

# TWENTY ONE DIFFERENT ABILITIES: A GENTLE GUIDE TO THE DISABILITIES RECOGNIZED BY THE RPWD ACT

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**Abstract:** This article explores the 21 disabilities recognized under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016. It aims to present each condition in an empathetic and simplified manner, helping readers—especially parents, caregivers, and professionals—better understand the unique strengths and challenges of individuals with disabilities. Emphasizing inclusion, early intervention, and emotional support, the article offers a heartfelt glimpse into the diverse world of special needs and calls for a shift from mere awareness to true acceptance and empowerment.

**Key words:** Disability, RPwD Act 2016, Inclusion, Special Needs, Neurodiversity, Rehabilitation, Awareness, Empathy

## INTRODUCTION

Disability is not a weakness. It's not something to hide, to be ashamed or fear. It is a different ability to embrace the world. It is simply a different way of experiencing the world—a world filled with sounds, colors, thoughts, and feelings that may come slower, louder, deeper, or in their own special rhythm. Every child enters this world with a light of their own where some shine loudly with words and laughter, while others speak softly through their eyes, gestures, or silence. Some learn to run before they talk, while others take a little longer to do so but every step, every smile, every effort is precious. We just need to open our inner eye and extend our hands to understand the untold emotions and hold them so they can enjoy the way they can and we also become a part of that happiness

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 in India recognizes 21 types of disabilities, not just as labels but clear categorization which helps to understand, support, and include them in main stream life. Behind every disability there is a real story of a child it's parents, a dream waiting to be seen, heard, and held with intervention, love and care. Each of these 21 types do not need sympathy, but needs support with empathy, awareness, and the belief that every person, no matter their ability, deserves dignity, opportunity, and joy.

As recognized under India's Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, let's shed light on the 21 kinds of different abilities

### 1. Blindness

This means a total loss of vision in both eyes. Children with blindness may not be able to see the world visually—but they “see” through sounds, touch, smell, and feelings. They often have sharp hearing, memory, and deep emotional awareness. They don't see the world, but they feel it more deeply than most of us ever will.

### 2. Low Vision

Children with low vision can see, but not clearly even with glasses or surgery. They may struggle to read books, recognize faces, or see the board in class. With assistive tools (like magnifiers or large print), they can learn and play with confidence. They don't need your sorrow feeling for them just a bigger support and a bit more patience.

### 3. Leprosy Cured Persons

Even after being cured of leprosy, some people may have lost fingers, toes, or feeling in parts of the body. They're no longer infectious. These individuals often face social rejection, which is unfair rather they deserve respect and a sense of belonging. They are survivors of a hard fought battle not just of a disease but societal stigma as well.

### 4. Hearing Impairment (Deaf and Hard of Hearing)

Children may be born without hearing (deaf) or with partial hearing loss (hard of hearing). They might struggle to hear speech, music, or everyday sounds. But with sign language, hearing aids, or cochlear implants, they can communicate beautifully. They listen with their eyes, speak with their hands, and feel every word with their heart.

### 5. Speech and Language Disability

This includes difficulties in speaking clearly, forming words, or understanding language . It happens may be due to neurological, developmental or physical causes. With proper intervention and support, many children can learn to express themselves in unique / different ways. Their silence always tell a story , we just need to listen differently.

### 6. Loco motor Disability

This means difficulty in using arms, legs, or parts of the body for movement. It can be caused by injury, birth conditions, or diseases. Some children may use wheelchairs, braces, or crutches but they can still play, learn, and shine with the right support and adaptable environment. They don't need sympathy rather they needs faith in your eyes, respect, and reachable goals. Especially trusting their ability.

### 7. Dwarfism

This refers to a medical condition where a person's height is significantly shorter than average (usually under 4 feet 10 inches). Dwarfism affects bones, growth, and sometimes movement, but not intelligence or emotions. They are small in size but their capabilities can be as large as people with normal height.

### 8. Intellectual Disability

Children may have difficulty understanding, remembering, or solving problems. They have low IQ score than normal . They might learn slower or need more time to understand everyday tasks. With love, routine, and proper education, they can build a life full of success and happiness. They may take longer time to learn but their journey is full of light and love with support and multidisciplinary approach.

### 9. Mental Illness

This includes conditions like depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia. These are not "bad behaviours" but they are real mental health conditions. Children with emotional struggles need acceptance, safety, and professional care. Not every wound is visible. Let's make mental health a priority.

### 10. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

A condition where a child may have differences in communication, behaviour, and social interaction. They might repeat actions, avoid eye contact, or react strongly to sounds or lights. They often have amazing focus, memory, and creativity. They don't live in their world but with right support can merge it with world outside.

### 11. Cerebral Palsy

A group of conditions affecting movement, balance, and posture, usually caused by brain injury during birth. Children with CP may use wheelchairs or need help with daily activities. They have strong minds and big dreams. Their bodies may move differently but not their minds.

#### 12. Muscular Dystrophy

A group of genetic conditions that weaken muscles over time. Children may start walking but later need support as muscles get weaker. With therapy, nutrition, and care, they can live actively and meaningfully. Their strength is not in their muscles but in their will.

#### 13. Chronic Neurological Conditions

Includes conditions like epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, etc. It directly affects the brain and nerves system. Symptoms can come and go, like seizures or muscle weakness. These children can live full lives with regular medical care and love.

#### 14. Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)

This includes dyslexia (reading difficulty), dyscalculia (math difficulty), and dysgraphia (writing difficulty). These children are bright, but their brain processes information differently. They may struggle in school, but often shine in art, music, sports, or memory. They are not slow learner. but they are different learners.

#### 15. Multiple Sclerosis (MS)

A chronic neurological condition where the immune system affects the brain and spinal cord. It's more common in adults but may occur in youth. It can cause fatigue, pain, and weakness, but with support, people can live productive lives. Some day may harder but they keep going, with courage and support

#### 16. Thalassemia

A genetic blood disorder where the body doesn't make enough healthy red blood cells. Children need regular blood transfusions, but with good care, they live active and joyful lives. Their every drop of blood speaks of their courage.

#### 17. Haemophilia

A condition where blood doesn't clot properly. Even small injuries can cause heavy bleeding. Children with hemophilia need to be careful in their daily routine but they can play, study, and grow safely with education and awareness. They are not patients rather they are cautious warriors.

#### 18. Sickle Cell Disease

A genetic disorder affecting red blood cells, causing pain, fatigue, and infections. With medicine, a good diet, and family support, children with sickle cell can stay healthy and happy.

#### 19. Multiple Disabilities

When a child has more than one disability, like vision and hearing loss together, or intellectual and movement difficulties. They may need comprehensive support, but can achieve their mile stone with early care, support intervention and teamwork from family and professionals. They teach us that strength comes in many forms.

#### 20. Acid Attack Victims

Children or adults who have survived chemical burns. They may carry visible scars, but also the deepest strength. They deserve love, respect, and dignity, not judgment. Their burns don't hide their beauty, it is their courage and they show their strength.

## 21. Parkinson's Disease

A brain disorder that mostly affects movement causing tremors, slowness, and stiffness. Though more common in adults, it can rarely affect youth. With treatment and support, people can still live independently.

## CONCLUSION

Disability is not a weakness, not a burden, and definitely not something to be ashamed of. It's just a different way of being human. Every child, every person regardless of their ability, deserves acceptance, equal opportunities, and unconditional love. Let's build a world where every child is celebrated, and no one is left

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