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Abstract



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### **Towards Inclusive India: Accessing Information by the Challenged People**

The paper introduces the concept of 'Inclusive India' and what does it contain. In its journey towards 'Inclusive India', libraries and information centers should develop policies and practices towards inclusion of challenged users. An attempt has been made to understand the term 'Challenged Users' in its proper perspective, including all its connotations and denotations. It defines disability, provides data on Disability Statistics, Disability Rate, types of disability, ranking of different disability population, etc. It presents the problems faced by the challenged people. It gives a selective list of the famous people with disabilities. It provides the names of Associated Organizations. The paper maps the issue of Information Access for the Challenged Persons. The case of the Braille Center at University of Calcutta formed in collaboration with West Bengal Chapter of National Association for the Blind is presented. Case of Accessibility for the challenged users in the University Library at Albany, New York has been presented at length as a model framework. Role of the Disability Services Coordinator at the library has been dealt with. Library Access options for the challenged users as well as different service delivery option including research support service options have been detailed. Universal Access and Research Access ways are discussed. Paging service, Proxy Browser, etc concepts have been dealt with. Assistive Technologies to facilitate library/information access are discussed. As a Model Policy for the Library Services for People with Disabilities, American Library Association Policy has been discussed. Some recommendations have been offered at the end.

**Keywords:** Inclusiveness, Universal Access, Library, Information, Challenged Users, Users with Disability, Model, Policy

#### **Brief Bio :**

Prof. Susmita Chakraborty did her Honours (English Literature), MA (English Literature) and Masters in Library and Information Science (Gold Medallist) from University of Calcutta. She did her Masters (Digital Library Management) and PhD from Jadavpur University; and Associateship in Information Science (AIS) from INSDOC, CSIR, New Delhi (now NISCAIR). Currently she is a Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science, University of Calcutta teaching Digital Content Management, Library Website Design, ICT, and Technical Writing. Formerly, she was a Deputy Librarian in Bengal Engineering & Science University (now IEST, Shibpur). Before that she was a Librarian in Maharaja Manindra Chandra College. Susmita is the Secretary, Standing Committee, Section on Education & Training, International Federation of Library Associations & Institutions (IFLA-SET) and also the Editor of IFLA SET Bulletin. IFLA is the umbrella organisation of all the National Associations in Library and Information Science. Susmita was Commonwealth Fellow and a visiting Academic in University College London, United Kingdom in 2015. She was awarded Bonnie Hilditch International Librarian Award (San Diego, USA, 2013), Momentum Press Award (Boston, USA, 2014) and SLA Rising Star Award (Vancouver, Canada, 2015)