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Research Paper

Architectural design problems faced by the orthopedically challenged in higher education institutions

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ABSTRACT : Education of students with a disability should be valued as high when compared with as the education of students without apparent disabilities. Acknowledging the value of educating students with a disability requires options for the type and location of their education. To find out the design problem faced by the orthopaedically challenged in higher education institutions. The study was taken up in Hyderabad city of Andhra Pradesh. The ex-post facto research design was used to approach research. 50 orthopaedically challenged students of these four universities and 3 Officers' in-charge of student's affairs /administrative officers from each of these universities were interviewed using interview schedules. In addition, a checklist-cum-observation schedule was used to collect the information. The opinion of the orthopaedically challenged respondents indicated that all respondents (100 per cent) had problem in accessing area class rooms,46 per cent felt difficulty in accessing seminar hall/auditorium, 24 per cent in laboratory, 28 per cent had problem in library,88 per cent faced problems in accessing toilet, 52 per cent had difficulty in accessing canteen while 10 per cent were having problems while accessing parking area. They also had problem with accessing different element like 94 per cent for stairways, 72 per cent for steps, 90 per cent for corridors and 8 per cent for ramps.

KEY WORDS : Orthopaedically challenged, Problems, Apparent disabilities

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A good design aims to enable all to have equal opportunities to participate in every aspect of society. That minces everything that is designed and made by people to be used by people – must be accessible, convenient for everyone (Sunil, 2006). The problem of disability is gaining more and more importance all over the world. However, accessibility has been one of the most neglected issues in the disability sector. The estimated 70 million disabled persons in India remain confined to their homes, as attempts to travel, enter buildings, parks, shops, etc. can be unsafe and humiliating, Reason behind the non-participation of affected masses into the general stream of life is the defective design. It is the design of the built-up and non-built spaces that directly or indirectly determines one's participation. Among different categories of disabled, educational level of people with movement disability is high compared to other categories because of the fact that they face only one barrier *i.e.* movement which can be easily solved by removing constructional barriers. To increase enrolment in universities and colleges to create barrier free educational environment, the UGC had made a one- time grant of up to Rs.5 lacs per university/college. (X plan guidelines, University Grants Commission). The universities and colleges, under this scheme are expected to address this problem according to the "Persons with Disabilities Act 1995", and ensure that all existing structures as well as future construction projects in their campuses are made disabled-friendly. The institutes should create special facilities such as ramps, rails and special toilets, and make other necessary changes to suit the special needs of differently able persons.

The existing educational environment presents many obstacles, including small classrooms, changes in floor