

ROLE OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract—*The paper explores the significant role of assistive technology in enhancing the learning experience of students with visual impairment in higher education and the opportunities and barriers in effective utilization of the same as a tool for ensuring inclusive higher education. By using both primary and secondary resources to substantiate the findings the paper highlights that this era of technological advancements brings with it a plethora of opportunities to make accessibility possible for all. Ostensibly there are a wide range of assistive technologies available, but not all of us have access to it. Comes in the way many bottlenecks in turn pushing back the students with visual impairment into the peripheries submerged with elevated dependency and curbing their autonomy. The a etiology for this include dearth of awareness, knowledge and skills among students, parents, teachers and institutions and inadequate assistance from the government and other agencies for the provision of need specific assistive technologies. To weed out these impediments the paper proposes a three pronged approach, by creating awareness and sensitization on disability among students, parents, teachers and institutions; identifying disability specific needs and ensuring availability of apt assistive technologies to all; and initiate new or strengthen the existing policies, acts and schemes for providing trainings and follow ups for effective utilization of assistive technologies for students with visual impairment. Though the paper has students with visual impairment at prime focus, this approach could be effectively utilized for students with other disabilities also.*

Keywords: *Students with Visual Impairment, Higher Education, Assistive Technology.*