

# Essay on The Problems of The Handicapped

I have a friend who has lost one of his legs through an accident. Suddenly from an active sportsman, he is reduced to a reluctant spectator. He just cannot run around kicking a football anymore nor participate in the many games that he used to participate in. He has to hobble around on his crutches. I can see the anguish in his face as he watches others run around freely while his movements are drastically curtailed.

Only after his accident did I realise how handicapped he is. He cannot ride a bicycle nor a motorcycle nor can he drive a car with manual gear. Everywhere he goes he has to take his crutches otherwise he is virtually helpless. Since he has only one leg, standing on it presents problems two-legged people do not have. He says his height has diminished by at least one and a half inches because his one leg can hardly bear his weight. Also, I can see that his remaining leg is bowed due to the extra strain on it. He has tried artificial legs but they create more problems. So he has resigned himself to hobbling around on his crutches.

If losing a limb presents so many problems, how much worse it would be for someone to be blind, or deaf? I would think it is much worse.

To see a blind man tottering along a street is a most pathetic sight. Here we are, the ones with eyes, easily moving about, avoiding traffic, window shopping, seeing the blue sky and white clouds, and there goes a blind man hardly able to move two meters before his white cane come against something. His handicap is very obvious. We, the sighted ones are really fortunate.

Could you imagine a life where you cannot watch television, nor see the food you are eating, nor even see what clothes you are wearing?

Well, a blind person has to put up with it every day. Besides being deprived of the things normal persons enjoy, a blind person is also deprived of most of life's privileges. Few employers will employ blind persons for the simple reason that they cannot see what they are doing. And in this world how many jobs are there available that do not require sight? Precious few, I would think. Besides operating a telephone exchange or doing some handicraft most blind persons cannot earn a decent living and have to depend on charity. Their handicap really causes them problems.

The deaf and dumb are a bit better off than the blind. I have seen a deaf and dumb man holding down a desk job without much difficulty. However, he cannot communicate with everyone and so has to rely on someone who knows sign language. This may sound like a slight handicap, but just try ordering a cup of coffee from a shop by using sign language. Chances are you will be a target of stares as well as misunderstanding.

It is obvious then that the handicapped face big problems in our society. There is an inherent prejudice against them. They are at best tolerated and pitied. However, I can see that they just want to be given a fair chance. The last thing they need is to feel prejudiced or be tolerated or pitied. They just want to be treated as human beings, nothing less.