

ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF COMPLIANCE WITH DISABILITY-FRIENDLY
HEALTHCARE STANDARDS IN A TERTIARY CARE GOVERNMENT TEACHING
HOSPITAL IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Accessibility in healthcare settings for persons with disabilities (PwDs) is fundamental to achieving inclusive, equitable care. Despite national and international commitments such as the UNCRPD and the Accessibility Standards for Healthcare (MoHFW, 2021), compliance within public hospitals in India remains inconsistent. **Objective:** To assess the level of compliance with Disabled Friendly Hospital (DFH) guidelines in the Neurology Department, Gandhi Ward building, and TG Hostel building at a tertiary care government teaching hospital in Lucknow, India. **Methods:** An observational study was conducted at King George's Medical University, Lucknow. Data were collected using a standardized checklist based on MoHFW Accessibility Standards and the WHO Disability-Inclusive Health Services Toolkit (2020).^[1] Variables assessed included parking, pathways, lifts, toilets, wards, signage, and emergency preparedness. Compliance percentages were calculated and compared across study sites. **Results:** Overall compliance with DFH guidelines was 70%. Individual compliance rates were 74% in Neurology Department, 59% in Gandhi Ward, and 79% in TG Hostel building. Key deficiencies were lack of designated disabled parking, absence of Braille signage, and unavailability of hearing loops at reception areas. **Conclusion:** The study reveals satisfactory but suboptimal accessibility in the evaluated hospital areas. Strengthening infrastructure—especially in parking, signage, and communication aids—and conducting regular staff sensitization can enhance inclusivity and ensure dignified healthcare access for PwDs.

KEYWORDS: Disability, Accessibility, Inclusive Healthcare, Hospital Infrastructure, Compliance, MoHFW Guidelines.

1. INTRODUCTION

Disability constitutes a significant public health issue, affecting approximately 2.21% of India's population.^[1] Equal access to healthcare is a fundamental right endorsed by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006). Despite progressive policy frameworks, practical compliance in public healthcare facilities remains limited.^{[2][3]}

A Disabled Friendly Hospital (DFH) integrates accessibility into its infrastructure, services, and communication systems. Features such as ramps, tactile signage, assistive communication aids, and inclusive policies enable persons with disabilities (PwDs) to receive equitable care. This study was designed to evaluate compliance with DFH guidelines in three hospital buildings of a tertiary care government teaching hospital.^[4]

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design: It was an Observational cross-sectional study.

Study Setting: The study was conducted in Neurology Department, Gandhi Ward, and TG Hostel of the hospital.

Data Source: Direct observation using a structured checklist with 13 Elements derived from:

- MoHFW Accessibility Standards for Healthcare (2021).^[3]
- WHO Disability-Inclusive Health Services Toolkit (2020).^[2]

Inclusion Criteria: Building of Neurology Department, Gandhi Ward, and TG Hostel were included in the study.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics were used to determine compliance percentages for each parameter.

3. RESULT

Deficiencies were primarily in parking for PwDs, Braille-based guidance, and communication aids such as hearing loops at reception counters. TG Hostel demonstrated relatively better accessibility due to newer construction aligned with modern standards. The overall DFH guidelines compliance of the selected hospital building is shown in Table 1 and Figure 1 through Bar Graph representation. The Table 2 shows the area wise compliance of the selected hospital building.

Table 1: Disable Friendly Hospital Compliance of the selected hospital building.

Building	Compliance (%)	Non-compliance (%)
Neurology Department	74	26
Gandhi Ward	59	41
TG Hostel	79	21
Overall	70%	30%

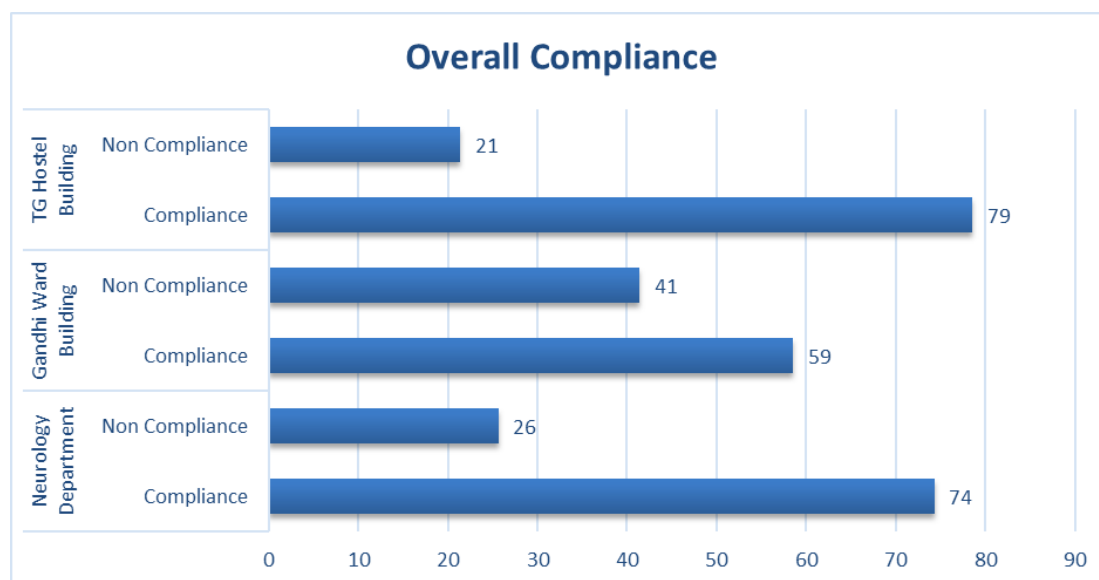


Figure 1: Bar Graph of the overall compliance of DFH guidelines.

Table 2: DFH guidelines Compliance of the element individual to the hospital building.

S.No.	Area	Neurology	Gandhi Ward	TG Hostel
1	Parking Facility	0%	0%	0%
2	Route to Service	80%	80%	100%
3	Entrance to Service	83%	17%	83%
4	Reception and Waiting areas	50%	0%	50%
5	Corridors	100%	100%	100%
6	Lifts	71%	71%	71%
7	Stairs	100%	100%	80%
8	Pathways	67%	67%	67%
9	Handrails	100%	100%	100%
10	Signages	80%	80%	80%
11	Drinking water	0%	0%	67%
12	Toilet and Hygiene facility	63%	63%	75%
13	Emergency evacuation	100%	100%	100%

- **High-compliance areas:** Corridors, Hand Rails, Emergency Evacuation and Stairs.
- **Low-compliance areas:** Parking, Drinking Water Facility, Braille Signages and Reception & waiting area.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that while hospital exhibits progressive accessibility initiatives, full DFH compliance has not been achieved. Comparable studies, such as Talib *et al.* (2016), report similar infrastructural gaps in Indian public hospitals. Architectural barriers and lack of awareness among healthcare staff often hinder complete accessibility.^[5]

Addressing these challenges demands.

- Policy reinforcement within hospital planning committees.
- Integration of universal design principles in all new constructions.
- Periodic audits based on MoHFW guidelines.
- Capacity building through sensitization workshops for staff.

Such measures not only improve hospital accessibility but also foster a culture of inclusivity and patient-centered care.

5. CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates that overall DFH compliance in selected hospital buildings is 70%, indicating moderate accessibility. The data indicates a positive direction towards accessibility and inclusivity within the hospital's facilities with specific infrastructural improvements—especially in parking, signage, and assistive communication aids—and ongoing monitoring, the institution can achieve full compliance and set a benchmark for inclusive healthcare environments.

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