

Feasibility of Employing People with Disabilities in the Indian IT Sector

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores feasibility of employment of People with Disabilities across the disability spectrum in the Indian IT Sector. In India, “people with disabilities face many obstacles when it comes to learning employable skills” and finding meaningful jobs under good working conditions. “Though India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD), there are still many difficulties facing people with disabilities in the labour market”. In this context, the aim of this study is to understand the challenges faced by employers in “hiring and retaining people with disabilities in the Indian IT companies”, and to identify possible strategic interventions for future advocacy or project work.

The primary concern expressed by the majority of respondents was the perception that workers with disabilities were unable to function at work. The form of work that is acceptable for People with Disabilities was another top concern. Most of the respondents agreed that hiring disabled workers would support the workplace; among them, improved CSR efficiency and increased morale of employees. In order for these challenges to be properly understood and sufficiently addressed, future studies should continue to concentrate on employer demand side issues with regard to disabled workers.

Keywords

People with disabilities, challenges, helpful strategies, People with disabilities, skills

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Introduction

The paying job is a key aspect of culture and identity throughout the world, with many people organizing their lives around jobs. “Employment helps to describe the role a individual has in the society. Often the unemployed are removed from main social group events and positions (Obermann 1980)”. Until recently, the assumption in India for people with disabilities was that they would not actually work. In USA, for example, “prior to the enactment of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, workforce initiatives seldom aimed at putting people with disabilities in competitive work positions (Blanck 2001)”. Benefit services for people with disabilities are largely tied to income — “only persons below a certain income level obtain support (Blanck et al. 2009; Wehman et al. 1997)”.

Improving job prospects for disabled people is one of India's key issues for the disability sector. If you look at the micro-level, it might appear as if progress has been made. Corporates and people with disabilities are getting more recognition. Indian government has been pressured to implement the 1995 Disability Act. While no legislation required the private sector to employ people with disabilities, several businesses took proactive steps to employ people with disabilities.

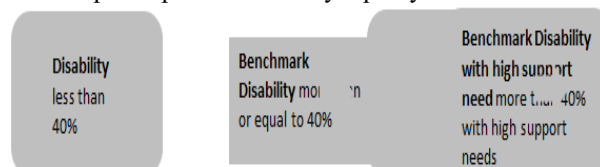
According to the 12th Five Year Plan, NSS 66th Round (2009–10) results indicate that between 2004–05 and 2009–10, “18 million new work opportunities were generated on a CDS basis. Unemployment in absolute terms plummeted by 6.3 million, and the unemployment rate dropped for the first time since 1993–94 to 6.6 per cent in 2009–10, after rising to 7.31 per cent in 1999–2000 and 8.28 per cent in 2004–05”. “Even on UPSS basis, the unemployment rate decreased from 2.3 percent in 2004–05 to 2 percent in 2009–

10 over the same period. The overall labour-power rose by just 11.7 million”. There was a greater gain in labour force than in previous years. However, this is a good development since higher youth enrolment in schools and universities can be linked to it, as well as “lower labour distress participation by working-age women as increased family income in both rural and urban areas”.

During the last decade, “India 's job elasticity decreased from 0.44 in the first half of the decade 1999–2000 to 2004–05, to as low as 0.01 in the second half of the decade 2004–05 to 2009–10”. Different patterns were seen at the sectoral level, namely in the sectors of agriculture, retail, and manufacturing. In the latter half of the decade job elasticity has been negative in agriculture and manufacturing. This migration of the surplus workforce to other sectors is important for inclusive growth for efficient and profitable jobs. Employment elasticity in the manufacturing sector is especially troubling as the sector experienced production growth of 6.8 per cent during the Eleventh Program.

Disability according to Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016

According to the “Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 A person with disability means a person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others.”



In terms of “People with Disabilities reservations, there was a significant shift in the new Act from 1996 to 2016. The 1995 Act permitted 3 percent employment reservations for People with Disabilities in government and government-assisted institutions, with 1 percent reservation each for (1) hearing impairment, (2) blindness / low vision, and (3) locomotive / cerebral palsy”.

The 2016 Act provides for “4 percent quotas for People with Disabilities, including quotas for individuals with mental disability, autism, SLD, and ID in all government institutions for job purposes. There is also a provision for at least 5 percent reservation in higher education; 5 percent reservation in the allocation of agricultural land and housing, with women being given priority; 5 percent reservation in poverty alleviation schemes (3 percent in the 1995 Act), with women being given priority; and 5 percent reservation in land allocation at concessional rates”. These regulations embody essential steps in supporting “People with Disabilities.”

“Employment of People with Disabilities” according to Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016

“The People with Disabilities Act promoted private institutions with opportunities in which 5 per cent of the workforce consisted of People with Disabilities.” In 2008, the Indian Government enacted an incentive structure for employers to provide private sector jobs to People with Disabilities. “Under this scheme, workers with disabilities (covered under the 1995 People with Disabilities Act and the Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Various Disabilities Act, 1999 National Trust for the Protection of People with Autism) will be covered”.

The Act ensures “4 percent quotas in government and government-assisted organisations. Both the People with Disabilities and the RPwD Acts specifically state provisions for cases in which an employee acquires a disability while on duty. He or she cannot be cast off in such a situation. If the person affected is unable to do the job properly, he or she may be moved to another position without a change in pay or service benefits. If that is not feasible, he or she may be retained on a supernumerary post until there is a suitable post available or until retirement”.

In terms of mental disorders that often arise during the early stages of work life, this strategy is of high importance and may result in elevated social and occupational instability. Given an inability to function at work or a reduced capacity, the provision would allow for continued survival. Mental conditions may also be episodic in nature, causing successful research to take a long duration up-to a few years. “This provision has the power to ensure that the affected employee would be able to retain their jobs even if there are periods of unproductivity”.

Disabilities covered under Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016

Under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 “Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept.”

“The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21 and the Central Government will have the power to add more types of disabilities. These include Blindness, Low-vision, Leprosy Cured persons, Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing), Locomotor Disability, Dwarfism, Intellectual Disability, Mental Illness, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Chronic Neurological conditions, Specific Learning Disabilities, Multiple Sclerosis, Speech and Language disability, Thalassaemia, Haemophilia, Sickle Cell disease, Multiple Disabilities including deaf-blindness, Acid Attack victim, Parkinson's disease”. Persons with benchmark disabilities are defined as those certified to have at least 40 per cent of the disabilities specified.

Employment of People with Disabilities in the IT Sector

Research on employer attitude “(e.g. Unger, 2002)” states that “employers have different concerns about hiring individuals with unique disabilities: people with physical disabilities are given the most favourable rankings in terms of employability compared to other types of disabilities (Bricout & Bentley, 2000), especially compared to people with intellectual disabilities (Chi & Qu, 2005; Hernandez, Keys & Balcazar, 2000)”.

While observing workers/employees with various types of disabilities, some scholars have studied the attitudes of employers towards persons with mental illnesses and found the least favourable attitudes toward this group (Bricout & Bentley, 2000). Furthermore, “reports that people with intellectual disabilities are less likely to be working in supportive work environments than people with other disabilities (Olney & Kennedy, 2001) suggest that a differentiated approach to job-related obstacles is required for people with various forms of disabilities in general and, in particular, those with intellectual disabilities”.

Private-sector employment has risen at an growing pace. “The number of people with disabilities in the private sector is not at a good number which could point to inclusion”. The same survey of “Top 100” companies in India by NCPEDP in 1999 (discussed above) highlighted the gloomy jobs rate across various sectors. “The private and the international industry painted an apathetic image in which the study found just 0.28 per cent and 0.05 per cent of their overall impairment workforce”. Recent study conducted for “NASSCOM in 2013 to gain insights into the IT-BPM Industry job scenario of people with disabilities showed the percentage of workers with disabilities by total employees was at just 0.36 percent”. There is no cross-industry data equivalent to this. The private sector was listed in the Disability Act as far back as “Clause 41, which put the onus on the Government to provide opportunities to encourage the job creation for persons with disabilities in the private and public sectors. That clause was just on paper until 2007”. Under the Eleventh Project, a Central Sector Scheme was declared in the Union Budget 2007-08 to provide hundred thousand jobs per year to people with disabilities, with a planned outlay of Rs. 1,800 crores.

Indian IT firms have been successful in recruiting disabled persons. Few big companies like Wipro, Mphasis, IBM, etc. employ workers from various categories of people with disabilities who do a range of jobs. Organizations such as

“SAP and EMC offer internship opportunities for people with high support needs, for disabilities like autism, deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities” etc. Companies like “Sun-ITES & Vindhya e-infomedia that distinguish themselves as organizations with large (10 percent +) workforce as disabled people”. Nonetheless, the aforementioned inclusion spree should best be listed as an exception. Such an initiative was limited to “a few organizations and was confined to cities like Bengaluru, Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Pune, etc. Many multinationals follow policies pertaining to disability at offices located in their Headquarter countries but there is blatant neglect when it comes to India”.

Although many businesses put CSR, gender diversity and climate in financial and human resources, there remains a neglect towards disability. A significant number of private sector companies were insensitive to employing handicapped individuals. The entire new start-up companies were not open to recruiting disabled individuals. Institutions such as the “Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the Federation of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Related Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) and the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) have struggled to impose specific pressure on their member organizations”. Both of these chambers / associations have been carrying out programs specifically for people with disabilities, such as organizing career fairs, seminars, training etc. The impact was slight.

Barriers faced by People with Disabilities

Disabled people face a wide variety of obstacles to accessing jobs. This may be physiological (health) or educational (poor schooling levels, or a dearth of vocational skills). “The challenges range from lack of knowledge and training to lack of financial capital that limit access to labour markets”. The difficulty of the work or occupation and the opinions of employers of people with disabilities are some crucial factors. Employer, family and society attitudes across the board create hurdles to link PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES to employment.

According to Kulkarni and Valk (2011), there are still several employers who believe that the co-workers will respond negatively if the organization hires people with disabilities. People with Disabilities also shy away from applying for specific positions, fearing social isolation and future co-workers' adverse reactions. This becomes more likely when disabled individuals are treated differently upon joining the organisation. People with Disabilities also feels shunned by its peers in the absence of an efficient integration process.

People with Disabilities has also been ignored in India, and has been discriminated against on the grounds that they have disabilities. Not only do they lack opportunities to engage fairly in political, social and economic practices, but economic empowerment, employment and social welfare services are not inclusive and do not take their needs into account. There are, however, several groups throughout the country that provide people with disabilities need-based services. Despite of these organizations' constructive efforts, people with disabilities have proven to be equally able to

work in India's banks, factories and many other sectors. In inaccessible work settings, however, they cannot perform effectively and this sometimes causes them to leave their jobs.

Indian IT sector employment scenario of people with disabilities

Information technology firms have started recruiting disabled people in large numbers, 4 percent of which have made their office buildings workplace friendly. Hyderabad's IT industry has employed nearly 132 new workers in different positions thanks to a Union government initiative where it contributes to the provident fund of physically disabled employees with salaries over 25,000.

India's government must pay those employees' PF for a three-year term. The number of physically disabled people actually working in the city's IT sector is 1.6, which is higher than that of the government service industry. For more than three years now the National Association of Computer and Service Companies' Foundation has been mooted the handicapped accessible push. The foundation has made the scheme successful through interfacing partners of national and local government.

The program not only helps employers to employ disabled people but also allows them to diversify their work environment. Various working environment is also a factor that is taken into account in multinational partnerships. Also, the international labour organization, as a growth criterion, had required numerous workspaces. For almost three years NASSCOM has been running career advice drives for physically disabled individuals. A strong 3 per cent of young girls who attended were physically challenged at a recent career motivation workshop held in the city where NASSCOM collaborated with Microsoft. The foundation also organized closed-door leadership roundtables in town to bring more employers on board. These meetings are intended to be a primary advocacy resource for people with disabilities. Wipro had recently included terms in the sign language dictionary that are part of daily communication in the IT industry.

In addition, the campaign for hiring physically disabled people is now being led by a coalition of 10 to 15 businesses who have already remodelled their buildings to make them more disability friendly. The IT area of the city is supposed to be fully disabled accessible by 2022, a handout provided in 2016 by the State IT department. “Ashok Pamidi, the chief executive of NASSCOM Foundation, the social arm of the technology industry body, said he estimated about 0.6-1% of the IT sector workforce to be disabled people. The sector employs around 40 lakh people in India. According to him, this number would not be very different for other sectors of formal employment.”

Objective of the study

- “To study the feasibility of employing People with Disabilities in the IT sector in terms of sustainability, workplace friendliness, technological availability, attitudinal and communication responsiveness”
- “To identify physical, psychological, technological barriers faced by People with Disabilities in the IT sector”

Method

For this research, employees of IT companies and start-ups were surveyed regarding their knowledge and sensitivity about working with people with disabilities. A comparison was made on the basis of workplace friendliness for People with Disabilities, perceived barriers among employees towards people with disabilities and the norms dictated by the organisation to make the workplace favourable for People with Disabilities. This survey highlights emerging workplace perceptions and activities across 12 IT organisations. "Research into employer perspectives on the jobs of people with disabilities required a pragmatic and a scientifically validated approach that collects and aggregates data from different employer forms". This survey was conceived to fill gaps in awareness of the discipline and the organizational difficulties companies face in hiring, retaining and promoting disabled individuals. Surveys on workplace perceptions were performed, but "there is no nationally representative research on workplace practices and challenges by business size and industry. This survey centred on sectors of the market and the size of organizations to ask specific questions about processes, threats and strategies. The strength of this paper is its emphasis on detailed sampling at all rates, based on business sectors, individuals and size of the companies". This survey brings out detailed reports on workplace behaviour and hiring, recruitment and retention practices for the sectors concerned.

Survey Overview

This study was made to understand the mind-set of employees in the IT industry in India towards their colleagues with special needs and the feasibility of employment of people with disabilities in the workplace.

Significance and relevance of the study

In spite of the implementation of legislation and initiatives to improve the recruitment and the retention of disabled employees, several studies have clearly shown that there is little improvement in the attitudes of employers to hire or accommodate these employees, indicating that there exist numerous gaps in the comprehension of the role of employers in promoting the reintegration of employees. A major contribution to the limited body of literature on awareness about employment of people with disabilities and employers' issues would be advanced by addressing employers' experiences and their perception of various disabilities. This will lead to initiatives to fight stigma and prejudice by employers. This strategy would also assist providers of vocational rehabilitation and work support to target the IT sectors that have low levels of concern regarding disability for employment growth, career matching, and placement purposes.

This study aims to fulfil employers need to be informed about the importance of hiring and maintaining professionals with disabilities, as well as the need to support and facilitate accommodation in the workplace. Payment arrangements for most job support services currently do not

have ample time for these important activities to be performed. Employers are also frequently reluctant to take a risk to include in their staff individuals with disabilities. "The views held by employers and colleagues need to be questioned if job opportunities for people with mental disabilities are to be enhanced. The challenges faced by employers, especially front-line managers, when coping with mental health concerns at the workplace and the kinds of knowledge as well as resources they need to promote the re-entry and integration of the worker into the work environment have been addressed by only a limited body of published literature". The critical problem relating to health is efficiency from the employer's viewpoint. For employers, preserving productivity, managing productivity risks, restoring lost productivity and optimising productivity are all main concerns. Therefore, the proposed research aims to illuminate how employers match these views with the needs of workers with mental illness and disability, particularly in periods of economic downturn and global recession, and to incorporate what supports best practise.

Results

Employing people with disabilities;

Respondents were asked, if they had any knowledge about current employees of your company having a physical or mental impairment.

These statistics are provided for IT companies of all sizes i.e., small medium and large, by their employees across different levels. Among the employees surveyed, 51.6% of the company's employee people with disabilities, 25.8% employees were not aware of any colleagues with a disability and 22.6% employees refused to having colleagues with a disability at their organisation. "Considering the size of the company, the larger the company, the higher is the likelihood there is to employ people with disabilities. It's no wonder that organizations with more employees are more likely to have at least one disabled employee". Such firms actually have more job openings, and will be more likely to invest in a diverse workforce.

Respondents were questioned about their knowledge of the number of disabled workers in their organization.

One of the IT giant employees responded having 450 persons of disabilities in the organisation. Maximum number of the respondents have 5-7 people with disabilities working in their company. 12.9 % of the total respondents were not aware of any colleagues with a disability currently employed at their organisation.

On the bases of above statistics, the respondents were asked about the type of disability these employees have.

Vision impairment, Deafness or severe hearing impairment and Physical or locomotor disability were the most prevalent responses amongst employees throughout various IT companies. A total of 58.1% people with disabilities were grouped under 'Physical/Locomotor disability' ("A condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting or carrying"), followed by 19.4% visually impaired people with disabilities and 12.9% people with a Deafness or severe hearing impairment.

Recruiting People with Disabilities;

The respondents were questioned “In the past 12 months has your company hired any people with disabilities?”

Based on the statistics, a majority (51.6%) employees were not aware of their organisations actively involved in hiring of people having disabilities. As a part of the diversity hiring in initiatives 25.8% of the employees said to be actively involved in People with Disabilities hiring and 22.6% companies do not hire persons of disabilities

Respondents were questioned “Does your company actively recruit job applicants who are people with disabilities?”

Based on the responses, 41.9 % of the IT companies surveyed “actively recruit people with disabilities” whereas employees in 22.6% of the IT companies refused to be involved in “recruitment of people with disabilities” and 35.5% employees were unaware of any such recruitment initiatives. “Recruiters in the service industry are more likely to recruit among private sector companies than those in the manufacturing industries. Service-producing companies have the largest number of employers who actively hire disabled applicants”.

Recruiting Strategies;

Companies that regularly hire disabled people were questioned, “How do you proactively employ job applicants who are disabled persons?” Table 1 lists approaches of all organisations; sample sizes were found to be “insufficient to generate statistics” dependent on market size. The recruitment method most commonly cited is 67.7 percent postings at job service or employee jobs centre. Percentages of businesses that aggressively hire individuals with disabilities use this approach.

Table 1- Strategies used by companies to proactively recruit people with disabilities

Strategy	All Companies	
	Percent	Rank
“Postings at job service or workforce employment centre”	67.7	1
“Contacting college and university career centres”	54.8	2
“Including people w/disabilities in diversity recruitment goals”	38.7	3
“Partnerships with disability-related advocacy organizations”	35.5	4
“Postings or tables at disability-related job fairs”	19.4	5
“Establishing summer internship and mentoring programs”	16.1	6
“Postings at Independent Living Centres”	16.1	7
“Postings at disability-related publications”	12.9	8
“Postings at disability-related websites”	12.9	9
“Postings at Department of Vocational Rehabilitation”	6.5	10

Persuading Companies to Recruit;

We asked organisations that do not recruit people with disabilities frequently about the kind of details that would allow them to recruit people with disabilities. Table 2 lists the types of knowledge the respondents have cited. “Information showing how hiring people with disabilities can increase your company’s productivity, Information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited other companies in your industry are considered the most convincing information, while Information that addresses your concerns about costs and Data showcasing that hiring people with disabilities has benefited larger recognized companies, for example a Fortune 500 company is the least convincing information”. For small and medium-sized IT companies, the two cited types of knowledge the most are “satisfactory work performance and improves business productivity” are similar. Large IT companies are more likely to be swayed, however, by evidence backed by statistics or analysis.

Table 2- Type of details that will reassure businesses that do not aggressively hire disabled people

Type of Information Required	All Companies	
	Percent	Rank
“Information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited other companies in your industry”	67.7	1
“Information showing how hiring people with disabilities can increase your company’s productivity”	67.7	1
“Information showing how hiring people with disabilities can benefit your company’s bottom line”	63.3	2
“Information on satisfactory job performance, attendance, and retention of people with disabilities”	63.3	2
“Information that addresses your concerns about costs”	56.7	3
“Information showing how hiring people with disabilities has benefited nationally recognized companies, for example a Fortune 500 company”	56.7	3

Hiring Challenges;

All businesses were asked, below are a few factors affecting recruitment of people with disabilities that are often the response from employers. “How much of a challenge are the following factors to your company in hiring people with disabilities? I would like you to say whether it is a major challenge, somewhat of a challenge, or not a challenge.” Table 3 shows the percentage of businesses that cited a specific factor as a major challenge or a challenge.

Table 3- “Challenges in hiring People with Disabilities as cited by the respondents”

Challenges	Major Challenge		Somewhat Challenge		Not a Challenge	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
“Nature of work”	29.03	4	54.8	2	16.13	7
“Not knowing how much accommodation will cost”	19.35		58.1	3	22.58	5
“Cannot find qualified people with disabilities”	35.48	2	45.16	5	19.35	6
“Actual cost of accommodating disability”	9.68	8	64.5	1	25.8	4
“Concern about cost of worker’s compensation premiums”	22.58	7	54.8	2	22.58	5
“Concern about the cost of health care coverage”	32.26	3	51.6	4	16.13	7
“Lack of knowledge or information”	38.7	1	38.7	7	22.58	5
“Discomfort or unfamiliarity”	25.8	6	41.9	6	32.26	3
“Attitudes of co-workers”	25.8	6	41.9	6	32.36	2
“Attitudes of managers”	26	5	35.48	8	38.7	1

The lack of information or knowledge regarding “people with disabilities” such that the organisations do not have a

“proper database to access information about the skills, qualifications and experience of professionals with disability” was cited as a challenge for 38.7% of the companies. “Attitudes of co-workers or supervisors” are the least frequently cited as a roadblock. Note also that no knowledge about actual cost of accommodating disability is perceived to be more of a recruiting problem than the discomfort or familiarity, which indicates that risk aversion can be a concern that needs to be discussed in accommodation literature. Other factors which moderately affect the recruitment of People with Disabilities are “nature of work, not knowing how much accommodation would cost, concerns about worker’s compensation premiums, concerns about healthcare coverage etc.”

The major reason that nature of work is not a very prominent challenge is because the industry doesn’t demand physical labour. “Companies in the manufacturing (goods-producing), construction and retail industries are most likely to cite the nature of the work, while businesses in the financial services, professional services and technology sectors are least likely to mention the nature of the jobs as a concern. It is perceived that the challenging physical demands is the reason why a person with a disability could not perform the jobs effectively within their businesses”.

Since all the respondents were asked about the hiring challenges, the question of other challenges they may face towards hiring People with Disability was also posed. The employees who work in organisations which hire People with Disability responded to what were the challenges they were facing to hire People with Disabilities more actively. The respondents belonging to the organisation which do not hire People with Disabilities, listed reasons to why they don’t. “Companies that do not employ disabled persons are more likely to identify a specific difficulty factor — with the most notable exception being the lack of expertise or intelligence. The major disparities in terms of businesses hiring and those not hiring are the issues related to the workers’ compensation costs, health insurance costs, fearful of lawsuits, real lodging costs, and co-worker attitudes”.

Hiring Concerns;

The respondents were asked “Some employers have concerns about hiring people with disabilities. Here are some of the concerns we often hear from employers. For each, please let me know how much of a concern it is for your company.”

Table no. 4 shows the percentage of businesses identifying a specific issue as a significant or somewhat of an issue. As shown in Table 4, the expense of hiring people with disabilities and the perception that the supervisors are not aware of evaluation criteria and the confusion of the boss as to how disciplinary action are the issues most commonly reported for businesses across the sector. Professional’s lack of skills and expertise and safety issues, by comparison, are not familiar with handling individual disabilities are the least reported by these organisations but still account for around one third of these businesses. “It is the least discussed issue being that the that people with disabilities may not be as healthy and efficient as others”

Table 4- “Percent of companies citing concerns about hiring People with Disabilities”

Challenges	Major Challenge		Somewhat Challenge		Not Challenge	
	Percent age	Rank	Percent age	Rank	Percent age	Rank
“It costs more to employ workers with disabilities”	25.8	1	48.4	2	25.8	6
“Workers with disabilities lack the skills and experience to do our jobs”	12.9	5	35.5	6	51.6	1
“People with disabilities may not be as safe and productive as other workers”	12.9	6	45.2	3	41.9	2
“Supervisors are not sure how to take disciplinary action”	22.6	2	51.6	1	25.8	5
“Supervisors are not sure how to evaluate”	22.6	3	45.2	4	32.3	4
“Supervisors are not comfortable with managing”	19.4	4	45.2	5	35.5	3

The main gaps between companies hiring and those not hiring are security and efficiency issues, skills and expertise and costs, with companies not recruiting those issues more often than the businesses hiring individuals with disabilities.

Helpful Hiring Strategies –

Organisations were asked about approaches that would assist in the employment of professionals with disabilities. Those tactics are ranked in Table 5. Regardless of the size of the organisation, the top five recruiting facilitation techniques are very common across the size of the company: “Workplace tax credits, disability sensitivity training, clear top management engagement, assistive and mentoring technology”. The relative ranking of the other strategies

varies according to the organization's scale., with the most valuable tax incentives for small and medium-sized businesses and the most significant noticeable top management engagement for big business. IT start-ups, too, are most likely to cite flexible work hours as an hiring facilitation technique. And whatever the size of the organisation, the least cited methods are a centralised accommodation fund and reassignment. The bigger the size of the organisation, the more likely it is that a given strategy would be quoted.

Table 5- “Strategies that would be helpful in hiring People with Disabilities”

Strategies	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful		Not helpful		
	Percent age	Rank	Percent age	Rank	Percent age	Rank
“Employer tax credit and incentives”	58.1	7	38.7	7	3.2	6
“Disability awareness training”	74.2	1	25.8		0	7
“Visible top management commitment”	67.7	3	32.3	10	0	8
“Mentoring”	67.7	4	29.03	11	3.2	5
“Assistive technology”	70.9	2	25.8	12	3.2	4
“Using a specialized recruiting source”	51.6	10	48.38	3	0	9
“Flexible work schedule”	58.1	8	41.9	6	0	11
“Training existing staff”	61.3	6	35.5	8	3.2	3
“On site consultation or technical assistance”	51.6	11	41.9	5	6.5	2
“Disability targeted internship program”	67.7	5	32.3	9	0	12
“Short term job assistance with job coach”	29.03	13	67.7	1	3.2	10
“Developing a targeted recruitment program”	54.8	9	45.5	4	0	13
“Centralised accommodations fund”	38.7	12	51.6	2	9.6	1

“The three most cited strategies are employer tax credits and benefits, disability sensitivity training and clear top management commitment and the two least listed strategies were centralised housing fund and reassignment are the same regardless of whether an organisation is actively hiring”. Table 13 It also suggests that organisations that have not employed people with disabilities are less likely to report a supportive policy with each of the policies than those that hire people with disabilities. In order to create a personalised recruitment plan, the greatest difference between recruiters and those who are not recruiting is concerned, with firms actively recruiting more likely to cite this as helpful in minimising obstacles to hiring.

“Retaining People with Disabilities” –

“Companies that at present have people with disabilities on their roll were asked, In your opinion, how much of a challenge are the following factors to your company in retaining a person with a disability?” Table 6 shows the percentage of businesses that mention a specific factor as a significant or very challenging challenge. The number one challenge facing medium and large businesses is seeking ways to bring workers to work following the advent of a disability. It's the concern around the cost of the worker's compensation premiums, followed by finding ways to get employees back into work. Compensation rates for health insurance and staff are less of a burden for larger businesses to maintain.

Table 5- Challenges cited by companies to retain People with Disabilities

Challenges	Major challenge		Somewhat a challenge		Not a challenge	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
“Lack of opportunity for career growth”	19.4	6	54.8	3	25.8	4
“Attitudes of co-workers”	25.8	3	41.9	6	32.3	2
“Attitudes of managers”	25.8	4	35.5	7	38.7	1
“Actual cost of accommodating a disability”	19.4	5	48.4	4	32.3	3
“Concern about the cost of health care coverage”	16.12	7	58.1	1	25.8	5
“Concern	29.03	2	45.16	5	25.8	6

about the cost of worker's compensation premiums”						
“Finding a way to return employees to work who have been on disability leave or workers compensation”	32.3	1	54.8	2	12.9	7

“Helpful retention strategies” -

“Companies that currently employ people with disabilities were asked about strategies that would be helpful in retaining people with disabilities”. Table 7 demonstrates how business rate the methods. A noticeable commitment by the top management is essential to retain disabled people along with regular disability training for the employees regardless of the size of the company. Start-ups are more likely to invoke tax credits and bonuses from employers as a retention tactic than big business. Very frequently, major corporations cite availability and accessibility of assistive technology as the top retention technique. In fact, with the exception of workplace tax credits or benefits, large businesses reference each strategy more often than start-ups, possibly because they are more likely than their smaller peers to hire and actively retain people with disabilities. Regardless of organisation size, a short-term assistance with a job coach and centralised accommodations fund are the two least cited techniques.

Table 7- “Strategies that would be helpful in retaining People with Disabilities”

Strategies	Very helpful		Somewhat helpful		Not helpful	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
“Visible top management commitment”	77.4	1	16.1	11	6.5	1
“Employer tax credits and incentives”	54.8	7	45.2	4	0	8
“Mentoring”	54.8	8	38.7	5	6.5	2
“Flexible	70.9	4	25.8	8	3.2	6

work schedule”						
“Assistive technology”	74.2	3	25.8	9	0	9
“Disability awareness training”	77.4	2	16.1	10	6.5	3
“On-site consultation or technical assistance”	48.4	9	51.6	3	0	10
“Training existing staff”	61.3	6	35.5	6	3.2	11
“Short-term on the job assistance with job coach”	38.7	10	54.8	2	6.5	4
“Disability targeted internship program”	64.5	5	29	7	6.5	5
“Centralized accommodations fund”	38.7	11	58	1	3.2	7

Collection of accommodations data –

“Workplace accommodations play an important role in the productivity of people with disabilities. Companies that employ people with disabilities were asked about the purposes of keeping data on the accommodations for employees with disabilities”. Table 8 shows the percentage of businesses that hold data for a specific reason and how these reasons are ranked based on the company’s requirement. Regardless of the size of the company, the top two factors are regulatory reporting standards (74.2 percent) and future accommodations in similar situations (58.1 percent), while the least reported is monitoring of accommodation costs (9.6 per cent). Large enterprises cited each explanation more often than other businesses.

Table 8- Reasons for collecting data on accommodations

Reasons	Very Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important	
	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank	Percentage	Rank
“Regulatory reporting Requirements”	74.2	1	25.8	5	0	4
“Disability claim	58	3	38.7	3	3.2	3

coordination”						
“Future accommodations in similar situations”	58.1	2	41.9	2	0	5
“Dispute resolution / settlement”	41.9	5	51.6	1	6.5	2
Tracking accommodations cost	54.8	4	35.5	4	9.6	1

Limitations of the study

It is important to recognise the number of businesses that can solve these problems while delving deeper into specific issues. For example, “the survey was limited to respondents actively hiring people with disabilities while looking at hiring methods, limiting the opportunity to examine this problem by business size and industry. This discovery, however, is a helpful indication that more needs to be done to enable employers to actively hire people with disabilities”.

It is important to consider cultural and experience differences when researching disability issues. For example, “because of systemic variations in the way people view disability, there is concern that the prevalence of disability in certain states is too high or too low”. In order to obtain quasi-baseline data on respondent interpretation, survey methods have been used successfully. A similar strategy may be used to request information about the viewpoint of an employer on the existence of disability and the kinds of work that employers consider should and cannot do for people with a disability. Also, the survey does not consider the existing gap between the talent availability in professionals with disabilities and the talent expected by hiring companies. Understanding this gap would help companies optimise their processes and define jobs for people with disabilities efficiently. The lack of advancement opportunities can be cited as an obstacle for businesses hiring people with disabilities and has not been taken into consideration for this study.

Conclusion

Several trends arise when analysing the findings on problems, issues, and strategies. By recognising these differences, policy proposals can be better established. “Large businesses are more likely to employ, retain and actively recruit disabled people”. It indicates that policies and data should be directed towards small IT companies and start-ups. The results also indicate the kind of data that is needed. “When business who do not actively hire people with disabilities were asked what sort of data would convince them to hire, the three most convincing were facts

about adequate job results, improvements in the competitiveness of the business, and benefits to the bottom line of the company”.

But unravelling these findings by company size showed that IT start-ups find information more convincing about adequate job performance, whereas large businesses are most convinced by statistical or research-supported information. The failure to find eligible people with disabilities was rated by large corporations as their number one challenge. A high percentage of employers cited the cost of employment and essence of the job as a concern regarding hiring people with disabilities.

“This survey may represent a lack of awareness of available accommodations, and these employers may profit from information about how travel for people with disabilities is not inherently a barrier. The main issues associated with recruiting are not finding a way to return employees to return to work who have been on disability leave and the real cost of worker’s compensation premium”. Around the same time, it is considered more of a recruiting problem than the real cost of accommodation to not know how much accommodation would cost, which indicates that “aversion to risk needs to be discussed in the cost of accommodation literature”. These issues represent “the need for training not only to increase the number of companies recruiting, but also to better prepare them for a hiring decision when evaluating an eligible disabled candidate”.

The “need for education not only represents the need to expand the number of businesses that hire, but also to better prepare them for a hiring decision” when evaluating an eligible disabled candidate.

Health insurance expenses, employee benefits expenses and fear of lawsuits are more complex for large corporations. For businesses that do not actively employ people with disabilities, these issues are particularly high, so knowledge aimed at alleviating these worries for small and medium-sized businesses will be helpful.

After the onset of a disability, “businesses are faced by seeking ways to return workers to work, and for small companies, the cost of handling disability was the biggest obstacle in keeping employees with disabilities. These results indicate that even for businesses that already hire people with disabilities, and for small businesses that may bear the cost of accommodation, returning to work will present unique challenges”. Companies are also “threatened by the expense of worker benefit insurance and health care benefits.” Regardless of the size of businesses, seeking ways to bring workers to work following the advent of a disability and opportunity for career growth are cited as major retention issues, and large businesses cite, involvement of top management, sensitisation and awareness training for employees and a flexible work schedule of professionals with disabilities may work as an effective method for retaining workers with disabilities.

A noticeable top management commitment is also essential to all businesses. “Developing research that shows how businesses through accommodation can maintain their valued workers and how mentoring works for comparatively large organisations can help to improve retention”.

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