

Differently abled workforce and their workplace experiences in the state of Gujarat

Preeti R. Chechani, Research scholar, Sardar Patel University Vallabh Vidya nagar Anand Gujarat India,
Dr.R.P. Patel, Professor, Sardar Patel University Vallabh Vidya nagar Anand Gujarat India.

Abstract : The differently abled people and their workplace challenges are quite distinct from the non-disabled people. They face a lot of discrimination at the workplace. The differently abled people are pushed to the margins because of lack of job opportunities. The work place challenges like accessibility, inclusive policies and vocational training influence their employment experiences to a large extent.

IndexTerms - *Barriers to employment, Disabled, Differently abled people, Employment, Employer's attitude, workplace accommodation, rehabilitation.*

INTRODUCTION

Discrimination on the basis of gender race ethnicity etc. have received a lot of protest in the modern world but the issue of discrimination which has been faced by differently abled people is still a less talked about. People consider it as an issue to be addressed by the charitable organizations. There are various reasons which are contributing to a weak representation of the issue.

Various definitions of disability make it conceptually difficult to conclude and generalize the results of different studies. To bring consistency in the definitions many agencies now recognize the definition given by World Health Organization in its International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The ICF says that disability is "the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors) (WHO 2011, p.4)."

Mostly differently abled people find it difficult to make a living out of the limited resources they have and lead a mediocre life despite their capabilities to excel. The present paper is an attempt to understand the problems faced by differently abled people in getting employment and the day to day challenges they face in course of their employment. Various agencies have given different estimates of the employment status of differently abled people. But the one common finding is that the rate of employment of differently abled people is lower than the non-disabled population. The finding is applicable to all genders and locational sections.

Literature review

A lot of researches have been conducted in the field of disability studies but unfortunately very few of them have specifically studied employment related issues of the differently abled people. Studies conducted by various government and international organizations have been able to bring some light to the employment issues of differently abled people. Census of India has collected data on only 5 types of disability in 2001 while in 2011 data on 8 types of disability was collected.

In 1991 the employment rate of differently abled people was 42.7 % but in 2002 it was only 37.6%. This is a steep decline and shows the worsening of employment status of differently abled people in India. The decline of employment rate was present in all the geographical locations of India only the extent of the problem was different in different states. The education level plays deciding role in the employment experience of the differently abled people. Those with less educational qualification face the worst of the challenges in the job market. Improved employment prospects for differently abled people can increase their participation in the economy by utilizing the full potential of the human resources. Unfortunately the contribution of the public sector in giving employment opportunities to the differently abled people has been limited (World Bank, 2007).

According to the census of India 2011 only about 50 percent of the differently abled people of the age between 15 to 59 were workers (Census of India 2011). The work participation rate (WPR) which is calculated as the percentage of workers among disabled to total disabled population showed that the people having multiple disability mental retardation etc. were having the lowest activity status. The data indicates that policy majors and other initiatives have not been efficacious in solving the problem of unemployment in differently abled people.

The high unemployment rates among the differently abled population can be attributed to different reasons which are social economic as well as infrastructural. The potential of the differently abled people can be utilized to make them financially self-dependent.

The discrimination faced by the differently abled people is greatly impacted by the other socio cultural grounds. Differently abled people face discrimination during recruitment by the employers. They also face discrimination while in the workplace from their colleagues and superiors. The jobs which are identified and available for them are also very less. They do not get ample help when it comes to the survival in the job and getting different skill trainings required to efficiently completing the job duties. On the other hand employers showed hesitance in recruiting differently abled people because of less awareness regarding various law related to recruiting the differently abled people. Further they find it difficult in providing accessible workplace to differently abled employees (Matthew & Bretag, 2015).

The truth that unemployment is prevailing across all section of societies can't be ignored. But the intensity of the problem is many times higher for the differently abled aspirants. The differently abled people are paid less than their counter parts at the work place. People with mental disability have to face even more challenging situation in securing paid employment. Differently abled people many a times are reluctant to share their disability in fear of losing the work opportunity. The differently abled people face problems when the recruitment process does not consider the accessibility requirement of the differently abled candidate. Some employers are quite rigid in making changes to their workplace and processes to make them inclusive. Further there is less guidance available for employers to make their work environment disabled friendly (O'Mahony, 2017).

In the developed and less populated countries there is often a deficit of the workforce. There the economic advantages of participation of differently abled people in the economy are valued easily. The United Nations (U.N.) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) passed in 2006 proved to be a ground breaking initiative in the areas welfare of differently abled people. The countries which have ratified it have started taking action in the direction of achieving the agenda of the convention. Poverty is closely linked to disability and removing poverty has been in the priorities of the United Nations as well. That is the reason the united nation is working closely with various national governments to help differently abled people. Due to social stigma and negative attitude towards differently abled work force the difficulties for the differently able people increases at the job market. If the education and awareness levels are improved it can create a positive impact in the economic rehabilitation of the differently abled people.

The paper is an attempt to understand the difficulties faced by the differently abled population in the work place. The differently abled people in the state of Gujarat are the target of the study.

Methodology

Keeping the objectives of the study in view a descriptive research design has been used for which a survey was conducted. Efforts were made to understand the perspective and ideologies of the differently abled population. For the purpose of data collection various NGOs were touched to get access to their differently abled beneficiaries. Different informal groups of differently abled people were also contacted. The total sample size for the study was 154. Keeping the challenges of reaching to a section which faces issues of infrastructural inaccessibility convenience sampling method (Non-Probability Sampling) has been used for data collection. Descriptive and inferential statistical analysis has been applied to data collected.

Data Analysis and Findings

Basic demographic details of the respondents were taken in to account first. Respondents hail from different geographic areas of the state

Table 1: Age groups wise distribution of respondents

Age groups	Frequency	Percent
18 to 25 years	42	24.6
26 to 30 years	34	19.9
31 to 35 years	86	50.3
36 and more	9	5.3
Total	171	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that approximately 24.60 per cent differently abled respondents (42) were in the age group of 18 to 25 years, 19.90 per cent differently abled respondents (34) were in the age group of 26 to 30 years, 50.30 per cent differently abled respondents (86) were in the age group of 31 to 35 years and 5.30 per cent differently abled respondents (9) were in the age group of 36 and more years.

Table 2: Educational Qualification wise distribution of respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percent
up to SSC	56	32.7
HSC: science/commerce /arts	53	31.0
Under Graduate	33	19.3
Post Graduate	20	11.7
Professional	1	.6
Diploma/ ITI	5	2.9
Certification course	3	1.8
Total	171	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 32.70 per cent respondents (56) were educated up to SSC, 31.10 per cent respondents (53) qualified HSC, 19.30 per cent respondents (33) were graduate, 11.70 per cent respondents (20) were having post graduate degree, 0.6 per cent respondents (1) were having professional degree, 2.90 per cent respondents (5) were diploma/ITI and 1.80 per cent respondents (3) were having certification courses.

Table3: Gender wise sample distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	127	74.3
Female	44	25.7
Total	171	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 74.30 per cent sample respondents were male and 25.70 per cent respondents were female.

Table4: Working Status of Respondents

Working status	Frequency	Percent
Working full-time	114	66.7
Working part-time	28	16.4
Full time home maker	15	8.8
Unemployed [seeking employment]	14	8.2
Total	171	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 66.70 per cent respondents were working full-time, followed by 16.40 per cent respondents who were working part-time, 8.8 per cent were full-time home-makers and 8.20 per cent respondents were unemployed and were seeking employment.

Table5: Respondents currently working in (sector type)

currently working	Frequency	Percent
In Government sector	20	12.7
In Private Sector	70	44.6
In Semi government sector	15	9.6
As a Self employed	52	33.1
Total	157	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 12.70 per cent respondents were working in government sector, 44.60 per cent respondents were working in private sector, 9.6 per cent respondents were working in semi government sector and 33.10 per cent respondents were self employed.

Table 6: Nature of Respondents job

Nature of job	Frequency	Percent
Managerial/executive	24	15.3
Clerical/administrative	51	32.5
Technical	16	10.2
Creative job	17	10.8
Skill based work	49	31.2
Total	157	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 15.30 per cent respondents were working in managerial/executive designations, 32.50 per cent respondents were working in clerical/administrative positions, 10.20 per cent respondents were in jobs creative in nature and 31.20 per cent respondents were skill based workers.

Table 7: Annual Income of Respondents

Annual income (in Rs)	Frequency	Percent
Below 60,000	101	64.3
60,001 to 1,00,000	23	14.6
1,00,001 to 2,50,000	21	13.4
2,50,001 to 5,00,000	5	3.2
More than 5,00,001	7	4.5
Total	157	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 64.30 per cent respondents (101) were in the annual income group of below 60,000 rupees, 14.60 per cent respondents (23) were in the annual income group of 60,001 to 1,00,000 rupees, 13.40 per cent respondents (21) were in the annual income group of 1,00,001 to 2,50,000 rupees, 3.2 per cent respondents (5) were in the annual income group of 2,50,001 to 5,00,000 rupees and 4.50 per cent respondents (7) were in the annual income group of more than 5,00,001 rupees.

Table 8: Type of disability of Respondents

Type of disability	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
In movement	112	64.4%	65.5%
In speech	6	3.4%	3.5%
In hearing	1	.6%	.6%
In seeing	44	25.3%	25.7%
Multiple disability	11	6.3%	6.4%
Total	174	100.0%	101.8%

It can be observed from the above table that 64.40 per cent respondents were having movement disability, 3.40 per cent respondents had speech disability, 0.60 per cent respondents were hearing impaired, 25.30 per cent respondents were visually impaired and 6.30 per cent respondents were having multiple disabilities.

Table9: Prevalence of Job Oriented Trainings

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	66	38.6
No	105	61.4
Total	171	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 38.60 per cent respondents took job oriented training prior to joining job and 61.40 per cent respondents never had a job oriented training before joining the job.

Table:10 Getting Employment after the completion of Vocational Education and Training

	Frequency	Percent
Immediate placement	16	9.4
Less than 6 months	20	11.7
More than 1 year	47	27.5
Yet to get my first job	88	51.5
Total	171	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 9.40 per cent respondents got immediate placement after vocational training, 11.70 per cent respondents waited for less than 6 months for their first job post training, 27.50 per cent respondents were unemployed for more than 1 year after completing training and 51.50 per cent respondents were yet to get their first job.

Table11: Opinion on the hurdles in getting employment

Biggest hurdle	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Biased attitude of society	57	19.0%	33.3%
Overprotective attitude of society	41	13.7%	24.0%
Lack of education and professional qualification on the part of candidates	55	18.3%	32.2%
Lack of social awareness	72	24.0%	42.1%
Lack of political and administrative commitment towards resolving the issue	75	25.0%	43.9%
Total	300	100.0%	175.4%

It can be observed from the above table that 57 respondents believe that the biased attitude of society is a hurdle in employment for differently abled people, 41 respondents believed that overprotective attitude of society is a hurdle in employment of differently abled people, Lack of education and professional qualification on the part of candidates was notified by (55 respondents), Lack of social awareness (72 respondents) and Lack of political and administrative commitment towards resolving the issue (75 respondents) was agreed by the respondents.

Table12 : Accessibility of the Work site/place

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	55	35.0
No	73	46.5
Partly barrier free	29	18.5
Total	157	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 35 per cent respondents revealed that their work site was barrier-free and differently abled – friendly, 29 per cent respondents notified that their workplace was only partly barrier free and 73 per cent respondents said that their work site was not barrier free.

Table13: Discrimination at work place

	Frequency	Percent
Often	37	23.6
Some times	43	27.4
Rarely	15	9.6
Never	62	39.5
Total	157	100.0

The above table reveals that 23.60 per cent respondents have often faced discrimination at their workplace, 27.40 per cent respondents have faced discrimination sometimes in their workplace, 9.6 per cent respondents have faced discrimination rarely in their workplace and majority respondents (39.50 per cent) have never faced any discrimination in their workplace.

Table14: Formal mechanism at employer organization to redress the discrimination and bullying

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	35.7
No	53	33.8
don't know	48	30.6
Total	157	100.0

It can be said from the above table that 35.70 per cent respondents said that their employer organization do have a formal mechanism to redress the discrimination and bullying faced bby them, 33.80 per cent respondents said their employer do not have a formal mechanism to resolve such issues.

Table 15: Employer's initiatives towards increasing acceptance at work place

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	107	68.2
No	50	31.8
Total	157	100.0

It can be observed from the above table that 68.20 per cent respondents said their employer helped in increasing acceptance at the workplace and 31.80 respondents said they received no help from employer in increasing their acceptance at the workplace.

Table16: Challenges faced in day to day work life

Challenge	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Difficulty in commuting to reach the workplace.	94	40.0%	59.9%
Difficulty in accessing the work premises	58	24.7%	36.9%
Difficulty in communicating and expressing yourself to colleagues	44	18.7%	28.0%
Lack of cooperation by colleagues	39	16.6%	24.8%
Total	235	100.0%	149.7%

The above table presents data on challenges faced by sample respondents during day to day work life. It can be observed that respondents found most Difficulty in commuting to reach the workplace (94 per cent respondents), followed by Difficulty in accessing the work premises (58 per cent), Difficulty in communicating and expressing themselves to colleagues (44 per cent) and Lack of cooperation by colleagues (39 per cent).

Conclusion:

The above analysis shows that the workplace experiences of differently abled people are full of adversities which can be attributed to various physical as well as psychological barriers. There is a constant pressure of performance on the young workforce these days and only the most competitive of the lot is chosen for the task. Inclusive employment seems to be an idealistic situation which an insuperable task but a never say die attitude of disabled people with a little initiation of society can make the difference. By removing the social physical and economical barriers the employment rate of disabled people can be increased. Alteration in the education and rehabilitation programs can also make the disabled people more employable. The inclusion of this group as a contributor will always create a positive impact on the economy of the country.

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