

# Persons with Disabilities and Labour Market in India

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**Abstract:** *There is evolution in the models of disability over the years. Various models of disabilities include religious model, charity model, medical model, social model and human rights models which changed the traditional concepts of disability. This article studies about Persons with Disabilities (1) and whether they are represented adequately in the Labour market of India. The most challenging factors in the employment of persons with disabilities is held to be discrimination, poverty, accessibility issues and attitudes of Employers and fellow employees. In spite of the efforts of ILO<sup>2</sup>, UNCRPD<sup>3</sup> strong anti-discriminatory laws, Disability legislations of India<sup>4</sup> and many Government schemes and policies, persons with disabilities are not adequately represented in the labor market of India. The issue of low employment rate of persons with Disabilities in the labour market hinder their full participation in the society. The importance of inclusion of persons with disabilities and treating them with equality and dignity is accepted worldwide. This article examines the reasons like poverty, lack of education, training, gender inequality, accessibility issues and Employer attitudes play roles in poor representation of PWD in job market in India and how it can be resolved. (4)*

## 1. Introduction

Persons with Disabilities make up an estimated 15% of the world's population (5). According to the Planning Commission report (6), 5% of Indian population includes Persons with disabilities. They experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes than persons without disabilities, such as less education, poorer health outcomes, lower levels of employment and higher poverty rates (7). Further, women with disabilities are the most marginalized and often subjected to abuses. There were International and National level efforts for the inclusion (8) of Persons with disabilities in all areas of life including employment. International Labour Organization Convention C-159 (8) concerned with vocational rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities. The year 1981 was declared by the UN General Assembly as the International Year of Disabled Persons with the theme of 'Full Participation and Equality'. In the year 2006, UNCRPD came in to existence. As per the 2011 WHO report, Poverty is one of the reasons of lower labour market participation amongst PWDs globally. Person with disabilities are not represented in the job market of India in spite of many disability legislations. Poverty, lack of adequate training, education and lack of accessibility are few of the main reasons for this. Further, Issues like accessibility in public transport, lack of barrier free environment in working places lead to poor representation of PWD in the labour market despite formal education, vocational and technical expertise's. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016 reserved 5% jobs (9) for PWD in the government sector which ensures equality and there is provision of incentives to Employers in the private sector (10) too. Training and skill development of PWD's need to be market linked.

In addition to above all Persons with Disabilities face attitudinal, physical and informational barriers which hinder opportunities in labor market. Many cases Employers do have sympathetic attitude towards employees with disabilities in their factory/organizations but there are specific attitudes which act as barriers in achieving this. This includes conceptualizing employees with disabilities as less

capable, apprehensions over the impact on coworkers and viewing work as fixed. In this context, there should be countrywide sensitization programs for employers so that they understand about disabilities and the needs of Employees with Disabilities. Fellow employees in Government and Private sectors need to be given awareness about disabilities and the importance of treating them with dignity and support while working with them. Thus Employers/supervisors can change their conceptualization and understanding about various disabilities, Employees with Disabilities, their capability and employ more persons with disabilities. Apart from this, there should be more awareness campaigns about the RPWD Act 2016 amongst PWDs, special incentives for employing women with disabilities, employment portals for PWD, smooth functioning of Special employment exchange as per RPWD Act, provisions for computer education for both men and women with disabilities in rural areas etc. can definitely make changes in the employment scenarios of persons with disabilities.

## Endnotes

- (1) Persons with Disabilities-PWD Means a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his full and effective participation in society equally with others. Section 2(s) RPWD Act 2016
- (2) ILO- International Labour Organization
- (3) UNCRPD- United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006
- (4) PWD Act 1995, National Trust Act 2000, Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016
- (5) WHO-World Health Organization
- (6) Planning Commission. Vision 2020, 15 July 2008
- (7) www.worldbank.org
- (8) Sarva Shiksha Abhyan(2000), National Skill Development Mission (2009), Special Employment Exchanges for PWD(RPWD Act 2016)
- (9) RPWD Act 2016, Section 34(1)
- (10) RPWD Act 2016, Section 35. incentives to Employers in private sector

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