

# New law will help LD students get admission

## 15 Million Young People In India Have Autism

Mahesh Jyoti  
@timesgroup.com

**Mumbai:** When the Lok Sabha passed the Right of Persons with Disabilities Bill on Friday, it marked the end of a 30-year-long effort for Vinay Shetty of the NGO Think Foundation.

Working for the rights of thalassaemia patients, Shetty, along with representatives of the Haemophilia Society's Mumbai Chapter, started writing to the Maharashtra government and politicians to recognise patients with any of these 100 blood disorders as "persons with disability".

"Thalassaemia patients now live longer and need job opportunities. The new law will help them study, get jobs and avail of travel concessions," he said.

But it is not only the 1,000-odd thalassaemia patients in Mumbai of 1.25 lakh across the country who will benefit here. The Delhi-based founder of the Disability Rights Group, Javed Abidi, who has been central in the struggle to get the government to recognise 21 types of disabilities as against seven so far, estimates it will empower 70-100 million Indians. Census 2011 had pegged the number of people with disabilities in India at 2.1 million.

"Even 30 million is a conservative estimate as the World Bank estimates that 10% of the population experiences some form of disability," he said, adding that the bill has for the first time given recognition to the "marginalised disabled" in the country.

So, people with learning disability—estimated to affect one in every 10 students—ar autism will get an oppor-

## DIFFERENTLY ABLED PERSONS

Disability	India	Metropolises
Sight	1 cr	6.7 lakh
Speech	16.4 lakh	4.7 lakh
Hearing	12.6 lakh	4.7 lakh
Movement	6.1 lakh	6.6 lakh
Mental	2.3 lakh	1.4 lakh
Total	2.2 cr	29.6 lakh

Many More People Disabled

Source: Census 2011

**22mn** India's Differently Abled Population as per Census 2011

**70-100 million** Activists' estimate of India's disabled population

> There is no estimate for the 14 newly added conditions

### DISABILITIES RECOGNISED BY GOVERNMENT



> India till now recognised only seven forms of disabilities, including speech, hearing and movement.

> The new bill includes 14 more. These include disability due to acid attacks, thalassaemia, haemophilia, muscular dystrophy, learning disabilities and Parkinson's disease



**15%**

Proportion of population that experiences some form of disability, as per World Bank

“Every year, over 1,000 seats in Delhi University aren't filled. Yet, no student with dyslexia would be given a seat as the law didn't recognize it as a disability”

Javed Abidi | FOUNDER, DISABILITY RIGHTS GROUP



tunity to get admission to college. “Every year, over 1,000 seats in Delhi University aren't filled. Yet, no student with dyslexia would be given a seat as the law didn't recognize it as a disability,” said Abidi.

Merry Barua of the Delhi-based Action for Autism believes the law will provide a great opportunity for the 35 million youngsters with autism in India. “We always struggled to get environments or concessions for children with autism. When concessions were given to disabled

children in board exams, we had to struggle separately for similar concessions,” she said, adding that mainstreaming will now be easier.

“In smaller towns, children with autism would be labelled as mentally retarded as there was no law to explain their condition,” she said.

Abidi said the bill is revolutionary as it increases the job quota for people with disabilities to 4%. “The paradigm shift, it says that people with psychosocial problems and intellectual disability have the right to work,” he said.