Review of: "Digital Literacy in People with Disabilities: An Overview and Narrative Review"

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I have read with interest both versions of Professor Srinivasan Venkatesan's paper. He made a bold statement about using brain-computer interfaces to enable individuals with severe and multiple disabilities to interact with their environment through their thoughts instead of using traditional input methods. I initially found his views to be overly optimistic. It is not that this technology does not exist. However, because it is still incipient and not in widespread use, it is limited to those with the financial and human resources to use and keep such technology running and updated. It is still not within the realm of the "average" user with a disability, if ever there was one. This assumes greater importance when one considers the level of development of the country in which the disabled person lives and how that country treats its disabled community.

However, this initial reaction was followed by a readjustment on my part concerning how digital and assistive technology can assist everyone, more so those with a learning disability. Professor Srinivasan Venkatesan is very much aware of the issues that people with various disabilities face. Among the most challenging is not so much physical as mental disability. He is very much aware that the issues raised by learning disability in the British sense of the word are the main obstacles to the broader use of assistive technology and will continue to be unless, of course, one doesn't embark on a programme of training for anyone who could benefit from such technology. He does, in fact, describe ambitious initiatives that are taking place in the Indian subcontinent that are laudable and potentially game-changing. Professor Srinivasan Venkatesan notes that only 33% of articles focus on disability issues, and even fewer address accessibility issues. He calls for a strengthening of the digital literacy skills of future educators to familiarise themselves with modern innovative technologies such as speech recognition software, eye-tracking devices, and other tools that facilitate their access to digital content to bridge the digital divide that persons with disabilities, particularly those with a learning disability, currently experience.