

Beyond Teaching: Teacher Support Shaping and Abetting Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

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Abstract

Empowerment of persons with disabilities (PWDs) has now assumed paramount importance while crafting disability-related policies, education framework and inclusion. Strong commitment has been displayed towards inclusion and accessibility by the state and private institutions. However, studies providing empirical evidences about the role played by teachers in shaping the livelihood of disabled by empowering them and transforming them as independent, confident and competent to participate in fruitful jobs is very much scanty. This study examines how teacher support received by disabled has cast a bearing on them gaining empowerment. Primary data was collected from 134 disabled in Chennai selected using Snowball sampling and analysed using SPSS, applying the analytical tools of Frequency, Mean, Cluster Analysis, Chi-square Analysis, Correspondence Analysis and Regression. Findings of the survey indicate that the disabled surveyed have gained good level of empowerment in their professional life while they have been supported by teachers to an average extent on majority of issues. Support from teachers have cast a significant positive influence on their empowerment with those fortunate to get good support of teachers gaining high level of empowerment. This implies that the quality of teachers' support for disabled usually well translates into better empowerment of them in their profession.

Keywords: Disability, Employment, Empowerment, Independent working, Persons with disabilities, Teachers support.

1. Introduction

The term, "Disability" has now witnessed a drastic shift in its contextual understanding. Earlier, it was understood as a medical limitation. Now, the term has been researched more in the backdrop of transforming the entire infrastructure starting from home, schools, workplace, worshipping places and even prisons. It is still disheartening to note that there are PWDs encountering barricades in educational institutions, public places, shopping and workplaces, limiting their opportunities to avail quality education and training, thereby restricting their employability. This stops capable and interested PWDs from joining the productive workforce. Mostly, these obstructions are caused not due to the PWD's incapacity but due to inaccessible environment, social stigma, prejudiced outlook and inaccessibility to necessary support mechanism.

Many measures have been implemented to tide over this unwanted scenario. PWDs are provided monetary assistance to get educated and disability policies have been formulated and executed to ensure more inclusive environment for them. Hence, some effort has been initiated to enable PWDs participate in the overall nation-building process. The enactment of Rights of PWDs Act of 2016 is a milestone occasion in this



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direction. The Act has spelt out different provisions to enable PWDs gain equal opportunities to be educated and employable. This would enable them gain dignified livelihood through inclusion, accessibility and equality. RCI has also made tremendous strides towards generating manpower for rehabilitating PWDs. All these measures have made a concerted effort to enable PWDs to be socially, economically and medically empowered. Evidences from Indian and international context indicate the vitality of environmental, economic and institutional barricades in limiting these efforts.

2. Education

Education is an enabler for social and economic transformation of especially the underprivileged sections of the society. It boosts an individual's self-actualisation, self-sufficiency, competence and confidence enhancing his contribution to the economy.

Schools may serve as ground for empowering disabled students or reinforcing marginalisation. Teachers play a decisive role in this issue. Their supportive role on academics, emotive, socio-cultural and structural grounds can boost educational accomplishments, empowerment, self-efficacy, self-confidence, unconventionality and sustainability of disabled students. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has strongly advocated for inclusive education offering inclusion, accessibility and diversity, accommodating universal needs, especially of disabled students. Inclusion in class environment integrates disabled students physically and emotionally, providing them opportunities for participating in the general classes and avail equivalent prospects for mental growth and development. Effectiveness of an inclusive classroom can be realised only through effective, proficient, skilled and competent teachers with desirable outlook. Teachers can contribute to the overall empowerment of students, especially the disabled students through their effective teaching practices which should extend beyond the traditional instructional-based learning. They can substantially impact and inspire students to make a self-assessment and self-realisation, capacitate them to tackle crisis scenarios and prepare themselves for their probable career. This role becomes more profound in case of disabled students as they need special attention to get oriented towards education and career by successfully conquering barricades.

3. Empowerment

Empowerment is a very broad term engulfing partaking, self-confidence, suppleness, sustainability, practicability, viability, flexibility, ability to confront crisis and complex scenarios and sense of belongingness and value-contribution to the society, family and the working organisation. This comprehensive phenomenon cannot be accomplished overnight. It has to be developed progressively and spontaneously from experience of dealing with educational experiences and social interactions. Empowerment can be a function of effective education, training, motivation and inclusive work environment. It is an incessant phenomenon strengthening the physical and mental agility, inculcating competence and self-confidence, boosting networking skills, developing imperative competencies and augmenting decision-making abilities on issues having a direct bearing on their livelihood. Hence, empowerment is an outcome shaped by constant relationships and experiences. By offering critical feedback, emotive reassurance and inspiration, effectual instructions and meaningfully engaging the students, teachers can substantially contribute to capacitating the students to encounter barricades and nurturing empowerment.

Studies have proven that fruitful student-teacher relationships fastens academic accomplishments of the students, motivates them positively towards achieving their professional goals and bettering their mental and

emotional wellbeing and goodness. Teachers have a greater role to play in the case of disabled students who confront numerous societal, attitudinal and structural challenges. Individualistic consideration, inclusive academic and instructive practices, positively strengthening and fortifying and constant support and encouragement of disabled students by the teachers can augment their competencies and belongingness. Contrarily, truncated expectations, insufficient accommodation and dismissive outlook of the teachers shall weaken self-confidence and push the disabled students towards over-dependence.

However, not much studies have concentrated on role of teachers in fostering good career development for disabled persons. Studies have been conducted on inclusion in educational institutions and barricades in workplace for PWDs. Not much research has been undertaken to uncover the contributions of teachers in shaping the career of disabled students by enhancing their self-confidence, actualisation and competencies. Hence, the effect of a teacher on the life of disabled in the long-run has not been well established. Hence, there is a need to explore the contributions of teachers in the disabled gaining empowerment which shall serve as a testimony to the selfless services of a teacher. Further, this study may also help in the formulation of suitable teacher-training programmes to capacitate them with competencies to handle disabled students in their classes.

This study proposes to examine the nature and extent of support received by PWDs from their teachers and the level of empowerment gained by them in their life and the possible impact of such teacher support on empowerment of the disabled. Results of the study can establish the catalytic role of classroom environment headed by teachers that can be played in fostering independent living and overall personal and psychometric development of disabled students.

4. Review of Literature

4.1. Empowerment of PWDs

Niesz et al. (2008) opined that through constant inquiries conducted qualitatively, larger personal and community empowerment may be accomplished by involving PWDs in decision-making whereby policy-making may be significantly influenced.

Manase (2025) advocated that including PWDs digitally may augment their empowerment by providing effective mentorship, training and self-advocacy.

Oswal et al. (2025) conducted a systematic literature review on inclusive education and concluded that fostering inclusion in educational institutions comprising of universally accessible designing and accommodation shall result in the PWDs being empowered fairly.

Kubiak et al. (2021) advocated that intellectually disabled students respond well to use of audio-visual aids which may enhance their autonomy and self-sufficiency, augmenting their ability to participate in the general community. Escobar (2016) studied University disabled students and found that customised care, inclusive environmental conditions and strong mental agility contributes significantly to them being empowered substantially. UNESCO (2018) opined that quality education, accessibility to desired info and socio-cultural partaking

significantly influence PWDs being included and empowered. Fadilah et al. (2025) highlighted that for empowering PWDs, it is indispensable to have a consorted and collaborated approach from different sectors and stakeholders such as governmental, non-governmental and corporate agencies so that social stigma pertaining to disability is eliminated and sufficient openings are created for the rehabilitation of PWDs.

Kuipers (2014) suggested that PWDs can be empowered effectively only with engagement of the community and society under a cultural framework. Veena (2024) advocated that for empowering PWDs, it is imperative to eliminate them from being isolated in the society for which effective advocacy, quality education and well supported networking are indispensable. Magotra and Vidya (2024) opined that empowering PWDs can be accomplished by first empowering their teachers by effective training and development so that they can contribute to the development of inclusive environmental conditions. The above studies have highlighted the importance of individualised empowerment (Kubiak et al., 2021; Escobar Delgado et al., 2016), educational empowerment (Manase, 2025; Magotra & Vidya, 2024; Oswal et al., 2025), community and policy empowerment (Fadilah & Hafrizal, 2025; UNESCO, 2018; Kuipers, 2014) and intersectional and contextual assessment (Veena, 2024).

4.2. Role of Teachers

Eseadi and Diale (2023) have hinted about challenges confronted by persons with learning difficulties in winning a qualitative career due to the barricades encountered by them which drastically affects their chances of obtaining a good job, earning and leading an independent livelihood. Under such a context, it is imperative for teachers to take much more responsibility and offer effective guidance and play a supportive role in preparing well for confronting the society through well constructed networking.

Carter & Solberg (career transition literature) advocates that well involved teachers in career planning, self-advocacy teaching, offering career directions and providing instructional teaching based on strengths of students boosts their empowerment and easier and even transition from educational institutions to work organisations.

Bam (2021) has opined that the excellence of career guidance by teachers substantially affects students being inclusive in the long-run and their economic integration. Bias or any form of prejudice among teachers, whether conscious and unconscious, will affect career goals of students. Hence, it is imperative for teachers to be trained on fostering positivity and providing appropriate guidance for students. Jamal et al. (2023) investigated the role of teachers in career development of persons with visual impairment and found that teachers with positive outlook offer better career transition for the visually impaired while those without sufficient training about the special needs of visually impaired are not able to effectively prepare the students for a good career path. Mohd and Khairuddin (2025) investigated Malaysian teachers and exposed the inability of them to provide career counselling for students due to dearth in skill, aptitude and acquaintance in implementing career progression planning, adversely influencing the livelihood of students after completing their schooling. Percedita Benemerito (2025) pointed that teacher's professional development strategies augmented the skillset of teachers which led to better inclusion at classes and supported developing of career-oriented proficiencies of the disabled students. Astudillo et al. (2025) have hinted that the role of teachers is not merely taking care of the disabled students at classes. They have to align the curriculum properly and create partnership networking so that they are motivated to arrive to schools and get prepared for assuming a fruitful career in the future. Chakraborty et al. (2024) found that dearth in proficiency among Indian teachers about inclusive valuation practices act as a barrier in crafting customised education policies and career guidance for disabled students. This necessitated the possibility of professionally developing the teachers through an effective collaborative effort of school and home. Karal and Wolfe (2018) found that effectual on-the-service training for teachers augmented their proficiency and acquaintance in preparing career

transition goals for disabled students which enabled them gain proficiency to plan their future career.

Special education teachers' efficacy and vocational preparation (2026) exposed the positive contribution of highly proficient teachers to provide career guidance and counselling to disabled students, aiding their career development.

Fujino and Sato (2022) found that teachers confront hardship in making future career choices of their disabled students and suitably partnering with appropriate stakeholders. They suggested teachers to be fully aware about advocacy and take decisions accordingly regarding their disabled students. Varkas (2022) explained that outlook of teachers largely affected career prospects of their disabled students. Experience and proficiency of teachers offering effectual career directions augment the possibility of disabled students having a successful career. Negative outlook of teachers diminishes career openings for the disabled students.

Shen et al. (2023) opined that professionally well-developed teachers successfully provide good career development for disabled students according to their lines of interest, proficiency and career aspirations. Liao (2024) stressed the vitality of involvement of professionally trained teachers and parents in setting plans for career of intellectually disabled students comprising of setting targets for career, establishing transition plans and assessing strengths and weaknesses which may find good career opportunities. Sefora & Ngubane (2021) found disabled students in an Open University can have access to rising career if their teachers are proficient in providing suitable career direction, boosting their self-assurance regarding their career choice and contending negative outlook. Alabdulwahab (2024) found that Saudi Arabian Higher Secondary school Teachers using customised instructions, practical working tasks and partnering with career analysts augment career eagerness and employable proficiency of their disabled students. Desombre et al. (2021) found that teachers well supported by social structures exhibit good positive outlook towards students, fostering their educational results and career openings, vital for empowering the students. Frontiers in Education (2022) suggested that well-structured training programmes capacitate teachers to strive for inclusive environment for disabled students and provide for better career openings for their disabled students.

It can be observed from an extensive literature review that most of the research studies have concentrated on contextual factors. Not much empirical investigation has been made on the students exposing their opinion about the role of their teachers in shaping their career and subsequently getting empowered. This study responds to this gap by analysing the role of teachers in empowering employees with disabilities. Using survey data from 134 employees in Chennai, the study shall assess the empowerment level of disabled and support received from them regarding their career aspirations.

5. Conceptual Framework and Objectives of the Study

The support provided by teachers to their students is conceptualised across different dimensions such as personal assessment and development of their students, career guidance and inculcating confidence and competence. Personal assessment and development comprise of identifying career interests of students in the light of their strengths and weaknesses and advising on overcoming weaknesses and getting prepared for suitable jobs by developing suitable career values. Career guidance and inculcation of confidence and competence may involve developing professional skills of the students to plan for their future and providing an actual feel of work, explaining about suitable career opportunities, providing useful tips for workplace scenario, providing information about different employment opportunities, motivating for a good and suitable career and inculcating self-belief and confidence among the students of being qualified for the intended job.

Empowerment is treated as a multidimensional outcome that captures resilience in overcoming challenges, ability to accomplish targets, feel of belonging and fulfilment, overcoming hurdles, fostering networking and finally the ability to contribute to the greater good by assisting community events. Hence, empowerment is a process which develops gradually with good quality education, job experiences and proper training and development.

On the basis of this framework, this study is based on the following objectives:

- a. To gauge the level of empowerment gained by disabled;
- b. To assess the extent of support received by the disabled from their teachers;
- c. To analyse the impact of support received from teachers by the disabled on their empowerment and also explore the association between such support from teachers and empowerment gained by the disabled;
- d. To expose the association between capability of disability to perform their job independently and the level of empowerment accomplished by them.

6. Methodology

This study is descriptive in nature, based purely on primary data, collected by administering a structured questionnaire to 134 disabled engaged in some meaningful vocation. The study population for this study shall be disabled while the sample frame is the metropolitan city of Chennai. The sample size for this study is 134 while Snowball Sampling method has been used to select the sample units. The questionnaire comprise of 7 statements pertaining to empowerment gained by the disabled and 16 statements relating to support received by the disabled from their teachers. There were a further 8 questions to assess the demographic characteristics of the disabled. Participation of the respondents was voluntary and informed consent was obtained from all respondents.

The questionnaire was earlier pilot tested with 37 disabled and the final data collection was further undertaken. The final data collected was checked for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha which yielded a score of 0.888 in respect of the Empowerment construct while the score was 0.952 in the case of the construct of Support from teachers. The data collected were analysed using SPSS, employing the analytical tools of Frequency, Percentage, Mean, Cluster Analysis, Chi-square Analysis, Correspondence Analysis and Regression.

7. Data Analysis and Discussion

7.1. Profile of the Disabled Surveyed

Of the 134 disabled selected for this study, 101 are males and 33 are females; 19 possess educational qualifications of School level while 44 possess Degree, 13 possess Diploma and 58 possess post-graduation or more as their educational qualifications; 13 have a monthly income of less than Rs. 25,000 while 51 have Rs. 25,000 to 50,000, 40 have Rs. 50,000 to

75,000, 17 have Rs. 75,000 to 100,000 and 13 have monthly income in excess of Rs. 100,000; 93 are married, 40 are unmarried and a solitary disabled is separated; 73 are engaged in government teaching, 3 are engaged in private teaching, 9 are employed in nationalised banks, 3 in private banks, 35 in other government service, 7 in other private service, 3 are engaged in profession and a solitary disabled is an entrepreneur; 88 have

visual impairment, 42 are Orthopedically challenged and 4 have hearing impairment; 10 have disability to the level of 40% while 43 have 40-80% and 81 have serious disability of 80% and more.

7.2. Level of Empowerment Accomplished by the Disabled

The level of empowerment accomplished by the disabled has been assessed using Likert's five-point statements and the outcome is displayed in table 1.

Table 1: Level of Empowerment Accomplished by the Disabled

Statement	Mean	Statement	Mean
I am able to overcome challenges successfully	4.1269	I am able to survive through obstacles	4.2612
I am able to accomplish all targets at my job	4.0970	I am able to easily foster new friendship or connection	4.2612
I am able to contribute to the greater good	4.3582	I am assisting community events	4.0597
Overall	4.2004	I am able to develop feeling of belonging and fulfilment by serving the cause of disabled	4.2388

Table 1 highlights that the disabled surveyed have accomplished good level of empowerment as the mean in respect of all the statements exceed the four mark in five-point scale. The overall mean is also in excess of 4, suggesting that the disabled have gained good degree of empowerment in their life. They are able to contribute to the general welfare of the society, successfully counter barriers and are able to foster networking. Hence, overall capability of the disabled is quite good.

7.3. Support Received by the Disabled from their Teachers

The level of support received by the disabled in their life from their teachers has been obtained using Likert's five-point statements and the results are portrayed in table 2.

Table 2: Support Received by the Disabled from their Teachers

Statement	Mean	Statement	Mean
Identifying strengths and weaknesses	3.6940	Explained about requirements of different jobs	3.2463
Developing career values	3.6866	Providing useful tips for workplace situations	2.6493
Exploring career interests	3.5299	Providing employment information	3.1642
Developing professional skills	3.4552	Motivating for a good career	3.8433
Exploring actual feel of work	2.8881	Inculcate self-belief of being qualified for the intended job	3.5000
Analysing suitable job position	3.0821	Completing all the requirements of the course	3.4030
Explaining prospects of suitable profession	3.2313	Plans for future	3.5373
Explaining about multiple career opportunities	3.2910	Confidence for career development	3.8507

Table 2 suggests that teachers of the disabled have assisted them only to an average extent in majority of the grounds. Teachers have played a good role in building good career values and inculcating confidence among them of getting a good career and motivating them towards this goal. Teachers have also played a reasonably good role in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the disabled and aiding them to complete requirements of their course. The teachers have also played a decent role in aiding the disabled to plan for future, develop professional skills and explore career interests. However, the disabled have indicated that their teachers played only an average role in explaining about possible requirements of jobs, multiple career opportunities and prospective career options, giving them an actual feel of work and

analysing suitable job position. Teachers were not able to provide any information about possible employment opportunities.

7.4. Grouping the Disabled based on their Empowerment

The disabled surveyed have been grouped using Cluster Analysis using the statements pertaining to empowerment gained by them and the outcome is portrayed in table 3.

Table 3: Grouping the Disabled based on their Empowerment

x	C1	C2	C3	F	Sig.
Successfully overcome challenges	2.89	3.82	4.77	64.776	0.000
Accomplish all targets at job	2.78	3.80	4.75	66.884	0.000
Ability to contribute to the greater good	2.83	4.18	4.97	125.243	0.000
Survive through obstacles	3.11	3.95	4.89	85.139	0.000
Foster new friendship or connection	3.00	4.09	4.79	68.811	0.000
Assisting community events	2.44	4.00	4.59	59.176	0.000
Develop feeling of belonging and fulfilment by serving disabled	3.11	4.18	4.62	29.886	0.000
No. of Cases	18	55	61		

Table 3 displays the formation of three distinct clusters using the level of empowerment gained by the disabled. The F values are statistically significant suggesting that all the statements used for measuring empowerment of the disabled play a significant role in grouping them on the basis of their level of empowerment. Based on the mean values of each of the three clusters, the three groups have been labelled as “Moderately Empowered Disabled:”, “Empowered Disabled” and “Highly Empowered Disabled”, each of them encompassing 18, 55 and 61 disabled respectively.

7.5. Profile-wise Characteristics of Clusters formed on the basis of Empowerment

The profile-wise characteristics of clusters of disabled formed on the basis of their level of empowerment has been assessed using Crosstab and the outcome is portrayed in table 4.

Table 4: Profile-wise Characteristics of Clusters formed on the basis of Empowerment

Profile		Moderately empowered disabled	empowered disabled	Highly empowered disabled	Total	Pearson Chi-Square values
Gender	Male	15	41	45	101	0.698
	Female	3	14	16	33	
Education	School Level	2	3	14	19	0.192
	Degree	6	20	18	44	
	Diploma	1	5	7	13	
	PG or >	9	27	22	58	
Monthly Income in Rs.	<25,000	3	4	6	13	0.169
	25,000-50,000	7	22	22	51	
	50,000-75,000	4	19	17	40	
	75,000-100,000	1	3	13	17	
	>100,000	3	7	3	13	
Marital status	Married	11	36	46	93	0.450
	Unmarried	7	19	14	40	
	Separated			1	1	
Occupation	Government teaching	10	34	29	73	0.535
	Private teaching	0	2	1	3	
	Other Private 1 service Professionals	1	2	0	3	
	Entrepreneur	0	1	0	1	
Nature of VI		14	38	36	88	0.339
Disability	OH	3	15	24	42	
	HI	1	2	1	4	

Level	of 40%	2	4	4	10	0.115
Disability	40-80%	2	15	26	43	
	80% & >	14	36	31	81	

Table 4 displays that the Pearson Chi-Square values in respect of all the demographic variables are in excess of 0.05, suggesting the absence of significant association between the clusters of disabled formed on the basis of empowerment gained by them and their demographic characteristics. The table further showcases that bulk of the male and female disabled, those with 40-80% disability, those with schooling and Diploma as educational qualifications, those with monthly income of less than Rs. 25,000 and Rs. 75,000-1,00,000, married, those employed in other government service and orthopedically challenged are highly empowered followed by those who are empowered and finally by those who are moderately empowered. However, more of the disabled with Degree and PG or more as educational qualifications, those with disability of 80% and more, those with monthly income of Rs. 50,000 to 75,000 and more than Rs. 100,000, unmarried, government & private teachers, private bank employees and the visually impaired are empowered followed by highly empowered and finally by those who are moderately empowered.

The table further portrays that a solitary separated disabled is highly empowered while equal number of disabled with monthly income of Rs. 25,000-50,000 are empowered and highly empowered followed by less number of disabled who are moderately empowered. There are more number of disabled employed in nationalised banks and other private service with high level of empowerment whereas there are equal number of private employees with empowerment and moderate empowerment.

There are equal number of disabled with 40% disability with empowerment and high empowerment followed by those who are moderately empowered. There are couple of hearing impaired who are empowered while one each of them are highly empowered and moderately empowered.

Further, there are couple of professionally employed disabled who are empowered and a solitary disabled with moderate empowerment while there are nobody with high level of empowerment. The solitary disabled entrepreneur is empowered.

7.6. Grouping the Disabled based on Support Received from Teachers

The disabled surveyed have been grouped using Cluster Analysis using the statements pertaining to Support Received by them from Teachers and the outcome is displayed in table 5

Table 5: Grouping the Disabled based on Support Received from Teachers

Statement	1	2	3	F	Sig.
Identifying strengths and weaknesses	2.45	3.74	4.43	34.310	0.000
Developing career values	2.45	3.59	4.57		
Exploring career interests	2.32	3.43	4.41	51.888	0.000
Developing professional skills	2.00	3.39	4.45	44.208	0.000
Exploring actual feel of work	1.74	2.54	4.00		
Analysing suitable job position	1.58	2.89	4.24	68.698	0.000
Explaining prospects of suitable profession	1.68	3.07	4.39	54.663	0.000
Explaining about multiple career	1.97	3.31	4.10	65.600	0.000
	1.87	3.20	4.16	90.907	0.000
	1.55	2.35	3.67	41.345	0.000

opportunities	1.61	3.00	4.33		
Explained about job requirements				49.992	0.000
Providing useful tips for workplace situations	2.35	3.81	4.82		
Providing employment information	1.90	3.43	4.59	40.195	0.000
Motivating for a good career	1.74	3.37	4.49	76.479	0.000
Inculcate self-belief of being qualified for the intended job	1.90	3.52	4.59	105.728	0.000
Completing all the requirements of the course	2.03	4.20	4.61	107.773	0.000
Plans for future	31	54	49		
Confidence for career development				125.674	0.000
No. of Cases				102.152	0.000
				126.352	0.000

Table 5 showcases the formation of three distinct clusters formed on the basis of support received by the disabled from their teachers. Since the F values in respect of all the statements are statistically significant, all the statements significantly contribute to the grouping process. Based on the mean values, the three clusters may be labelled as “Unsupported Disabled”, “Moderately Supported Disabled” and “Well Supported Disabled”, each engulfing 31, 54 and 49 disabled respectively.

7.7. Association between Support Received by Disabled from their Teachers and Empowerment

The association between support received by the disabled from their teachers and the level of empowerment gained by them has been explored using Correspondence Analysis and the outcome is portrayed in figure 1.

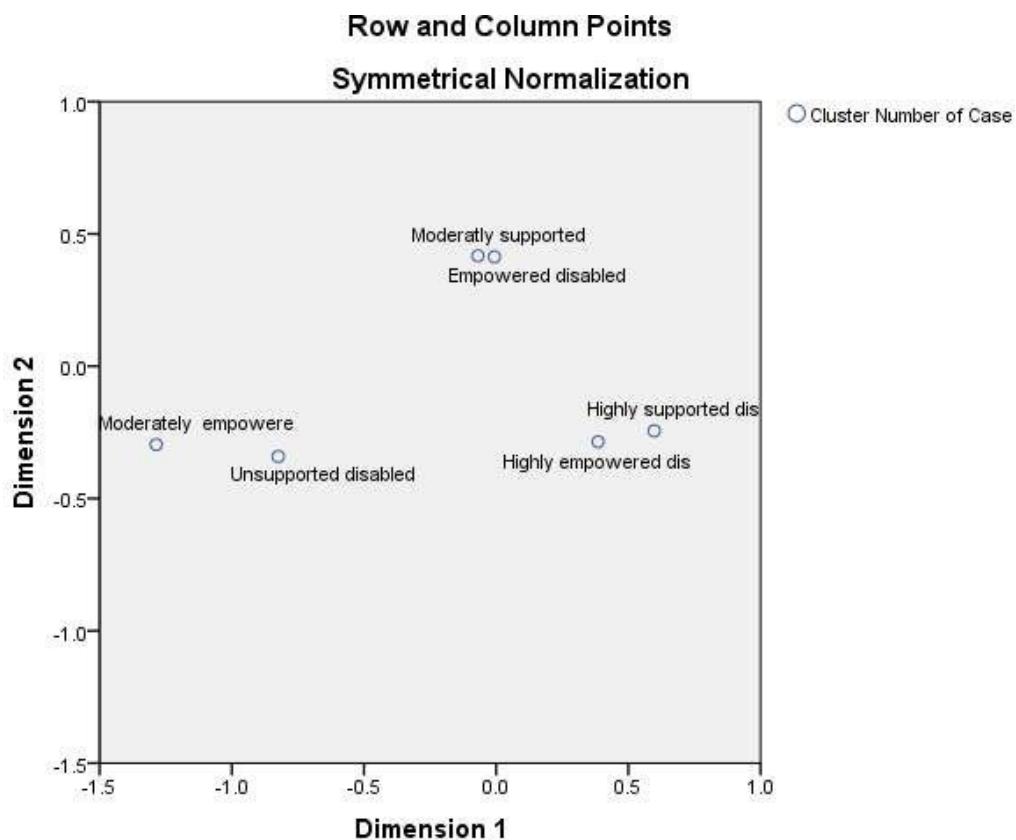


Fig 1: Association between Support Received from their Teachers and Empowerment Figure 1 clearly shows that those disabled who were fortunate to be immensely supported by their teachers are highly empowered while those who got moderate support from their teachers have managed reasonably good empowerment. Those disabled who were unfortunate of not receiving adequate support from their teachers have succeeded in accomplishing moderate level of empowerment.

7.8. Association between Capability of Disabled to Perform their Job Independently and their Empowerment

The association between capability of the disabled to perform their job independently and their empowerment has been gauged using Correspondence Analysis and the outcome is displayed in figure 2.

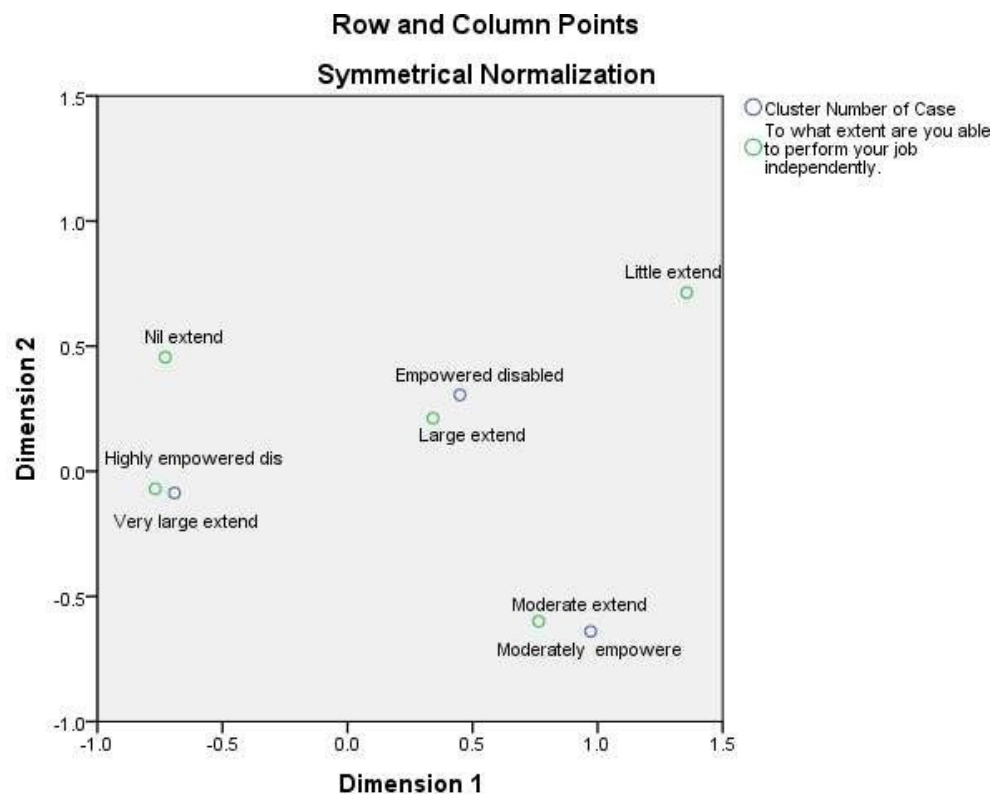


Fig 2: Nature of Association between Capability of Disabled to Perform Job Independently and Empowerment

Figure 2 clearly depicts that those disabled who are well empowered are able to perform their independently to a very large extent while those who are empowered are performing their job independently to a large extent. Those disabled who are able to perform their job independently only to a moderate extent are moderately empowered.

7.9. Impact of Support Received by Disabled from Teachers on their Empowerment

The impact exerted by support received by the disabled from their teachers on their level of empowerment has been gauged using Regression Analysis and the outcome is showcased in table 6.

Table 6: Impact of Support Received by Disabled from Teachers on their Empowerment

Variable	B	Std. Error	T	Sig.	VIF
Constant	3.530	0.208	16.992	0.000	
Support From Teachers	0.198	0.059	3.360	0.001	1.000
R Square=0.079	F=11.287	P=0.001			

Table 6 suggests that the Regression Model is fit at one percentage level of significance ($F=11.287$; $P=0.001$). The independent variable of support received from teachers explains 7.9% variance of the dependent variable of empowerment gained by the disabled ($R\text{ Square}=0.079$). It can further be inferred that support received from teachers exerts significant positive impact on empowerment gained by the disabled ($T=3.360$;

$P=0.001$). Furthermore, an increase in support from teachers by one time shall result in them gaining further empowerment to the tune of 0.198 times ($B=0.198$).

Based on this Regression result, the following Regression equation can be derived: Empowerment = $3.530 + 0.198 \times \text{Support from Teachers}$.

7.10. Major Results of the Study

This study has revealed that PWDs have accomplished good level of empowerment in their life. They are able to contribute to the general welfare of the society, successfully counter barriers and are able to foster networking. Hence, overall empowerment of the disabled is quite good. Importantly, all the disabled have gained at least moderate level of empowerment if not very high level. Only 18 of the 134 PWDs surveyed have been moderately empowered while the others have gained good level of empowerment.

The study has also exposed that teachers of the PWDs have assisted them only to an average extent in majority of the grounds. Teachers have played a reasonably good role in building good career values among the PWDs, inculcating confidence among them of getting a good career, motivating them towards this goal, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, aiding them to complete requirements of their course, aiding them to plan for future, develop professional skills and explore career interests.

However, teachers have played only an average role in explaining the PWDs about possible requirements of jobs, multiple career opportunities and prospective career options, giving them an actual feel of work and analysing suitable job position. Teachers were not able to provide any information about possible employment opportunities. 31 PWDs are not supported by their teachers while 49 are well Supported.

support received by PWDs from teachers exerts significant positive impact on their empowerment. PWDs who were fortunate to be immensely supported by their teachers are highly empowered while those who got moderate support from their teachers have managed reasonably good empowerment. Those disabled who were unfortunate of not receiving adequate support from their teachers have accomplished moderate level of empowerment. Hence, it can be observed that support of teachers for PWDs has played a commendable role in them gaining empowerment in their life.

disabled who are able to perform their job independently to a very large extent are well empowered while those who are performing their job independently to a large extent are empowered. Those disabled who are able to perform their job independently only to a moderate extent are moderately empowered. This stresses the need for capacitating PWDs to discharge their duties independently using assistive devices which can significantly contribute to their empowerment. Government must ensure that all disabled are accessing assistive devices needed for discharging their official duties so that they can transform themselves more efficient.

7.11. Implications and Suggestions

Dearth in availability of info about possible job openings is a major negative in the school life of PWDs. This has resulted in an off-quality of the schooling-based to career transition scheduling for PWDs. This outcome throws open some significant implications for the system of education, preparing and training teachers and policy formulation.

Consolidating Preparation and Professional Progress of Teachers: Outcome of this study has suggested that the PWDs have not received much support from their teachers about info on possible job openings for them. This necessitates an urgent need for enhancing knowledge of teachers about career prospects available for

PWDs and boosting their proficiency on career direction for PWDs. It is suggested to include the following aspects in all teacher-training courses:

- a. Career counselling for Disabled students;
- b. Awareness about general job market conditions;
- c. Awareness about general employment tendencies;
- d. Workstation accommodations and assistive technologies for PWDs;
- e. Transition preparation from schooling to office environment;

Teachers should be frequently updated about evolving new career openings for PWDs through constant training while on service. They should be provided knowledge about inclusive job practices in the market. Teachers should focus in addition to the usual teaching, on providing job-related orientation for their students. This can be enabled through boosting their capacity and competence so that they may enthusiastically engage in supporting career aspirations of the PWDs.

Formalised Career Direction Services: Career direction should be considered as an integral part of curriculum of schools. Schools should have career-guidance cells and transition-planning committees so that tailor-made plans may be prepared and made available for each disabled student which can enable exploring career openings for each disabled students based on their potentials and skillset. These cells and committees should comprise of the vocational experts, teachers and parents, school counsellors and special educators.

Crafting Customised Shifting Strategies: Strategies should be evolved for facilitating each disabled student be equipped with planning to shift from their educational institution environment to the work environment. This has to be crafted taking into account the interested notice area, proficiency and competence of each individual disabled student. "Individualised Education Plans" should be formulated suitably by integrating emphasis on career modules which should emphasise on:

- f. Capacity-based valuation;
- g. Skill-mapping and professional profiling;
- h. Augmenting employability and communication expertise;
- i. Target-oriented shifting plans.

Customising career-oriented strategies to suit the differing needs of disabled students shall enable aligning the competence of students with their career prospects.

Augmenting Exposure to Job Environment: Exposing students in schools to the real working environment is not all that possible due to inadequate practical learning openings for them. Under such a scenario, educational institutions may use the following strategies to give practical job-like exposure to students:

1. Work shadowing and internship opportunities;
2. Industrial visits;
3. Apprenticeship programmes;
4. Replicated working experience in classrooms;
5. Providing opportunities for disabled students to interact with efficacious disabled professionals.

Exposure to work environment through practical education will augment the consciousness of students about possible career opportunities and accordingly get motivated and well prepared for a fruitful job.

Solidification of Industry-Institute Collaboration: Teachers unable to pass on job-related info to students has been exposed by this study. This exposes that institutions imparting education are feebly connected with the industry. This necessitates educational institutes forge mutual collaboration with vocational training institutes, business firms and other organisations. Through such collaborative arrangements, students should be given opportunities to undergo industrial visits, internships, on-campus placement opportunities and participation in competency enrichment certification programmes. This will boost the flow of info about possible job opportunities to students which shall augment their chances of getting a smooth shift from education to employment.

Providing Accessible Career Info: Info pertaining to career should be available in accessible formats to suit the needs of students with different types of disabilities. Every school should have a Career Resource Centre which is well updated and accessible to make available the following info:

- a. Talent enrichment measures;
- b. Government schemes to aid generation of jobs;
- c. Reservation policies;
- d. Evolving employment sectors;
- e. Entrepreneurship openings available.

Availability of info pertaining to job opportunities in accessible form for disabled students shall capacitate them take decisions about jobs which are suitable for them.

Policy Framework: Career counselling should be made mandatory for disabled students at all schools. The students should be given effective services to enable them shift smoothly from educational to employment institution. These services should be strictly monitored by district education officers and proper accountability must be fixed for its effective execution. Most importantly, sufficient financial and human resources must be made available to execute these policies effectively.

7.12. Theoretical Implications of the Study

7.12.1. Empowerment Theory:

Outcome of this study is supportive of the Empowerment theory of Julian Rappaport which advocates that disabled get empowered not purely due to self-driven factors such as their suppleness, vibrance, self-esteem or actualisation but is largely influenced by external environmental factors such as relationships, especially with their teachers and tutors. This highlights that:

- a. Disabled getting empowered is largely due to social co-construction mechanism;
- b. Teachers serve the important role of facilitating mental, psychographic, social, emotional and economic empowerment through suitable job opportunities;
- c. Educational institutions serve disabled not merely as emotive or sensitive buffers; rather they act as effective structural enablers for empowering disabled.

This research reinforces the importance of environmental and ecological conditions in empowering disabled by illustrating the effect of education relations in the micro level on career results in macro level.

7.12.2. Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT):

Results of this research well align with the SCCT propagated by Robert W. Lent, Steven D. Brown, and Gail Hackett. In the light of this theory and outcome of this study, supportive role of teachers can be conceptualised as follows:

- a. Contextual affordance;
- b. Source of oral persuading;
- c. Contribute to the developing of self-actualisation;
- d. Reduction of career barricades.

Outcome of this research has offered empirical validity to the SCCT under disability scenario which has not been sufficiently researched. The result that supportive context for disabled shall substantially contribute to them being empowered acts as a strong case to validate the applicability of SCCT to the disabled sections.

7.12.3. Models of Disability:

Outcome of this study is supportive of the Social Model of disability according to which environmentally and socially supported disabled get empowered. This suggests that:

- a. Disabled gaining empowerment through career progression is not intrinsic;
- b. Education can strengthen marginalization of disabled or empower them;
- c. Supportive teachers serve as an effective transforming institutional instrument.

7.12.4. Ethical Implications:

Outcome of this study reinforces the importance of society in helping disabled finding suitable career progression. Education has to play a decisive role in aiding disabled gain fruitful career which will help them get empowered. It is the responsibility of educational institutions to:

- a. Avoid overprotective approach;
- b. Inculcate capacity to lead an autonomous life rather than being dependent;
- c. Ensure all students with and without disability are provided all possible info about potential job opportunities.

Supportive teachers can successfully serve as an effective social justice instrument for reducing partiality and bias and provides identical opportunities to all for accomplishing growth and development.

7.12.5. Research Implications

1. Longitudinal studies may be conducted in future to scrutinise the influence of teachers on career progression of disabled in the long run. Mediation effect of variables such as self-actualisation, suppleness and career adaption may be considered in this relationship while the moderation effect of characteristics such as nature of disability or percentage of disability may also be explored.
2. Outlook of different stakeholders in the process of rehabilitating disabled such as teachers, parents, rehabilitation personnel and corporate employers may be collected to assess the possible support these parties can play in disabled gaining effective career opportunities.

3. Other forms of supportive role by teachers in the form of emotive support, instrumental support, informational support and psychological support to disabled may be assessed and the most important form of support in shaping the career of disabled may be explored.

8. Conclusion

This research has exposed the important contribution that teachers could make in empowering the disabled. Teachers may serve as an effective catalyst in fostering career progression and empowerment of disabled. If an effective empowerment-driven supportive machinery is established by the education system for facilitating just and unbiased career progression process with the active involvement of teachers, empowerment of persons with all types of disabilities may be accomplished in the near future.

However, the ground reality is that school teachers seldom contribute to career identification and progression of disabled. To address this inefficiency, it is imperative to motivate and train the teachers accordingly, establish an effectual organisational structure, forge meaningful collaborative arrangements along with suitable policy modifications. Empowerment of disabled can be accomplished by suitably empowering the teachers at school level with desirable proficiency, competence and acquaintance coupled with making available sufficient resources for the purpose.

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