

Current State of Inclusion of People with Disabilities at Workplaces in India

Devpriya Dey¹

¹Assistant Professor – Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Bangalore dev.hrm@gmail.com, 9902020913

Received: 05 May 2020 Revised: and Accepted: 15 July 2020

ABSTRACT:83 percent of the employers in India have diversity as a priority and has an active program to drive the diversity policy (Outlook, 2017). Inclusion of persons with disabilities (PwD) in the workforce forms an eminent part of the diversity program. PwD in India are increasing every year at a rapid rate which makes it necessary for them to get employed for the betterment of the economy. In 2001, the number of PwD in India were over 21 million (Census 2001) which has risen to 26.8 million in 2011 out of which only 5.8 million PwD are employed. This 5.8 million PwD comprises of 20 percent women and 80 percent men (Census 2011). This paper aims to study the current scenario of the employment of PwD in India. The primary stakeholders in driving the PwD employment are the employers who hire PwD; the NGO's who support in the employment of PwD, Govt. institutions who promote employment of PwD. An exploratory approach was tailored to gain a better understanding of the initiatives taken to generate PwD employment. The approach for the data collection is based on secondary data from different studies and research papers. The research is of strictly qualitative character. This work will contribute to an understanding of the steps being taken by stakeholders towards employment of PwD.

KEY WORDS: Persons with Disabilities (PwD), Employment, Incentives, Initiatives

I. INTRODUCTION

Maintaining workplace diversity is one of the top priorities as well as a key challenge for the HR fraternity. More representation of women and minority groups at all levels of organizations are expected in 2017 (Poepsel, 2017). To win the war for talent, diversity is a key weapon (Pierce, 2016). Inclusion of people with disabilities is an important aspect of an organization's management of diversity. 'Persons with Disabilities' Act 1995 provides employment incentives for companies in the private sector with at least 5% of their workforce consisting of persons with disabilities. With respect to the private sector, the importance of hiring PwD in their workforce has been understood by many organisations. Some organizations include PwD employees as part of their diversity programme; some take into account it a CSR agenda whereas others use it as an enhancement of their social image. The outcome of employing PwD was high loyalty levels with good results coupled with low attrition rates. In spite of knowing such facts the rate of employment in private sector is 0.58 percent (DEOC, 2009).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the major organizations and their practices that enables in inclusion of PwD at workplaces
- To comprehend the existing Government machineries promoting the employment of PwD
- To understand the overall current scenario of the inclusion of PwD in India

III. METHODOLOGY

The research approach is exploratory since this research would help us to better understand and clarify the current state of PwD's employment in conjunction with other stakeholders that facilitate job creation. The objectives of the research have been explored in varying degrees of scope as this is an initial research that will form the foundation for more definitive research. Not only this, hardly any work about the employment of PwD in the Indian context has been done to date so this is an effort to gain more insight.

It is generally difficult to formulate a formal hypothesis in exploratory study, since the aim of the analysis is to more thoroughly explore the research goals in order to establish some concrete hypothesis or assumption that

can be tested in future studies. The study aims to look for patterns, ideas or theories, rather than to test or validate a hypothesis.

However, the research would result in identifying the major organizations and their practices that enable PwD to be employed or facilitate the employment of PwD. Not only this, the existing Government machineries utilized for promoting the employment of PwD will be identified. Overall it will help to understand the present employment scenario PwD in India.

The purpose of data collection is to gain insight into the research question by investigating and understanding the phenomenon, so that a qualitative approach to data collection was planned, whereas the secondary data available were analyzed in depth. Different studies have been discussed published by respected organizations such as the World Bank, the International Labor Organization, the American Indian Foundation, the WHO, etc. In addition to these sources, data from the census, articles published on blogs, online edition of newspapers, research papers published in authoritative foreign journals are the other sources from which secondary data are obtained relating to various PwD job stakeholders viz. employers, NGOs, industry associations and Govt. Institutions.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

The total population of the country is 1.21 billion out of which 26.8 million citizens are considered under people with disabilities(PwD) i.e. 2.21 percent of the entire population are disabled out of which 55.9 percent are males and 44.1 percent are females. The location of these 26.8 million PwD majorities belongs to rural areas. Specifically 18.6 million PwD are from rural areas and only 8.1 million from urban areas. Of these PwD 26.8 million, only PwD 5.8 million are employed in the country. This 5.8 million PwD comprises of 20 percent women and 80 percent men (Census, 2011).

In order to support the employment of PwD in India, many initiatives have been taken till date from various stakeholders (from Govt. as well as from private organizations). Govt. of India has established the following machineries which are under the "Ministry of Labour and Employment", "Ministry of personnel, public grievance and pensions", "Ministry of rural development", "Ministry of social justice and empowerment". Not only this, there are few other govt. institutions which includes the provisions of employment of PwD such as department of "HRD, Ministry of micro, small and medium enterprise, Ministry of commerce and industry and Ministry of urban employment and poverty alleviation" (DEOC, 2009).

State-owned organizations such as NTPC, BPCL, BEL, HAL and India's State Bank employ disabled people (Shenoy, December 2011). As of 2015, prominent employers in the public sector are State Bank of India followed by Punjab National Bank, BHEL, BPCL and ONGC (Somvanshi, 2015).

As for the private sector, many companies realized the value of using PwD in their workforce. Wipro Technologies emerged as the winner in the diversity and inclusion award with category called "outstanding work in the category of persons with disabilities" conducted by NASSCOM. A study by the American Indian Foundation identified twelve private sector organizations prominently employing PwD in India, including Vindhya E Infomedia, Titan, Revive Company, Miracle Couriers, Lemon Tree Hotels, ITC Hotels, Aegis and just a few others. Mphasis was the recipient of the Shell Helen Keller Award, the most prestigious Indian benchmark to recognize individuals and organizations seeking to create job opportunities for disabled people (DNIS, 2015).

A report by the ILO on PwD and Indian Labor Market Challenges and Opportunities asserts that besides these institutions, there are certain private players running training centers specifically for disabled people. For example TATA motors, L&T, Foundation Dr Reddy, Centum learning ltd (DEOC, 2009).

Public-Private Partnerships such as the NSDC and the Center for PwD Living (CPDL) have links to career opportunities for disabled people (DEOC, 2009).

In addition to government initiatives, private employers, public-private partnership firms, prominent non-governmental organizations also work in conjunction with their corresponding associations to create PwD employment. Some of them are Association of persons with disability(APD), Enable India, National Center for promotion of employment of disabled people(NCPEDP), Able disabled all people together(ADAPT) Mumbai, Ability foundation, Chennai, Enable India, Bangalore and few others (DEOC, 2009).

In addition to government initiatives, private companies, public-private partnership firms, NGOs, industry groups such as NASSCOM and CII also work to build employment opportunities for the PwD (DEOC, 2009).

V. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Initiatives taken by Govt. agencies, State owned organisation, Private Employers, NGO’s, Private sector Training centers, Pubic-Private Partnerships and Industry Associations.

Table 1: Initiatives by all stakeholders towards inclusion of PwD at workplace

Stakeholders	Machinery	Steps Taken	Source
Govt. Of India Initiatives	Ministry of Labour and Employment	Forty three special employment exchanges for PwD	(DEOC 2009), Diversity and Equal Opportunity Center
		Thirty eight special cells for PwD	
		20 vocational rehabilitation centers for handicapped	
	Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievance and Pensions	Conducts recruitment for union/central govt.	
		UPSC for grade A jobs & SSC for grade B and C jobs	
	Ministry of Rural Development	NREGA (2005) for whole country in 2008	
	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment	Welfare, Social justice and Empowerment disadvantaged marginalized sections of the society in which PwD have been included.	
		Set up two statutory bodies exclusively for PwD	
		a) “Officer of the chief commissioner” of PwD and b) “National trust for welfare of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities”	
		National Institute of Empowerment of Persons with multiple disabilities (NIEPMD)	
	“The Persons with Disability’ Act 1995”	Provides incentives for organisations in the private sector with at least 5% of their employees as people with disabilities	

Stakeholders	Machinery	Steps Taken	Source
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State Owned Organizations	NTPC	400 PwD Employees, NTPC foundation takes care of health, education, employment of PwD. It also has 'self income generating schemes too. It conducts Abilities 'mela' fair for employment of PwD.	(Shenoy, December 2011)
	BEL	258 PwD Employees (Group A - 79, B -7, C - 164 & D - 18)	
	HAL	659 PwD employees (Group A - 114, B - 42, C - 499 & D - 4)	
	State bank of India	2692 PwD employees; partnered with "Enable India" which has helped to trained PwD who are currently working at SBI and managing banking operations job	(Nagri, 2014)
	Punjab National Bank	1126 PwD employees	(Somvanshi, 2015)
	BHEL	988 PwD employees	
	BPCL	935 PwD Employees	
	ONGC	156 PwD Employees	

Stakeholders	Machinery	Steps Taken	Source
Private Sector Training Centers	TATA Motors	Has a 45 days drivers training program	(Shenoy, December 2011)
	Larsen and Toubro	Provides construction skills training	
	Dr. Reddy's Lab	Established "Livelihood Advancement Business School (LABS)"	
	Centum Learning Ltd	(Joint venture with NSDC) provides training in multiple areas to PwD	
Industry Associations	NASSCOM	Diversity awards in IT and ITES segment which includes PwD inclusion too. Conducted workshops on diversity awareness, published a handbook entitled, 'Inclusivity at workplace: 5 principles that enable and empower PwD'. Collaboration with vocational rehabilitation center (VRC) based at Chennai. Launched job fair on world disability day 2010 at Delhi is association with Sarthak which is a training institute for disabilities.	(Shenoy, December 2011)
	CII	CII has developed disability code, voluntary acceptance by organizations to establish a disability policy	

Stakeholders	Machinery	Steps Taken	Source
Private Organizations	Miracle Couriers	Run by hearing speech impaired people	(Sapra, 2016)
	Mphasis	350 PwD employees; Winner of Shell Helen Keller Award	(DNIS,2015)
	Vindhya E Infomedia	95 percent staff are PwD	(Dass, 2014), American Indian Foundation
	Revive Enterprise	Hires only visually impaired people	
	Lemon Tree Hotels	400 disabled employees, i.e. 13 percent of their total workforce. It intends to boost its headcount of PwD employees to 2,000 over the next three years	
	Titan Industries	4 percent of the workforce at PwD	
	ITC hotels	292 PwD employees spread across all core functions like finance, human resources, marketing, housekeeping and reservations	
	Aegis Ltd	314 PwD employees; has a separate equal employment opportunity policy for disabled people	
	Shakti Masala	200 Physically and Mentally Challenged Employees	
	Pointec Pens	3 percent of the total staff are PwD employees ; their goal is to recruit 15 percent of the total workforce	
	IBM India	120 PwD Employees; Developed "spoken web" - voice enabled technology for visually impaired to access and share info	
	Gitanjali Gems	270 PwD Employees out of 1650 Staffs	
	Radnik Exports	100 PwD Employees; Roles for skilled, semi - skilled, unskilled workers. Hires even cerebral palsy and intellectual impaired employees	(Dass, 2014), American Indian Foundation
	Devyani International (KFC, Pizza Hut)	200 PwD Employees with Hearing Impaired	
	D S Group (Rajnigandha Tobacco, Pearl Mouth freshener)	PwD deputed in IT department, HR, Vigilance Dept, Sorting and Packing dept	
	Wipro Ltd	500 PwD Employees in Consulting, Marketing, Leadership Training, Recruitment, Testing and more	

	Café Coffee Day	Collaborated with Enable India, to hire hearing impaired employees for specific F&B roles, such as a master brew and coffee maker. Some have been elevated to management positions	(DNIS,2015) Disability News and Information Services.
	Accenture	Accenture has developed a development platform “Jobability Portal (www.jobability.org)” in collaboration with Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD) which will act as an industry link between disabled individuals and potential employers.	
	Capgemini	All new hires undergo disability sensitization and etiquette training, and so far more than 4,000 staff have provided training. Sensitization sessions and Sign Language training for different teams are performed regularly. On Capgemini's Intranet, Capgemini launched a dedicated 'Inclusion' tab. The site includes information on disability rights, best practice, inclusion dos and don'ts and success stories	
	Euro Able (Eureka Forbes Initiative)	National Society for Equal Opportunities for the Handicapped (NASEOH), to maintain financial security for disabled people. Unlike regular workstations, EuroAble has ensured that the call center is specially designed to incorporate the needs of the employees, with foot trails and workstations that are wider (4 feet). Currently the call center manages 5000 calls every day with 100 calls handled by each employee. It already hires 80 people and plans to hire about 150 disabled individuals by the end of next year.	

Stakeholders	Machinery	Steps Taken	Source
NGO's	V Shesh	V Shesh offers work listing, counselling and training programs, equipping job seekers in a corporate environment to perform to their full ability. V-shesh facilitates the inclusion of disabilities in policies and actions at work, through a range of pre- and post-recruitment services. This includes workshops on disability awareness, handicap audits, solutions for inclusion, job analysis sessions, etc.	(DNIS,2015) Disability News and Information Services.
	Enable India	132,076 persons with disability across 11 disabilities, families, employees, leaders and community have been positively impacted by the work of EnAble India. 600 companies across 27 sectors, 48% of these companies hired severe and sensory disabled, 23% have hired over multiple years	(Nagri, 2014)

	Muskaan	Through their seminars and training programs, Muskaan has shown that people with intellectual disabilities can learn similar jobs and other skills, and benefit for themselves. Muskaan promotes the goods made at the work center, receiving orders from various organizations. They work in eight units of production: bakery, cooking, masala and pulses, food processing, solar drying, candles, decorative diyas, office & gift stationery, etc. Yearly production worth more than Rs 20 lakh!	(DNIS,2015) Disability News and Information Services.
	Mobility India	Involved with Rehabilitation, Training, Community based inclusive development programs	(Dass, 2014), American Indian Foundation
	Ability Foundation	National level disability organisation for the empowerment and mainstreaming of persons with disabilities	
	Association of Persons with Disability (APD)	Conduct training sessions to educate and equip these organizations on rehabilitation and therapy for the disabled.	
	Able Disabled All People Together (ADAPT)	ADAPT engages at all levels with national and international organizations, the public and private sectors, and government agencies to impact policy changes affecting disadvantaged people across the nation.	

VI. CURRENT SCENARIO

In spite of all the above stated initiatives taken various stake holders, the World Bank report (2007), PwD in India: Commitments to Outcomes” states that a mere 27 percent of disabled people are listed with special exchanges, a total of 6.61 lacs of PwD are registered with job exchanges, of which 1.09 lacs listed with special exchanges for physically disabled persons and 0.06 lacs were listed as a part of special cells. Between 1998 and 2003, total funding for special exchanges and cells was just over five crores. Employment exchanges (special and regular) play a marginal role in supporting PwD employment. The placement ratios for special exchanges are 0.9 percent and other exchange is 0.7 percent in 2003. Only 10.2% of all ministries, departments and the public sector posts were found to be suitable for PwD (Dass, 2014). PwD retains a reservation of 3 per cent of all categories of government jobs. The icing on the cake is that only PwD with over 40 percent disability are eligible for reservation in government jobs (Ghorai, 2014).

For all those efforts that private organizations, govt. bodies, NGO’s, industry associations have made, of the 26.8 million PwD employed in the country, only 5.8 million PwD are employed. There is a huge gender gap in this employed PwD i.e. only 20 percent are women and 80 percent are men as per the 2011 census data.

Out of PwD 70 million, only one lakh citizen with a disability is employed. Even the educated and qualified PwD are bound to remain at their homes because of the lack of infrastructural support (Jindal, 2014). At one end India has a shortage of skilled talent and at the other end; such potential workforce is being ignored. Sinicism or disbelief is a huge obstacle in employing PwD. The employers are skeptical about the competency level of the disabled people who have earned professional training and certifications. This is primarily due to the idea that people with disabilities can adjust the work environment or that the employees can manage their work smoothly with the disabled (Jindal, 2014).

62 “disability friendly” organizations listed on the national center for promotion of employment for disabled people (NCPEDP) portal, yet a survey on the top 100 Indian companies revealed that 0.28 percent of the disable employment in the private sector and even lower 0.05 percent in the MNC’s (Ghorai, 2014). 73.6 percent of the

disabled in India are still outside the labour force. 43 special exchanges and 38 special cells for people with disabilities are still in operation; only 27% of PwDs are registered with special exchanges. Even among those who are registered, the placement ratios for special exchanges are 0.9 percent and other exchange is 0.7 percent in 2003 (ILO, 2011). The rate of employment in private sector is 0.58 percent (DEOC, 2009). In spite of NASSCOM and CII's effort in spreading the awareness about PwD employment still 73 percent of the IT and ITES organizations do not have a policy or any guidelines in place for employing PwD (ILO, 2011). Only 10 Nifty companies are receptive to this issue, hiring 90 per cent of the 8,551 people with disabilities continuing to work in the 50 companies in the index (Somvanshi, 2015).

VII. CONCLUSION

Overall based on the current scenario, the employment of PwD in India looks grim. Hence the guiding research question is how to make the PwD more employable in India? In order to find out some way out in making the PwD employable; the need to understand the barriers has become a prime importance. Hence without identifying the causes which leads to unemployment or causing a roadblock in the employment, finding a remedy is baseless. Majority of the employers employing PwD belong to service sector which gives a direction to conduct a further research in the service sector. Moreover the solution to the current research problem is not based with one stakeholder. Due to this understanding the barriers faced by all stakeholders i.e. employers, NGO's/ training partners, Govt. machineries and PwD which are interlinked is necessary.

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