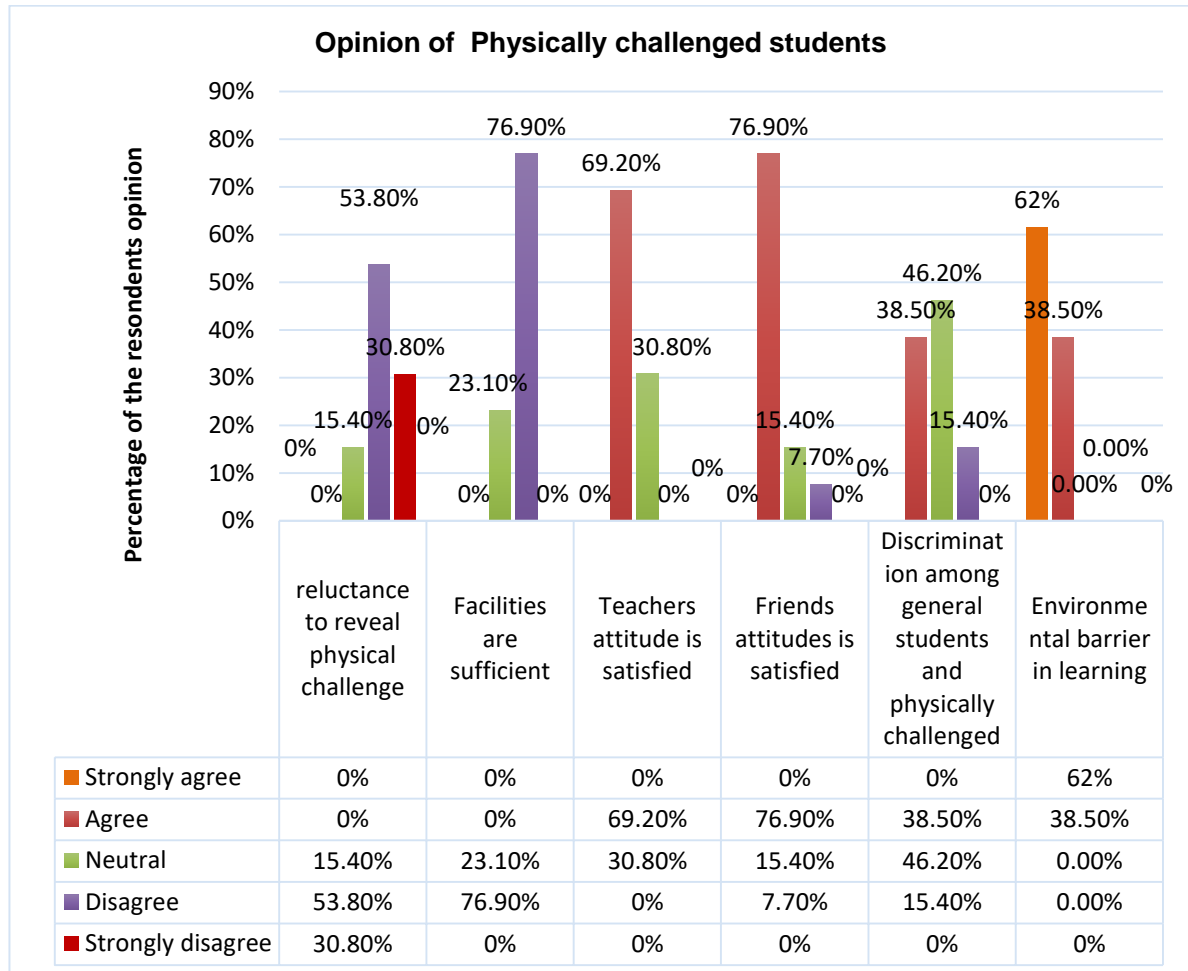


Figure 3. Opinion of physically challenged students regarding existing facilities

Transportation is an important factor for the movement of physically challenged students. Sitting arrangement was better in the college bus of BL College. Four seats were allowed for challenged students in college bus of BL College but in Khulna University physical disordered students made sitting arrangements in University bus through cooperation with other students. Health facilities have an important role to keep hale and hearty of people. There were medical centers of their own of the two institutions. General treatment and medicine were provided for all the students. But there was no special treatment or assistive device for the betterment of physically challenged students. Recommendation also came from some challenge students that periodic medical check-up from the education institution can contribute to build healthy human resource.

In spite of the lack of some facilities, administrations of the two institutions were giving scope to participate in co-curriculum activities equally. All students had a scope to participate in games and sports, cultural and social activities responded that teachers are supportive and always help in their academic curriculum. For development and non-discrimination, it is required the full and equal opportunity and participation of all individuals. Development efforts should be based on the principles of equality of opportunity, non-discrimination and accessibility. In developing poverty reduction and development strategies that are inclusive of persons with disabilities, guidance can be drawn from disability-specific standards and standards applying to the general population that make specific reference to persons with disabilities, or deal with job creation or poverty reduction (ILO, 2015). The international development community is increasingly guided by a rights-based approach. This is an inclusive approach which calls for the participation of all groups of the population, but particularly disadvantaged persons in the development process, and for all people to have equal access to public services such as health and education. To ensure human rights and to develop human resource and to prevent inequalities of general and physically challenged students' special facilities is required for student with physical challenge.

CONCLUSION

The knowledge about and perceptions of students with physical challenge and facilities for them remains an area with unlimited research potential. From this study the data suggest that students with physical challenge are accepted in the classroom by their teachers and classmates and are viewed as capable of meeting the demands of an academic program by receiving sufficient facilities from education institution. The study showed that classroom climate like teacher and classmates are supportive to overcome the problem of physically challenged students. But physical environment and service facilities are not so supportive for them as well as inclusive education is needed for their better performance in higher education. Faculty and academic support staff can serve as sources of accurate information and can support students in need of accommodations to be successful in college or university. To ensure human right, make them as a useful human resource and engage them as an educated workforce, more positive steps should be taken to create a supportive campus climate for those students with physical challenge.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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