

# E-Learning Platforms and Skill Training for Divyangjan: Opportunities and Challenges

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## Abstract

Every individual plays an important role in upliftment and development of a nation. Science and technology, along with skill training initiatives provided by the Government of India, play an important role in enhancing education and employability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Various E-learning platforms are providing special opportunities for the Divyangjan in acquiring knowledge and practical skills. Due to their disabilities, these individuals constantly struggle to earn a livelihood and become independent. Most of the traditional skill development methods are time-consuming and difficult, as Divyangjan have to go through a difficult process in acquiring them. In the era of digitalisation, various E-Learning platforms are playing a special role in removing the obstacles for Divyangjan and make more accessible and universal as possible by minimizing hard effort to learn. This research paper discusses the various E-Learning Platforms for skill training programs available for Divyangjan in India. The present study also discusses about opportunities and awareness of these initiatives among Divyangjan. Despite the adoption of various programs by the government, public awareness and use of E-learning Platforms have not achieved comprehensive success. There are various reasons behind this such as lack of adequate resources, trained teachers, public awareness. Also, Divyangjan who are constantly facing various personal, social and economic difficulties for using Skill-Based E-learning Platforms which are having a particularly negative impact on their ability to acquire skills and become self-reliant. The paper discusses real-life situations and difficulties faced by Divangjans which will further help in sensitising policymakers for future reforms.

**Keywords:** Divyangjan, E- Learning Platforms, Skill Training, Challenges.

## Introduction

The Divyangjan refers to “Divine Body”, which is a respectful perspective towards PwDs. In the year 2015, the Government of India decided to use the official term ‘Divyangjan’ to refer persons with Disabilities, emphasising the latent potential and capabilities of the disabled instead of their disabilities. (Vikash, Naveen Kumar, 2025). According to the Right of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, Government of India has identified 21 Types of Disabilities (Divyangjan), which are categorised into some types like Physical disabilities, Intellectual, Developmental Disabilities, Mental illness, etc.

Active participation of the entire population is essential for the overall development and progress of a nation. Without equal active participation of the entire population national development will be affected. People who are physically, mentally or intellectually challenged are known as Divyangjan, and such people face unique challenges in living independent lives compared to individuals without disabilities. According to the 2011 census, there are about 26.8 million Divyangjans in India (**Ranjit Sharma p. 285**),

which is 2.21% of the total population of the country. Due to their disability, Divyangjan face various challenges to sustain themselves and lag behind the general public in many areas in terms of earning a living and choosing a profession and in many cases cannot be self-reliant and are forced to live their lives depending on others. However, it is possible to build confidence and self-reliance in Divyangjans through appropriate education and vocational training. If it is possible to provide suitable and capacity-based training and facilities to all these individuals, their contribution to the country's economy will play a special role in the personal development of the Divyangjans as well as their contribution to the country's economy. Government of India has been adopting many initiatives for upliftment of Divyangjans, but has not yet fully achieved self-reliance in their self-determination. Traditional and ancient methods, lack of awareness, geographical and economic limitations, etc., have become obstacles in the way of the Divyangjans' progress. However, in the 21st century, in the era of globalisation and the era of information technology, skill training and application have become much more affordable and easily available. In the change of traditional thinking, various E-Learning Platforms have played a crucial role in the training of Divyangjans by removing the obstacles.

Government of India has taken various programs under Skill India Mission, which provide training to Divyangjan through various types of E-platforms to make them self-reliant, besides, programs like 'National Action Plan', Skill Development Organization etc are constantly adopting various modules to achieve universality and its expansion (Siddaraju, 2024, p.159). Also, platforms like SWAYAM provide vocational and higher education opportunities for Divyangjans through various types of ODL. However, despite adopting various programs, these platforms have not been able to achieve universality; many Divyangjans are still deprived. There are various reasons behind all these failures, such as lack of adequate resources, lack of trained teachers, lack of public awareness. About 45% of Open Universities in India lack Screen Reader Access, High Contrast Text, Word Spacing, Text resize etc. (Kumar, 2021, p. 2). Research has shown that visually impaired people face difficulties in opening Power Point Presentation, PDF File in the case of online learning (Guddad, 2025, p.10).

In the present time this is necessary to identify and analyse all the issues and barriers facing by Divyangjan and require adequate infrastructure and government and private initiatives and public awareness. Also provide adequate skill training and job opportunities, which will help them to ensure their self-dependent future life.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the available E- Learning and skill training Platforms for Divyangjan in India.
2. To study the effectiveness and challenges faced by Divyangjan while using E- Learning and skill training Platforms

### Method of the Study

The investigators have used the descriptive method for the present study. This study is purely based on secondary sources of data. The data are collected from government websites, research papers and different internet sources.

### Available E-Learning and Skill Training Platforms for Divyangjan

1. **PM-DAKSH-DEPwD Portal:** The Government of India, along with Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, has developed the

PM-DAKSH-DEPwD Portal to provide skill training and employment opportunities for Divyangjans (Persons with Disabilities). This online portal serves as an integrated hub to fulfil the multiple needs of PwDs, training organisations, as well as employers and job aggregators. Within this portal, two modules were also designed explicitly for delivering skill training and facilitating employment opportunities for PwD's. These two modules are:

- a) **Divyangjan Kaushal Vikas:** This provides end-to-end facilities for PwD's who are interested in skill training. It provides Unique Disability Identity (UDID) based seamless registration, enabling enrolment in more than 250 skill development courses, e-learning digital resources, aids in identifying Training Partners in their state or district, access to study materials, as well as detailed information on the trainers.
  - b) **Divyangjan Rozgar Setu:** It is a specialised digital platform that is designed to provide information about the vacancies for PwDs in various organisations. The platform provides geo-tagged information on employment and earning opportunities within private companies as well as details about PwDs from all over India. Further, the department has taken proactive steps by establishing Memorandum of Understanding with various companies like Amazon, Youth4Jobs, Godrej Properties, among others, dedicated to enhancing employment prospects for PwDs. Presently, there are more than 3000 vacancies spanning various disabilities, thereby allowing PwDs nationwide to apply for roles aligned with their interests through the official website of this portal.
2. **PM e-Vidya (DIKSHA):** This digital platform offers special e-content for CWSN. The audiobooks for the visually impaired and ISL Dictionary for deaf and hearing impaired are available on DIKSHA platform (Press Information Bureau, 2021). Some other features of this platform are given below:
- **Visual Impairment (Blind & Low Vision Learners)**
  - Study materials available in DAISY format (digital audiobooks and accessible text)
  - Access to content through National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) platform
  - Text-to-Speech (TTS) enabled e-books (UNICODE format)
  - Availability of tactile maps for better understanding
  - Adjustable display settings (font size, contrast, etc.)
  - Audio-based learning materials via DIKSHA
  - **Hearing Impairment (Deaf & Hard of Hearing Learners)**
  - Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary for communication support.
  - More than 270 educational videos in sign language.
  - Course content recorded in sign language and uploaded online .
  - Learning materials also distributed via DVDs .
  - Audio-video introduction in both sign language and regular language.
  - **Learners with Severe Disabilities / Multiple Disabilities**
  - Low-cost home-based e-learning materials developed by NCERT
  - Digital content accessible anytime, anywhere
  - Supports flexible and individualised learning
3. **National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS):** It is an autonomous organisation, originally established by MHRD, now the Ministry of Education, GOI. It offers open and distance learning from the secondary to the senior secondary level. NIOS provides flexible learning opportunities to each

student especially for special children, who get numerous benefits to learn at their own pace and comfort. It provides individualised facilities to ensure fair access to education, which involves:

- Special Concessions in Examinations
  - Adopted Curriculum and Study Material
  - Use of Assistive Devices and Technology
4. **Sugamya Pustakalaya:** Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in collaboration with member organizations of Daisy Forum of India and powered by Tata Consultancy services Jointly launch this platform in the year of 2016 for facilitating the person with disabilities (Divyangjan) by providing e book content which are accessible formats like DAISY audio, DAISY full text, EPUB, Braille Ready Files (BRF), HTML, and standard Word/Text documents for people with visual impairment and other print disabilities.(PIB). There are over 6,53,234 books for online reading and also downloadable (NIEPVD) also with
5. **National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT)**, is an autonomous administrative control of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), under Government of India. NIELIT provides online courses, virtual lab, and assistive technologies for Divyangjan. According to the 30<sup>th</sup> report by NIELIT 2025, it implements a Skill-based Entrepreneurial Programme for Divyangjan for training them as data entry operator.
6. **SCPwD Learning Management System (LMS):** SCPwD is a specialised digital platform to provide accessible, industry-relevant skill training for Divyangjan. This platform provides a centralised, accessible digital hub to facilitate, manage and track skill development programs for PwDs.

#### Key functions of this platform

- **Customised Curriculum:** This platform designs and customises existing curricula based to suit specific disabilities.
  - **Specialised Trainers and Assessors:** Training of Trainers (ToT) and Training of Assessors (ToA) programs to ensure specific domain and teaching expertise.
  - **Accessible Digital Learning:** This platform provides specially designed course content and study materials for Divyangjan.
  - **Government Certification and Job Opportunity:** After successfully completing the training course, the candidate get government recognized certificate under Skill India. Also organises job fairs to provide job opportunities for trained Divyangjan.
7. **E- Pathshala:** E-Pathshala is a government initiative platform to provide equitable digital literacy by providing accessible educational resources for all, including Divyangjan. In this platform, many features like Audio, Text to speech, Indian Sign language, accessible textbook ePub format, etc. and Access to diverse content help Divyangjan to develop their knowledge and learning skills.
8. **SWAYAM:** It is the largest e-learning MOOC platform in India, providing different online courses. Although this platform is not specially designed for Divyangjan but this is deeply integrated with the inclusive education policy of the government of India. Some specialised provisions for Divyangjan under SWAYAM are given below-
- **Accessible Academic and Vocational Courses:** Different mainstream Course conduct by NIOS and IGNOU provide special provisions for Divyangjan by providing highly accessible audio, Visual aids, Indian sign Language, self-space quiz etc.
  - **Exam fee and accommodation:** SWAYAM offers a low exam fee for Divyangjan as compared to general person and provides compensatory time and scribe.

## Effectiveness of Digital Training Initiatives

Integration of Modern Technology and E-learning with education has made it easier for Divyangjans to acquire knowledge and skills. Efforts are being made to make Divyangjans self-reliant in India through several programs and platforms initiated by Govt of India. It is very important to judge their effectiveness, which can inform about the current situation. To judge the effectiveness of available E-Learning Platforms, it is very important to judge two main criteria of these Platforms.

### 1. Usability and overall acceptability:

The E-Learning Platforms created for the disabled in India have been particularly effective in the field of Learning and Skill development of Divyangjans. Universally usable Study Material, vast information and book collection are helping in acquiring knowledge by removing obstacles. In the year of 2024-2025 1.34 Lakh PwDs have successfully registered on Divyangjan Kaushal Vikas Module and 87,200 Divyangjan successfully facilitated the skill training under PM-DAKSH - DEPwD Portal (Shree et al, 2025, P. 205). As per the official data of MSDE total 172891 persons with Disabilities trained across various skilling initiatives under SCPwD. Around 27,820 PwD member registered on Sugama Pustakalaya and it providing more than 31,000 direct downloadable study materials. Under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana PwD category 8,936 Divyangjan are successfully trained within the year of 2018-19 to 2023-24.

### 2. Impact on skill acquisition and employment:

The main purpose of education skill training for Divyangjan is to make them self- dependent and enhance their employability. To ensure job opportunities and employability after completing the course or event, the government tried to integrate job vacancies in the government sector as well as encourage private organisations to come forward. As per PIB, around 2500 trained Divyangjan secure their job after completing their course under PM-DAKSH-DEPwD Portal and 11,545 active geo-tag job vacancies with 12,992 PwDs are actively registered for job matching across 20 major job aggregators under Rozgar Setu Platform (Shree, 2025, p.205). 300 trained students got placement in Food and beverage Service in the financial year 2024 under the training programme of Diageo India, in partnership with SCPwD.

## Challenges faced by Divyangjan while using E- Learning and skill training Platforms

Although the Government of India has adopted various schemes such as PM-DAKSH, SWAYAM, and SCPwD to integrate modern technology for making Divyangjan self-reliant and skilled, these platforms have not yet achieved universal reach in the current context. Various government reports, surveys, and research identified that there is a lack of enrolment because they are facing many challenges to learn while using digital platforms. These barriers can be broadly categorised as follows:

### 1. Digital Accessibility and Technological Barriers

- **Lack of Universal Design in Digital Platforms:** Although in the 21<sup>st</sup> century rapidly evolving technology makes education more universal and accessible to every individual but the Divyangjans due to their disability still struggle to access all the resources. Many e-platforms are providing specialised education but are not able to fulfil the universal accessibility standards due to unsuitable curriculum, teaching method, materials etc. According to a report, about 45% of Indian Open Universities lack of essential features like screen reader access, high contrast text, and text resizing (Kumar, 2021, P. 2). Visually impaired learners are struggling significantly to access different soft copy study materials like PPT, PDF (Guddad, 2025, P. 10).

- **Digital Divide:** E-learning is mainly accessible on smart devices, which require a properly capable device, continuous internet connectivity, also specialized assistive technologies like digital hearing aids, braille display, advanced screen recorder etc. which are mostly expensive and not possible to afford by low-income Indian families. According to Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) in India - A Statistical Profile: 2021, around 69% of Divyangjan are live in rural areas. In India, many of rural place have lack of digital connectivity and infrastructure which creates digital divide.

## 2. Learning and Literacy Deficiencies

- **Poor Foundational Literacy Rates:** Most e-learning and skill-based training programs require a minimum standard of basic education as a prerequisite. According to the 76th National Sample Survey (NSS) conducted by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the literacy rate for Divyangjans aged 7 years and above is 52.2 percent which is far behind the national average of 80% also 15 years above 19.3 percent Divyangjans have the highest educational level secondary and above. This literacy rate clearly indicates that huge number Divyangjan are illiterate and access to e-learning platforms and skill-based training programmes is too challenging or they may not be able to fulfil the basic criteria to enrol in specific courses.
- **Shortage of Trained Special Educators:** To conduct successful e-training with an online platform need proper domain-based pedagogical knowledge with digitally skilled trained teacher. But at present there is lack of proper trained teachers with proper technical and specific disability knowledge with adequate teaching abilities. There is a shortage of trained teachers to fulfil the desire of Divyangjan.

## 3. Infrastructure Deficits and Policy Implementation Gaps

- **Physical Infrastructure Challenges in Blended Skill Training:** E-learning and training sometimes need to integrate with physical experience, practical hands-on activity, to properly develop a particular skill and practice in real environment. Most of the institute have lack of proper infrastructure like ramps, tactile paths, and accessible washrooms makes it difficult for Divyangjan to complete the practical assessments of hybrid online courses.
- **Inadequate Use of Financial Resources:** Based on the Rights of Persons with Disability (RPwD) act 2016 government allocated funds under different schemes, but this is found that the funds are not properly utilized due lack of proper IT system, planning or administrative delay. According to NSS 76<sup>th</sup> Round only 21.8 percent of Divyangjan received help from the Government.

## 4. Societal Prejudices and Limited Employment Outcomes:

The ultimate goal of skill-based training is to make Divyangjan confident and self-dependent. However, in our society Divyangjan face societal prejudices regarding their ability, also a preset mentality that they will always be dependent on others negatively impacts their mental health, leading to lowered self-esteem and marginalisation. Out of 2.68 crore, only 26% of Divyangjans are employed (**Devi, Thounaojam, 2025, P. 41**)

## Conclusion

The present study tried to identify the major e-learning and skill training platforms available for Divyangjan in India and to study the effectiveness as well as challenges faced by persons with disabilities while accessing these digital initiatives. The findings indicate that the Government of India has taken significant steps toward promoting inclusive digital learning and skill development through a range of platforms such as PM-DAKSH-DEPwD Portal, DIKSHA, SWAYAM, NIOS, Suganya Pustakalaya, NIELIT, SCPwD Learning Management System, and e-Pathshala. These initiatives collectively play a

crucial role toward empowering Divyangjan by providing flexible learning opportunities, accessible study materials, vocational training and employment opportunities. These e-learning and skill training platforms in India have emerged as powerful tools for promoting inclusive education and employability among Divyangjan. Strengthening accessibility standards, improving digital infrastructure in rural areas, enhancing teacher training, ensuring effective policy implementation, and fostering inclusive employment practices are essential for maximising the benefits of these initiatives. A coordinated approach involving government agencies, educational institutions, industry partners, and civil society is required to create a more equitable and empowering digital learning system. Such efforts will contribute not only to the holistic development of Divyangjan but also to the broader national goal of inclusive growth and social equality.

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