



THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CELL, JMC

NEWSLETTER

THE PERCEPTION OF DISABILITY IN CREATIVE MEDIA: REPRESENTATION AND IMPACT

**“Just because a man lacks the use of his eyes doesn’t mean he lacks
the vision.”**

Media has a unique influence; it’s more than just stories on a screen—it’s a mirror of society’s values, biases, and ideals. How has this mirror reflected people with disabilities? Are we breaking down stereotypes or still looking through outdated lenses? Today, as society becomes more aware of disability rights, media’s role in shaping our perceptions has never been more crucial.

For much of history, media representations of disability have been limited and narrow, creating a one-dimensional view of what it means to live with a disability. Yet, as awareness grows, so does the call for authentic, layered, and empowering portrayals. What do these portrayals look like? Think of films like *Taare Zameen Par*, which redefined how audiences see learning disabilities, or *Barfi!* and *Hichki*, which showcase disabled protagonists as complex, resilient, and full of life. These are not just characters—they are glimpses into real human experiences, finally given the depth and respect they deserve.

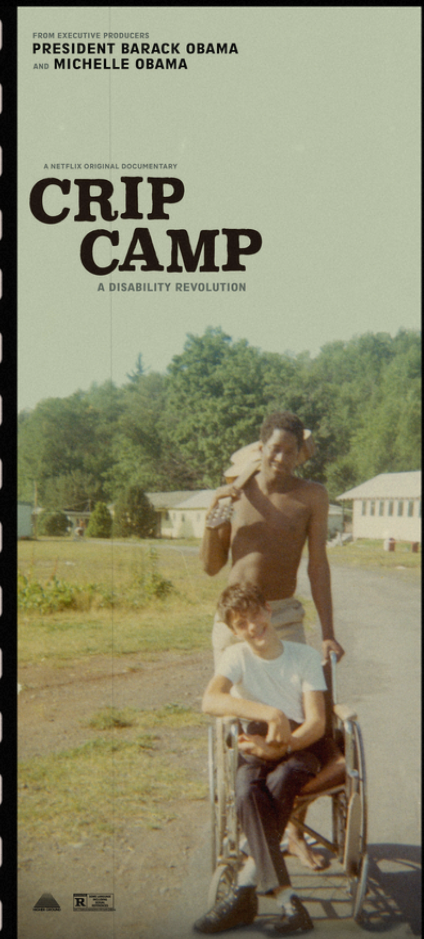
With 15% of the global population—nearly 1 billion people—living with a disability, accurate representation is not only significant but essential. Why? Because when media shows disabilities as integral to the human experience, it not only validates individuals’ stories but challenges us to rethink notions of normalcy, strength, and success. In the words of disability rights advocate Stella Young, “My disability exists not because I use a wheelchair, but because the broader environment isn’t accessible.” Media, with its power to influence, can either reinforce barriers or help dismantle them by telling these stories with honesty and integrity.

The Equal Opportunity Cell's Newsletter takes up this essential conversation in its second issue, "Disability in the Media: Beyond the Screen." Here, we explore the evolution of disability representation, tracing the journey from marginalized characters to the central, nuanced protagonists we see today. We examine how authentic storytelling does more than entertain—it educates, inspires, and fosters empathy. What's more, the voices behind these stories matter. Without diverse writers, directors, and creators, can we truly claim an inclusive narrative?

Through this edition, we aim to highlight how media, in both fiction and non-fiction formats, shapes the societal view of disability. From breaking stereotypes to raising awareness about issues of accessibility, the media's portrayal of disability is vital in shaping public opinion and policy. Documentaries like *Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution* bring the fight for disability rights to the forefront, urging us to see the world from a different perspective and, ultimately, to work toward making it more accessible.

"Each body is different, each mind sacred, and each soul pure." So, what are we really differentiating for?

By recognizing and celebrating our shared humanity, media has the power to reshape society's understanding of disability—not as a limitation, but as part of the vast spectrum of human experience. This issue invites you to think critically about these portrayals, to question biases, and to imagine a future where media and society go beyond mere inclusion and embrace true representation.



FROM STEREOTYPES TO STORYLINES: THE EVOLUTION OF DISABILITY REPRESENTATION IN MEDIA

“Representation matters because it has the power to humanize, to educate, and to bridge understanding.” As we look back on the history of disability in media, we see not only how society has viewed people with disabilities, but also how it has chosen to define them. For decades, the disabled were typecast as either “inspirational” heroes or tragic figures—a reflection of society’s limited understanding. Characters with disabilities were often presented through a singular lens, stripped of their individuality, and reduced to symbols of pity, bravery, or misfortune.

This simplified, one-dimensional portrayal overlooked the rich, varied experiences of those living with disabilities. These depictions were powerful enough to shape societal attitudes, reinforcing prejudices rather than dispelling them. As writer Stella Young once said, “We’ve been sold the lie that disability is a Bad Thing, capital B, capital T. And to live with a disability makes you exceptional.” The danger here is clear: misrepresentation can create and reinforce harmful stereotypes, limiting the space for authentic, multifaceted narratives.

Today, however, there is a dynamic shift in how disability is portrayed. As social consciousness around inclusivity grows, media has started to embrace more complex, respectful, and realistic portrayals. Disability is no longer a storyline about pity or exceptionalism; it’s a reflection of real people’s lives, where characters with disabilities are depicted as nuanced individuals—people with ambitions, emotions, flaws, and strengths. Films like *CODA* and *Atypical* exemplify this shift, highlighting disabled characters as integral to the story without reducing their identity to their disability. These narratives invite viewers to see disability not as a defining limitation, but as a natural part of human diversity.

In India, too, the conversation is evolving. Bollywood, once guilty of portraying disabilities in exaggerated, stereotypical ways, has made strides toward more sensitive portrayals. *Taare Zameen Par* brought attention to dyslexia in a way that resonated with audiences across the country, breaking new ground in understanding learning

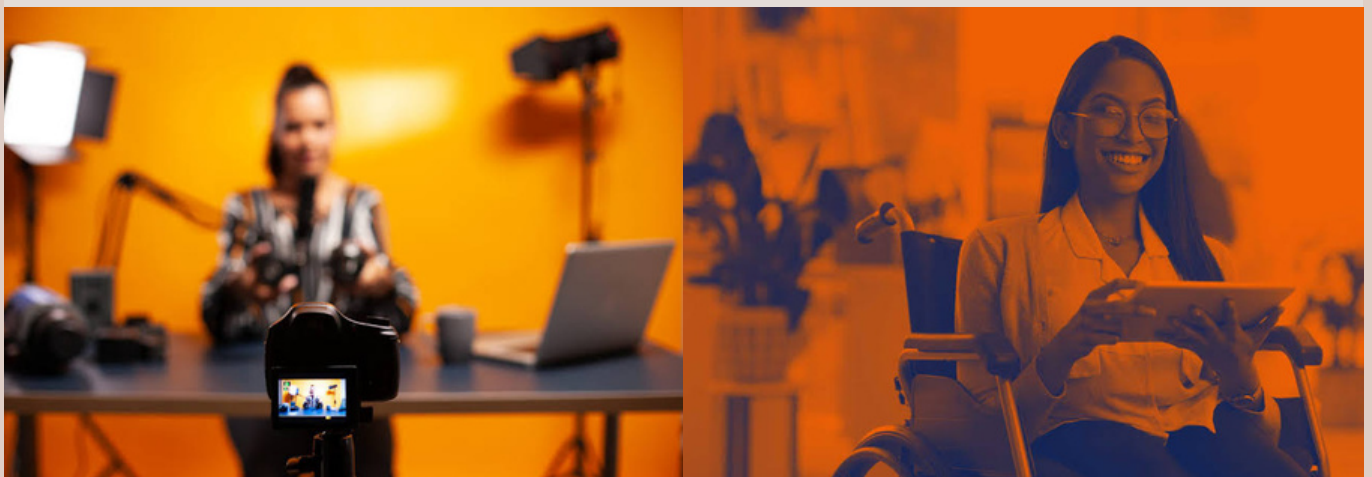
disabilities. *Barfi!* portrayed a deaf-mute protagonist with depth and charm, while *Margarita with a Straw* delved into the experiences of a young woman with cerebral palsy, portraying her not just as “disabled” but as a person with desires, challenges, and dreams. Experiences of a young woman with cerebral palsy, portraying her not just as “disabled” but as a person with desires, challenges, and dreams.

However, as much as we celebrate this progress, substantial challenges remain. Media representations often continue to be shaped by those outside the disabled community, leading to potential oversights or inaccuracies. Authenticity in storytelling is not merely about representation on screen but about including disabled voices at every level of production. As disability rights activist and actor Marlee Matlin has said, “It shouldn’t be about whether we can do the role, but whether we’re given the chance to do the role.” Without disabled writers, directors, and producers, stories run the risk of becoming performative rather than transformative.

Why does this evolution in representation matter? Because positive and accurate portrayals have the power to challenge deeply embedded stereotypes and foster a more inclusive mindset. Stories are powerful; they create empathy and open minds. When we see authentic portrayals, we are invited to look beyond our biases, to question stereotypes, and to reimagine disability as part of the fabric of human experience. The impact of these portrayals is especially profound for young audiences, who look to media as a reflection of society's values. Seeing real, multidimensional disabled characters can empower individuals with disabilities and educate those without, fostering empathy and understanding across communities.

But media has a long way to go. Authentic disability representation is not a passing trend; it's a commitment to social progress. As viewers, our support for such portrayals is crucial in reinforcing the demand for inclusivity. By valuing stories that are inclusive and representative, we contribute to a cultural landscape that embraces all facets of human diversity. The journey of disability representation in media reminds us of storytelling's profound influence, and it challenges us to envision a world where every narrative is given the respect it deserves.

“Our stories are the most powerful tool we have in changing the world,” said storyteller Brené Brown. Disability representation, then, is more than a push for “inclusion”—it is a call to reframe and rethink our understanding of humanity itself. As we celebrate the progress made, we must continue to push for stories that educate, inspire, and respect every individual's right to be seen as they are: whole, complex, and deserving of understanding.



REDEFINING THE PLAYROOM

HOW MATTEL'S BARBIE'S ARE CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

Toys have long served as mirrors reflecting societal values, subtly shaping children's understanding of beauty, gender, and ability. Historically, these representations have been limited and idealized, promoting a narrow standard of beauty that often excluded visible disabilities and failed to capture the rich tapestry of children's lived experiences. Across cultures, dolls and action figures were designed with idealized, able-bodied features, reinforcing the notion that beauty and strength were synonymous with being physically "whole." From Japan's delicate kokeshi dolls to the exquisite porcelain dolls of Europe, these toys embodied societal ideals that left little room for physical diversity, suggesting that only certain forms were worthy of admiration.

a subheading

The launch of Barbie in 1959 marked a pivotal moment in toy history, as she emerged not just as a doll but as a cultural phenomenon that encapsulated and disseminated American beauty ideals on a global scale. With her slender figure, perfect features, and fashionable wardrobe, Barbie became a powerful symbol of femininity, shaping the aspirations and self-image of children worldwide. As she gained international traction, dolls such as Brazil's Susi, the UK's Cindy, and Japan's Blythe echoed similar aesthetics, reinforcing a narrative that equated beauty with youth, slenderness, and physical perfection.

Gendered marketing further entrenched these norms, steering girls toward domestic play with dolls and tea sets while boys were directed to action figures and construction sets. In the United States, G.I. Joe exemplified hyper-masculine ideals, associating strength and heroism with physical prowess and able-bodiedness. Similarly, Indian Channapatna figurines and Brazilian "bonecas" reflected traditional gender roles, solidifying existing stereotypes. Despite some progress in racial representation during the 1970s and 1980s, children with visible disabilities remained largely absent from mainstream narratives, signaling that physical differences had no place in depictions of beauty or heroism.



The late 20th century saw the rise of social movements advocating for diversity and inclusion, including the disability rights movement and feminist movements that challenged restrictive gender norms. These movements laid the groundwork for broader acceptance of diverse identities and redefined traditional beauty standards. In response to this cultural shift, Mattel's introduction of Barbie dolls with disabilities—featuring wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs, and hearing aids—marks a significant response to calls for inclusivity. Other brands have similarly embraced this ethos in recent years. LEGO introduced a wheelchair-bound minifigure, and American Girl's line now offers dolls with hearing aids, diabetic care kits, and other adaptive accessories. Hasbro's Mr. Potato Head, rebranded simply as "Potato Head," invites children to explore family structures beyond traditional norms, reflecting broader societal shifts toward open representation. Each of these toys contributes to a movement that validates a wide range of identities and abilities, showing children that everyone deserves a place in the world of play.

By introducing dolls that reflect real-life disabilities, Mattel is not merely expanding its product line; it is challenging traditional notions of beauty and normalcy. These dolls provide children with a broader understanding of what is considered "normal," sending a powerful message that all bodies are beautiful and fostering acceptance and empathy from a young age. The presence of Barbies with disabilities reshapes the existing narrative around disability, encouraging children to view differences not as limitations but as part of the rich spectrum of human experience.



This shift promotes kindness and empathy and creates opportunities for parents and children to engage in meaningful discussions about disability, inclusion, and respect. The impact of this shift extends beyond children, influencing adults and society at large. As these dolls challenge conventional notions of normalcy through diverse representations, adults may reevaluate their biases about disabilities, fostering a more understanding environment. Moreover, as consumer demand for inclusive toys increases, we may witness a shift in media and content creation toward better and more holistic representations of people with disabilities, further reshaping societal norms and narratives.

Toys transcend their status as mere objects; they serve as gateways to children's imaginations, igniting a sense of wonder and allowing them to explore an array of diverse worlds. Engaging in imaginative play not only fosters creativity but also cultivates essential life skills such as cooperation and empathy. The representation of visible disabilities in toys is particularly vital, as it nurtures confidence and self-worth in children who see their own identities reflected. For their peers, inclusive toys act as crucial conduits for understanding and appreciating the richness of diversity. By introducing concepts of inclusivity and acceptance, toys profoundly shape social interactions, weaving a vibrant tapestry of belonging for all.

Mattel's Barbie dolls with disabilities are emblematic of this transformative shift as powerful catalysts for change. These dolls challenge outdated societal norms and inspire a generation to embrace the beauty inherent in diversity. They send a resonant

message that strength and beauty come in varied forms. As we look to the future, it is essential that every child sees themselves represented in the toys they engage with, empowering them to envision a world filled with empathy and acceptance. By championing inclusive values through thoughtful representation, we can pave the way for a brighter tomorrow—one where diversity is not only acknowledged but celebrated, and where every identity can flourish.



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CINEMA'S LENS ON DISABILITY: A CROSS-INDUSTRY REVIEW



In recent years, cinema across industries has taken on the complex task of depicting disabilities, aiming to foster understanding, empathy, and sometimes even sparking social change. Bollywood and Hollywood have both produced notable films that attempt to portray various disabilities, yet their approaches to authenticity, sensitivity, and impact differ, revealing much about the cultural contexts from which they emerge.

In Bollywood, films such as *Barfi!* (2012), *Taare Zameen Par* (2007), and *Margarita with a Straw* (2014) explore a range of disabilities with varying degrees of sensitivity and realism. *Barfi!* centers on a protagonist who is deaf and mute, depicted as a whimsical, Chaplin-esque character. While the film's storytelling and acting were praised, critics argue that it fell into romanticized portrayals of disability, often glossing over the challenges faced by individuals with such impairments in real life. Conversely, *Taare Zameen Par* broke ground by presenting dyslexia through the lens of a young boy struggling with school and social expectations. The film was celebrated for its sensitive, well-researched portrayal, bringing dyslexia—a largely unspoken topic in India—into the national conversation. *Margarita with a Straw*, which follows a young woman with cerebral palsy, is equally compelling, tackling issues of disability, sexuality, and identity. It stands out for its bold portrayal and authentic representation of cerebral palsy, a rarity in Indian cinema, largely thanks to Kalki Koechlin's meticulous preparation for the role. This film underscores the need for authenticity in portraying disabilities to avoid reducing the individual's experience to stereotypes.

In Hollywood, *The Theory of Everything* (2014) and *Sound of Metal* (2019) have received similar acclaim for their nuanced portrayals of disabilities. *The Theory of Everything*, based on the life of physicist Stephen Hawking, who lived with ALS, was lauded for Eddie Redmayne's committed performance and the film's respectful handling of Hawking's life. Although some disability advocates noted the limitation of casting an able-bodied actor in the role, the film is praised for highlighting the resilience and intellect of individuals with ALS beyond the disability itself. *Sound of Metal* offers a raw look at hearing loss, following a drummer who loses his hearing and must adjust to a new way of living. The film takes the audience through the protagonist's emotional journey and realistically portrays Deaf culture, even casting deaf actors in several roles, which many applaud as a step towards inclusive, authentic representation.

Both industries grapple with the challenge of balancing entertainment with genuine storytelling. Bollywood often presents disability through an emotional, dramatic lens, sometimes romanticizing the conditions it portrays. Hollywood, while more open to authentic casting choices, also risks commodifying disabilities for dramatic impact. The increasing number of films and series exploring disabilities across languages and cultures is encouraging, yet there remains room for improvement.

MORE THAN ENTERTAINMENT

MEDIA'S INFLUENCE ON DISABILITY PERCEPTION



The media significantly shapes society's views on disability, impacting attitudes and treatment of people with disabilities. This influence can promote understanding and acceptance or reinforce negative stereotypes. This essay explores media's role in shaping disability perception, stressing the importance of accurate representation to counteract bias.

With over 1 billion people worldwide living with disabilities, responsible media portrayal is crucial. Positive portrayals of disability—depicting individuals with depth and authenticity—can increase public awareness and normalize disability. For example, characters shown as fully rounded individuals, rather than simply as objects of pity or inspiration, help normalize disability as part of human diversity. However, oversimplified portrayals, such as framing people with disabilities as “tragic heroes” or “victims,” can lead to inflated societal expectations and reinforce harmful stereotypes, fostering stereotype threat. This can lead to internalized stigma, identity confusion, and barriers to social integration and employment opportunities.



*"I need to hear more
voices speaking out
for people with
disabilities.*

*If I'm not hearing a
voice, I need to
become a voice."*

-Von Harris

Positive representations contribute significantly to psychological empowerment. Media figures such as Ali Stroker and Stevie Wonder, who succeed on their own terms beyond stereotypes, can foster self-acceptance among individuals with disabilities, enhancing their sense of identity and community. Furthermore, accurate portrayals, as seen in shows like *Atypical*, offer society role models who challenge biases, emphasizing that disability does not confine one's identity to a stereotype. These portrayals are instrumental in fostering societal change, cultivating empathy, and encouraging policies that value and accommodate people with disabilities.



Psychological Effects of Representation

Conversely, the absence of responsible representation can perpetuate stereotypes that negatively impact individuals with disabilities. Common stereotypes, such as those casting people with disabilities as “helpless victims” or “inspirational overcomers,” can unintentionally restrict empathy and discourage meaningful inclusion. Such portrayals create barriers to forming genuine social connections, leading to social isolation and even challenges in employment. By reinforcing limited perceptions, media risks affecting individuals' self-worth and identity formation, particularly among youth, who may internalize these stereotypes or experience identity confusion due to cultural stigmas.

Disability Pride and Influential Figures

Disability Pride Month exemplifies the progress toward self-acceptance and celebration of disability identity. Historical figures such as Helen Keller, Marlee Matlin, and Beethoven highlight how people with disabilities contribute meaningfully to society, countering stereotypes and expanding the understanding of disability through their accomplishments. Their achievements not only redefine societal perceptions but also support broader social progress, showing that disabilities are neither barriers to excellence nor limitations on potential.

Current Status in Indian Media

In India, inclusive portrayals of disability are limited. Chief Justice Chandrachud emphasized that media’s tendency to perpetuate the “super-cripple” stereotype—implying that only exceptional abilities warrant societal value—distorts public perception and creates unrealistic expectations. This narrow scope restricts societal empathy and does not represent the diverse reality of disability. Despite some progress, Indian media often sidelines disability issues in favor of broader political or commercial narratives. Activists, such as Dhruv Lakra and Shampa Sengupta, advocate for community media as a platform to expand disability coverage, believing that a more comprehensive approach would foster societal awareness and inclusivity.

By fostering accurate portrayals that value people with disabilities, media can challenge stereotypes, reduce biases, and support a cultural environment that celebrates the contributions of all individuals. Through empathetic and inclusive narratives, media holds the power to create a landscape where everyone, regardless of ability, is recognized as valuable.

SOCIAL MEDIA & INFLUENCERS REDEFINING DISABILITY REPRESENTATION



Social media is reshaping the landscape of disability representation, providing people with disabilities an empowering platform to share their stories, challenge stereotypes, and influence public perception directly. Historically, mainstream

media limited or stereotyped disability representation, often reducing individuals with disabilities to token roles. Now, platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram offer people with disabilities the opportunity to tell their own stories, fostering inclusion and authenticity on a global scale.

From Traditional Representation to Digital Empowerment:

In traditional media, people with disabilities were often portrayed through a narrow or stereotypical lens, if represented at all. But social media has changed this dynamic, allowing creators with disabilities to bypass these media gatekeepers and connect directly with audiences. By sharing raw, personal narratives, they are able to offer perspectives that are more representative of their lived experiences. This transformation is giving rise to a new generation of creators who inspire audiences and initiate critical conversations around disability and inclusivity.

Influencers Redefining Disability Narratives

Influencers and content creators worldwide are challenging stereotypes, breaking down barriers, and amplifying disability representation. Some of the leading voices globally and in India include:

Molly Burke (@mollyburkeofficial): As a blind motivational speaker and YouTuber, Molly educates and inspires her audience by sharing insights into her life with blindness, debunking misconceptions, and raising awareness of the unique challenges people with visual impairments face.

Aaron Philip (@aaron__philip): A model with cerebral palsy, Aaron challenges conventional beauty standards in fashion, showing that beauty and confidence transcend physical limitations. His work advocates for diversity in an industry traditionally resistant to it.

In India, numerous influencers are also making significant strides in raising awareness about disability, fostering greater inclusion and understanding within society:

Virali Modi (@viralimodi): A motivational speaker and disability rights advocate, Virali uses Instagram and Twitter to advocate for accessibility, especially in public spaces and transportation. Her #MyTrainToo campaign brought much-needed attention to accessibility issues within Indian Railways, demonstrating the impact social media can have on policy change.



Siddhant Shah (@siddhant.shah): An accessibility consultant and advocate, Siddhant focuses on creating inclusive spaces within museums and cultural institutions in India. Through his content on Instagram, he educates audiences about the importance of accessible art spaces and provides insights into adaptive design.

Neha Arora (@planetabled): Neha, founder of Planet Abled, uses her social media platforms to share her work in making travel accessible for people with disabilities. Her content encourages inclusive tourism and educates her followers about the accessibility needs of travelers with disabilities, inspiring people to think about tourism through an inclusive lens.

Social Media as a Platform for Advocacy and Education

Social media’s role extends beyond representation; it is also a crucial educational platform. Influencers use their channels to debunk myths, discuss accessibility challenges, and highlight the intersectionality of disability with gender, race, and socioeconomic factors. For example, TikTok’s quick, engaging format allows creators to make educational videos about disability rights, while YouTube provides a space for more in-depth content, such as discussions on ableism and the social model of disability.

In India, campaigns like #MyTrainToo and #AccessibilityForAll illustrates how social media can be used to address systemic issues and build support for policy changes. By speaking directly to followers, these influencers foster empathy and understanding, educating a wider audience on the nuanced realities of living with disabilities.

This grassroots approach to advocacy allows creators to connect with diverse audiences, fostering empathy and understanding among followers who may not have been previously exposed to disability-related topics. By making these conversations more accessible, social media is bridging knowledge gaps and creating a more informed society.

Community Building and Support

Social media platforms also act as spaces for community-building among people with disabilities, offering support and solidarity to those who may feel isolated. Hashtags like #DisabledAndCute, created by writer Keah Brown, has gained global traction, allowing people with disabilities to share their stories and celebrate their identities proudly.



Nipun Malhotra



Virali Modi



In India, influencers like Virali Modi use hashtags like #InclusionRevolution to build online communities focused on disability rights and representation. These digital communities are instrumental in helping people with disabilities feel seen, accepted, and understood. They provide spaces where users can openly discuss their challenges, share advice on navigating accessibility barriers, and find comfort in the shared experiences of others. This connectivity is particularly valuable for those who may feel isolated due to limited accessibility in their physical environments.

The Role of Major Platforms: YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram:

Each social media platform offers unique benefits for disability representation, helping to amplify voices and foster connection in different ways.

SOCIAL MEDIA & INFLUENCERS REDEFINING DISABILITY REPRESENTATION



YouTube: A platform ideal for long-form content, YouTube allows influencers to share in-depth stories about their experiences, struggles, and victories. Channels like Molly Burke’s and Virali Modi’s explore topics ranging from mental health and accessibility to relationships, providing audiences with a more comprehensive view of life with a disability.

TikTok: Known for its short, engaging videos, TikTok has proven effective in spreading awareness about disability-related issues quickly. Influencers use this platform to share tips on accessibility, educate audiences on disability rights, and address misconceptions in a format that resonates with younger audiences. TikTok’s algorithm helps amplify these voices, bringing disability representation to a broad, diverse audience.

Instagram: As a visual platform, Instagram highlights the diversity and beauty of the disability community, offering a space for advocates to share personal stories, raise awareness, and share glimpses into their advocacy work. Influencers like Siddhant Shah use Instagram to promote accessible design, while creators like Chelsie Hill share adaptive dance techniques, inspiring people of all abilities.

MOVING TOWARD A MORE INCLUSIVE DIGITAL FUTURE

The influence of social media on disability representation is profound, bringing the perspectives of people with disabilities to the forefront in ways that are reshaping societal norms and perceptions. As more influencers continue to share their authentic stories, the narratives surrounding disability will grow more nuanced and inclusive, moving society closer to a future that celebrates and values the contributions of people with disabilities. Social media has empowered individuals to take control of their own narratives, creating a ripple effect of awareness, empathy, and advocacy across borders.



EXPLORING REPRESENTATION OF DISABILITY IN MEDIA:

A Resource Guide



1. The Peanut Butter Falcon (2019)

Where to watch: Amazon Prime Video

This comedy-drama stars Shia LaBeouf and Zack Gottsagen, with Gottsagen playing a man with Down syndrome who dreams of becoming a wrestler. After escaping an assisted living facility, Zak joins Tyler (LaBeouf), who is also on the run, and the two form a deep friendship, sharing thoughts on love, loss, and dreams. The film offers a refreshing portrayal of disabled characters and authentic representation, with Gottsagen's performance highlighting what's often missing when able-bodied actors take on such roles.

2. Margarita with a straw (2014)

Where to watch: Netflix

It's the story of Laila (played by Kalki Koechlin) who is suffering from Cerebral Palsy. In spite of her malady, Laila is a very talented student of Delhi University, a writer, composer and a singer. Destiny brings her to New York when she wins a scholarship. Her journey from a girl to an independent woman, her shortcomings, and her honest acquiescence all is portrayed beautifully in the movie.



3. Barfi (2012)

Where to watch: Netflix

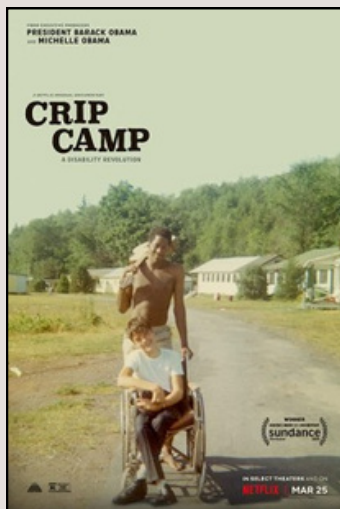
Starring Ranbir Kapoor and Priyanka Chopra Jonas, this heartwarming film shows how to find happiness in simple ways and reminds us never to give up on the people we love. Centered on the love story between an autistic girl and a deaf-mute boy, it beautifully demonstrates that love can be expressed without words. With an engaging plot and a phenomenal soundtrack, the film treats its subject with sensitivity, blending comedy and romance as two imperfect individuals discover they're perfect for each other. You'll laugh, cry, and experience a full range of emotions throughout.

Documentaries



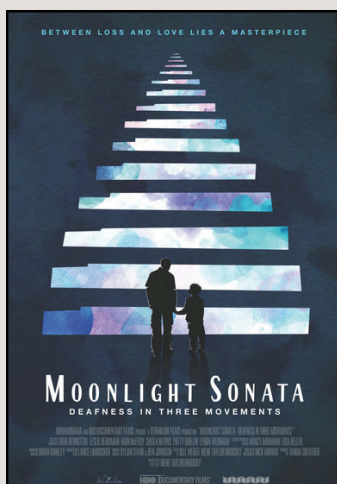
1. Being Michelle (Atin Mehra, 2022)

Being Michelle follows the astounding journey of a deaf and disabled woman who survived incarceration under unimaginable circumstances by a system that refused to accommodate her needs as a deaf person with autism.



2. Crip Cam (James Lebrecht, Nicole Newnham, 2020)

The film Crip Camp is a documentary from Barack and Michelle Obama's Higher Ground Productions. Bold and, at times, shocking, it revisits Camp Jened in the Catskills, a place that welcomed people with disabilities in the 1950s-70s—when most camps didn't, and many disabled people were institutionalized. Using historical footage, the film captures the camp's revolutionary spirit and the profound experiences of campers, many of whom later became leaders in the U.S. disability rights movement.



3. Moonlight Sonata: Deafness in Three Movements (Irene Taylor, 2019)

Moonlight Sonata is a deeply personal memoir about a deaf boy growing up, his deaf grandfather growing old, and Beethoven the year he was blindsided by deafness and wrote his iconic sonata. Their lives weave a story about what we discover when we push beyond loss.

Books

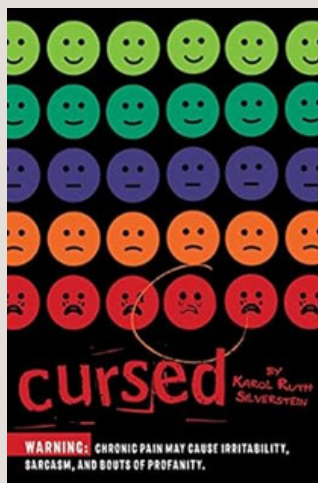


1. One Little Finger (2011) by Malini Chib

Malini Chib's autobiography titled, *One Little Finger* (2011) is a powerful story of her triumph of overcoming disability. Malini Chib has cerebral palsy, but she has never let her disability come in her way. She is gifted with unwavering spirit, which is worded in her life story. The film *Margarita With A Straw* is based on her life.

2. The Incredible Story (2005) by Naseema Hurzuk

The book translated by Aasha Deodhar and edited by Rukmini Sekhar, recounts Naseema's inspiring journey as a paraplegic from age 16. Beyond her personal story, it reflects the lives of countless disabled individuals who received support from her organization, Helpers of the Handicapped, for medical care, education, employment, and counseling. Her autobiography captures her struggles, hospital stays, and unwavering dedication to empowering the disabled community.



3. Cursed by Karol Ruth Silverstein

As if her parents' divorce and sister's departure for college weren't bad enough, fourteen-year-old Ricky Bloom has just been diagnosed with a life-changing chronic illness. Her days consist of cursing everyone out, skipping school, daydreaming about her crush, and trying to keep her parents from realizing just how bad things are. But she can't keep her ruse up forever. Ricky's afraid, angry, alone, and one suspension away from repeating ninth grade when she realizes: she can't be held back. She'll do whatever it takes to move forward—even if it means changing the person she's become.

ORGANISATIONS PROMOTING ACCURATE REPRESENTATION OF DISABILITIES IN INDIA



National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP)

website: <https://ncpedp.org>

NCPEDP advocates for the rights of disabled individuals, promoting inclusivity and accessibility in employment, education, and media



Ability Foundation

website: <https://www.abilityfoundation.org>

BarrierBreak focuses on digital accessibility and inclusion. They advocate for accurate media portrayals of people with disabilities and work with companies to ensure inclusive content.



BarrierBreak

website: <https://www.barrierbreak.com/>

BarrierBreak focuses on digital accessibility and inclusion. They advocate for accurate media portrayals of people with disabilities and work with companies to ensure inclusive content.



Mitra Jyothi

website: <https://www.mitrajyothi.org/>

Mitra Jyothi supports people with disabilities through education and skill development, while advocating for positive representation in society and media.

IN THE NEXT EDITION

Navigating Rights and Legislation for Benchmark Disabilities: A Comprehensive Guide



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THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CELL

Of

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Encourage, Empower, Enlighten
