

IMPACT OF MANN KI BAAT ON DIVYANGJAN: A CASE STUDY OF JAGADGURU RAMBHADRACHARYA DIVYANG UNIVERSITY

Sunita Singh*
Rashmi Pal**
Kajal**

ABSTRACT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's radio programme, Mann ki Baat, strives to engage the public and address their issues. Additionally, it proposed the term "Divyangjan" rather than "Viklang," as advised by the Prime Minister. As is committed to promoting learning and equal opportunities for all marginalised sections of society, it is critical to investigate the opinion of Divyangjan towards Mann ki Baat and its influence on their day-to-day life. The researchers conducted a case study of Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Divyang University, to know how Mann ki Baat has changed the life of the learners who study there and have disabilities. Purposive sampling was opted. A total number of 70 participants, including 45 students (enrolled in various programmes offered by the University), 10 faculties (teaching in various departments of the University) and Heads of the Departments, 10 University staff, and five parents participated in the study. The tools like observations (to explore the infrastructure and facilities provided to students), semi-structured interviews (with teachers, administration, and parents), and focus group discussions (with students) were used to collect the data. It was found that the participants had heard of the Mann Ki Baat show and had listened to it on different platforms, including their mobile phones, radios, and televisions. The stakeholders addressed certain episodes in which the Prime Minister discussed various experiences. They also shared that the Paralympics winners also motivated them to improve their talents in order to give back to the community. However, they also shared that they have faced difficulties after completing their education in terms of searching for employment and financial aid. It was advised that this concern be taken into account at the policy level and that their reservation be enhanced in light of the degree of impairment as a modified number of disabilities under the RPWD Act (2016). They also expressed their satisfaction with institution's various amenities and highlighted how Mann ki Baat's reference to female students had motivated them to continue their studies. The survey about infrastructure comprised of ramps, spacious hallways, hostel amenities, and braille printers. It also included electricity supply, ICT, recording equipment, wheelchairs, and diet without charges. This study concludes that Mann ki Baat has played a valuable role in raising awareness and promoting inclusion in society.

Keywords: Mann ki Baat, Divyangjan, University, Impact, Inclusion.

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions are known for being sources of change and preparing individuals for society. In this regard, various research studies discuss universities and schools as sites for conducting research to explore the effectiveness of any policy initiative at the ground level. The higher education institutes act as sites for organising seminars, workshops, and other events to create awareness about government policies and promote discussions and debates. Mann ki Baat (MKB) is one of the initiatives by the Prime Minister where he addresses the citizens of India in different contexts of society. In December 2015, the PM expressed that he had wished people use Divyang instead of Viklang as a terminology for persons with disability. From 2014 to the 99th episode, he preferably mentioned various initiatives and inspirational stories related to Divyangjan. Studying the impact in educational institutions can help to evaluate the effectiveness of the MKB episodes in achieving their intended goals and outcomes, particularly in the context of Divyangjan and related policies. This research can add to knowledge in the related fields where research is being carried on for Divyangjan. It may also provide understanding to the policy analysts regarding the involvement of Divyang community reflections for the formation and evaluation of related policies for Divyangjan. Further, it can also foster innovation in developing new approaches and solutions to address the challenges faced by persons with disabilities. It further plays a significant role in empowering Divyang students to become active and engaged and motivated citizens who can work in promoting inclusive practices in society. Therefore, this research aims to explore the impact of Mann ki Baat with reference to Divyangjan in the realm of Divyang University.

*Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Delhi. Email: nitivasudev@gmail.com

**Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Education, University of Delhi

2. RATIONALE

Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Divyang University (JRDU) is one of India's most esteemed educational institutions and a pioneer in providing skills and education to Divyang students. Around 2,500 students have already passed out from the university. As it is observed, there are nine crore Divyangjans in India, and only 5% of them are enrolled in formal education. Access to higher education is seen as being significantly hampered by the socioeconomic situations and amenities which are offered in institutions of higher education for people with disabilities. Therefore, this university is considered significant for providing education for Divyangjan.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a) How did the JRDU Divyang students become aware of the different episodes of the PM's Mann Ki Baat?
- b) What kind of initiatives and concerns are discussed in MKB regarding occupation work, skill, social confidence, self-esteem, and dignity of the Divyangjan?
- c) How does the MKB engage the Divyangjan community of JRDU to be aware of policies, programmes, and initiatives related to them?
- d) How did MKB create socio-psycho conditions for empowering Divyangjan in India?

4. OBJECTIVE

To explore Mann Ki Baat as a potential tool for addressing the issues and concerns of Divyangjan in Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Divyang University.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is a case study of JRDU with reference to exploring the impact of Mann ki Baat on Divyangjan. The subjective views, ideas, knowledge, and awareness of Divyangjan stakeholders have been given prime importance in this case study. It focused on collecting and studying the subjective realities and perceptions of Divyang individuals to understand the influence of MKB. The population consisted of university stakeholders, including the head of a department, faculties, students, administrative staff, other staff members, and parents. In this study, the purposive sampling method was used. A total number of 70 participants including Divyang students (enrolled in various programmes offered by the University), teachers (teaching in various departments of the University), Heads of the departments, University staff, and parents participated in the study. The data collected from the participants has been categorised in the table below:

Table 1: Data Collected from the Participants

S. No.	Category	Number of Participants
1.	Faculty (Head of the Department and Teachers)	10
2.	Divyang Students of UG/PG course	45
3.	University Staff	10
4.	Parents	5

For the aim of triangulation, the data was gathered through interviews, focused group discussions, and observations. The questions were based on the related themes as,

- Perceiving awareness about Mann ki Baat with a special focus on Divyang sentiments
- Raising awareness about yoga among Divyangjan in JRDU,
- Creating awareness and promoting health and wellness among Divyangjan in JRDU
- Accessibility of infrastructure in the University Campus,
- Divyangjan as a terminology
- Focus on cleanliness By Divyangjan in JRDU

- Inspiring Community Services to Empower Divyangjan
- Strong determination for Divyangjan
- Responses from the female Divyangjan
- Creating awareness among Divyangjan for the new laws of reservation
- Issues and challenges faced by Divyangjan
- Feedback from the Institution and messages for Mann ki Baat.

The tools used for the data collection are as follows:

Table 2: Tools for the Research Study

S. No.	Tool	Sample
1.	Observation	Infrastructure and facilities provided in the University (For Divyang students as mentioned in PM's MKB)
2.	Semi-structured Interviews	Faculties, staff, and parents (On various initiatives discussed in MKB related to Divyangjan)
3.	Focus Group Discussions (FGD)	10 FGD done with Divyang students of UG and PG Courses (On the issues discussed by PM in MKB for Divyangjan)

The tools were validated with the assistance of two experts who are professors and work in the area of disability in higher education. With the advice of the experts, the tools were further modified. The field investigators conducted field visits in the University with the monograph author. They conducted interviews and focus groups during the visit within the premises of the University with stakeholders, including faculties, students, parents, and staff. In-depth interviews and discussions were conducted to ascertain how they felt about Mann ki Baat concerning empowering Divyangjan.

6. ABOUT JAGADGURU RAMBHADRACHARYA DIVYANG UNIVERSITY



Fig.1: Campus and Logo of Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Divyang University

It is situated in Chitrakoot and was established in 2001. It is named after Jagadguru Rambhadracharya, a prominent spiritual leader and scholar who is visually impaired and the University's chancellor. He worked very hard to support the educational needs of students with impairments. The University is dedicated to educating individuals with impairments, as its name suggests. This University is affiliated with the Association of Indian Universities and University Grants Commission and has received a B Grade from the NAAC. It aims to provide quality education, promote research and innovation, and foster an inclusive learning environment for persons with disabilities. It also provides special education and rehabilitation services, assistive technology support, and inclusive infrastructure to facilitate the academic and social inclusion of students with disabilities. With this, seven convocations have been organised till now. The objectives of the University are below as per the website:

6.1 Objectives of University

- To ensure greater participation of the disabled in higher and professional education by providing disabled-friendly campuses, classrooms, and courses to prepare students of strong character enriched with traditional and modern knowledge.
- Provide boarding, lodging, and essential requirements to disabled students to facilitate better accessibility in higher education.
- Explore suitable placement for educated disabled graduates in public and private sector

enterprises.

- To prepare expertise/manpower to cater to the needs of the disability sector.

Promote disabled persons spiritually, socially, and economically by providing suitable education to bring them to the mainstream.

6.2 Accessibility of Academic Programmes for Divyangjan in the University Campus

The University offers undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programmes in various disciplines, including humanities, social sciences, applied sciences, and vocational courses. There are 19 departments in the University. The Departments of Computer Science, Sanskrit, Hindi, Commerce and Management, History, Political Science, Vocational Education, Economics, Education, English, Fine Arts, Music, Vocal, Psychology, and Special Education were visited by the research team. During observation, it was found that all departments' classes run according to the timetable and the full strength of Divyang students was present.

6.3 Accessibility of Infrastructure for Divyangjan from the Lens of MKB

In the context of equal access and opportunity for persons with disabilities in the very first episode of Mann Ki Baat on **3 October 2014**, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, in his address exhorted for equal access and opportunity for persons with disability. On **2 November 2014**, he stated the steps taken by the Ministry of Education, then the Ministry of Human Resource Development, for assisting persons with disabilities who want to pursue technical education. PM Modi also talked about the initiatives related to making the Kendriya Vidyalayas, Central universities, and other organisations accessible to physically challenged people. Eventually, it was observed that the wheels for positive change were put in motion from the very beginning of Mann Ki Baat. Therefore, in this context, it is significant to observe the infrastructure and accessibility of JRDU.

The infrastructure is one of the key features of the University in its commitment to accessibility and inclusiveness. It has all the basic amenities on the campus premises. It has a well-equipped infrastructure, including ventilated rooms with boards, toilets, a veranda, and a sports field. The campus is designed to be barrier-free, with ramps, handrails, tactile flooring, and other accessibility features to ensure that persons with disabilities can move around the campus independently. The gallery and corridors are wide so that students with wheelchairs can move feasibly and can go to classes through the ramp. They have been provided locomotor facilities also. The auditorium has been constructed for organising conferences, symposiums, and seminars. At the University, there are several opportunities to play both indoor and outdoor games. The institution promotes student participation in a range of sporting activities that enhance their all-around campus performance.

The University provides specialised assistive technologies, such as screen readers, magnifiers, and braille printers, to support students with visual impairments. Additionally, JRDU has a dedicated team of professionals trained in special education, rehabilitation, and sign language interpretation to provide academic and social support to students with disabilities. The classrooms have boards, proper ventilation, space for wheelchairs, ramps at the entrance, and an electricity supply. The University has a strong foundation and classrooms are well-equipped. JRDU has been recognised for its efforts in promoting inclusiveness and empowering persons with disabilities. It has received tribute for its accessible infrastructure, inclusive policies, and innovative practices in disability education. It was found that a combined approach of various initiatives may be considered necessary for supporting Divyangjan in educational premises. Additionally, the campus features decent Wi-Fi connectivity and a library. It also has the facility of a hostel for both boys and girls. The nutrition quality is taken care of and the food to the students is served four times a day. With this, it was observed that the rooms are ventilated and have enough space that four students can reside in a room. Interestingly, the students were initially identified by their abilities and were allotted the room accordingly to each other's strengths like V.I. (Visually Impaired) students with M.I. (Motor skills Impairment) and also H.I. (Hearing Impairment) with Orthopedically Impairment. It shows the cooperation skills which are developed in the students. After interaction with the Registrar of the University, it was inferred that

they are trying to create a total wi-fi campus that shall provide easy accessibility of technology to the Divyangjan. Infrastructures like ramps, braille script, sign language trainers, etc. are available on the campus for training. These responses reflect that the Prime Minister's address has produced a noteworthy influence on the community. When a Divyang student was asked a question about how technological assistance has helped them in their studies, he said,

“Technology has helped us in learning in a better way as it is assisting us with computers with screen readers like NVDA. It helps us in reading the content on different devices to learn the concept in a better manner. We are thankful to the person who made this kind of technical assistance for us”.

The PM had also raised the same issue in Mann ki Baat regarding the facilitation of assisted technology as a support service for Divyangjan.

The responses of various stakeholders expressed the contribution of Mann ki Baat in multiple ways like the issue of creating a safe and inclusive environment for Divyangjan, using different innovative pedagogical techniques that suit them, sensitising other general students to the diverse needs of Divyangjan, making them aware of opportunities, encouraging special skills and motivating them to improve their accessibility in higher education.

7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The participants were asked about their perceptions of Mann ki Baat vis-e-vis Divyangjan. The following themes have emerged in their responses to know the impact of MKB on Divyangjan and to explore the status of the implementation of initiatives discussed in MKB in their University:

7.1 Awareness on Mann Ki Baat

The Divyang students and teachers stated that they are aware of Mann ki Baat episodes. They expressed that they have listened to it many times through TV, mobile, and radio. Furthermore, it was noted during the interviews that MKB has given them the motivation to move forward in their lives. The respondents cited,

“This initiative is telling us that we are also recognized as significant citizens of our nation”.

“I have been listening to this programme as a regular listener since 2015 when he introduced us as Divyangjan and discussed that we also deserve respect in society”.

“This programme is motivating my students to do better as the Prime Minister takes the name of significant contributors in the realm of art, culture, Paralympics, and yoga. They are looking forward to listening to different addresses by the Prime Minister”.

“It is a great initiative and the PM is trying to connect through Mann ki Baat and he also reads letters of common people and their concerns”.

During the FGDs and interviews, it is visualised that the majority of the Divyang students who suffer from multiple disabilities expressed that MKB is an initiative where the PM aims to connect with people and engage diverse communities through their suggestions in the form of telephonic contact, emails, and letters. Such initiatives sensitise our society to inclusion, rather than criticising any opposition or showcasing the achievements of the government.

7.2 FGD on What they Recall from the Different Episodes of MKB

The Divyang students who are enrolled in B.Ed. courses were asked how well they recall the various themes that the PM discussed in MKB concerning Divyangjan and other social, national, and educational issues. Most of the respondents of JRDU were found vividly recalling various subjects like *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, Swachh Bharat, Fit India and Yoga, Khadi India, Incredible India, Drug-free India*, etc.

To know further, when the questions were limited to recalling the initiatives raised only for Divyangjan in MKB, all participants of the Divyang University responded regarding the raise of **4% reservation for Divyangs** and the identification of **sign language in NIOS**.

“I recall that he has talked about RPWD Act 2016 and reservation”.

“Sign Language is now a formal language after this talk on Divyangjan in Mann ki Baat”.

“I remember that he asked all the citizens to call us Divyangjan instead of Viklang in 2015”.

“It is a privilege when the PM asked everyone to call us Divyangjan and then the government discussed RPWD Act 2016 with the inclusion of different disabilities and providing education to us”.

After raising the name of many initiatives discussed in the PM's MKB, majority of the Divyang students showed that they were impressed most by the cleanliness campaign followed by the initiatives related to empowering Divyangjan with assisted technology, Yoga, and other different initiatives.

7.3 Discussion on Divyangjan as a Terminology of MKB



Fig.2 Diverse Talents of Divyangjan on the University Campus

The term Divyangjan is recognised at the main platform as the Prime Minister introduced it in the **episode of December 2015**. It is reaching the masses and making the community aware of an inclusive society. When asked about this introduction of Divyangjan as terminology, the respondents had different perceptions regarding it.

One of the students who was enrolled in the Masters in Yoga said,

“Divyangjan as a terminology is appreciated by me as Viklang was a derogatory remark”.

One of them disagreed with this terminology,

“I do not find this as a suitable terminology as it is identifying us with a different identity”.

The terminology Divyangjan has its own emotions. Everyone has their perceptions regarding the terminology. When asked about divine quality as per the terminology, one of the students said,

“I have a good memory of the term with divine quality”.

“I am good at music and people recognise my talent”.

“I am a good technocrat and I can concentrate for a longer duration than others”.

These responses reflect how they are identifying themselves as a significant part of society. They admired that the positive attitude developed after the episode of Mann ki Baat.

7.4 Focus on Cleanliness by Divyangjan in JRDU

The interviews with teachers reflect that there is a positive attitude developed in the students towards cleanliness after the PM's address on **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in October 2014**. She noted,

“Now, the students take care of their campus premises on their own by cleaning the corridors and not littering here and there”.

The students also pointed out,

“We need to keep our country clean. Our PM Modi has also asked for cleanliness and it is our duty to keep it clean”.

These responses reflect how Prime Minister’s discussions have influenced Divyang students and their actions. It shows how the address of Mann ki Baat has a positive impact on Divyangjan regarding various concerns of the nation.

7.5 Inspiring Community Services to Empower Divyangjan

During an interview with administrators of the JRDU, the majority of the respondents said that MKB episodes motivated youth to involve themselves in community services. They expressed that

“In my university, the students are faced with challenges of blindness and hearing impairment and multiple disabilities but they are doing all their routine work and sanitation of their room, etc. on their own”.

“Even they support community services like they do mess duties to facilitate managing it transparently”.

When Divyang students were asked whether they had rendered any voluntary services, they replied,

“I had participated in blood donation camp and felt empowered that I can also help others as discussed in Mann ki Baat by our PM”.

“I used to participate in yoga camps and am now enrolled in MA Yoga to pursue it further”.

“I have contributed to tree plantations on campus and my friends have also planted many trees near the campus”.

It shows that Divyang students are involved in their routine work and are independent. With this, Mann ki Baat is appreciated by the students and also, and they are motivated by the address of the Prime Minister.

7.6 Raising Awareness about Yoga among Divyangjan in JRDU

During an Interview with the teachers on this theme, one of the teachers cited the celebration of Yoga Day after the Prime Minister promoted **Yoga** and said that one should be proud of their culture.

“Before Narendra Modi Ji we did not have International Yoga Day. Our PM has been a tireless ambassador of Yoga. Now due to his effort. each year on 21 May we celebrate International Yoga Day”.

The majority of the respondents in the Interview said that,

“MKB has played a great role in popularising Yoga and the health of the country. PM Modi ji not only cites the benefits of Yoga but also relates our culture with the history of Yoga”.

Some of the respondent students exhorted their hobbies as,

“I am good at sports and can play many games with my physical abilities”.

“I am very inspired to take the Yoga course which is introduced in this university. It is because of our Prime Minister whom I have listened to promoting Yoga and I decided to contribute my efforts in this field by teaching Yoga to the younger generation”.

Furthermore, providing an inclusive setup, identifying capabilities, encouraging participation, providing necessary equipment and training, and financial support can all be helpful initiatives for the skill development of Divyangjan. Almost all the stakeholders stated that the government has encouraged and promoted sports and other activities among Divyangjan. It helped in developing their physical abilities, enhancing their self-esteem and confidence, and also providing opportunities for skill development.

7.7 Raising Awareness and Promoting Health and Wellness among Divyangjan in JRDU

During the Focus Group Discussions with the Divyang students from the MA Yoga Course, they were asked how MKB has raised awareness about health and wellness among Divyangjan. The respondents said that,

“I got aware of the e-Sanjivani app, evidence-based Ayurvedic research, etc, from MKB. He also urged that the PM in MKB also raised awareness about Tuberculosis, Dengue, lifestyle diseases, etc.”

“During Covid lockdown, the Prime Minister addressed the citizens regularly and motivated us with stories and asked us to help others”.

It was found that the most laudable answer was that MKB acts as the most important platform where the PM spreads awareness regarding preventive health awareness and wellness.

7.8 Strong Determination for Divyangjan

The students responded regarding how Mann ki Baat has contributed to their strong determination, as our Prime Minister talked about it on the **25th September 2016** episode. He discussed the efforts of paralympic athletes and how their strong determination has led them to win medals. Regarding inspiring achievement in sports by Divyang players, the PM said in the MKB episode:

“We are greeted by the commendable performance of the young player of the Rio Paralympic. India defeated Pakistan in the final of the blind T20 World Cup and became the world champion for the second consecutive time and thus covering national prestige to new heights. I once again congratulate all players on our team. The country is proud of these Divyang friends for their achievements. I always believe that Divyang sisters and brothers are capable, strongly determined, courageous, and possess tremendous resolve. We get to learn something from them every moment”.

When the above incident was discussed in FGD, some of the responses noted are as follows,

“The way he (PM) puts, it shows how much he appreciates the determination and hard work of any individual. He emphasises the efforts of different players also and it motivates us to be determined and thrive towards our goal”.

“This kind of interaction also motivates us as Divyangjan and also makes us determined to have strong willpower and do hard work in our respective fields”.

Such responses show that when a Prime Minister talks about one instance, people from various regions get motivated to do hard work and have faith in their capabilities. It also led to strong determination in Divyang students and motivated them to pursue their careers in their respective fields.

7.9 Responses from the Female Divyangjan

The Prime Minister has also talked about the strength and increased contribution of female divyangjan in one of the episodes where he stated the words by Deepa Malik, **“Through this medal, I have actually defeated the disability itself.”** Regarding empowerment and advancement of Indian women, the PM on **8th March on International Women's Day** said about raising awareness and sensitivity towards saving daughters through the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao movement and Sukanya Samridhi Yojana**. The PM said,

“It gives me great joy and happiness when we hear the news of the festive celebration of the birth of a daughter. It shows a positive mindset towards our daughters in leading towards societal acceptance”.

The Prime Minister also talked about the **Goa Purple Fest in his 97th Episode** and appreciated the efforts of the community to organise the events for Divyangjan. With the description of episodes, the discussions on Female Divyangjan and their contribution were conducted. Some of the responses of students are,

“We have seen the initiatives of the government especially for female divyangjan. We are motivated to pursue our studies further. We have been provided with hostel facilities and also oriented for scholarship programmes at higher levels”.

“When I see myself as a postgraduate student, it feels like a dream as earlier I used to have doubt whether I would be able to study or not. I am thankful to our Prime Minister to discuss our concerns at the national level in Mann ki Baat which made us aware of the new reservation policy, scholarships, and other programmes”.

“I do not bother for others. I do not feel that I am dua-marginalised as you are asking in your question. I feel that I am the source of motivation for other girls as I am the only girl to pursue this course with all the boys. I am not a disabled person; I am a student of a postgraduate degree at a university. I am thankful for the episodes of Mann ki Baat which discuss our special abilities and female empowerment”.

“I think that the PM has talked about an important initiative about Goa Purple Fest and this kind of programme will aid us to showcase our talent and the PM’s words of Deepa Malik have inspired us”.

“As a girl, I do not identify myself as a divyang. It is in our minds and not just in our physical body. NEP 2020 has also given us this space to learn in educational institutions”.

“I am happy that he has also talked about the ‘beti bachao beti padhao’ initiative. It will help us in understanding how females and their education are also important”.

These responses led to a positive influence on inspiring female Divyangjans. Furthermore, it has also motivated the females and identified themselves as a significant part of the community.

7.10 Creating Awareness among Divyangjan for the New Laws of Reservation

When the students and faculties were asked about the new laws for reservation which were pointed out by the Prime Minister on **27th November 2022**, they had various responses. He had discussed that there is a **4% reservation for Divyangjan and RPWD Act (2016)**. When asked about this awareness in Focus Group Discussions with students and interviews with faculties, staff, and parents, most of them were aware of the reservation for Divyangjan. They expressed,

“Yes, I have listened to MKB and also read the RPWD Act 2016 which makes the provision for reservation for Divyangjan”.

“There are 4% seats reserved for Divyangjan. However, there is a concern regarding the increased number of disabilities which are now identified in the RPWD Act, of 2016. If they are increasing the number of disabilities as they know what kind of challenges we are facing, they should also talk about increasing the number of seats in reservation for us”.

“As a parent, it gives me hope that with reservation, my child will be able to go in government jobs”.

“I teach these students and many of them want to teach in higher education and they have a critical understanding of different concerns. This kind of initiative will provide them the platform to pursue their careers according to their interest”.

Such responses provide the reflections of respondents that they are updated with new laws of reservation. It also further inspires them to work towards their goal and pursue their careers for a better life.

8. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FACED BY DIVYANGJAN

When the respondents were asked whether Mann ki Baat had addressed the issues and concerns of Divyangjan, they discussed various concerns which need to be implemented as they mentioned,

“It is a concern that Divyangjan are not able to find a respectful title in our society”.

“Our PM has discussed issues and concerns about Divyangjan, however, there is a need to ask

about the different needs of Divyangjan and implement the initiatives in institutions”.

“There is a gap between policy initiatives and implementation as braille printers need to be installed in every department for V.I. Students”.

“Hearing aids and sign language boards are not installed everywhere. It is difficult for us to ask for directions from people. Prime Minister needs to discuss this concern for departments. It should be discussed and implemented in different regions”.

It infers that there is an overall positive impact of Mann ki Baat found in the response of participants regarding how MKB addresses the main challenges and concerns of Divyangjan students in higher education. With this, there is a scope for improvement in the implementation of various initiatives to provide more accessibility to Divyangjan in society.

9. PREFERRED WAYS TO GIVE INPUT TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Prime Minister requests opinions on specific topics from individuals of different communities in Maan Ki Baat episodes. It was found that the majority of the visually impaired Divyangjan preferred to contribute their suggestions through recorded phone calls. While the divyang students from urban areas utilised email and other methods to submit their comments, the responses from rural areas also opted to send letters. Every Divyang University respondent is aware of the Modi App and MyGov. After analysing the speech given at MKB, it was also discovered that the Prime Minister had a profound understanding of India's diversity and had counselled the officials of All India Radio to prefer receiving suggestions from people from rural backgrounds in the form of letters rather than via email, mobile, or missed calls.

10. FEEDBACK FROM THE INSTITUTION

During the interaction with the Head of the Department of Education at the University, he said that,

“The successful implementation of inclusive setup in formal education system requires three aspects:

- *Infrastructure*
- *Human Resource*
- *Financial Support*

It will enable an institution to formulate an inclusive setup for fulfilling the aim of Education for All. it will lead to an inclusive society”.

It was found that since the University belongs to Divyangjan, the teaching happens in this context. The students are satisfied with the implementation of policies to an extent and said that the Prime Minister can help them address this concern in the episodes of Mann ki Baat as it will make the community aware and sensitised for Divyangjan.

It was noted that although they felt that PM discusses many social issues, educational issues, health issues, etc. in his MKB series, when it comes to policy initiatives, not much has been done so far. They expressed that they were not fully satisfied with the policy implementation. One of the staff pointed,

“We know that this is necessary and it is implemented in other states. But I think that the social issues also include the taboos and ideas related to our (Divyangjan) community.

When the PM addresses everyone, we feel included but there should be proper implementation at ground level”.

The students in the Focus Group Discussions suggested that accessibility to infrastructure is one of the significant components which should be provided to them. As RPWD Act 2016 also talks about providing the facility to Divyangjan, they mention proper implementation of the policy and other initiatives that will help them to move further. They have provided their reflection on roads and infrastructure as one of the students demanded a crossroad bridge to cross the roads on their own. There are suggestions for the implementation of the policy initiatives for an inclusive society:

“The roads and universities must have cross-road bridges to have the feasibility for us to cross

roads”.

“Braille books should be provided in the library for every subject for accessibility of resources and reading material for all students”.

“Sign language must be a part of the training of teachers so that they can facilitate inclusive practices for Divyang students in classrooms”.

“Teachers and students should be equipped with ICT Skills”.

“International placements and art galleries should be including our talents also with fests as it will give a platform to showcase our talent and it will open us with many opportunities”.

“Travel destinations should be made disabled friendly”.

“Guidance and counselling should be given to the students”.

“There is a need to fix income sources for Divyangjan through special courses to make them financially independent by providing them job opportunities after skill training”.

“There should be awareness programmes, job mela, orientation, showcasing the need of skill and training of Divyangjan at international level”.

“We have different policy initiatives which need to be implemented properly for classrooms”.

“The percentage of the reservation should also be increased as the categories are also increased in RPWD Act 2016. The Central government should provide us with every facility including devices, sticks, education, and residence”.

These responses suggest various initiatives at the ground level like braille books, guidance and counselling, increment in the reservation, accessibility of infrastructure, and others. Furthermore, the Central and State governments should jointly take initiatives to improve the lives of Divyangjan.

Therefore, it reflects the importance of creating a safe environment, enhancing self-esteem, and engaging students in classroom activities for the holistic development of Divyang children. It also emphasises the need for active participation of parents in school activities, collaboration with different organisations, support for staff and professionals, and initiation of support groups for parents. It also highlights the significance of listening actively to children, providing diverse needs students with appropriate assistance, promoting societal inclusion, conducting awareness programmes, and ensuring equal opportunities for all. It suggests that harmonious development can be achieved by providing the right environment, and special teachers, and fostering awareness in the public.

11. SUGGESTIONS FOR MANN KI BAAT

When asked about the various issues about their preference that need to be covered in Maan ki Baat. The respondents of the University expressed that,

“There could be more focus on the issues like entrepreneurial schemes for Divyangjan, job opportunities for Divyangjan in the government and private sector, providing sign and braille language training to all pre-service and inservice teachers and parents to enrich inclusive classroom and society”.

“It should also include the different initiatives taken by Divyangjan like Goa Purple Fest and other Olympics to motivate Divyang students”.

They also said that,

“Our PM is very conscious of raising awareness for health issues. It is good but in rural areas, there is a need to take more action in relation to accessing quality education and health practices”.

“Prime minister should take care of our jobs and also talk about it”.

They also exhorted that there is a need to highlight the diversity of Indian culture in MKB which in the majority of the speech of MKB was raised by the PM. It is also important to raise the issues related to gender equality and communal harmony in India.

12. CONCLUSION

Overall, it is concluded that JRDU served as a valuable source of understanding the impact of ‘Mann ki Baat’ addressed by the Prime Minister and related policies, particularly in the context of Divyangjan. Through research, education, outreach, and advocacy, educational institutions can contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of these policies and promoting positive change for persons with disabilities. The case study of Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Divyang University on the impact of Mann ki Baat on Divyangjan highlights the positive impact of the radio programme in empowering persons with disabilities. The programme has helped raise awareness about the challenges faced by Divyangjan and has encouraged them to participate more actively in society. It also shows that the programme has helped in creating a sense of inclusion and belongingness among Divyangjan, and has inspired them to work towards their goals and aspirations. So comprehensively, it is concluded that Mann ki Baat has played a vital role in promoting the rights and dignity of Divyangjan in the University.

REFERENCES

- Bluekraft Digital Foundation (2019). *Mann Ki Baat – 50 Episodes Special Edition: A Social Revolution on Radio*. India: Rupa Publications India. ISBN 10: 9353333571
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Government of India (2016). *The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. Gazette of India* <http://www.disabilityaffairs.gov.in/uploaad/uploadfiles/files/RPWD/ACT/2016.pdf>.
- Mann Ki Baat - PM Shri Narendra Modi Radio Programme Today. Narendra Modi English. <https://www.narendramodi.in/mann-ki-baat>, Accessed on 21 March 2023.

Acknowledgments

This research is sponsored by ICSSR in the study entitled “Mann ki Baat: Empowering the Divyangjan” in the Monograph Series of Empirical Studies on Social Impact on Mann ki Baat vide File No. ICSSR- MKB/Monographs/8-2023. The author of the Monograph is Dr. Sunita Singh and is affiliated with the Department of Education, University of Delhi.