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# PERSONS WITH DISABILITY & THE INDIA LABOUR MARKET: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Meera Shenoy  
December 2011

ILO DWT for South Asia & Country Office for India

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Coordinated macroeconomic, employment and social protection policies in Asia and the Pacific / Sukti Dasgupta and Kee Beom Kim ; ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific. - Bangkok: ILO, 2011

47 p. (ILO Asia-Pacific working paper series)

ISSN: 2227-4391 (print); 2227-4405 (web pdf)

ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

13.01.1

*ILO Cataloguing in Publication Data*

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*“Decent work is one of ILOs primary goal for everyone, including persons with disability. When we promote rights and dignity of persons with disability, we are empowering individuals, strengthening economic security and enriching society at large”*

***Juan Somavia, ILO Director General***



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## Abbreviations

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| ADAPT    | Abled Disabled All People Together   |
| APD      | Association of persons with disability                                       |
| ASSOCHAM | The Associated Chambers of Commerce & Industry of India                      |
| BEL      | Bharat Electronics Limited   |
| BPA      | Blind People's Association   |
| BPCL     | Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited   |
| CII      | Confederation of Indian Industry   |
| CPDL     | Centre for Persons with disability Livelihoods                               |
| CSR      | Corporate Social Responsibility  |
| DFID     | Department for International Development                                     |
| DPO      | Disabled Persons Organisation  |
| DGET     | Directorate General of Employment & Training                                 |
| DRDA     | District Rural Development Agency  |
| DRG      | Disabled Rights Group  |
| ESI      | Employees' State Insurance   |
| FICCI    | Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry                         |
| GGL      | Gitanjali Gems Limited   |
| GOI      | Government of India  |
| GRI      | Global Reporting Initiative  |
| IGNOU    | Indira Gandhi National Open University                                       |
| ITI      | Industrial Training Institutes   |
| MOSJE    | Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment                                     |
| NASSCOM  | The National Association of Software & Services Companies                    |
| NCPEDP   | National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People              |
| NCVT     | National Council for Vocational Training                                     |
| NGO      | Non Governmental Organisation  |
| NHFDC    | National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation                       |
| NIVH     | National Institute for Visually Handicapped                                  |
| NSDC     | National Skill Development Corporation                                       |
| NSS      | National Service Scheme  |
| NVQF     | National Vocational Qualification Framework                                  |
| PRI      | Panchayat Raj Institutions   |
| PwD      | Persons with Disability  |
| SADAREM  | Software for Assessment of Disabled for Access, Rehabilitation & Empowerment |
| SERP     | Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty                                     |
| SEZ      | Special Economic Zone  |
| SGSY     | Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna   |
| SHG      | Self Help Groups   |
| SJSRY    | Swarnajayanti Shahri Rozgar Yojna  |
| TBSS     | Tata Business Support Services Limited                                       |
| TRRAIN   | Trust for Retailers & Retail Associates of India                             |
| UNCRPD   | United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities         |
| UNDP     | United Nations Development Programme   |



# 1. Introduction

Persons with disability in India face many challenges when looking to develop employable skills and in gaining meaningful employment in conditions of decent work. Whilst India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with disability (UNCRPD), persons with disability continue to face many difficulties in the labor market. In this context, this study aims to understand the issues facing persons with disability in the Indian labour market to enable ILO to identify potential strategic interventions for future advocacy or project work.

## 1.1. Objectives

The objectives of the study are the following:

- Summarize the key challenges and issues facing persons with disability in Indian labour markets;
- Provide an overview of the major organizations and institutions acting for persons with disability in India and the services they provide;
- Identify strategic opportunities to improve and expand persons with disability participation in Indian labor markets;
- Recommend key interventions that could be pursued by the ILO in India

## 2. Background: Setting the context:

### 2.1. People with Disability (PwD) in India

In India, the disability sector in general estimates that 4-5% of the population is disabled. The Planning Commission recognizes this figure as 5%.<sup>1</sup> A report by the World Bank states that while estimates vary, there is growing evidence that persons with disability are around 40-80 million, which constitute between 4-8% of India's population.<sup>2</sup> Both Census 2001 and NSS round of 2002 estimate lower incidence of disability in the country.<sup>3</sup> The Census of India showed that the prevalence of disability in India was 2.2% translating into 21.9 million affected individuals. 12.6 million are males and 9.3 million females. Among the five types of disabilities on which data had been collected in the 2001 Census, visual impairment constituted 48.5%; mobility impairment 27.9%; mental disability 10.3%; speech impairment 7.5% and hearing impairment 5.8%, as indicated in Figure 1. Irrespective of the varying estimates, because of the sheer size of the Indian population, even the lowest estimate of disability makes it equal to the population

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<sup>1</sup> Government of India, Planning Commission, Vision 2020, 15 July 2008.

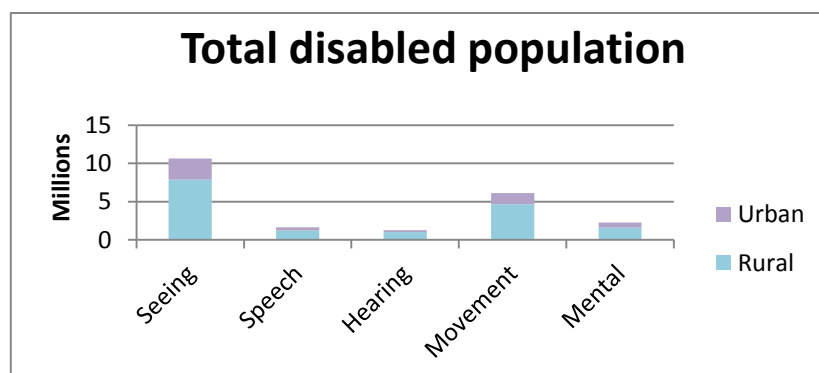
<http://www.planningcommission.nic.in/reports/genrep/bkpaper2020/30bg2020.doc>, accessed February, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> People with disabilities in India: From Commitments to Outcomes, Human Development unit, South Asia region, The World Bank, May 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Disability in India - A statistical profile, March 2011, Central Statistics office, Ministry of Statistics & Program Implementation, Government of India.

of several European countries put together. Viewed in this perspective, persons with disability represent the single largest combined minority group in India.

**Figure 1: Total disabled population in India**



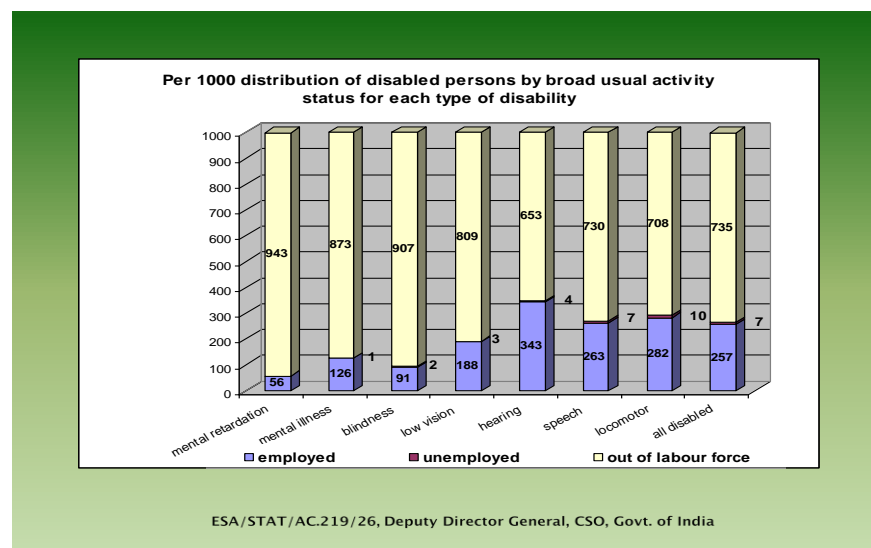
Even though disabled people constitute a significant 5 to 6 percentage of the population of India, their needs for meaningful employment largely remain unmet, in spite of the implementation of the '*The Persons with Disability' Act 1995*'. This Act reserves 3% of all categories of jobs in the government sector for disabled persons, and provides employment incentives for public and private sector companies, that have at least 5% of their workforce comprising of disabled persons. The bleak scenario is of the approximately 70 million persons with disability in India, only about 0.1 million have succeeded in getting employment in the industries till now.<sup>4</sup> In a survey conducted by National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) on top 100 companies in 1999, the rate of employment of disabled in private sector was a dismal 0.28% and in multinational companies, it was 0.05%.<sup>5</sup> The Annual report of the Ministry of Labour and employment(2007-8) indicates there are 6,87,632 disabled people on the live register of the 81 Employment exchanges and special cells of the country, waiting to get government jobs.<sup>6</sup> While many others have enrolled in private employment agencies, information on their enrolment and placement is largely unavailable. Figure 2 shows that on average, for all types of disability, 73.6% are out-of the labour force.

<sup>4</sup> Disability Information Resources [www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/asia/resource/apdrj/z13jo0400/213jo0410.html](http://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/asia/resource/apdrj/z13jo0400/213jo0410.html), accessed February, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Super ranking of corporate sector, Business India, Mumbai 1998, Nov.16, Survey done by NCPEDP

<sup>6</sup> Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Annual report,( 2007-8), Government of India, 2008

**Figure 2: Per 1000 activity distribution of disabled persons status for each type of disability**



Employment rates of persons with disability vary with geographical location (urban or rural), gender, education, and type of disability. According to 2011 Census of India, 68% of India lives in rural areas. Therefore, in the overall population, the number of disabled is proportionately higher in rural areas, accentuated by general poverty considerations and poor access to health services.<sup>7</sup> The rural disabled are significantly disconnected from skills and markets. Literary levels are low, with the Census of India estimating that 51% of persons with disability are not literate; 26% reach up to the primary level; 6% middle level and only 13% secondary level and above.<sup>8</sup>

## 2.2. Gender & disability

Disabled women are the most marginalized. There are 250 million of them with 75% in developing countries.<sup>9</sup> A report by United Nations Enable, which is the official website of the Secretariat for the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disability, indicates global literacy rate is a low 1% for women with disability.<sup>10</sup>

In the third world, girls with disability are excluded from education, even basic, because of the gender aspect. The general opinion is it is important for boys with disability to get an education but little thought is given to girls in the same situation, especially in the rural areas.<sup>11</sup> Using gender and disability lens, disabled women have far greater difficulty—in public and private sphere—access to housing, health,

<sup>7</sup> Census of India, [http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov.results/paper2/datafiles/India/Rural Urban 2011.pdf](http://censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov.results/paper2/datafiles/India/Rural%20Urban%202011.pdf), accessed February, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Disability in India- A statistical profile, March 2011, Central Statistics office, Ministry of Statistics & Program Implementation, Government of India.

<sup>9</sup> [www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=657&Itemid=200](http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=657&Itemid=200)

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Enable, "Factsheet on persons with disabilities", <http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

<sup>11</sup> [www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=657&Itemid=200](http://www.isiswomen.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=657&Itemid=200), accessed March 2012

education, vocational training and employment.<sup>12</sup> They experience inequality in living, access to credit, and rarely participate in economic decision making.<sup>13</sup> According to a World Health Organization (WHO) report on disability, lower labour market participation is one of the main pathways through which disability leads to poverty.<sup>14</sup>

### **2.2.1. International standards & conventions in India**

India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disability (UNCRPD) in 2007. Article 27 of UNCRPD “recognizes the right of persons with disability to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in the labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disability”.<sup>15</sup> Further, UNCRPD prohibits all forms of employment discrimination, promotes access to vocational training, promotes opportunities for self-employment, and calls for reasonable accommodation in the workplace. However, despite the fact that India has ratified the UNCRPD, young people still struggle to access decent work. Access to quality education, vocational training and employment are denied to millions of young persons with disability, worldwide including India.<sup>16</sup>

India has not ratified ILO Convention 159, which concerns Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention. This convention has been ratified by more than 80 countries. The Convention requests ratifying states to set out a policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons in the open labour market (integration of disabled in regular working environment). The Convention furthermore promotes equality of treatment between disabled and non-disabled workers, specifying the need for positive action, which would enable workers with disability many opportunities to be as productive as any other worker. This may require specific services for disabled workers, like adaptations in the work environment (access to workplace) or at the workplace of the individual worker. The Convention makes it mandatory to provide vocational rehabilitation and employment services for disabled workers in rural and remote areas, which is very relevant to the situation in India.<sup>17</sup> Several key pieces of legislation issued from 1980 onwards were (i) the Mental Health Act, 1987; (ii) the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (PwD Act); (iii) the Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 and amended in 2000 (RCI Act); and (iv) the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999 (National Trust Act). The cornerstone of these is the PwD Act 1995 which heralded a new dawn in the lives of disabled people in India. For the first time in India, a separate law was formulated which talked about the multiple needs of disabled people. This Act helped disabled people to come together, forming advocacy groups to implement this law.

Since the ratification of UNCRPD by India in 2007, there has been much discussion of the manner in which Indian laws must be modified to give effect to the obligations under the Convention. While the

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<sup>12</sup> Miloon Kothari, Women and adequate housing, Study by special reporter on adequate housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living

<sup>13</sup> “Employment barriers for women with disability, Arthur O.Reilly, The Right to Decent work of Persons with disability, Skills working paper, No. 4,ILO, 2003

<sup>14</sup> World Health Organization, World Report on Disability , 2011

<sup>15</sup> Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, New York, United Nations, 2006, [www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities), accessed February, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Maureen Gilbert, Solution Exchange for work and employment community, Query: Access to decent work for Persons with disability, Compilation 19 August 2010.

<sup>17</sup> ILO Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment(Disabled Person) Convention (no.159) and Recommendation (No.168)

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MOSJE) has proposed 108 amendments to the PwD Act including 50 new provisions, the Disabled Rights Group (DRG) led by Javed Abidi has unequivocally stated that the PwD Act has served its time and that there is a need for a new law. Consultations on this issue at national and zonal levels have taken place. Advocate Kanchan Pamnani, who is blind herself, says that the old law will need more than 300 amendments to make it suitable to our times, and obviously it is better to frame a new one than make 300 changes in the old one.<sup>18</sup>

### **2.2.2. Skills & employment in India**

Among persons with disability, there are, approximately, between 5 and 5.5 million in the 12-24 years age group in India.<sup>19</sup> It makes eminent sense therefore to make available a new hitherto untapped labour force – the persons with disability. The pool of disabled people is large and growing with increased population and medical advances. With government of India programs like Sarva Shiksha Abhyan, which focuses on inclusive education, the number of educated persons with disability is gradually rising. Moreover, with technological advances and assistive devices, it is possible to skill this human resource pool to industry needs. This opens up an opportunity, therefore, for this target segment to contribute to India's economy.

### **2.2.3. National skill development mission**

Government of India has launched the “National Skill Development Mission” with an outlay of Rs.22800 crores in the Eleventh Plan. The target is to skill 500 million youth in five to seven years. The rationale is to create a pool of trained and skilled workforce, sufficient to meet domestic requirements of a growing economy, with surpluses to cater to the skill deficits in other ageing economies, thereby effectively leveraging India's competitive advantage and harnessing India's demographic dividend.<sup>20</sup> With liberalization, the Indian economy is transiting to a knowledge based economy. This requires education and skills to drive the growth. Majority of Indian workforce, however, is still in traditional occupations with over 90 % working in the informal sector with low levels of productivity and poor returns. Growth in the formal sector employment has been negligible.

At a central government level, a key milestone in skills development has been the set-up of a National Skills Development Mission in 2009 that functions as an apex institution responsible for achieving India's skilling needs and harness the demographic potential in a meaningful way to fuel economic growth. Under the National Skills Mission the Prime Minister's council on skills development, the National Skills Development Corporation and the Sector Skills Councils has been instrumental in developing appropriate strategies, frameworks and providing support to skills development initiatives.<sup>21</sup>

Approximately 17 ministries of the central government of India implement skills development initiatives

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<sup>18</sup> <http://infochangeindia.org/disabilities/analysis/india-needs-new-legislation-on-disability-rights.html>, March 2012

<sup>19</sup> Singh, N, Forgotten Youth: Disability & Development in India, RECOUP working paper No.14, 2008.

<sup>20</sup> GOI, (2009) “Vision of the National Skill Development Initiative in India” Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, March.

<sup>21</sup> Leveraging the Dividend: Enhancing employability in India, Dasra research report, December, 2011.

in their respective focus areas. The Ministry of Labour and Employment, Department of Rural and Urban development have the largest of these initiatives.

- **Ministry of Labour and Employment:** The Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGET) functions as the executive arm of the Ministry and is responsible for the management of all vocational skilling initiatives. These include:

➤ the National Council of Vocational Training (NCVT)

➤ 10,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITI's) offering 2 year diplomas to grade 8 – grade 12 graduates

➤ 3552 Industrial Training Centers which are ITI's managed by private players and funded by the government

➤ 947 Employment Exchanges which function as placement centers which include 43 special employment exchanges for the disabled

At present over a million young people a year are skilled through DGET initiatives. Since 2007, the DGET has invested INR 35.5 million to upgrade approximately 15% of its ITI's in partnership with corporates. So far, around 924 ITI's have been upgraded. Also, it has mandated opening 1,500 new ITI's and 5,000 new skills development sectors in underserved areas.

In addition, the DGET oversees the apprenticeship scheme which mandates public and private sector establishments to engage apprentices in training. Around 24,000 establishments have trained over 200,000 apprenticeships in 235 trades thus far.

- **Ministry of Rural Development:** This Ministry implements schemes for generation of self-employment and employment for rural and tribal youth. In its newly launched National Rural Livelihood Mission, 15% of the total budget is earmarked for skilling and placement. The schemes designed will improve on the previous special SGSY (Swarnjayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana). The SGSY is implemented by the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) with the active involvement of the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), line departments and NGOs.
- **Ministry of Urban Employment:** The Ministry of Urban Employment is the apex authority at the national level to formulate policies, sponsor and support programs, coordinate activities of

**Figure 3: National skills development mission 2009**





central ministries, state governments and nodal authorities and monitor programs concerning all issues of urban employment, poverty and housing in the country. The urban counterpart of the skilling program, SJSRY, (Swarnajayanti Shahari Rojgar Yojana) is implemented by the Ministry of Urban Development. SJSRY has the Urban Self Employment Program (USEP) and the Urban Wage Employment Program (UWEP).

- **Ministry of Human Resource Development:** The Ministry of Human Resource Development implements Technical and Vocational educational training in schools and institutes of higher education. The Department of School Education and Literacy enables these vocational skilling programs within secondary schools from grade 8 – 10. The Department of Higher Education runs some technical and vocational courses through Community Colleges, IITs and universities.
- **Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Department of Information Technology:** The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology through its Human Resource Development Division is targeted to ensure availability of trained human resources for the manufacturing & service sectors of the electronics and IT industry. The initiatives carried out include identifying gaps emerging from the formal sector and planning programmes in the non-formal and formal sectors for meeting these gaps.

Besides, all states have been mandated to set up an umbrella State Jobs/Employment mission, under the leadership of the Chief Secretary and Chairmanship of the Chief Minister, to ensure state targets of skilling and placing youth in companies is met.

#### Box 1

##### Twenty high growth sectors to focus on skilling

Twenty high growth sectors have been identified as key areas to focus on skilling:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Automobile & Auto components             | 11. Health care                           |
| 2. Banking/Insurance and Finance Services   | 12. Handlooms & Handicraft                |
| 3. Building & Construction Industry         | 13. ITES/BPO                              |
| 4. Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals            | 14. Soft ware services/products           |
| 5. Construction                             | 15. Leather & leather goods               |
| 6. Educational & Skill development services | 16. Organized retail                      |
| 7. Electronics Hardware                     | 17.. Real Estate services                 |
| 8. Food processing                          | 18. Textiles, apparels and garments       |
| 9. Furniture and furnishing                 | 19. Tourism, hospitality and travel trade |
| 10. Gems & Jewelry                          | 20. Transportation, logistics, packaging  |

Source: Planning Commission, Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-2012)

Of these, manufacturing, textiles, construction, automotive, retail and healthcare are key. "Green skills" like skills required for organic farming and renewable energy are being focused on, for sustainability. While persons with disabilities are suited to work in these sectors in certain jobs, depending on their abilities, there is no sustained effort to train the disabled to meet the needs of the industry.

### 3. Challenges:

There are several barriers for people with disabilities to enter the labour market. The challenges can range from their lack of education and training or a lack of financial resources which limit access to labour markets. Other reasons include the nature of the workplace or occupation and employer-perceptions of disabled people. Anecdotal evidence suggests that social protection systems can create incentives for persons with disability to leave their jobs and move on to the disability benefits.<sup>22</sup>

Negative attitudes toward employees with disabilities can result in discrimination. These negative attitudes stem from ignorance, misunderstanding, stereotyping, backlash and fear. Companies, agencies, and organizations are composed of individuals with their own attitudes and beliefs about people with disabilities. Co-workers will draw conclusions regarding the people with whom they work. Supervisors and management staff will make decisions that affect employees. The individual choices that people make regarding the hiring of people with disabilities can be guided by their attitudes.<sup>23</sup>

Many employers also assume that co-workers may react negatively if people with disabilities are hired into the organization. People with disabilities often shy away from applying for certain jobs, fearing social stigma and adverse reaction from potential co-workers. This is more likely when people with disabilities are treated differently post entry into the organization. In the absence of an effective integration process, people with disabilities often feel shunned by their co-workers. This is because co-workers come with their own prejudices and the actual attributes of people with disabilities are often overshadowed by their perceived shortcomings. Further, people with disabilities frequently reach a development plateau where they are no longer able to undertake more complex assignments and responsibilities due to their disabilities. They suffer what is known as the 'lost opportunities effect', whereby improvement opportunities are lost due to the absence of critical feedback for performance improvement.<sup>24</sup>

Key actors in PwD employment include persons with disability themselves, government, employers and NGOs / DPOs. Each of these stakeholders faces various challenges and limitations which act as a barrier for scalable employment of persons with disability in India.

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<sup>22</sup>Maureen Gilbert, Solution Exchange for work and employment community, Query: Access to decent work for Persons with disability, Compilation 19 August 2010.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.vabir.org/tilting-at-windmills/>, Vermont Association of Business, Industry & Rehabilitation, accessed March 2012

<sup>24</sup>Prof. Mukta Kulkarni, IIM, Bangalore and Prof. Reimara Valk, Utrecht University, Netherlands, July 2011, Employing the disabled-Is HR part of the problem [www.iimb.ernet.in/newsletter/issues/131](http://www.iimb.ernet.in/newsletter/issues/131)

**Figure 4: Stakeholder Challenges**

| Government  | NGOs  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job quotas ineffective so far</li> <li>• Ineffective access to Persons with disability employment related data/information</li> <li>• Awareness about benefits limited</li> <li>• Training may not be market linked</li> <li>• Limited success of programs</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scaleability challenges for skilling and training model</li> <li>• Lack of sustainable funding</li> <li>• Lack of proper infrastructure</li> <li>• Training quality</li> <li>• Many in number but fragmented</li> <li>• Sharing of best practices</li> <li>• Instructor effectiveness</li> </ul> |
| Companies   | Persons with disability   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of skilled general category candidates</li> <li>• Lack of necessary education and/or qualifications among Persons with disability</li> <li>• No efficient center for sourcing Persons with disability</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> <li>• Unwillingness / Unawareness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of accessible education</li> <li>• Impact of disability / logistical barriers</li> <li>• Lack of encouragement from family and society (Social stigma)</li> <li>• Limited interaction</li> <li>• Fast pace of environmental changes</li> </ul>  |

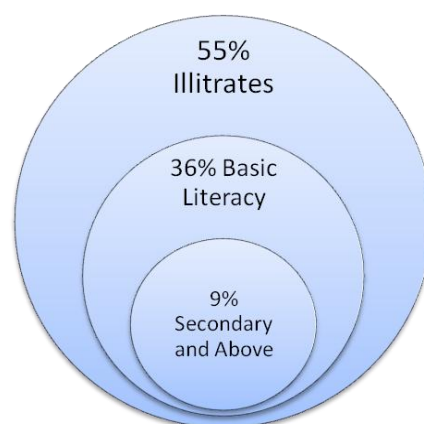
Source: Market Linked employment of Persons with Disabilities; Report by Indian School of Business; November 2010

### 3.1. Persons with disability

Some of the constraints persons with disability face in accessing labour markets are the following:

- **Low literacy levels:** Literacy levels are low among children of all categories of disability. According to the World Bank, illiteracy is 52% among disabled versus 35% in the general population.<sup>25</sup> As with the overall population, there are strong gender differences in educational attainment among persons with disability, with female illiteracy being 64% against disabled male illiteracy of 43%. In rural areas, the schools are located at large distance; colleges are in the district headquarters. Added to this is the fact that in many schools are not equipped to cater to the special needs of the disabled because of infrastructure, accessibility and availability of special instructors. Many persons with disability youth invest in their education, battling family and societal barriers which do not encourage putting their limited financial resources into educating children with disability. Even in states with good educational indicators and high overall enrolments a significant share of out of school children are those with disabilities: Data also indicates that across all levels of severity, children with disability very rarely progress beyond primary school.

**Figure 5: Literacy levels among**



<sup>25</sup> People with disabilities in India: From Commitments to Outcomes, Human Development unit, South Asia region, The World Bank, May 2007

- **Lack of daily living skills:** Many persons with disability are not trained in basic living skills like maintaining personal hygiene, grooming, travelling, use of washrooms, personal safety, etc.
- **Lack of self-esteem and confidence:** Some persons with disability have low self-expectations about their ability to be employed and may not try to find employment. The social isolation of persons with disability restricts their access to social networks, especially of friends and family members that could help in finding them employment.<sup>26</sup> In rural areas, persons with disability are ridiculed or get bullied. Sometime the parents also don't take them along for social gatherings, etc., due to the stigma. This reinforces their inferiority feeling and leads to low self – esteem.
- **Overprotective parents:** Many parents are very protective about their disabled children, which can be a hurdle for the child to become independent. Many persons with disability are dependant either on their parents, siblings and friends for small tasks, which makes it difficult for them to independently seek employment. Most of the time they are escorted by their parents/relatives, whereas companies stress they want persons with disability who are independent.<sup>27</sup>
- **Basic Skills:** persons with disability may not have access to situations of regular social interaction, may have specific issues with communication (spellings for visually impaired do not get reinforced by “seeing”, sentence construction for hearing impaired do not get reinforced by “listening” and so on leading to difficulties in training them for employment.
- **Life Skills:** This is an important employability skill to get the job. Among the persons with disability candidates skills like team building skills, time management, money management, are lacking or weak.
- **Poor knowledge of English:** Rural aspirants with reasonable qualifications have very poor knowledge in English. Sometimes they cannot even spell/write their village name in English. This is a big challenge to make them work ready in many service sector jobs, including data entry operator, where minimum English knowledge is necessary.
- **Lack of access to skills and technology:** Education and training are central to good and productive work for a reasonable income. But young persons with disabilities often lack access to formal education or to opportunities to develop their skills, particularly in the field of information technology.<sup>28</sup>
- **Rural disconnect from markets:** There are many disabled youth who are not aware about the training/job opportunities available for them especially in the rural areas where disability is more acute. They are also not exposed much to the outer world and are isolated in their own world. Technological changes especially new trends like online recruitment make it difficult for persons with disability to cope, many of whom have never worked with computers before.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Addlakha R (2012) Mainstreaming disability into the child rights, Available at agenda <http://infochangeindia.org/agenda/child-rights-in-india/mainstreaming-disability-into-the-child-rights-agenda.html>, Accessed February 2012.

<sup>27</sup> Parenting Post-Secondary Students with Disabilities: Becoming the Mentor, Advocate, and Guide Your Young Adult Needs Available on <http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=208> , Accessed February 2012.

<sup>28</sup> World Report on Disability, Chapter 8, Work and employment, World Health Organization, 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Public Sectors in India, Emerging Issues and Trends--An Evaluation Study with Special Reference to Persons with Disabilities Act (1995), Commissioned by Planning Commission, Government of India Society for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies, (2008) [http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/sereport/ser/ser\\_pdp1206.pdf](http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/sereport/ser/ser_pdp1206.pdf) ,accessed February, 2012.

- **Preference for government jobs:** Persons with disabilities prefer government jobs and repeatedly sit entrance examinations. Their frustration increases as, despite the 3% reservation, they are not successful due to their poor knowledge of English, computers and general knowledge. Anecdotal evidence suggests that in rural areas, self-styled agents and middle men obtain financial reward by promising government jobs to persons with disabilities.

#### Box 2

##### Case study showing PwDs preference for government jobs

Ravindra, 24 years of age, with locomotor disability had been trained in English, computers and retail management and was placed in a large retail mall as cashier, drawing Rs.72, 000 per annum. He called to say he had to go home for the weekend, even though his supervisor was not giving permission. The reason was his mother had paid Rs.50, 000 for a government teacher's job; so he had to take the test.

- **Health issues:** Many persons with disability candidates suffer from various health issues and due to lack of proper treatment their conditions deteriorate soon. For example, many rural youth come to CPDL trainings with bamboo and wooden sticks which compresses their lungs further and leads to accelerated deterioration of the spine.
- **Pension and other Govt. incentives:** Very often this also becomes a challenge in training and linking the persons with disability youth to employment. Due to various pensions/Govt. incentives, disabled youth do not come forward to take up training or job opportunities, others return to the village to take their monthly pension and resign from their job.

Persons with disability face a wide range of barriers to access employment. These can be physiological (health conditions), or educational (Poor levels of schooling or lack of vocational skills). Attitudes of employers, family and the society at large create hurdles for linking persons with disability to employment and government schemes like pension become deterrents to persons with disability to exit employment. These need to be addressed to mainstream employment of persons with disability in India.

### 3.2. Government

In India, government departments and public sector enterprises have been important employers of disabled people. Whilst government initiated the policy of 3% reservation of jobs for persons with disability in 1977, the reservation was only in the lower ranking jobs (C & D categories). However, with India adopting the Disability Act of 1995, the reservation was extended to higher ranking (A & B) categories. Other measures adopted by Government of India include establishment of National Institutes like the National Institute for Visually Handicapped, Dehradun; National Institute of Orthopedically Handicapped, Calcutta; National Institute of Mentally Handicapped, Hyderabad and National Institute of Hearing Impaired, Mumbai. These are information, documentation and rehabilitation centres.

While considering the employment situation of the persons with disabilities in India, certain major points are noticeable. Firstly, whilst one may find plethora of public programmes to promote the employment of the persons with disabilities, their impact has been quite negligible and mostly confined to urban areas. This is perhaps due to weaknesses in design and implementation.<sup>30</sup>

Government of India, Ministry of Social Justice & Employment, XII Plan (2002-2007) Outlay and Expenditure for the disability sector is Rs.1166.14 crores with an expenditure of Rs. 919.05 crores.<sup>31</sup>

Analysis of the budget 2007-8 of the Ministry of Social Justice and Employment, which is the nodal ministry for disability, shows the following main allocations:

1. The largest budget allocation of over 35% is to a scheme to promote voluntary action supporting NGOs to run institutional disability programs.
2. 28% is allocated for assistive devices for persons with disabilities
3. 16% is for seven national level organizations like National Institute of Hearing handicapped, etc.

### **3.2.1. Funds utilization**

A recent study by TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences) showed that institutions like NHFDC (National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation) that provide financial support for entrepreneurial activities to persons with disabilities could not utilize even half their financial allocation from the government.<sup>32</sup> As noted by CBGA, 'an important precondition for making budget responsive to persons with disability needs is to link commitment to budgetary allocations and supported by robust institutional mechanism for implementation'.<sup>33</sup> Whilst poor utilization of funds is not limited to the social services sector, it does act as an additional barrier to improving Persons with disability employment in India.

### **3.2.2. Special employment exchanges**

There are 43 special employment exchanges as at December 2005 under the Ministry of Labor and Employment with large infrastructure. Besides, there are special cells in regular exchanges. These exchanges only focus on government jobs and are disconnected from the markets, resulting in a poor placement rate.

The number of jobseekers placed in employment was 3,200 from the live register of 109,632.<sup>34</sup> Among the total 661,000 people with disabilities on the live register of all exchanges, 109,929 were registered as

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<sup>30</sup> Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Public Sectors in India – Emerging Issues and Trends, Society for Disability & Rehabilitation Studies, 2008

<sup>31</sup> Annual Report, Ministry of Social Justice & Employment, 2008-9

<sup>32</sup> Not Working! Why livelihood programs for Persons with disabilities do not work in India, Draft, Ipsita Sapra, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 2012

<sup>33</sup> DNIS 2011, Interview Subrat Das, Executive Director, Centre for Budget & Governance Accountability (CBGA) Vol.8, Issue 8, <http://www.dnis.org/interview.php?issue id=8 & volume, id=8&interview id=167>

<sup>34</sup> Employment of disabled people in India, NCPEDP & DEOC, February 2009

part of special exchanges for physically handicapped and 66,612 were registered as part of special cells for physically handicapped of regular exchanges. Only 27% of people with disabilities registered with special exchanges, or the special cells of regular exchanges. Total funding for special exchanges and cells between 1998 and 2003 was just over Rs. 5 crores. Hence, employment exchanges, both special and regular, play a negligible role in promoting employment among disabled people. The cost effectiveness of many special exchanges is also open to question.<sup>35</sup> Whilst there is a national network of special employment exchanges for the persons with disabilities, they have failed to play the desired role in promoting employment. Though there are employment exchanges in State capitals, the link between employment exchanges and establishments in the private sector is weak. Consequently, the job placement ratio is quite abysmal for both special and other exchanges, 0.9 per cent and 0.7 per cent of registered persons with disabilities respectively in 2003, and has roughly halved over the past decade.<sup>36</sup> The downward trend is indicative of shrinking job avenues in the public sector as also general failure of employment exchanges to reach out to the private employers.

**Box 3:**

**Poor Performance of Employment Exchanges in West Bengal**

In West Bengal, 1500 persons with disability (about 0.08% of total no of persons with disability in state) have been employed in government, semi-government and quasi government establishments through employment exchanges since 1998-2011. In 2011, only 29 persons were found jobs.<sup>37</sup>

### 3.2.3. Employment in reserved government posts

Most of the posts are reserved for orthopedically handicapped persons and even these posts do not get filled as the persons with disability are not trained to pass the written tests and interviews. In the case of posts which are reserved for visually impaired and hearing impaired people, most of the posts remain unfilled for many years. One of the major reasons is because the requirements as per the government do not match with the skill set which visually impaired and hearing impaired people have. For example, job descriptions still state the visually impaired should have typewriter skills, despite the fact that typewriting training courses are no longer available. As a result, many state government positions in the District Collectors offices are not filled. An analysis of employment in government posts done by NCPEDP is shown in Box 3.

<sup>35</sup>People with disabilities in India: From Commitments to Outcomes, Human Development unit, South Asia region, The World Bank, May 2007

<sup>36</sup>“Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Public Sectors in India-Emerging Issues and Trends”, a study conducted by Society for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies, New Delhi (India) , 2008

<sup>37</sup> Not Working! Why livelihood programs for Persons with disability do not work in India, Draft, Ipsita Sapra, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, 2012

#### Box 4

##### NCPEDP Analysis of employment in government posts

###### Ministries & Departments

Total number of posts: 2698762

Identified posts for disabled: 281398

Employed persons with disabilities: 9975

% of identified posts filled by disabled people: 3.54%

% of all posts filled by disabled people: 0.37%

###### Public Sector:

Total number of posts: 4527,293

Identified posts for disabled people: 460,396

Employed people with disabilities: 20053

% of identified posts filled by disabled people: 4.46%

% of all posts filled by disabled people: 0.44%

Two main reasons for the low representations of persons with disability in the government jobs and public sector is a) inadequate job identification process b) limited coverage of disability categories. The system of job identification is arbitrary. For example, the World Bank report gives the example of “In Group A, the job of an agricultural scientist specialized in econometric analysis is identified as suitable for an individual who is blind or has an orthopedic disability, but not for someone with a hearing disability”.<sup>38</sup> Only three categories of disability are covered in the 3% reservation, locomotor, visual and hearing with 1% reservation for each. Mental disability is excluded.

- **Backlog Vacancies:** The Eleventh Plan states, “The backlog of vacancies for persons with disability continues to be large, both at the centre and the states. This backlog should be cleared in a time-bound manner and in a campaign mode”.<sup>39</sup> In most government offices however, backlog vacancies remain unfilled, despite special drives. As banks and public sector units go for online recruitment, the situation gets further aggravated, as many persons with disabilities have no access to computers.

Other reasons for poor representation in government jobs are the following:

- **Limited Approach:** Governments approach is in giving incentives to the persons with disability like pensions which prevents them from taking jobs. Many parents prevent their children from moving into city for jobs as they will lose the pension which is a low Rs.500 -1000 a month.

<sup>38</sup>People with disabilities in India: From Commitments to Outcomes, Human Development unit, South Asia region, The World Bank, May 2007.

<sup>39</sup> Planning Commission; Eleventh Five Year Plan(2007-2012)



- **Difficulty in accessing schemes:** There are government departments which deal with giving technology aids like laptops, hearing aids to the persons with disability. Accessing them, however, is difficult. As a result, India which has the largest number of visually impaired and hearing impaired find it difficult to enroll into higher education or professional courses.<sup>40</sup>
- **Representation in Trade Unions:** Article 27© of UNCRPD states, "Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others". To date, disabled employees are not represented in trade unions. As a result of which trade unions have not taken up issues of disabled workers.

By and large, the government schemes are limited in their approach and accessing the schemes is difficult. On one hand, incentives given by government leads to disabled exiting employment; On the other hand, outdated methods of job identification have resulted in large backlog vacancies.

### 3.3. Employers

Companies typically have several concerns and doubts, which prevent them from hiring persons with disability. From our experience with several first time hirers of disabled from our training centres, their concerns are the following:

- What jobs can the disabled do? Can visual impaired use computers?
- Would hearing impaired feel isolated?
- Is it expensive to make work place adjustments?
- Would it affect the existing work flow and processes? Can the disabled cope with work pressures?

While some companies are employing the disabled, the work has still not been mainstreamed. For example, there is only one HR consultancy, Anubhuti HR Consultancy, which concentrates on working with persons with disability with a business model. Anubhuti Mittal remarks that corporates have insufficient knowledge and preconceived notions of what is possible and is not possible. This makes it difficult to entice corporates to look at the disabled as viable employment profiles. As Javed Abidi, Honorary Director, NCPEDP says, "The private sector continues to be a worry. We seem to have hit a roadblock".<sup>41</sup>

- **Employer/Companies mindset on hiring the disabled:** Many companies have a mindset that the disabled will only be suitable for a very narrow set of job roles. They always see their disability and not the existing potential/abilities to perform certain tasks. The situation is compounded by the fact that there are no/limited systematic studies and pilots done which give a proof-of-concept to companies that all of them can become an equal opportunity employer.

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<sup>40</sup> Employment of Persons with Disabilities in Public Sectors in India ,Emerging Issues & Trends-An Evaluation study with special reference to the Persons with disability Act (1995),Commissioned by Planning Commission, GOI, Society for Disability& Rehabilitation Studies (2008)

<sup>41</sup> Discussion with Javed Abidi, Honorary Director, NCPEDP, February 2012

- **HR policy:** Many companies have clear policies of hiring the candidate who is physically fit due to which they reject the disabled youth without any proper reason. Also HR policies do not define clearly their hiring policies in context of different disabilities.

#### Box 5

##### Working with companies to hire disabled

A batch of 15 Persons with disability trained by Youth 4 Jobs Foundation passed written tests and interviews of a leading BPO. One was rejected on the ground that their HR policy was silent on one hand. The youth just could not understand this rejection. It took one month of escalating this issue right to the CEO level to get the youth into the same BPO. Today, he wins several productivity awards for the company.

- **Work place accessibility:** This is a major issue with many companies where their workplace is not accessible for the disabled youth to work. It is either the design of the building, approaching the work place area, using washrooms, etc. In many cases, the deterrents are as small as the companies having steps in the approach to the washroom.
- **Work place adjustments:** Persons with disability youth, especially rural youth, take time to adjust in the new work environment. If the supervisors are not sensitized and do not give time to the disabled youth to adjust in the workplace and be productive, dropouts can result.
- **Investments in technology:** Many companies hesitate to hire visually impaired youth as their budgets do not permit spending on the Jaws software, which helps the blind use computers.
- **Coping with work pressures:** This is a major concern of many companies. Employers feel persons with disability cannot cope with the high targets required by the competitive work environment.
- **Corporate social responsibility:** Many companies hire a few persons with disability or fund some training as a part of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Unless companies hire persons with disability because it makes business or commercial sense, the initiative will not be sustainable.
- **Accessibility audit:** Multinational organizations have of late begun to do accessibility audit of all their buildings. They complain that there is no one information point where they can access information on organizations which specialize in this with their brochure/pricing etc.
- **Worker sensitization:** There are very few organizations which do company sensitization workshops for the CEOs and supervisors. This is a major stumbling block to companies building an inclusive workforce.
- **Government incentives for hiring persons with disability:** An incentive scheme for private sector employers recruiting people with disabilities was launched with much fanfare in 2008 by the then Finance Minister with a claim of creating 100,000 jobs per annum. By this scheme, the central government pays the employers contribution of Provident Fund and ESI contribution for the first three years for each persons with disability employed in a private company with a salary of upto Rs.25,000 per month.<sup>42</sup> But the scheme has been a failure with companies not accessing these

<sup>42</sup> [www.socialjustice.nic.in](http://www.socialjustice.nic.in)

incentives. Many companies are not aware of these incentives and those who are aware feel it will take them effort and time to access government schemes.

Summary: Companies are a major stakeholder in ensuring the disabled get linked to labour markets. Currently, the private sector interventions in this sector are limited. The deterrents range from attitudes towards hiring disabled to apprehensions of having to make high investments for work place adjustments if the disabled are hired. Compounding the problem is the fact that there are few organizations which currently help companies who want to hire disabled in either helping make their infrastructure disabled friendly or holding sensitization workshops.

### 3.4. NGOs/DPOs

Most NGOs focus on rehabilitation and advocacy. There are few organizations which focus on training. Even those which train lack sustainable funding and often proper infrastructure. The training duration is for long periods like one year. Studies show that trainings provided in most NGOs do not match the needs of the industry and they do not have good training faculty, due to lack of resources. Understanding the impact of these NGOs on the field of work and employment is also difficult as no studies or data is available. Some NGOs which work in the area of disability and employment are the following:

- **Ability Foundation:** Based in Chennai, this is a cross disability organization set up to empower the disabled. Today, it conducts job fairs in Chennai and Delhi, where companies are invited to screen and hire the persons with disability. In collaboration with the Chennai based company Cavin Kare, the annual Cavin Kare Ability awards are given to achievers with disabilities who have soared beyond conventional barriers to realize their dreams. It also runs a quarterly magazine, “Success & Ability”.
- **Association of Persons with disability (APD):** APD's vocational and employment section runs an inclusive ITC which is affiliated to and follows the National council of vocational training curriculum. A range of skills from welding to carpentry are taught in the ITCs. Besides, short and long term computer courses are offered in its Information technology centre. Its Horticulture section which trains disabled in a range of horticultural skills and runs a nursery in Bangalore is well known.
- **Blind People's Association (BPA):** Located in Ahmedabad, BPA operates an employment cell for persons with disabilities which provides diverse opportunities for employment and self-employment in the public and private sectors, across disabilities, with a specific focus on generating employment for women with disabilities. It attempts to create opportunities beyond the stereotypical jobs for persons with different disabilities from varied educational background and experience. As part of the program, BPA contacts and builds relationships with public sector companies to encourage them to recruit persons with disabilities as employees. It has also made inroads into government institutions, although persons with disabilities are employed there on contractual basis only. It encourages private and individual donors to employ persons with disabilities instead of making financial donations to BPA.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Realizing UNCRPD: Learning from Inclusive Practices, Unnati Organization for Development Education, July 2011

- **Abled Disabled All People Together (ADAPT, formerly known as the Spastics Society of India):** Based in Mumbai, ADAPT provides persons with disabilities access to employment-related support services (e.g. assessment, referrals, counseling and placement assistance, and a continuum of support in the post-training and post-placement phases). It also provides education and training (e.g. technical or vocational training, vocational guidance programs, and others); and a one-year bridge course for students from special schools to prepare them for vocational training. The course includes functional academics, skills of daily living, exposure to various job skills and recreation activities. Through its National Job Development Centre's Activity Centre and Narika Shakti, ADAPT promotes self-employment, entrepreneurship skills, and income generation for persons with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities.
- **Enable India:** This organization focuses on empowering people with visual impairment. It offers pre-employment services, supplemental education, counseling and support services and consultancy for other institutions. Enable India has different training offerings for persons with disability, companies, partners and institutions working for persons with disability and volunteers. According to Shanti Raghavan, "Our teaching methodology is based on detailed root cause analysis by disability. Giving one on one attention; using multiple intelligence; real time exposure; job simulation; challenging time bound exercises and making candidates responsible are integral parts of our curriculum". Enable India has collaboration with Lake Systems for training visually impaired for the medical transcription industry.
- **National Association of Blind (NAB):** NAB was set up with a vision to make a difference to the lives of the visually impaired in Mumbai and eventually at the national level. Employment related activity ranges from participation in Job melas to providing placements to those who register with them. 64 visually impaired were placed in 2010-11. Computer training centre was supported by Amway foundation. A joint initiative of NAB and Tata Indicom is the Drishti call centre which employs 25 visually impaired youth. A new initiative is information on job availability to visually impaired youth across the country through SMS.
- **NCPEDP (National Centre for Promotion of Employment of Disabled People):** NCPEDP works in the field of policy advocacy to promote employment. It has, in a pioneering manner partnered with industry associations like CII, FICCI, Nasscom, Assocham to include disability in their agenda. The Disabled-friendly corporate logo was designed in 1999 and portrays a partnership between the Indian corporate sector and the disabled citizens of India, in the international colours of disability which are blue and yellow. Another noteworthy intervention is the NCPEDP-Shell Helen Keller Awards which are awarded annually from 1999 for various categories of employers of disabled including individuals who have done inspiring work in the field of employment and disability.

While the country has a large number of NGOs/DPOs working in the field of disability, most concentrate on rehabilitation. Their training is often out of step with the needs of the market and youth typically not employed in the organized sector. However, some NGOs have begun focusing on the important field of skilling and employment or working on employment by organizing job fairs. Efforts like constituting awards and advocacy also help in putting the spotlight on to achievements of the disabled.

## 4. LANDSCAPE OF SKILLING IN INDIA:

The focus on skilling and earmarking of large governmental budgets, whether through departments or the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has resulted in a large number of organizations, both profit and non-profit, entering this area of skilling youth in India.<sup>44</sup> Most of these training organizations do not have training persons with disability as a mandate.

### 4.1. Private Sector training organizations

#### 4.1.1 CSR initiatives

These companies have set up training organizations as part of their CSR to get a sustained supply of trained manpower. In many cases, they have also leveraged grant funds from the central government departments. Their initiatives range from setting up training centres to giving on-the-job trainings.

- **Tata Motors** is implementing a fee based driver training course to address the growing demand for skilled drivers. This 45 day training course aims to train 3.4 million drivers in 10 years.
- **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** runs its own construction skills training institutes across 6 cities with a combined training capacity of 600 students per month. These institutes provide 1-3 months construction skills training in trades such as carpentry, masonry, bar bending, plumbing etc. Trainees are provided accommodation, stipends and placements at L&T's sites. Other construction companies which have smaller number of training centres are Lanco and Ambuja Cements.
- **SIS Security Training Centre** Security and Intelligence services limited has training academies located in six locations in India with a capacity to train 15000 personnel every year. These centres screen youth, give customized trainings in multiple security courses and absorb them in their various locations.

#### 4.1.2 For-profit training organizations

With the skilling mandate of the country clearly defined, several private sector players have moved into the field of skilling. Many of them have accessed soft loans from NSDC and are working towards building a sustainable business model. Venture capital funds are also available for this sector. Some of these for-profit organizations are Futures Human Development group is a part of the diversified Futures group known for its retail outlets like Pantaloon, Brand Factory, and Food Bazaar. It plans to set up 1650 training centres across the country to train 7 million youth in ten years. The plan is to absorb most of this trained manpower in their various businesses like organized retail.

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<sup>44</sup> Meera Shenoy, State of India Livelihoods, Access Development Services, The 4P Report, Chapter 5, Skilling Young India, 2010

- **B-Able:** This company is a 100% subsidiary of Basix, a micro finance & livelihood group. It aims to train one million youth in ten years. The focus is on local employment and rural youth across India. Its trainings range from construction, tourism to food processing.
- **Centum Learning Limited:** NSDC has formed a joint venture with Centum Learning limited, which is a Bharati associate company. It plans to train 10 million youth across the country in ten years. According to Sanjeev Duggal, CEO and Executive Director, Centum Learning, “Being a part of one of the largest conglomerates in the country, we have taken the first big step to leverage India’s demographic dividend and fulfill the ambition of making our country the skill capital of the world. Our track record of building capabilities of millions across diverse sectors and strong industry connect will help deliver best in class learning, provide employment opportunities and develop successful entrepreneurs.”

Many companies are finding it difficult to get sustained supply of trained manpower, especially at the entry level. This has resulted in companies setting up their own training centres, either as part of their CSR or leveraging government funds. National Skills Development Corporation has further given an impetus for private training organizations to be established by giving soft loans or taking an equity stake to help them develop a business model. None of these training organizations, to date, have trained any persons with disability.

## 4.2 Non-Profits in Skill Development

While non-profit agencies have been in the training space for a long time, most of them are in the traditional farm and non-farm sector. With an open economy and rise of the service sector, some of these training agencies have shifted focus to newer opportunities like telecom, automobile sector etc.

Due to their social objective, these organizations focus on the underprivileged youth, mostly in the rural communities. Employability includes a range of activities from mobilization, training, placing and post placement support. Majority of the non-profits do not charge a fees and depend on philanthropic and government grants.

Some examples are:

- **Dr.Reddy's Foundation (DRF):** This is the philanthropic arm of the large pharmaceutical group, Dr.Reddy's Laboratories. Its flagship program is Livelihood Advancement Business School (LABS). The training centres are located both in rural and urban areas, with a focus on the poor. The program leverages both government and company CSR funds. Currently, the model is transiting to trainings with fees paid by youth and employers.
- **Unnati :** Unnati is a 70 day vocational training program offered free of cost to the less educated, unemployed and economically backward youth with an assured job at the end of the training period. Unnati enables inclusive growth by empowering families below poverty line. Soft skills and English is an added component to all trainings. The sectors of training range from guest care, retail sales, car driving to industrial painting.

Large investments are being made in the skilling sector by conventional government departments like Labour & Employment and Rural and Urban Development. This has brought both for profit and nonprofit organizations to enter this skilling sector in a large way. However, skilling the disabled seems to be outside the radar of the policy makers which results in skilling the disabled getting ignored by training organizations. This in turn results in the persons with disabilities remaining unemployed, without requisite market skills.

### 4.3 Public-private partnership Initiatives

#### 4.3.1 National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)

NSDC is a pioneering public-private partnership which facilitates skill training and upgradation of skills. The National Skills Mission has been set up by the Government of India and aims to help the country reap the demographic dividend of becoming the youngest nation by 2020. It provides viability gap funding to build scalable, for-profit vocational training initiatives. Its mandate is also to enable support systems such as quality assurance, information systems and train the trainer academies either directly or through partnerships. NSDC plans to set up Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) which will help identify skill development needs and establish a sector specific Labour Market Information System (LMIS) to assist in the planning and delivery of training. The SSCs will forecast changes in the labour market and will enable the standardization of affiliation and accreditation processes. The difference between the government funding and NSDC is the former is grants while NSDC invests in equity or gives soft loans to training organizations which have a sustainable business model.

#### 4.3.2 Centre for PwD Livelihoods (CPDL)

An innovative market linked model exclusively for the disabled is a partnership between a state Government organization and a private sector foundation.

##### Box 6

##### **Best Practice: PPP model for market linked skilling of persons with disability**

**Youth 4 Jobs Foundation** has tied up with SERP (Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty), Rural Development, government of Andhra Pradesh, to set up the Centre for Persons with disability Livelihoods (CPDL). 2500 disabled youth have been trained in 14 centres set up exclusively for the disabled in one and half years with 70% placements. 90% of the companies are first time employers of the disabled. CPDL offers Persons with disability a basket of options to train and get employed in ranging from the apparel and manufacturing sector to service sectors like retail, e-learning and BPOs.

The model, the first of its kind in the country, leverages the strengths of the government in reaching out to rural, underprivileged disabled youth, and private sector by Youth 4 Jobs which designs strategy, organizes trainings linked to markets, placement and post placement mentoring. This results in scale. Systematic studies are conducted in each sector to do a job analysis and match the abilities of different disabled youth.

**McDonald's Restaurants** – The Company had not hired Persons with disability before. Company officials were sensitized by bringing them to the model training centre and making McDonald staff interact with trained youth who were placed in prestigious malls. McDonald recently gave Youth 4 Jobs Foundation an award for this partnership which both will scale together.

**Gitanjali Gems** - CPDL works closely with Gitanjali to help them take their percentage of disabled workforce to 10% of their total staffing in their SEZ in Hyderabad.

**Tata Business Support Services (TBSS)** - CPDL worked with TBSS to co-create training modules.

**Taj group of hotels & Indian School of Business** (in partnership with Wadhvani Foundation) - Study to map abilities of the Persons with disability with job positions in the hospitality industry.

There are several important lessons to be learnt from this model.<sup>45</sup> For one thing, it is an unusual partnership of government and a group of committed team members with a private sector background. The vision, strategy and the face of the program have been crafted by the private sector team of the Centre whose salaries are paid by a private foundation. The Government pays for the training costs, both at the Centre as well as at companies like Gitanjali Gems. The rent for the Centre office and training facility is raised by the private sector team. In this case, there is no intermediary NGO involvement. The private sector team works independently and innovates as it moves along. Since the government does not pay their salaries, the relationship of the team with their government counterparts is not hierarchical.

Secondly, disabled youth are identified through the established network of SHG groups and the local district offices as well as the SADAREM database. Since most States now have SHG networks, a similar strategy can be pursued in other states as well.

It is a competency-based model in that all placements are made after an assessment is done of the competency of the youth by the recruiting company. No special concessions are made for the disabled (other than work place adjustments which are costly and which can deter profit-making companies). However, as mentioned earlier, companies have realized that there is less attrition and persons with disabilities are able to work hard and be productive.

Any employment based on a welfare approach would not last long. Furthermore, it is important for the self-esteem of disabled youth to know that they had been hired for their competency and not for their disability. Certain elements of this model need to be underlined. Strong private sector linkages are needed in order to convince senior management of the need to make workplace adjustments as also of the viability of offering employment to the disabled.

Summary: PPP initiatives, whether national like NSDC or a state model like CPDL leverage the strength of the government and the private sector. This helps build scale through innovations.

## **5. Good practice examples of PwD employment:**

While the challenges that face Persons with disability to be mainstreamed into the labour market are significant, there are some organizations which provide evidence that these challenges can be overcome.

### **5.1. State Owned Enterprises that employ Persons with Disability**

The Govt. of India has reserved 3% vacancies against identified posts in Group 'C' and Group 'D' for persons with disabilities. The categories of persons with disability benefited by this scheme are the visual impaired, the hearing impaired and the orthopedically impaired on 1% reservation for each category in the Central Govt. services, Public Sector Banks and Govt. Undertakings. The persons with disabilities are

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<sup>45</sup> Draft report, Developing Women's Skills for improving Economic Prospects, Neera Burra for World bank 2011



entitled to relaxation in upper age limit upto 10 years for appointment to clerical and subordinate posts. They are also exempted from payment of application and examination fee prescribed for recruitment of clerical and sub staff cadres in public sector banks and financial institutions.

Persons with disability prefer government jobs as they perceive them to be secure compared to private sector employment.

Recently, a number of state owned enterprises have commenced special drives to recruit Persons with disability employees and have taken leadership in providing employment to persons with disability. These include:

#### **5.1.1. NTPC Limited**

NTPC is the largest Indian state owned energy provider. It addresses the issue of disability through two institutional set ups. One is the Corporate CSR group and the other is the NTPC Foundation the focus is on health, education and employment of persons with disability. NTPC has ensured its physical environment is accessible for disabled employees. Special ramps with railings have been constructed for improved access to buildings. Toilets with proper signages are also being installed. The C.P.W.D. guidelines for accessible buildings have been circulated to all NTPC Projects, and some units have already taken a lead in implementing the guidelines. Today NTPC has 400 persons with disability employees on its rolls. It also has self income generating schemes for disabled which are displayed on its website for which NTPC gives soft loans. Abilities Mela is another initiative supported by NTPC.<sup>46</sup>

#### **5.1.2. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)**

To provide wider employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), Mumbai re-organizes its recruitment and selection processes to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in campus-based recruitment. It also makes special efforts to ensure access at all its test centres during special recruitment drives for persons with disabilities. The work conditions are supportive: BPCL supports persons with disabilities through technological aids, reorganizing the work process, and providing collegial support. In case of new recruitments or transfers, preference is given to persons with disabilities while allotting houses, superseding the existing wait lists. Persons with disabilities have not encountered any forms of discrimination in career advancement and growth. It recognizes that accessible environment is a work in progress within the organization; and that there is a need for wider work on making higher education accessible to persons with disabilities, to facilitate their entry within the skilled workforce.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Poojan Gianchandani, NTPC, Query: Initiatives in Disability Rehabilitation, Solution Exchange for the Work and Employment community, July 2006

<sup>47</sup> Realizing UNCRPD: Learning from Inclusive Practises, Unnati Organization for Development Education, July 2011

### 5.1.3. Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)

BEL is a state owned electronics company with nine factories manufacturing advance electronic products for the Ministry of Defence. Out of a total workforce of 11,180 persons as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011, the particulars of persons with disability categories of employees as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 are:

**Table 1: PWD categories of employees in BEL**

| Category of Employees     | Executives |           | Non-Executives |           | TOTAL |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|-----------|-------|
|                           | Group 'A'  | Group 'B' | Group 'C'      | Group 'D' |       |
| Persons with Disabilities | 79         | 7         | 164            | 18        | 258   |

According to Anil Kumar, Chairman and Managing Director, BEL, persons with disabilities at the Bangalore unit constitute 2.75% of its total workforce. Of these 138, 34 are visually impaired. BEL won recently the national award for "Employment of persons with disability 2011" under the category of "Best Employer".<sup>48</sup>

### 5.1.4. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL):

HAL is Asia's largest aerospace company which manufactures and assembles aircraft, navigation and communication equipment and operating some airports. Out of 33990 employees of the company, 1.93% were persons with disability as on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010

**Table 2: PwD categories of employees in HAL**

| Category of Employees     | Group 'A' | Group 'B' | Group 'C' | Group 'D' | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Persons with Disabilities | 114       | 42        | 499       | 4         | 659   |

The 3% reservation in government jobs has not resulted in large scale employment for persons with disabilities. Some public sector organizations like NTPC, BHEL, and BPCL have taken a lead in recruiting disabled and in some cases, making the work place accessible. However, these efforts need to be strengthened as in no case is the percentage of disabled to the total manpower more than 2%.

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<sup>48</sup> [www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/article/2692534.ece](http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/article/2692534.ece)

## 5.2. Private Sector Enterprises

Despite negative attitudes and perceptions, there are economic and social reasons why employers should welcome people with disabilities into their organizations. The percentage of people with disability in the population is steadily increasing, and it is impractical to continue to ignore this segment of our population. A large number of organizations in developed and developing nations are suffering from severe shortage of manpower and seeking potential employees wherever possible seems to be the way out.<sup>49</sup>

According to a resource guide on disability for employers developed by ILO:<sup>50</sup>

- Persons with disabilities make good dependable employees. Employers with disabled workers consistently report that, as a group, persons with disability perform on par or better than their non-disabled peers on measures such as productivity, safety and attendance.
- Persons with disability are more likely to stay on the job. The costs of job turnover, such as lost productivity and expenses related to recruitment and training, are well known to most employers
- Hiring persons with disability increases workforce morale.
- Persons with disability are an untapped resource of skill and talent. persons with disability have skills that businesses need i.e technical job skills and transferable problem solving skills developed in daily life.
- Persons with disability represent an overlooked multibillion-dollar market segment. The market consists of their families and friends.

Making a case for hiring an inclusive workforce, Sripada Chandrasekhar, Vice president, IBM writes, "In a diverse and talent-constrained society such as India, it helps to penetrate talent pools that are normally not accessed." <sup>51</sup>

It is important to note that specifics of the business advantages of employing persons with disability will vary from company to company and sector to sector. Some companies have taken a proactive role in hiring persons with disability. Few entrepreneurs have built their business model around hiring only disabled. Annexure 3 highlights the business case for hiring persons with disability.

The following are some examples of the business case for hiring persons with disability. As Javed Abidi remarked, "These are isolated islands that show that linking disabled to jobs is doable, not from a charity perspective but looking at the company profits."<sup>52</sup>

<sup>49</sup> [www.iimb.ernet.in/newsletter/issues/131](http://www.iimb.ernet.in/newsletter/issues/131), Employing the disabled-Is HR part of the problem, Prof. Mukta Kulkarni, IIM, Bangalore and Prof. Reimara Valk, Utrecht University, Netherlands, July 2011

<sup>50</sup> Perry Debra A .Employability: A Resource Guide on Disability for Employers in Asia and the Pacific ,ILO, Bangkok, 2007

<sup>51</sup> Mint, Making a case for inclusiveness, Sripada Chandrasekhar, Nov.21,2011

<sup>52</sup> Discussion with Javed Abidi, Honorary Director, NCPEDP, February 2012

**Vindhya e-Infomedia :**

Set up in June 2006 with 2 people, Vindhya e-infomedia today employs 200 people who are mostly based in Bangalore, while a small group is posted at client locations across India. The company employs people with physical disabilities and hearing impairment. The team of nearly 190 disabled people in Vindhya services the company's clients in the banking, microfinance and insurance space. From a pre-dominantly data entry focused portfolio, the Vindhya team now also carries out higher value work consisting of mainly consists of loan processing, human resources processing and claims processing (for insurance companies). The company pays market salaries but the business case comes from the greater commitment and productivity of the staffers, according to Y.L. Pavithra, Managing Director. Unlike high attrition levels of the BPO industry, the company has only 5-8% attrition. The company's unique vision and business strategy have paid off with the business clocking a close to 100% growth year-on-year. Annual revenues are just short of a half a million dollars (USD 500,000). The company recently attracted private equity investment and now plans to open offices in other cities to take its employee base by 5000 by the year 2020.

**Mirakle couriers:**

There are about 8 million deaf adults in India, of which many are exploited in the informal sector employment. Mirakle Couriers is the only privately run for-profit organization in India that employs only hearing-speech impaired people. The company hires 60 young men and women from the underprivileged sections, trains them and puts them on a career path. The company is run like any other – salaries are comparable with the rest of the industry and the workforce is given every right that a blue- or white-collar employee deserves. Mirakle Couriers employs them in a highly competitive and professionally demanding courier business. Says Dhruv Lakhra, "Working with us they gain copious levels of confidence and eventually gain financial independence. The result is that many of them are able to go back home and support their families rather than having to be helplessly dependent on the family".

**Revive Enterprise:**

Revive Enterprise hires only visually impaired, both as frontline and backline staff. Says Karan Thakur, founder of Revive, "When I wanted to start off with this business idea, I can't name a single person who supported the idea or did not scoff at it. Even if these persons are vision impaired, they have immense potential and with the right training, they can be absorbed into the mainstream professional world instead of pushing them to sidelines and treating them as disabled people with no sense of the real world".<sup>53</sup>

**Titan Industries:**

Titan, one of the earliest employers of disabled, had by year 1999, 169 disabled employees out of a blue-collar workforce of 3,235, which amounts to 5.22 per cent. By year 2010 the numbers were over 120 persons with disability which constitute about 4 per cent of Titan's total employee strength. Titan's unique recruitment strategy meant combing the countryside in search of capable candidates aged between 18 and 24. Appropriate selection procedures were adopted, depending on the nature of the disability. The company arranged counseling sessions with the families, to make the transition into the factory smooth.

Those with disabilities were housed with regular employees, which contributed to their integration with the rest of the workforce. Even work areas were made common. Fortnightly meetings sensitized the company about issues concerning the disabled and their families. Supervisors who interfaced with the

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<sup>53</sup> Economic Times, Can and Able, Vinnie Bhadra, 13 April, 2010

hearing impaired were trained in sign language. Today, in the strapping department, it's nearly impossible to distinguish the hearing impaired from the others, as everyone uses sign language. A new initiative of the retail division, Tanishq is to hire persons with disability for its expanding retail outlets for the back operations and frontline customer service staff.

#### **Shakti Masala:**

About 200 physically and mentally challenged persons are working to live honorable living rather than a burden to the society. For this humanitarian activity the Union Govt. has honored the Managing Director, Mr. P C Duraisamy, with the 'Best Employer Award'. Tamil Nadu State Govt. has also recognized this activity with the Best Employer Award on the same day at Chennai.

#### **Pointec Pens:**

The company manufactures pens, gel pens and mechanical pencils. Currently 3% of its workforce is disabled and their target is to increase hiring of persons with disability to 15%. The employees work in various departments ranging from production assembly, production moulding, and data entry to quality lab and accounts. Many of their products lend themselves to assembling and sub-assembling work which can be done at the homes of the persons with disability.

#### **Lemon Tree Hotels:**

Lemon Tree Hotels is a Shell Helen Keller Award Winner 2010 for policies, practices and belief in equal rights and gainful employment for persons with disability. The aspects of both interests and safety of persons with disability are duly considered. The existing staff also undergoes sensitization to promote a healthy work environment. "This is a big alternate talent pool at a time when everybody is vying for the same set of people. Their attrition is in single digits compared with double digits for other employees," says Rahul Pandit, president and COO. After employing them as gardeners, tailors and laundry staff, it's now trying deaf employees as waiters in restaurants in three hotels in Bangalore, Gurgaon and Hyderabad. Lemon Tree now has around 75 deaf people currently among its 2,000-odd employees, and is targeting 10% of its workforce, or 500 employees with disability in the next three years.

#### **Aegis Limited:**

Aegis has a six dimensional Diversity Model which includes initiatives that act as enablers towards enhancing the cause of employment of disabled people: 1) Equal Employment Opportunity Policy in which the service conditions are same for disabled and others. However certain flexibilities are provided for disabled depending on their specific needs. 2) Facilities for Persons with disabilities: This includes provision of facilities that are accessible, convenient and cater to the needs of the disabled. 3) Target based commitments: This year the commitment is 1.5% of their global workforce should be disabled. Says Mehta, "Out of the total disabled employees globally 314 are from India". The company also has a policy of equal pay for all employees including the disabled, partnering with NGOs and state employment exchanges to recruit disabled people and by providing an accessible working environment through provision of auxiliary aids and services for persons with disability with hearing, visual impairment and mental disability.

### IBM India:

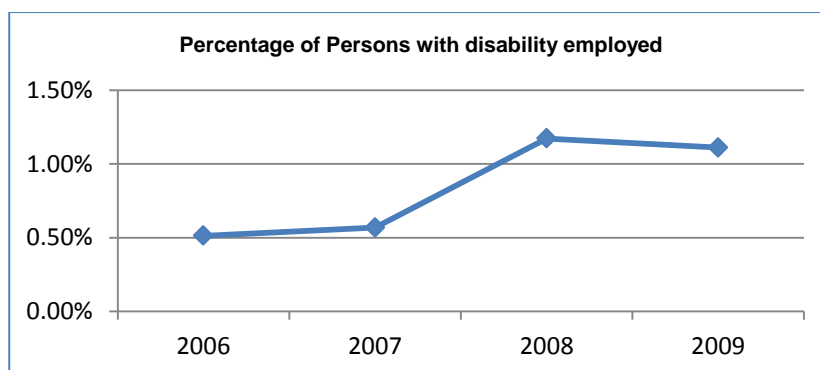
IBM was awarded India's National Award 2009 in the category of "*Technological Innovation*" for best applied research aimed at improving the life of persons with disability - India's highest such award. It recognizes the work of IBM Researchers in creating technology for what IBM calls the "*Spoken Web*." This voice-enabled technology, developed by IBM Research - India, complements the Internet, and enables people with little or no literacy, or those with visual impairment, to access and share information, perform business transactions, and create social networks using mobile or landline phones. IBM's Project Able, in its Global Leadership Forum sets the tone of its philosophy, "We don't hire people who are disabled because it is nice thing to do; we hire them because it is a right thing to do from a business perspective" IBM adopts the best practices adopted by its global offices. IBM recruited its first employee with disability almost a century ago and has a long history of creating an inclusive work environment. The persons with disability have jobs in a number of roles at IBM, including project management, programming, consulting, operations, quality assurance, and human resources. Currently, IBM has 120 persons with disability on its rolls.

### MphasiS:

MphasiS states that it makes not only business sense but also common sense to recruit disabled people because the organization, in turn, benefits from diversity, systems become accessible not only for employees but also for their clients. MphasiS is also the winner of prestigious Shell Helen Keller Award 2008 for the empowerment of persons with disability in the category of best employer. The initiative to ensure persons with disability have access to all opportunities is headed by Ms. Meenu Bhambani, who is herself differently abled.

MphasiS has been consistently releasing the number of persons with disability employed in its annual report further highlighting its commitment towards this cause at the stakeholder level. Currently persons with disability employed at MphasiS are around 350. Persons with disability employed as a percentage of total employees at MphasiS are depicted below.

**Figure 6: Percentage of PwD employed in MphasiS**



### Gitanjali Gems:

Gitanjali Gems (GGL) is an India based integrated diamond and jewelry manufacturer and retailer established in 1966. The company's activities are spread across the entire value chain from sourcing and processing rough diamonds to manufacturing, branding and retailing gold and diamond jewelry.

The Saksham initiative of Gitanjali Group is focused on empowerment of People with Disabilities through training and employment. The goal of the project is to create conditions for their rehabilitation and integration into society. Out of 1650 strong work force Gitanjali currently employs nearly 270 are persons with disability and planning to employ more than 1,000 additional disabled workers in the next three years.



In 2009, the Government of India awarded Gitanjali Gems with the “Best Employer” award for its efforts to empower persons with disability, particularly for the company’s efforts at its unit in Rajiv Gems Park, Hyderabad, India. Gitanjali sources its disabled manpower needs from the PPP, Centre for persons with disability Livelihoods, Andhra Pradesh which also part funds the cost of training the disabled youth.

#### **Box 7:**

##### **Hiring Hearing Impaired**

Shaan Ahmed, 23, and Preeti Bhot, 21, the two baristas on the morning shift of Costa Coffee, cheerfully take customer orders, make coffee, serve tables and everything else that comes with the job - all without a single word uttered between them. Both are deaf and the outlet is among the few ones in the Costa network where the entire team has been staffed with deaf workers (except for the shift manager and his assistant). "When I came in I was afraid and shy of facing customers," says Ahmed, in sign language interpreted by his manager Debasis Das. "Now I am fine." The eldest child born to the family of a hardware goods distributor in Aligarh, Ahmed is fortunate to have found a means of living and a job he loves. As India Inc discovers that deaf workers can, despite their disability, bring in unique skills and contribute meaningfully to jobs, youngsters like Ahmed not only have careers, they are actually in demand. From shop floor workers to computer hardware and networking engineers and in-store promoters in retail stores to security staff in 5-star hotels, the deaf have been finding employment with companies like Titan, IBM, Mphasis, Café Coffee Day, and the Taj Group of Hotels.

"Our experience has been that their other senses are very sharp. 90% of them have high commitment and surprisingly high energy levels. They are more loyal, genuine and want to do well in life," says Virendra Singh, director HR at RJ Corp, which represents KFC, Pizza Hut and Costa Coffee in India. Starting three years ago in Kolkata, the group now employs around 450 deaf people in KFC and Costa Coffee.

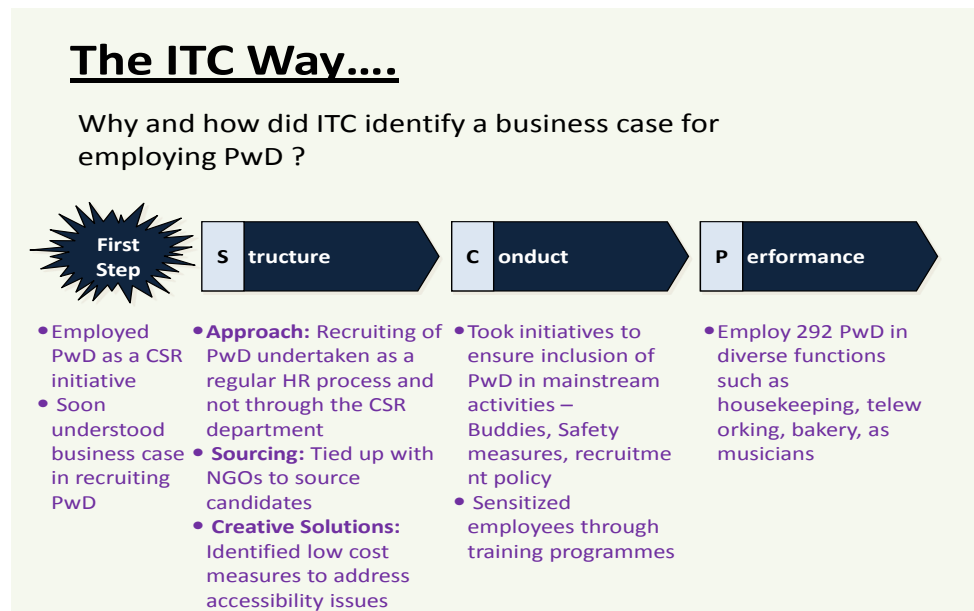
Source: Hearing impaired increasingly becoming employees of choice for a host of companies, *Economic Times*, Vikas Sundar 20 May, 2011.

#### **Microsign Products:**

Microsign Products, Bhavnagar, Gujarat represents a voluntary initiative of employing persons with disabilities in the private sector, with nearly eighty per cent of the workforce comprising of persons with disabilities. The result of an individual’s enterprise, Microsign have chosen to focus on the abilities of its employees: employing persons with hearing impairments and orthopedically handicapped. In doing so, it creates opportunities for employment of persons with disabilities who are unskilled or low skilled, and those who have been rejected by their families and communities. Microsign provide family-like support to meet the social security needs of the employees. (UNCRPD 2011)

## ITC Hotels:

Figure 7: Why & how did ITC identify a business case for employing PwD



At ITC Hotels, differently-abled people are engaged in core functions like finance, HR, housekeeping, reservations and concierge services. The company has 292 differently-abled employees across all its hotels. ITC Maurya, for example, has the largest number of disabled in any luxury hotel. Out of the total 1079 employees, 22 are disabled with the nature of disability varying from hearing impairment to cerebral palsy, dyslexia, dwarfism and locomotor disability.

Says Nirranjan Khatri, Head Sustainability, "The success in ITC's efforts lie in the fact that its HR policy links the Managers key performance indicators to the number of disabled they hire". All new ITC hotels are disabled friendly. Besides, the company has brought out several manuals for having an inclusive workforce.

Summary: The work and inclusive focus of these firms are commendable. Their case studies and the forces behind this initiative need to be understood and documented. But eventually limited number of firms cannot provide enough employment to cause a meaningful change at the ground level situation of persons with disability. Even among the leading firms, typical employment of persons with disability only reaches 1-2% of their workforce which is typically hundreds of jobs per firm. The job creation at present rate is a drop in an ocean when compared to millions of unemployed persons with disability.



### 5.3. Industry associations

#### **National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM):**

In 2009, NASSCOM Foundation came up with the Accessibility Initiative. The Accessibility Initiative based itself on the rights approach to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the IT-ITeS sector by reaching out not only to the Talent Acquisition Team, but also to the common worker who was as integral part of making inclusion work. Sensitization workshops were held in Delhi, Chennai and Mumbai and that elicited participation from companies like Wipro, IBM Daksh, Genpact, Aegis to name a few. NASSCOM Foundation has conducted a number of diversity awareness workshops for NASSCOM member companies. Since the initiative began, 190 persons with disabilities have been employed by ten IT service companies. In 2010, NASSCOM Foundation published a handbook, *Inclusivity at the Workplace – Five Principles that Enable and Empower persons with disability*.

NASSCOM Foundation collaborated with the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre (VRC) in Chennai to provide HR counseling to jobseekers with disabilities. Given the growing need for skilled and qualified persons with disabilities in the IT industry, the Foundation decided to conduct its first job fair as part of World Disability Day 2010 celebrations in Delhi, in collaboration with Sarthak, an educational institute for training people with disabilities and Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for the Handicapped operated by the Government. The job fair brought together some 450 disabled jobseekers with IT employers like Aegis, Designmate, Disability India Network e-Vindhya, Genpact, Synopsys, Wipro Infrastructure, IBM, IBM Daksh, Mphasis, NetAmbit, Netmagic Solutions, NewGen and Team Computers. To facilitate the IT industry in sourcing qualified employees with disabilities, the Foundation started a specific training and mentoring project in 2011.<sup>54</sup>

#### **Confederation of Indian Industry:**

In 2006, CII developed a ‘Corporate code of disability’ for voluntary adoption by companies in order to develop a disability policy. CII adopted disability as part of their social agenda in 1998. In Bangalore and Delhi, core groups have been appointed which keep the agenda of disability alive in the corporate sector. Other initiatives are job fairs, producing an awareness films and bringing out a comprehensive manual for educating employers on disability employment. There is no information on the number of employers who have adopted the corporate code of disability. CII has also failed to integrate disability agenda within its members, whether in business or CSR/Affirmative action/skill development programs. CII has not earmarked any budget for disability.<sup>55</sup>

**Summary:** It is clear that industry associations can do far more to promote disability and employment, considering their reach and wide membership. For example certain chapters of CII which have appointed core groups for disability like Bangalore have managed to make a positive impact on industry by bringing out publications and holding workshops. Likewise, since IT and ITES are sectors which can employ large number of educated disabled youth, a more proactive role by Nasscom with a clear target based approach would help in furthering the cause of disability and employment.

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<sup>54</sup>Contributed by Dr.Arпита Sutradhar, Manager Accessibility Initiative & Business Responsibility,Nasscom Foundation, 2011

<sup>55</sup> Employment of disabled people in India, NCPEDP &Diversity and Equal Opportunity Centre(DEOC),February 2009

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The recommendations made here are a result of the consultations undertaken for this study and the author's experience in the sector.

Companies want to be "inclusive" which means hiring more persons with disability. As Ajay Maken, Minister of State, Youth and Sports remarked, "When we hire, we look for loyalty, honesty and ability. The disabled score best in these three characteristics – they are loyal employees, honest to themselves and others and are focused on the ability they possess."

The reasons for hiring disabled are increasingly are economic – less attrition, higher productivity, company loyalty and a learning atmosphere with a heterogeneous workforce. Larger companies like Shell, Aegis computers, Lemon tree hotel, Titan admit it makes business sense. But many companies point out they do not know how and where to access trained disabled youth. As A.Gopinath, Vice President of HDFC Bank said, "We are a progressive organization; but we do not know about this talent pool and where to look for this manpower." Industry concerns are what kind of jobs can the disabled do? Is it expensive to hire them? Can the hearing impaired or visually impaired work as a team?

India has a population of 70 million disabled (WHO figures) although barely one million are employed. It makes logical sense to facilitate linking these two worlds of companies and disabled together. The timing is right since India is currently facing skill shortages and working towards reframing the Disability Act and the CSR policy. Both these pieces of legislation will impact the disability sector in a positive manner. Also, fund allocations and demand for market linked vocational skilling is increasing and this provides enhanced scope for skilling the disabled to the needs of the market.

### **Recommendation 1: Develop an Employment Portal for Persons with Disability**

IT architecture is proposed which will, in phases, become a one-stop shop for disability and employment. A Skillpedia is being developed by NSDC and CII which is an open source internet portal for skilling for youth. The same platform can be used with a separate icon for disability

#### Phase I: Knowledge repository

Phase I envisages building a knowledge repository which is crucial to create a conducive eco-sphere for persons with disability to get mainstreamed into the workforce. This includes bringing the main stakeholders onto one platform like government, market linked vocational training centres, specialists in different disability training, companies which are currently hiring and DPOs. In the 13<sup>th</sup> NCPEDP-Shell Hellen Keller award ceremony, Sushanta Sen, Principal Advisor, Confederation of Indian Industry, said that there was a need for a common platform for all working groups of disabled and a need to sensitize industry, to facilitate companies and trained persons with disability linkage.

### Possible sections of the portal for Phase I:

The following information could be displayed and or linked to:

- a) Funding schemes for trainings of persons with disability from department of social justice; National Trust schemes; funding schemes from various other government departments like Labour, Rural Development; Tribal development for vocational skilling; NSDC loan/equity skilling schemes etc. Other important information would be the entitlements from Department of Social Justice for companies which hire persons with disability like the ESI contributions for three years. This fund is currently unutilized, despite government inserting large advertisements in newspapers with details of the scheme. Information on ways of accessing the fund could also be included.
- b) Bulletin board: Employers will use this to post their intention to recruit. A list of NGOs whom they might contact for potential employees will be made available.
- c) Backlog vacancies of the government and public sector jobs. Currently only 0.44% of all government and public sector positions have been filled by disabled versus the 3% reservation. These organizations can be encouraged to display their backlog vacancies on this site for NGOs and training organizations to respond.
- d) Training organizations which focus on the persons with disability with details like kind of trainings offered; nature of disability, visual, hearing impaired, locomotor etc; whether trainings are residential –non-residential; track record of placement; certification if any. State-wise information would be displayed.
- e) Listing open courseware material available for different disabilities including courses in Universities like IGNOU.
- f) Funders which focus on persons with disability employment: national/international with details.
- g) Studies: Employment potential of sectors and states has been mapped by industry associations like CII and recently NSDC. These Skilling Sector reports will be made available. While these are not specific to the persons with disability, the information is useful for organizations working in skilling the disabled to understand market needs. Nasscom has done disability specific studies for the information technology sector which are useful, as this is a sector which is suited for persons with disability employment. Youth4Jobs Foundation has done a mapping of the hospitality industry with the Indian School of Business and the Wadhvani Foundation(See Annexure 2).
- h) Manuals developed by companies/organizations like ITC which help in overall mainstreaming of the persons with disability in society, which have an indirect bearing on employment. For example, ITC Limited Hotels Division has recently brought out a guide for creating accessible building infrastructure for persons with disability.
- i) Associations of persons with disability/institutions which focus on persons with disability employment: NCPEDP, Youth4Jobs Foundation.
- j) Organizations which manufacture various aids and appliances like Bhagavtulu Jain charitable trust which distributes calipers and the Jaipur foot etc.

- k) Technology which is open source. Many technologies for the visually impaired are available now in open source, but the persons with disability or their trainers and employers are not aware of them. Sites where this software can be downloaded can be listed in this platform.
- l) ILO material: ILO manuals; training materials can be made available. Companies will also learn, for example, how the ILO Code of Practice for Managing Disability in the Workplace can serve as a guide in their disability inclusion policies and efforts. This will help ILO publications get disseminated to a much larger audience. Knowledge dissemination can also take place through webinars; web chats and workshops.
- m) Feasibility study for linking the IT platform to e-payment: To make the system of government schemes for persons with disability transparent, all payments can be made using this IT architecture. For example, currently the Department of Social Justice has earmarked Rs.500 crores for ESI entitlements to companies who hire disabled. Most of the money is unspent. When companies were asked why they do not apply for this entitlement, their replies were a) we feel the system is not transparent b) if government gives us something, we also feel they may ask us to take on rolls certain youth who do not fulfill our criteria, under recommendation. An e-payment system will help in better utilization of government funds. Hence the feasibility of linking the IT platform to e-payments can be explored in the first Phase.

#### Phase II: Employment exchange

With stakeholders on board, the same architecture can now be leveraged to act as an employment exchange. For convergence, this data can be linked to the proposed Labour Market Information systems of the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

Information to be listed would include the following:

- a) Persons with disability who want to enlist in trainings/be interviewed for jobs can register directly. Persons with disability associations can also register their all-India youth data base. This platform should be connected to the government employment exchanges which exist in every state. All rural and tribal persons with disability youth register here with the hope of a government job. These exchanges have infrastructure and officers, but work currently in an extremely out-dated manner. The data is hardly updated and employment is still defined as a “government” job only!
- b) Training centres can use this data to enlist youth in their training centres, depending on their sectoral focus.
- c) Companies which are keen to hire persons with disability will register their requirement and do web interviews with the untrained/trained youth, depending on their requirements. Companies which do e-recruitment can enable disabled youth to apply online, give job alerts and facilitate taking online tests.
- d) Vacancies in government offices and public sector organizations, especially those reserved for persons with disability, can be listed.

#### Recommendation 2: Develop a Compendium of Best Practices

Employers and Employers' organizations need to increase their capacity to address their member needs related to diversity, corporate social responsibility, legal adherence and human resources. This can be done by understanding best practices in existing organizations like IBM, MphasiS, and Titan etc. Existing challenges on hiring an inclusive workforce and how the company overcame the challenges; what they did right and wrong; HR policy and some profiles of working persons with disability should be captured in each company profile. Focus should be given to companies which hire visually impaired and rural underprivileged youth. In an eco-sphere where most training do not lead to jobs, best practices of market-linked vocational training organizations which train and link persons with disability to organized sector jobs like Youth4Jobs, should be captured.

#### Recommendation 3: Implement a social marketing campaign

With the knowledge repository of the web portal and the compendium of best practices, ILO can plan a social marketing campaign to sensitize the eco-sphere. Partners for this could be consumer companies like Coca cola or Hindustan Unilever which have budgets for cause marketing or multinational IT companies. An advertising agency which specializes in social marketing can help in design.

#### Recommendation 4: Use the web portal to leverage the ILO Global Business and Disability Network

Creating this IT architecture would support a key initiative of ILO which is the creation of a Global Business and Disability Network. This is an initiative of ILO's Bureau for Employers' Activities and Skills & Employability Department. It emerged from the needs expressed by multinational companies and ILO employer organizations to learn how to more effectively address inclusion of disability in the work place. It is within the ILO Public-Private partnership framework. The Network has four goals: knowledge sharing and the identification of good practices among members, development of joint projects and services, strengthening of national employers' organizations to reach small and medium sized enterprises, and linkage to national ILO projects and activities. Initial Network activities include the publication of Disability in the Workplace: Company Practices - a compilation of 25 company profiles, which describes how companies address hiring and retention, products and services, and CSR from the perspective of disability; creation of a playlist on the ILO-TV of corporate disability and work; and three inaugural planning meetings. Lessons from this network and linkages between the two platforms can be forged. The suggested linkage between the India and the global network will result in increased enrolment of members in all categories from India, for ILO's Global Business and Disability Network

#### Recommendation 5: Giving technical aid to training centres for persons with disability

NSDC and different government departments can be encouraged to have a separate window of funding to set up model training centres which focus on market linked trainings for the persons with disability,. ILO can give technical expertise to these centres to ensure the global best practices are adopted here, both in

terms of infrastructure, methodology of training and building company networks. These training centres, could be located in the main metros, to set standards for the sector. Focus should be on girls and rural underprivileged persons with disability youth who are isolated from markets. Sharing of best practices and innovations can take place between these model centres with others set up in South Asia periodically, resulting in seamless knowledge transfer. The same model centres can be training hubs to build capacities of NGOs/organizations involved in persons with disability training, thus resulting in scale.

#### Recommendation 6: Establish an Innovation Fund

ILO should approach major donors like World Bank, DFID, and Ford Foundation etc to announce an Innovation fund like the World Bank Development Market place, which will help ground out-of-box solutions for this space.

#### Recommendation 7: Advocacy and Policy change

ILO should lobby for inclusion of disabled as one of the target groups in the Skilling Mission, with at least 5% of the Skilling fund earmarked for youth skilling in various departments to be earmarked for persons with disability youth. India is expected to be the youngest country by 2020. To cash in on this demographic dividend, the Planning Commission has set up a dedicated Mission whose goal is, in five years, to have a 500 million trained and skilled workforce, sufficient to meet the domestic requirements of a rapidly growing economy, with surpluses to cater to skill deficits in other ageing economies. A policy decision on earmarking at least 5% of this budget for persons with disability will ensure youth get employable skills. This will, in turn, bring socio-economic transformation in their families and the disability landscape in general.

Besides lobbying for earmarking a separate budget for skilling persons with disability, the focus should be on influencing policy makers to ratify ILO Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention No.159

#### Recommendation 8: Inclusion of Persons with disability in trade unions

Workshops should be organized to sensitize trade unions on the necessity of including persons with disability as members to increase awareness of the rights of the Persons with disability, encourage hiring and their special needs are met at the workplace.

## 6.1 Activities

**Table 3: Activity Schedule for recommendations**

|            | ACTIVITIES  | Year 1 |    |    |    | Year 2 |    |    |    |
|------------|---|--------|----|----|----|--------|----|----|----|
|            |   | Q1     | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1     | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |
| <b>I</b>   | <b>Develop a Persons with Disability Employment portal</b>  |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 1          | Deliberations with industry associations and industrial groups like Tata's, CII   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 2          | Round table meetings with state Government Officers, NGOs and Employment exchanges in 6-8 states with progressive disability policy |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 3          | Meeting with concerned Departments like:<br>Department of social justice and empowerment<br>Department of labour and employment     |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 4          | Exploring possibilities of converging with NSDC's Skillpedia  |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 5          | Launching portal with stakeholders  |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
|            |   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| <b>II</b>  | <b>Develop a compendium of Best Practices</b>   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 1          | Identify a consultant   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 2          | Map the best practices of organizations in public and private sector  |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 3          | Develop a case study template and documentation   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 4          | Bring out the booklet on best practices   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
|            |   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| <b>III</b> | <b>Implement a social marketing campaign:</b>   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 1          | Meet corporates with CSR budget/have social marketing campaign  |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 2          | Identify an advertising agency  |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 3          | Develop key messages for persons with disability employment with advertising agency   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
|            |   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| <b>IV</b>  | <b>Link web portal to ILO Global Business and Disability Network</b>  |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
|            |   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| <b>V</b>   | <b>Give technical assistance to market linked training centers</b>  |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 1          | Meeting with National Skill Development Council (NSDC) to encourage opening a separate window of funding for disability             |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 2          | Facilitate bringing ILOs best practices in training methodology, curriculum etc.  |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
| 3          | Facilitate bringing best practices in training NGOs in Market Linked Skilling of disabled   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |
|            |   |        |    |    |    |        |    |    |    |

|      |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|------|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| VI   | Establish an Innovation fund:   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1    | Dialogue with World Bank, DFID, ADB, IFC to set-up an innovation fund                                       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2    | Setup a committee to discuss the modalities of the fund   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| VII  | Advocacy and policy change  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1    | Meet National Skilling Mission members for earmarking 5% budget for skilling the disabled                   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2    | Meet NAC, Secretary Labour and Employment, National Advisory Council for India to ratify ILO convention 159 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|      |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| VIII | Inclusion of Persons with Disability in Trade Unions  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## 7. CONCLUSIONS:

Decent work is the ILO's primary goal for everyone, including people with disabilities. Putting decent work into practice means promoting employment opportunities for persons with disabilities based on the principles of equal opportunity, equal treatment, and mainstreaming and community involvement. The ILO works to achieve its goals of decent work for all through promoting labour standards, advocacy, knowledge building and technical cooperation services.

**Disabled population is large in India and cannot be ignored:** Though the estimates of India's disability population vary, disability advocacy groups put the figure at 70 million. This is the population of a state in Europe. Barely 1% is in organized employment. Persons with disabilities often face disproportionate poverty and unemployment. An estimated 75% per cent of all people with disabilities live in rural areas of developing countries and have limited or no access to services they need. Thus, the ILO vision of providing decent work for people with disabilities makes social as well as economic sense.

**There are challenges to link the disabled to labour markets:** The main stakeholders in this field are the government, companies, NGOs and the disabled community. There are challenges at different levels. For example, in the world of work, persons with disabilities tend to experience high unemployment and underemployment and segregated from the mainstream labour market. This affects their self confidence. Rural disabled are cut off from markets, have no knowledge of English and computers which is important for employability. Government's reservation policy of 3% reservation in government and public sector jobs does not translate to a reality because the disabled cannot pass the online recruitment tests and the method of job identification is faulty. As a result, no public sector organization has persons with disability more than 1-1.5% of their workforce. While multinational companies are focusing on building an inclusive workforce, most Indian companies' knowledge of disability is negligible. This results in skepticism of whether disabled can be a productive workforce, or whether high expenditure has to be made in work place adaptation for the disabled.



**Some companies which hire disabled highlight the Business Case:** Companies which hire persons with disabilities or set up enterprises with a disabled workforce, however, admit it makes business sense. Attrition levels are low and productivity is high. Company experience shows that when they find jobs suited to their skills, abilities and interests, they can make significant contributions in the workplace. The company's brand also gets built with an inclusive workforce. Examples range from Miracle courier to Titan watches.

**There Is an opportunity to Skill the disabled for industry needs:** Vocational skilling based on the needs of the industry helps link persons with disability to labour markets. To reap its demographic dividend, India has set up an ambitious task of skilling 500 million youth in five years with a dedicated budget. A National Skill Mission has been set up with the Prime Minister leading the agenda. National Skill Development Corporation and three key government departments are focusing on skilling youth. But there is no mention of skilling the disabled in any of their plans.

Taking into account the above eco-sphere, ILO should concentrate on the following to impact key stakeholders and facilitate linking persons with disability to decent employment.

**An employment portal should be set up:** This would serve as a knowledge repository with studies, manuals and ILO publications. It would help bring different Associations of disability, technology providers and other stakeholders involved in linking persons with disability to labour markets, under one umbrella..A bulletin board would be set up where companies post their job requirements and link with NGOs and training centres which focus on persons with disability. For transparency, the possibility of using the same platform to facilitate payment of government schemes the e-way will be studied.

**Current Best practices should be mapped:** Few companies are hiring disabled because it makes business sense. Likewise some entrepreneurs are building their business model around hiring only disabled. These best practices need to be mapped to inspire others and help them perceive the persons with disability as a valuable alternative labour force.

**A social marketing campaign to be planned:** This will help build a positive eco-sphere for the public including important stakeholders to come on board to mainstream persons with disability

**The ILO Global Business and Disability network must be leveraged:** ILOs global network arose from a need expressed by multinational companies and ILO employer organizations to learn how to effectively address disability inclusion in the workplace. Linking the India platform to ILO's Global Business and Disability Network would result in increased Indian participation and seamless sharing of best practices.

**Giving technical aid to training centres for persons with disability:** NSDC and other government departments should be encouraged to have a separate window of funding for the disabled. The ILO can give technical expertise to some to emerge as model training centres, by facilitating adoption of global best practises in market linked trainings of persons with disability

**An Innovation Fund can be established:** This will help out-of-box innovative solutions to emerge in this field of disability and employment

**Advocacy effort should be on earmarking 5% of budget for skilling the disabled:** This should be combined with lobbying for India to ratify ILO convention No. 159 which sets out a clear policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons in the open labour market. Both these policy decisions will help increase employability of the disabled, especially the more vulnerable ones like the rural poor.

**Workshops for inclusion of persons with disability in trade unions:** This will raise awareness of the rights of the persons with disability and also facilitate hiring and ensuring their special needs are met at the work place.

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## **9. ANNEXURES:**

### **9.1 Annexure 1**

This report incorporates discussions with the following:

1. K.M. Acharya, IAS, Secretary of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
2. Mrs. Chaya Ratan, IAS, Special Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh
3. B.Rajsekhar, IAS, CEO, Society for Elimination of Rural poverty
4. M.V.Subbiah, Chairman, NSDC
5. Dilip Chenoy, CEO, NSDC
6. Debra Perry, Senior Specialist in Disability Inclusion, ILO, Geneva
7. Paul Comyn, Senior Vocational Training & Skill development Specialist, ILO, New Delhi
8. Coen Kompier, Senior Specialist ILO Labour Standards, New Delhi
9. Nalin Jena, Senior education specialist, World bank
10. Prema Gera, Head, Poverty Unit, UNDP
11. Javed Abidi, Honorary Director, National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP)
12. Anubhuti Mittal, Anubhuti HR Consultancy
13. Niranjana Khatri, ITC Hotels
14. Ipsita Sapra, Ph.D. Scholar of Tata Institute of Social Sciences
15. HR officers of various companies like McDonalds ,KFC, Cafe Coffee day, Tanishq, Inorbit mall; Gitanjali Gems ,Aegis, HDFC Bank

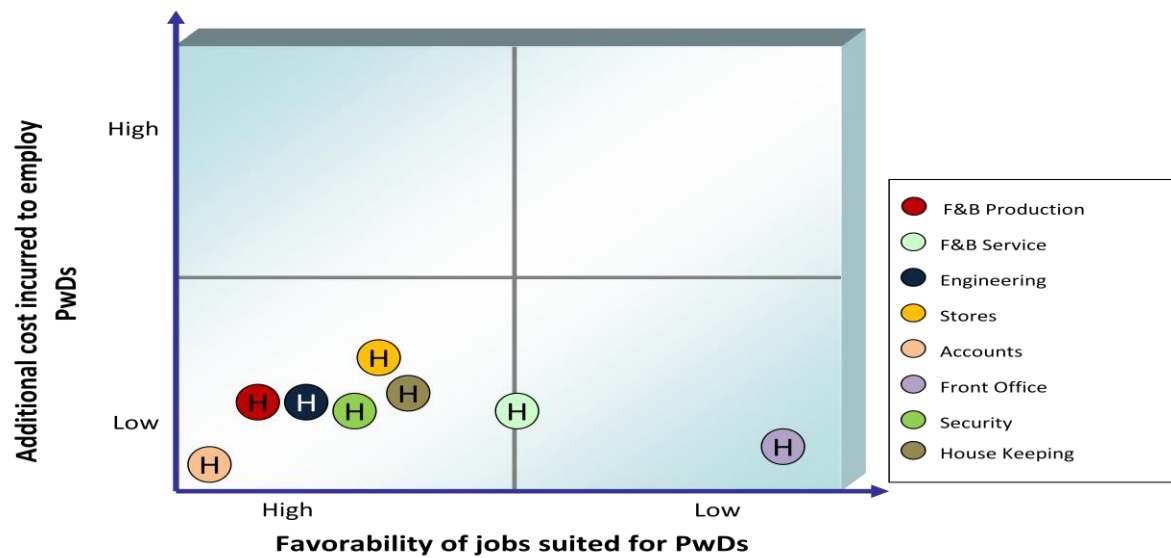
## 9.2 Annexure 2

### Job Opportunities for Persons with disability in the Hospitality Sector

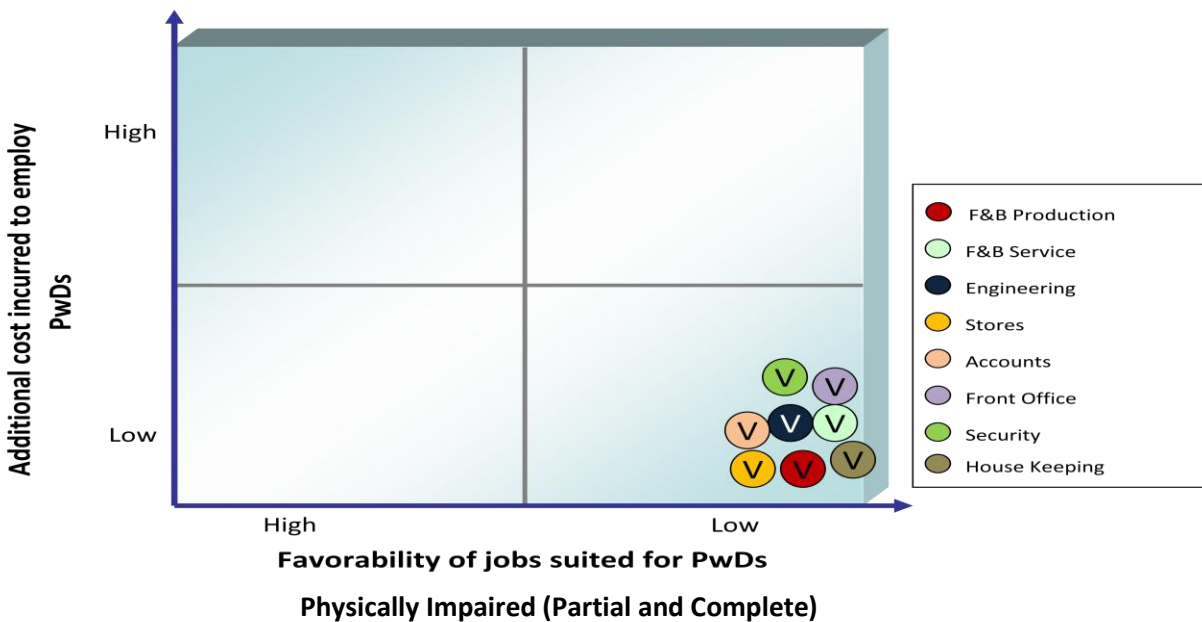
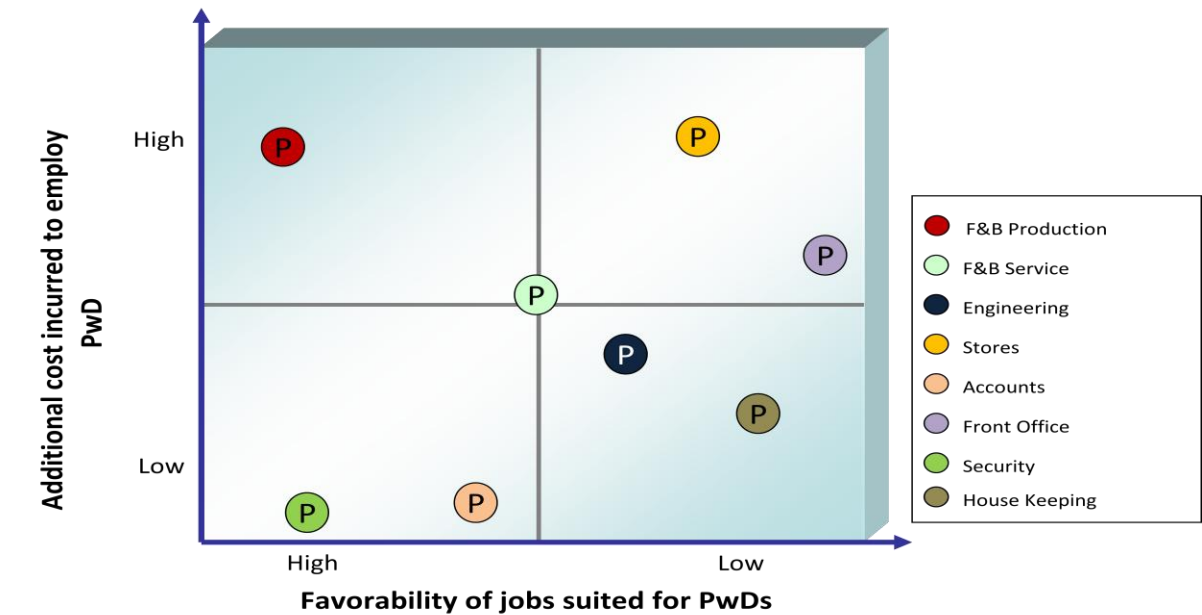
#### Snapshot of Employability

Department-wise ease of employability of PwD

Department-wise cost and favorability of employing PwD



Hearing Impaired (Partial and Complete)



**Visually Impaired (Partial and Complete)**

**NOTE:**

- 1) Costs include cost of revamping existing infrastructure or purchase of new equipment such as electronic wheel chairs, hearing aids, safety equipments, software such as Jaws etc.
- 2) Favorability of jobs is a function of ease with which a PwD can fit into a job role and the number of employees the department hires.

Source: Market Linked employment of Persons with Disabilities; Report by Indian School of Business; November 2010

## 9.3 Annexure 3

### Business Case for employing persons with disability<sup>56</sup>

For employment of persons with disability to become a norm in companies, hiring has to be done not out of sympathy or empathy, but because it makes business sense.

Employing persons with disability might provide multi-dimensional benefit to an employer as analyzed below:

#### Human capital:

- Employers can expand existing talent pool by gaining access to skilled and valued workforce
- Lower attrition rate among disabled employees result in lower training and hiring costs

#### Return on Investment

- Companies can leverage benefits extended by the government for employing persons with disability
- Improves productivity of employees since employees will understand that they will be judged on the quality of work and output produced by them.
- Increased retention of employees result in lower costs of training and hiring. Certain disabilities can also act as a natural competence. E.g. hearing impaired in a noisy environment.

#### Diversity

- Enhance workforce diversity
- Improves employee morale by appearing as an equal opportunity employer

#### Innovation

- Technology can be used to increase productivity. E.g. use of Jaws software by many IT firms has allowed the companies to successfully employ visually impaired persons with disability.
- Stimulate new product and service development through disability-inclusive diverse teams

Figure 8: Business Case for employing persons with disability



<sup>56</sup> Ferry, Korn. International Toolkit on Retaining Diverse Talent :Lessons from the field.2008

**Social Responsibility**

- Increased customer loyalty and brand trust
- Demonstrate social responsibility by connecting with a significant market segment
- Brings the company in good light if the company is interested in being listed by the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

**Marketing**

- Given the popularity of CSR initiatives, a large majority of people prefer to do business with companies which give back to society. Hence hiring people with disabilities can often strengthen their brand in this respect.