

## Comprehensive Text Book on Disability

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**“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” ~ Nelson Mandela**

According to The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, ‘Person with disability’ means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his/her full and effective participation in society equally with others. The persons with disabilities have equal rights to live a purposeful life of dignity. One means of achieving that is to have well qualified professionals engaged in educational rehabilitation of children with disabilities. In India there are many educational institutes offering programmes in special education that are recognized by The Rehabilitation Council of India, a statutory body of Government of India. The students attending these courses and their teachers as well, seek information from various sources to get the correct and latest information about the conceptual framework, assessment and intervention techniques, teaching strategies and many other issues that are contextual. The socio cultural aspect of disability in India would be very different from that of any developed nation. Community based rehabilitation for example is very culture specific. To fill in the gap of having a complete all-encompassing information, ‘Comprehensive Text Book on Disability’, is a significant contribution to the field.

Prof B S Chavan and Dr Wasim Ahmad and Prof Raj Kumari Gupta have edited this comprehensive text book on disability. The knowledge of the fields which the three editors had, was complementary (Psychiatry, Intellectual Impairment, Education, Human Biology and Psychology) and it has really helped in presenting the book in its present shape. They have accomplished an arduous task of bringing together contributors to explore various aspects of disabilities.

There are quite a few books available on disability by western authors but I have yet to come across any book by Indian authors which is as comprehensive as this

one. There are eighty chapters divided into nineteen sections focusing on different disabilities including neurodevelopmental disabilities, sensory disabilities, multiple disabilities, genetic disorders and mental illness. One hundred and eighteen writers including university professors, medical doctors, rehabilitation practitioners, clinical psychologists, occupational therapists, special educators, and lawyers have provided diverse perspectives to disability making this book all-inclusive. The authors are not only from India but across the world thus providing a global view of disability.

The book is truly comprehensive including essays on early childhood education, assessment, curriculum development, legislations related to disability, and many special issues concerning disability. Attention is also rendered to the current trends in research in disability area, the integration of technology for education and independent living of persons with disability. The field of disability is so dynamic and rapidly changing so, care has been taken all subject-matter in the book encompasses up to date information. The contributors provide a well-rounded perspective, in shifting focus from disability as a medical condition only needing clinical intervention to giving it due social and academic legitimacy. Breaking the myths and stereotypes associated with disability, insight is given for the causes and manifestations of various disabilities. The role of family and society in breaking the attitudinal and physical barriers is also discussed thus enabling the reader to recognize how to unlock the potential of so many persons with disabilities who have so much to contribute to the world.

What makes this book special is its far reaching appeal. The students studying special education programmes at under graduate level and postgraduate level including in-service teachers at school and college can refer to this book on an array of subjects in context of a disability.

This is a resource book not only for trainees in the field of special education but also for medical health including rehabilitation psychologists, clinical psychologists, and allied professionals.

Given the legislative mandates on inclusion in India, for including students with disabilities in general classrooms whenever possible, general educators must be aware and equipped with knowledge and skills to address the diverse needs of special children in their classrooms. This book is therefore, appropriate for the students and teachers of general education. This book is also useful for professionals in other allied fields who work with special children viz. speech-

language pathologists, audiologists, occupational therapists, counsellors and school psychologists and school administrators.

The presentation of the book is clear with consistent chapter structure. The reader gets to read a synopsis of each chapter right in the beginning in the form of an abstract and at the end in the form of top takeaways. Images, tables and boxes break up the text and make the chapters more comprehensible. The language used is easy to read and comprehend.

Every chapter gives a glossary of important words appearing in that chapter. There are also exercises for the reader to check his/her own knowledge gained after reading a particular chapter.

A colourful representation would have made the book more attractive. A hard cover would have enhanced the longevity of the book. But I understand, this book should be accessible to far and wide population and therefore the cost factor has to be kept in mind.

In my opinion this is a Bible of a sort for those who want to seek knowledge about disabilities. I strongly recommend this book and I, for one, will be assigning this book to my students.