

# Various Types of Barriers Faced by Persons with Disabilities and Strategies to Make Them Accessible

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**ABSTRACT:** Humans face many barriers while performing tasks in their lives. The word 'barrier' means 'obstacle, obstruction or hindrance'. Barriers come in many forms and many sources. Barriers can be temporary or permanent. In such a situation, the place or task is no longer accessible to the person due to barriers. To create a barrier free environment, accessibility is necessary. Accessibility is a very important core element of disability inclusion. An accessible barrier-free environment is a very important step towards fulfilling the rights of people with disabilities to participate in all areas of community life. Barrier free environment means more than just physical access like ramps and needs to be more comprehensive. Barriers for the disabled are numerous. These can be physical, social, psychological, psychosocial, educational etc. in nature. In this article will discuss the some measure types of barriers and how they affect the lives of persons with disabilities and what can be done to reduce these barriers.

**INDEX TERMS:** Disability, Barrier, Accessibility, Physical, Social, Psychological, Psychosocial, Educational, Environment, Community, Discrimination, Awareness etc.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In our daily routine, we participate in many activities. Some of these activities are completed very easily and some activities are difficult to complete. Some people find solutions to problems on their own, but for some people finding solutions to problems are complicated due to their physical or mental condition. Therefore, this complexity in completing activities becomes an obstacle for them. This obstacle is known as a barrier. The word 'barrier' means 'obstacle, obstruction or hindrance'. Therefore, anything that prevents a person from doing what he wants to do can be a barrier. Barriers come in many forms and many sources. Barriers can be temporary or permanent. In such a situation, the place or task is no longer accessible to the person due to barriers. Access and accessibility are two terms. In simple words, 'access' means 'available for use'. 'Accessible' means 'to be able to reach and use something'. Accessibility is a very important core element of disability inclusion. An accessible barrier-free environment is a very important step towards fulfilling the rights of people with disabilities to participate in all areas of community life. Accessibility is broadly understood as the ability to access or benefit from a product, device, service or environment. If a product, service or environment is accessible, it means that all disabled and non-disabled persons can access it without any hindrance. Reducing barriers is called least barriers in the environment. In simple language we can say that we can reduce the barriers but can't make totally free. Barrier free environment means more than just physical access like ramps and needs to be more comprehensive. Barriers can be physical, psychological, psychosocial, social and educational in nature.

**1. Physical Barriers:** This refers to the restrictions imposed upon an individual with disability due to physical structures - they could be man-made structures such as buildings, roads, public transports, parks and so on; they could also be natural structures like uneven terrain. Physical barriers such as architectural barriers are features of buildings and outdoor spaces that restrict access, such as stairs, narrow doorways, and lack of ramps or elevators. Environmental barriers are obstacles in the natural or man-made environment that impede movement, such as uneven pathways, lack of tactile paving for people with visual impairments, or lack of accessible toilets. Infrastructural barriers are barriers related to design and construction, such as poorly designed public transportation, inaccessible parking lots, and lack of visual or hearing aids for navigation. Equipment barriers include medical equipment that is not suitable for people with disabilities, such as too high examination tables or inaccessible mammography machines. Examples of physical barriers are stairs and curbs can prevent wheelchair users and people with mobility assistive devices from accessing buildings and sidewalks. Narrow doorways and hallways can make it difficult for people using wheelchairs, scooters or walkers to move around in internal spaces. Lack of ramps or lifts can make it impossible for people with mobility impairments to reach buildings and upper floors. Poor lighting can cause difficulties for people with visual impairments or those who rely on lip reading. Inaccessible toilets cannot be made suitable for wheelchairs or other mobility assistive

devices. Uneven or slippery surfaces can pose a safety hazard for people with mobility impairments. Lack of accessible parking spaces can make it difficult for people with disabilities to access buildings and services. Inaccessible public transport includes the lack of ramps, lifts or accessible seats on buses, trains and subways. Lack of assistive technology in public spaces includes the lack of visual or auditory aids for navigation, or the lack of public telephones accessible to people with hearing impairments. Lack of clear signs and way finding can make it difficult for people with disabilities to navigate public spaces.

*Measures to overcome physical barriers:* In a society that offers all its members appropriate and equal access to transportation, technology, housing, services and community infrastructure, people with disabilities have more chances to develop their skills and contribute to communal life. This can mean making reasonable accommodations – small adjustments to the environment to make it friendlier to persons with all types of abilities. Inclusive design involves designing buildings, transportation systems and public spaces with accessibility in mind from the start. Modifying and adjusting existing infrastructure to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Educating the public about the impact of physical barriers and promoting inclusive practices. This is ensuring that buildings and public spaces meet accessibility standards. All products, environments, and systems should be designed to be usable by all individuals, regardless of age, ability, or background.

**2. Social Barriers:** By ‘social’ barriers we mean the negative attitudes and prejudices that exist in the minds of the people towards persons with disabilities. These reduce the interaction of the persons with disabilities with the environment and the non-disabled individuals in the community. Unfortunately, many of us have wrong assumptions about the disabled, which leads to certain negative attitudes, feelings and reactions. A common misconception about persons with disabilities is linked to superstition and fear. Social barriers for people with disabilities include a range of challenges that hinder their full participation in various aspects of life. These barriers arise from negative attitudes, inaccessible environments and inadequate policies, ultimately leading to social exclusion and limited opportunities. Attitudinal barriers are the most pervasive and arise from negative perceptions, stereotypes and prejudices about disability. Stereotypes lead to the assumption that people with disabilities have a poor quality of life or are unhealthy. Seeing disability as a personal tragedy, something in need of treatment or prevention, or a sign of inadequacy creates negative attitudes. There are many physical barriers to their progress. These physical barriers relate to the design and construction of the built environment, which makes it difficult or impossible for these people to access buildings, transport and public spaces. For example, there is a lack of ramps, lifts or accessible toilets. There is also a lack of accessible transport for the disabled, buses and trains that are not wheelchair accessible. Policy barriers for people with disabilities occur when laws and regulations are not inclusive or not enforced. Lack of accessible infrastructure; building codes are not prioritizing accessible. Websites or documents that are not designed for screen readers or other assistive technologies, leading to a lack of accessible information. Communication barriers occur when information is not accessible to all, hindering participation and inclusion. Use of technical language: medical or legal terminology that is difficult to understand. Information not available in Braille, large print or audio formats leading to a lack of accessible formats. There are limited access to education and employment due to low expectations and discrimination in hiring and promotion. Social barriers can significantly limit the opportunities for people with disabilities to fully participate in social life, education, employment and other spheres. Social exclusion can lead to isolation and marginalization. Limited access to education and employment can increase poverty and financial hardship. Social determinants of health, such as poverty and exclusion, can worsen health outcomes for people with disability, affecting their mental health and wellbeing.

*Measures to overcome social barriers:* Challenging negative stereotypes and promoting positive attitudes towards disability is important to foster inclusive attitudes. Designing and building environments that are accessible to all is essential; Enforcing laws and regulations that promote accessibility and inclusion. Providing information in accessible formats and using simple language can improve communication. Creating opportunities for social interaction and participation is extremely important. By removing these social barriers, society can move towards greater inclusion and equality for people with disabilities, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

**3. Psychological Barriers:** Having a physical or sensory disability can make it difficult to participate in social activities, leading to feelings of isolation. These include social stigma and a lack of understanding from others can increase feelings of loneliness. People with disabilities may face prejudices that isolate them from social networks. The ongoing challenges of managing disability, including working in inaccessible environments and dealing with discrimination, can increase long-term anxiety, depression and stress. Dealing with the financial burden of medical care, assistive devices and therapy can also be a significant source of stress, leading to mental health problems. Social standards of beauty and ability often do not match the experiences of people with disabilities. This mismatch can lead to self-esteem and body image problems. People with intellectual disabilities or severe mental health conditions may need special support that is not always readily available. This lack of adapted services can hinder effective treatment. Disability can limit access to educational and employment opportunities. Frustration at not being able to achieve personal or professional goals can lead to

feelings of failure. The constant struggle for equal opportunities can be mentally exhausting. Many people with disabilities rely on caregivers or support systems for daily activities. This dependence can lead to concerns about loss of autonomy and personal control. The need to adapt to an environment that is not always designed with accessibility in mind can lead to frustration and decreased mental health. People with disabilities may be at greater risk of experiencing abuse and trauma due to their vulnerability and dependence on caregivers. Communicating about abuse can be challenging, especially for those who have communication barriers or limited access to supportive resources.

*Measures to overcome psychosocial problems:* To improve the mental health and overall well-being of people with disabilities, several steps can be taken such as: Ensuring that mental health services, social spaces, and public spaces are accessible can help reduce barriers that lead to isolation and stress. Building strong support networks and promoting inclusive communities can help reduce the feeling of loneliness and provide emotional support. Education and awareness campaigns can work towards reducing stigma and challenging negative stereotypes about disability, helping to improve self-esteem and social acceptance. Developing and expanding mental health services that meet the needs of people with disabilities can ensure that they receive appropriate care and support. Efforts to ensure equal access to education, employment, and recreational opportunities can help individuals achieve their personal goals and improve their overall mental health. It is important to encourage self-acceptance and build self-esteem through therapy, support groups, and positive reinforcement. Educating the public about disability and promoting inclusive practices can help reduce stigma and discrimination.

**4. Psychosocial Barriers:** Persons with disabilities face a number of psychosocial barriers, including prejudice, discrimination, social isolation, and inadequate support. These barriers can have a negative impact on their mental health and well-being, leading to social and economic marginalization. Negative stereotypes and misconceptions about persons with disabilities are widespread, leading to discriminatory treatment and exclusion. They often feel excluded from social activities and opportunities, increasing feelings of loneliness and isolation. They often have difficulty accessing necessary assistance, such as assistive devices, medical care, and social services. They may also suffer psychological trauma from negative experiences caused by disability, such as discrimination, ridicule, and social exclusion. While facing challenges caused by disability, persons with disabilities may develop negative feelings about themselves, leading to low self-esteem and self-confidence. As a result of these psychosocial barriers, persons with disabilities may suffer from depression, anxiety, and other mental health problems. These individuals may feel excluded from social activities and opportunities, leading to feelings of loneliness and isolation. They may have difficulty finding a job and becoming financially independent, increasing their risk of poverty and inequality. They may have difficulty accessing education and employment opportunities, which may reduce their quality of life. They may also be at increased risk for health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

*Measures to overcome psychosocial barriers:* To overcome the psychosocial barriers of persons with disabilities, it is important to raise awareness to challenge negative stereotypes and misconceptions about disability. It is important to treat persons with disabilities equally and provide them with equal opportunities in society. Providing these individuals with the necessary help and support, such as assistive devices, medical care, and social services, is important. Creating an inclusive environment for them, where they can feel safe and respected is important. By implementing these measures, we can build a more equitable and inclusive society for persons with disabilities.

**5. Educational Barriers:** Educational barriers for persons with disabilities include a variety of challenges. These may be physical, technological, systemic, financial or attitudinal. These include failure of the education provider to provide the necessary facilities in a timely manner, lack of physical access, lack of appropriate resources and support, negative attitudes and rigid curriculum. School buildings, transport and even teaching materials may not be suitable for students with physical disabilities, such as those who use wheelchairs or those with mobility impairments. This may include lack of ramps, elevators, accessible toilets and appropriate classroom layouts. Inadequate funding, inadequate teacher training, and lack of assistive technologies and adapted teaching materials may pose significant barriers. Teachers may lack the specific knowledge and skills to effectively support students with diverse learning needs. Rigid curriculum and traditional teaching methods do not meet the diverse learning styles and needs of students with disabilities, hindering their engagement and understanding. Students with disabilities may require assistive technologies such as screen readers, augmentative communication devices or special software to access information and participate in learning. Limited access to these technologies can be a major barrier. Inadequate funding is a major cause of delays and shortages in special education services at the primary and secondary levels. Often, accommodation decisions are made based on budgetary considerations rather than an assessment of the real needs of students with disabilities. At the upper secondary level, the funding structure is highly complex. Accommodations for these students are not always available in time or are inadequate and sometimes not available at all. At the primary and secondary levels, some education providers are taking a blanket approach to accommodations, rather than assessing each

student on an individual basis. Some funding schemes rely on pre-determined categories and labels, and emphasize a student's "weakness" rather than his or her ability. Suspension and expulsion policies are sometimes applied rigidly and do not take into account a student's individual circumstances. At all levels of education, there is also a need to better understand the context in which discrimination occurs. Dispute resolution mechanisms that exist to deal with accommodation issues are often ineffective, and accommodation disputes often result in students losing time in school. Students face negative attitudes and stereotypes in the education system. Lack of knowledge and sensitivity to disability issues among some teachers, staff and students can make it difficult for students with disabilities to access educational services equally.

*Measures to overcome educational barriers:* A multi-pronged approach is required to overcome these educational barriers for students with disabilities. This approach includes creating an accessible environment for them by ensuring physical access to schools through ramps, lifts and adapted facilities. Providing adequate resources and support by investing in teacher training, assistive technologies and adapted teaching materials; Promoting inclusive attitudes and practices by challenging negative attitudes, promoting awareness and promoting a culture of inclusiveness; Developing flexible and adaptable curriculum by adopting diverse teaching methods and materials that meet different learning styles and needs; Involving students, parents, teachers and the wider community in the process of creating an inclusive education system. Working to implement and implement policies that promote inclusive education at all levels, advocating for inclusive policies, etc.

**Providing accessibility as per the individual's disability:** Barriers in the way of persons with disabilities can be made accessible to a great extent by providing certain basic facilities as per their disability. For people with low vision, good lighting, good tactile markings for identification, firmly attached railings, Braille, raised and/or bold letters, no objects or debris in the way to prevent people from tripping; For people with hearing and/or speech impairments, clear and visible signs, provision of written reference information, glare-free lighting to make it easier to follow lip reading and sign language, good acoustics in meeting rooms, alternative methods of communication in public places, such as paper and pen; For people with intellectual disability and/or learning disability, clear and frequent communication on upcoming or expected events, activities, easy-to-read written material, clear and simple messages supported by pictures, clear communication about the facilities provided so that people with undiagnosed mental health conditions can have access etc; For the physically challenged (difficulty in walking) persons, wide pathways, ramps and doorways to allow easy movement of a person using a wheelchair, accessible toilets and washing facilities, easily readable written material: clear and simple messages supported by pictures, securely attached handrails, seats and benches available for people with walking difficulties to rest, etc; For the physically challenged (difficulty in using arms and hands) persons, place handrails such that they can be easily grasped or leaned upon by a person with limited use of hands, doors that allow easy access, such as revolving and sliding doors, accessible toilets and washing facilities etc.

## II. CONCLUSION

Some people finding solutions to problems are complicated due to their physical or mental condition. Therefore, this complexity in completing activities becomes an obstacle for them. This obstacle is known as a barrier. Anything that prevents a person from doing what he wants to do can be a barrier. Barriers come in many forms and many sources. These barriers can be physical, social, psychological, psychosocial, educational etc in nature. A barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities is a space designed to be accessible and usable by everyone, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities. An accessible barrier-free environment is a very important step towards fulfilling the rights of people with disabilities to participate in all areas of community life. Barriers in the way of persons with disabilities can be made accessible to a great extent by providing certain basic facilities as per their disability.

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