

ENSURING INCLUSION RESPONSE TO COVID-19 GOOD PRACTICES BY INDUSTRY

CII INDIA BUSINESS AND DISABILITY NETWORK

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ENSURING INCLUSION RESPONSE TO COVID-19 GOOD PRACTICES BY INDUSTRY

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CII INDIA BUSINESS AND DISABILITY NETWORK

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Piruz Khambatta
Chairman, CII National Committee on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities 2020-21 and India Business & Disability Network and Chairman and Managing Director, Rasna Pvt Ltd

“ 2020 will be remembered as the year that caused large-scale disruption of lives and livelihood across the globe. Coronavirus spread rapidly, leaving people and economies devastated and struggling to steady themselves. While the outbreak was unsettling for everyone, it was particularly difficult for persons with disabilities (PwD) who found themselves more vulnerable at this time.

However, every crisis carries within itself the seeds of opportunity. As countries came to terms with the changes forced upon them by Covid-19, new ways of working emerged, with work from home becoming the new normal across sectors. For many, thinking out of the box also became the new normal.

Corporate India was quick to devise systems and work processes to enable continuity with least disruption and damage. The new systems and processes were designed keeping in mind the needs of employees with disabilities to ensure they were inclusive. Companies also focussed on the safety and well-being of the employees while trying to ensure career continuity for them.

This Compendium captures some of the best practices of select companies in supporting such employees during the pandemic and the lockdown to deliver to the best of their ability.

Thinking ‘beyond business’ many provided essential food and medicines to the PwD community, especially during the lockdown, and took care of the mental well-being of PwD with counselling sessions with experts.

In addition, the publication also includes intervention by the Government, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment – Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), in ensuring that measures being taken by the Government are all-inclusive.

I hope that this Compendium will throw light on ways to strengthen the inclusion agenda. Companies can adopt, replicate and scale up some of the practices mentioned in this Compendium to create a more inclusive and diverse workforce. ”



Esteban Tromel
Senior Disability Specialist
International Labour Organisation

“ Maintaining corporate commitment to disability inclusion in times of the Covid-19 pandemic has been a key objective of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network (ILO GBDN) in 2020. We have heard how companies have addressed the concerns of their employees with disabilities when moving to telework as well as to ensure accessibility in their occupational and health measures. Crises also bring opportunities. The opportunity of the moment is to make inclusion of marginalized groups, such as persons with disabilities, a central element of the pandemic response.

The need to ensure top-level commitment to disability inclusion so that the response to the crisis includes persons with disabilities has been highlighted as a key element in the different webinars that have been organised by the ILO GBDN in 2020. This will also be the main focus of the GBDN annual conference on 30 November.

The ILO GBDN welcomes the initiative taken by the CII India Business and Disability Network to produce a compendium of good practices in times of the pandemic. Earlier this year, the GBDN conducted a survey of National Business and Disability Networks (NBDNs) on the support they are providing to company members to respond to Covid-19 and to include persons with disabilities. The survey showed that NBDNs value collaboration with stakeholders on disability issues as an important part of the Covid-19 response. It also showed that information about practices and strategies being implemented by other NBDNs and companies would help them address the challenges to disability inclusion posed by Covid-19. The Compendium is exactly the kind of initiative that will contribute to a disability-inclusive response to the pandemic. ”

Introduction



The outbreak of Coronavirus has affected the entire world in ways unimaginable. As it spread across the globe, affecting vast swathes of people, lockdowns and containment zones became a reality. The impact on the economy was severe.

One of the most vulnerable groups affected by the outbreak of Coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown were persons with disabilities (PwD). With restrictions on movement and shutting down of markets, many faced challenges in procuring daily essentials and other necessary items. On the work front too, as companies moved to a work-from-home and online model, several faced challenges adjusting to the new environment. Maintaining health and hygiene became difficult as well since a simple recommendation like frequent hand washing was not feasible for many PwD who are dependent on caregivers.

Corporate India, which has always promoted diversity and inclusion, and employees several PwD rose to the occasion and quickly put in place measures to help PwD. Not only was work from home facilitated, but companies also displayed tremendous compassion and understanding and addressed the other safety and well-being needs of PwD as well.

This Compendium captures some of the practices adopted by companies in ensuring the inclusion, safety and well-being of PwD during the pandemic.

Initiatives by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment - Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) for PwD Communities



The outbreak of Coronavirus had a swift and debilitating impact on lives and livelihoods across the country and necessitated a nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of the disease. While people across the world faced challenges, one section of society, persons with disabilities (PwD), found itself more vulnerable than others. It is estimated that there are around 1 billion PwD globally.

The Indian government undertook several measures like dissemination of health advisories and various services to support people during this challenging time. It was, however, a challenge to address and reach out to the community of PwD in terms of disseminating awareness, information and advisories and also ensuring that the support services for them continued seamlessly despite measures like the lockdown, containment of specific zones, and physical distancing norms.

It is imperative to consider the needs of PwD and ensure that they have access to essential information and support services and are not disadvantaged because of their disabilities.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment - Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) especially reached out to key Ministries - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting - to ensure all information, publicity and awareness material is published, promoted and publicised in an accessible format.

The Ministry also reached out to the Chief Secretaries of States regarding the accessibility of publicity material around Covid-19. The State was requested to advise the State Health Department regarding prioritising treatment of PwD as envisaged under Section 25 of the RPwD Act 2016.

Subsequently, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment - Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) issued Comprehensive Disability Inclusive Guidelines for the protection and safety of PwD (Divyangjan) during Covid-19.

Some of the key guidelines are as below:

- All information related to Covid-19, especially safety precautions, are to be accessible to PwD and should be available in braille, as audio tapes and as video-graphic material with sub-titles and sign language interpretation. It should also be available in regional languages.
- All persons handling emergency response services are to be trained on the rights and requirements of PwD.
- Sign language interpreters who work in emergency and health settings should be given the same health



and safety protection as other health care workers dealing with Covid-19.

- Relevant information on support to PwD should be a part of all awareness campaigns.
- During quarantine, essential support services, personal assistance, and physical and communication accessibility should be ensured, e.g. blind persons, persons with intellectual/mental disability (psycho-social) are dependent on caregiver support. Similarly, PwD may seek assistance for rectification of fault in their wheelchair and other assistive devices.
- PwD should be given access to essential food, water, medicines, and, to the extent possible, such items should be delivered at their residence or place where they have been quarantined.
- All caregivers should be allowed access to PwD and provision for necessary access passes etc. should be made.
- To ensure the continuation of support services for PwD with minimum human contact, due publicity needs to be given to ensuring personal protective equipment for caregivers.
- The Resident Welfare Associations should be sensitised about the need of PwD to allow entry of maids, caregivers and other support providers.
- The States/UTs may consider reserving specific opening hours in retail provision stores, including supermarkets, for PwD and older persons for ensuring easy availability of their daily requirements.
- Additional protective measures should be taken for PwD based on their impairment who need to be given travel pass during the emergency period and should also be sensitised for their personal safety and protection.
- Employees with blindness and other severe disabilities, in both the public and private sector, should be exempted from essential services work during the period as they can easily catch an infection.
- Peer-support networks may be set up to facilitate support during quarantine for PwD.
- PwD should be given priority in treatment, and special care should be taken in respect of children and women with disabilities.
- An on-line counselling mechanism should be developed to de-stress PwD as well as their families to help them cope with the quarantine period.
- The States/UTs may consider involving Organisation of Persons with Disabilities in

preparation and dissemination of information material on Covid-19 for the use of PwD.

These guidelines were issued to all State Authorities.

In addition, a mechanism was set up to resolve disability-specific issues during the lockdown period at the State and district level:

- **State Commissioner for PwD**
 - ▶ The State Commissioners for PwD was declared as the State nodal authority with respect to PwD.
 - ▶ They should be overall in-charge to resolve disability-specific issues during the crisis period.
 - ▶ They will coordinate with State Disaster Management Authority, Health, Police and other line Departments as well as District Collectors and district level officers dealing with PwD.
 - ▶ They will be responsible for ensuring that all information about Covid-19, public restriction plans, services offered are available in the local language in accessible formats.
- **District Officer dealing with empowerment of PwD**
 - ▶ The District Officer dealing with empowerment of PwD should be declared as the District nodal authority in respect of PwD.
 - ▶ He should have a list of PwD in the District and monitor their requirements periodically. He should also have a separate list of persons with severe disabilities, who need high support, in the locality.
 - ▶ He will be responsible for resolving issues within the resources available and if necessary, may take the help of Non-Governmental Organisations and Civil Society Organisations/Resident Welfare Associations.

Financial scheme

Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana Package, the Government of India announced an ex-gratia aid of ₹ 1,000 to beneficiaries with severe disabilities of the Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme. The aim was to help them with additional financial resources to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment - Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) has requested the Ministry of Rural Development to consider extending the ex-gratia benefit to all Divyangjan (having disability of 40 percent or more) and increase the amount.



1 ■ ANZ India



ANZ, one of the four largest banks in Australia, started the Bengaluru Service Centre more than 30 years ago. It provides Technology, Operations and Services to group entities in Australia, New Zealand, Asia Pacific, Europe and the Americas. The operation, which started with 40 personnel, today has over 7,000 employees providing support to the bank's network.

ANZ started its accessibility and inclusion journey with a small pilot in 2010 by hiring six persons with hearing and orthopaedic disability. It took very little time for these new hires to move along the learning curve, which helped the company establish a strong business case for hiring more people. The company has not looked back ever since and has slowly expanded the scope and scale of its engagement to populate -100+, i.e. approximately 2% of its employee base has employees with diverse disabilities (including -10 employees with severe disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism, muscular atrophy) across various departments. Dedicated support by management, robust funding, a passionate team of volunteers and its partnerships with experts gives momentum to its inclusion and diversity journey.

ANZ truly believes in the inherent strength of a vibrant, diverse and inclusive workforce where the backgrounds, perspectives and life experiences of its people help it forge strong connections with its customers, innovate and make better decisions for its business. ANZ is fully committed to providing support to non-government organisations and charities that back education and create employment opportunities for underprivileged and underrepresented communities.

Number of employees with disabilities: **110+**

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

Around mid-February, the Covid-19 virus had started making headlines in India. In March, two cases were reported from Bengaluru. Organisations were concerned as the news from other countries didn't look promising. The ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre started monitoring the evolving scenario continuously. The lockdown left the employees with disabilities more vulnerable as access to healthcare, and physical and emotional support was limited. The risk of contracting the virus for persons with disabilities was high as well.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

- Laptops/desktops at home
- WiFi Network connection/VDI
- Infrastructure like chairs
- Travelling to hometown to be with the family

Initiatives Taken

Recognising that the issues employees face in their daily lives can impact their physical and emotional well-being, the organisation took several steps to help reduce stress.

- Laptops/Desktop/VDI were provided to staff.
- To enhance communication, especially with the hearing and speech impaired, MS Teams live caption option was provided to help in video calling.
- A dedicated WhatsApp group, 'Abilities Warrior Group' has been created where the team regularly connects with the PWD staff.
- Employee Assistant programme: ANZ offers short-term well-being support services to employees and immediate family members. The support is confidential and delivered by an external provider. The service is designed to support employees, through individual well-being coaching and advice on either work-related or personal matters. During this time, our people are being supported on issues such as work-life balance and managing stress and anxiety
- Regular webinars on health and well-being, especially related to mental health, were conducted not only for staff but their families too.
- The ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre supported women entrepreneurs running Mitti Café, which employs persons with disabilities. The two Mitti Cafes on the premises were shut down due to Covid-19 and WFH scenario, and ANZ paid salaries to the PwD employees of these cafés during this period.
- Under the Mission 1000 project, ANZ financially supported PwD housekeeping staff even though they were not engaged in work then.
- Medical teleconsulting services were provided through local hospitals during the lockdown.
- ANZ Group Mediclaim policy covered Covid+ people. The voluntary top-up plan for staff and family members under Group Mediclaim coverage was opened once again to ensure that the employees who did not take the extra cover could do that, mainly due to the pandemic.
- Virtual engagement activities, bite-sized information on Covid-19 and health advice from an expert was provided to staff through a social network (Yammer) and Apps.
- Leadership Connect: Given the challenges of WFH due to Covid-19, regular informal sessions with members of the India Management Team were conducted to check mental and physical well-being and to stay connected.
- Teams collected funds and donated books, toys to NGOs like Akshadhaa Foundation.

Initiatives for PwD Employees at the Workplace

ANZ believes in equal employment opportunity. The organisation has a sensitised ecosystem and policy/process that takes care of any workplace adjustment for PwD staff.

Talent development and training opportunities are equal for all employees. Everyone, including PwD and LGBTQ+ employees, is always encouraged to go for further training and learning using the L&D budget.

People with Disability Listening Group (Internal): This group conducts sessions to understand the needs of PwD employees to create specific work arrangements to enhance their engagement and well-being.

ANZ's Abilities Network, the employee resource group, fosters inclusiveness and aims to increase the number of PwD employees besides identifying new opportunities for them. The Network also works towards enhancing PwD staff inclusion and engagement through targeted sensitisation programmes. The feedback from the community is shared with HR and the HSW teams to ensure workplace adjustments are made for them to deliver their best. Any ANZ employee can be a supporter and/or volunteer in the Abilities Network to contribute to creating a diverse and inclusive workforce and community.

PwD Mentorship programme: PwD employees are mentored by senior leaders to elevate their confidence and enhance their communication skills as well as performance.

Physical/infrastructural support:

- All doors have nameplates in braille.
- All washrooms have emergency lights which light up automatically in case of a power disruption.
- Ramps have been built for easy movement, and changes have been incorporated in workstations for a comfortable work environment.
- Wheelchairs and crutches are available.
- The organisation provides support like pedals to help employees work conveniently.

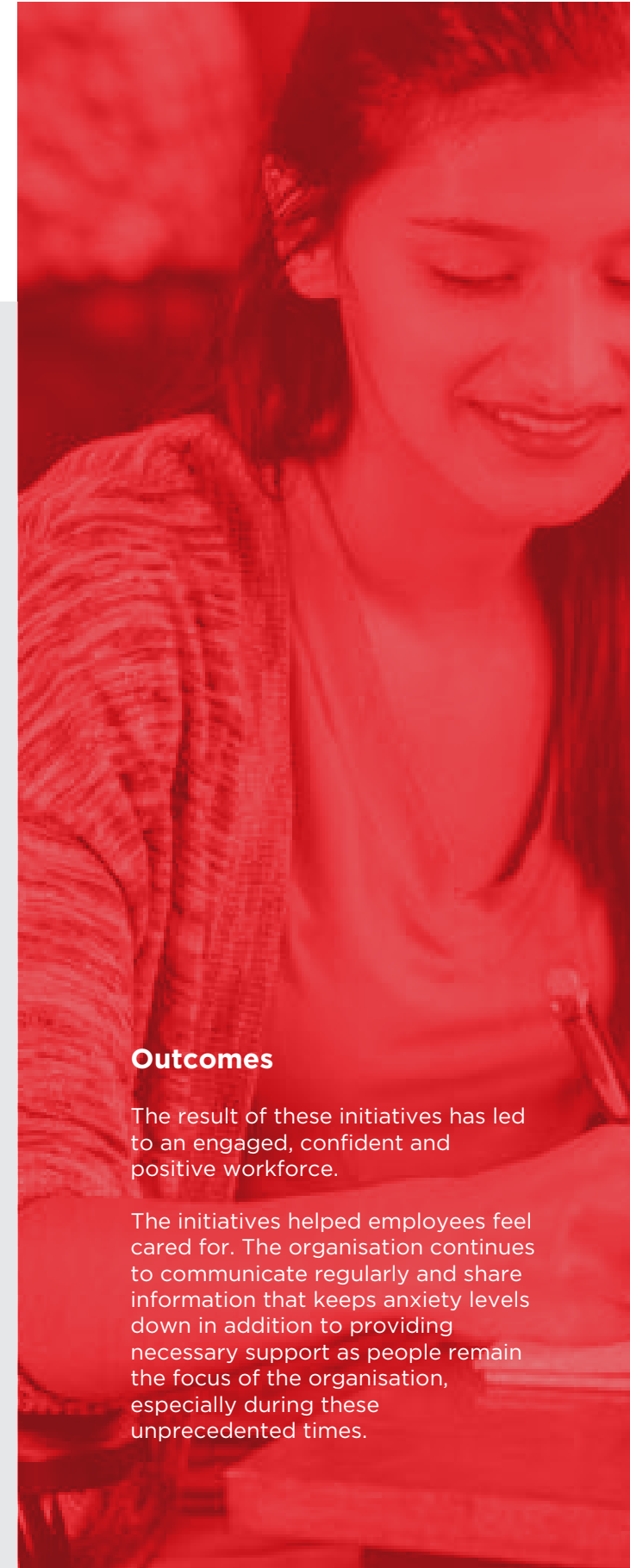
Digital/IT infrastructure:

- Assistive devices such as joystick and adjustable monitors are provided.
- An exclusive dictionary of banking words in sign language has been created to enable PwD staff to communicate well.

Medical, insurance and health-related:

Regular health and wellness promotional activities are provided. These include:

- Screening for diabetes and bone density.



Outcomes

The result of these initiatives has led to an engaged, confident and positive workforce.

The initiatives helped employees feel cared for. The organisation continues to communicate regularly and share information that keeps anxiety levels down in addition to providing necessary support as people remain the focus of the organisation, especially during these unprecedented times.

- Comprehensive insurance cover.
- Employee assistance programme for the emotional well-being of employees.
- In-house doctor/nurses who are available 24/7.
- Ambulance facility.
- In-house physiotherapist.
- Income protection plan.

Transport and Parking:

- Special medical cabs for persons with disability are provided. For hearing and speech impaired employees, the transport team is trained to communicate through SMS.
- Special colour codes are provided in the mobile app for drivers to identify PwD staff in the route.
- There are 40+ medical cabs to help PwD commute to the office with the availability of customised PwD specific vehicles.
- Motorised and manual wheelchairs for PwD staff are available.

Safety:

- ANZ has tied up with hospitals such as Columbia Asia for trained medical attendees for PwD staff. They are present at all times when PwD staff is on campus to assist them as required.
- Specific fire and emergency procedures for PwD staff are in place.
- Emergency evacuation chairs are in place for easy access by the PwD employees.

Pay Parity:

- Pay parity is a focus both at the hiring and at the annual performance and compensation review process stage to ensure balanced budget allocation and spend.
- PwD Hiring: There is a structured process to identify job roles suitable for PwD. Skill mapping is done with the help of experts from the organisation's hiring partner, Enable India. ANZ partners with Enable India to conduct specific recruitment drives for PwD at least once a year, which is known as PwD Hiring Accelerators.
 - ▶ ANZ's policies, frameworks and governance mechanisms support and help people with disability to progress in their line of work.
 - ▶ To eliminate bias during screening, ANZ uses industry-standard third-party tools such as HirePro online assessments for logical/ reasoning skills and BUPLAS voice & email writing online assessments tools.

- ▶ The organisation runs sensitization workshops for recruiters and hiring managers so that they are well-prepared to deal with, and care for, our PwD hires, and are equipped to make them feel comfortable. We have a flexible approach to recruitment based on candidate needs. Also, on day one of their joining, we ensure all the special requirements for the candidate to perform is in place. We have conducted more than 15 Disability Awareness & Sensitization sessions and covered 105 employees and 120 managers.
- ▶ As a part of the 'return-to-work program' we encourage persons with disabilities who had taken career breaks to apply for the open positions.
- ▶ ANZ also conducts exclusive placement drives to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds who would have otherwise missed out due to the strict checklist of requirements followed by most companies.
- ▶ It runs programs that help PwD employee accelerate their career growth path like PwD Mentorship Program.

Sensitisation of the ecosystem:

Targeted awareness session on unconscious bias for line managers and staff are conducted to ensure the opportunity to learn and grow is available to all staff.

Team members are trained in sign language to enable them to communicate with their hearing and speech impaired colleagues.

Recognition:

STAR Awards: ANZ recognises and celebrates its employees who have gone beyond the call of duty to support PwD to shape a world where people of all abilities can thrive.

Impact of Interventions on PwD Employees

ANZ works towards demystifying the world of disability by creating awareness about the issue. Through their interventions, they foster inclusion in the ecosystem. It has led to a change in mindset, flexibility and innovation. Disability inclusion is not treated as a one-off initiative at ANZ, and the focus is on increasing engagement with PwD and leveraging the experience to create a more nurturing working environment.

Initiatives for the PwD Community

The ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre aims to create value for the community by providing opportunities to people to contribute to the communities in which they live and work through the company's volunteering programmes. Three priority areas have been identified - environmental sustainability, financial well-being, and healthcare (local priority) and dedicated efforts are made to meet the goals set under these.

ANZ is building a workplace that reflects the communities in which the organisation operates and is inclusive. It collaborates with NGOs to hire PwD and people from the LGBTIQ community. It also provides training to members of these communities to prepare them for corporates.

- MoneyMinded: is ANZ's flagship adult financial education programme that helps people improve their money skills, knowledge and confidence. Over 4300 external participants - specially-abled, transgender, and women have been trained through this CSR initiative. ANZ also conducted sessions for other corporates for their support staff - drivers, housekeeping, and security staff.
- The ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre conducts targeted outreach programmes to get a continuous flow of candidates with disabilities. As a part of this initiative, the company works with non-profit organisations such as V-Shesh, Enable India and Samarthanam. ANZ provides mentorship programmes to the candidates and has open sessions with NGO partners to understand the candidates' progress and their requirements. On successful completion of mentorship, ANZ offers employment opportunities.
- In 2017, the Bengaluru Service Centre joined a 120-member network of NGOs for people with disabilities, committing to the Mission 1000 project. This initiative was launched recognising that traditional disability employment often fails to hire people with severe disabilities; it brings employers and NGOs together to challenge stereotypes and assumptions on both sides. It aims to provide 1,000 opportunities to people with disabilities in 1,000 days.

- Introduced Mitti Café, an organisation which solely employs PwD, in their cafeterias and pantries. ANZ also introduced Artinci ice-creams, owned and managed by a PwD resource, in their cafeterias.
- ANZ is a co-sponsor and volunteer at the India Inclusion Summit, which is an annual summit for people with disabilities, where ANZ plays an active role to support the inclusion agenda.
- ANZ sponsored the Bengaluru Walkathon by Samarthanam to create awareness on disabilities in December 2019.
- Association of People with Disability (APD): ANZ funded the physiotherapy lab for NGO, APD. It also set up a spinal cord injury rehabilitation centre.
- The organisation has funded skills training for persons with intellectual disability for two not-for-profit organisations, Amogh and Amba. Around 44 people are being trained in these skills labs.
- ANZ funds a school bus for Akshadhaa Foundation, which helps children with autism commute to school.
- Organised sensitisation programmes and fairs to promote products made by NGO and support NGOs like APD (plants, pottery making), Akshadhaa Foundation, Diya Foundation under Mission 1000.
- Nisvartha, which supports higher education of government school students, did not include PwD. ANZ recommended the inclusion of PwD students and the organisation is supporting the higher education of 5 PwD students through Nisvartha.
- ANZ does not limit the hiring to just the business areas but explores all other spheres of work:
 - ▶ Encourage partner facilities management company to place Persons with Disabilities at ANZ for work, such as paper shredding, pantry and cafeteria services etc.
 - ▶ Provide internship opportunities in the Cafeteria Management department for work such as 'plate and glass wiping'.

Leader Speak



S V Venkataraman
Managing Director
ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre

“

We take pride in having a balanced, sustainable and inclusive workplace at the ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre. During Covid, we have paid special attention to our PwD staff. Our Health, Safety and Wellness team is in regular touch with each PwD, and we are also ensuring that all infrastructure is provided to them even at home for them to be productive. At ANZ, not only

are we building an agile, outperforming organisation, we are also making an impact in the larger community that we represent. We are financially supporting some PwD housekeeping staff even when they are not engaged in work at this point. ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre fosters an environment where people of all abilities can thrive.

”

My Story



Varghese Kuruville
ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre

“I am very happy to work with ANZ. During Covid, the organisation has allowed us to work from home and has taken care of all our requirements. The ANZ management cares about the well-being of their employees and has been in touch with us through virtual meetings. The leadership team is accessible and approachable. ANZ has been with me in good and bad times. I am proud to be a part of ANZ.”

The Road Ahead

The ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre D&I Council is committed to meet the diversity and inclusion priorities and managing the sustainability programme. The Council, which also comprises of the Abilities Network, helps in bringing global alignment, accountability and governance and creates a focussed agenda. ANZ's Abilities Network works towards enhancing PwD inclusion and engagement through many targeted sensitisation programmes and encourages employees to be supporters and/or volunteer in the Abilities Network to contribute towards creating a diverse and inclusive workforce and community.

The ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre believes in making an impact in the broader community that they represent. Through the Mission 1000 and Valuable 500 programme, ANZ continues to challenge stereotypes and assumptions around disability employment. As a part of its sustainability programme, ANZ continues to support not for profit organisations that are supporting PwD issues.



2 ■ Barclays India



Barclays traces its ancestry back to two goldsmith bankers, John Freame and Thomas Gould, who were doing business in Lombard Street, London in 1690. In 1736, Freame's son, Joseph, took his brother-in-law, James Barclay on as a partner, and the name has remained a constant presence in the business ever since.

Barclays was built over centuries. The longevity of the organisation is an extraordinary achievement, especially against the backdrop of multiple financial crises, international conflicts, and the agricultural, industrial and now technological revolutions.

Barclays Plc, one of the largest UK-based organisations, employs over 23,000 people in India across its banking, technology and shared services operations.

Initiatives For PwD Employees at the Workplace

Dynamic working at Barclays is about empowering colleagues to work in a way that suits their lives and supports the business to serve the needs of customers and clients better. This includes ensuring that staff has the necessary technology infrastructure to operate. As the shift to a work-from-home mode happened, additional support by way of screens, keyboards, chairs and other technology aids was prioritised.

Reach: The disability agenda in Barclays in India is managed through a group-wide network called Reach. The Network works in a structured manner with both global and local agenda/programmes that focus on serving the cause of disability in and outside the organisation. Barclays employs people with varied disabilities and works towards their optimal integration into the workplace. Once the lockdown commenced, the Network seamlessly shifted its engagement to a virtual mode to continue building an inclusive workplace.

Since social connections make people happier and physically healthier, translating into better performance at work, Reach has an initiative called 'Connect with Colleague' to support PwD colleagues. As a part of the programme, virtual groups have been created for regular interactions to facilitate any support that the members needed.



Working from home stories: The Network had an online campaign running on some of the interesting working-from-home stories by colleagues from the Network, helping build a sense of community and a stronger bonding amongst members.

Community Support: Reach extended support to 'Concern India Foundation', established in 1991 as a registered non-profit in fighting Covid-19 through a campaign 'Fight to Finish Covid-19' by providing food grain support to vulnerable families to help them survive in this difficult situation. The fundraising activity was supported by organising a virtual drawing and poetry competition.

The amount of funds raised was matched by Barclays, and the funds were utilised for providing food grains and hygiene products to families (including differently-abled individuals) unable to access them.



Leader Speak



Praveen Kumar
Co-CEO, Barclays Global Service Centre India

“ We believe that every employee, client and stakeholder brings a set of unique talents and perspectives to the table. We are fully committed to increasing opportunities for people with disabilities and creating an accessible and inclusive business for people with all abilities. Our employee diversity network, Reach, helps build awareness, attract diverse talent and support career development. The Network is open to all colleagues who support the cause of disability inclusion and/or improving mental health.

”

My Story



Malathi

Malathi has been engaging in volunteer work to help the physically challenged community.

As working from home became the new normal, spending long hours in seated positions became a challenge for many, especially PwD. Malathi urged them to seek help. To help people cope with this stress, she sought the help of doctors, as well as her basketball teammates.

“I am a state and national wheelchair basketball champion, an advisor at Barclays India and a daughter. My time gets spent in balancing all these roles. I have a packed schedule due to the championship tournaments and training session, but I am able to handle these challenges because of the stupendous support I get from Barclays.

My manager, colleagues, and the Reach network always encourage me by providing timely support in my day-to-day work and my other initiatives. During this pandemic, I started engaging in volunteer work to help the physically challenged community, along with wheelchair basketball teammates. We helped around 200 people with dry rations, medicines and other essentials. With the help of volunteers and by spreading the word via Facebook, we could even extend our help to Puducherry, Bengaluru and Tiruchirappalli. I always feel valued and am proud to work at Barclays.”



Sudharsan Lakshmanan
Associate Vice President
Chief Control Office

“I joined Barclays in 2017 as Associate Vice President with the Chief Control Office. The journey at Barclays has been extremely pleasant and interesting. Every milestone that I touched along the way has had some special moments to share.

First, the level of commitment towards supporting a disabled-friendly working environment started much ahead of the employment, i.e. from the interview process itself. Infrastructure at Barclays is so disabled-friendly that it supports people like me reach any part of the building without dependency, thus stimulating confidence. It also helps to manage my day-to-day activities better. This is evident through the disability-friendly ramps, special holders in restrooms, reserved car park (fulfilled my dream of driving my car) etc. There have been instances where I had recommended changes for certain facilities which have been taken care of by the Reach Team instantly (e.g. an alarm in the restroom to alert in case of any difficulties). I have enrolled to become a part of the Reach network to support many colleagues with similar problems. This is a fantastic opportunity for me to interact with people with disability to understand their needs and support them to make their experience as pleasant as mine. The management at Barclays has been extremely supportive to help me achieve the heights that I aim for.”

3 ■ BarrierBreak



BarrierBreak is the leader in offshore digital accessibility testing and consulting. It was founded in 2004 with the firm belief that technology can empower people with disabilities and the elderly to live independently.

A pioneer in accessibility and assistive technology in India and with a global footprint, BarrierBreak is recognised as a global expert for accessibility testing solutions. The organisation believes that technology can bridge the barriers that people face due to their disabilities as people with disabilities need access to technology just as much as anyone else. What does BarrierBreak do? Accessibility Testing, Accessible Documents along with providing consultation for Accessibility.

The vision of the organisation is to create an inclusive society; a society where equal opportunity, employment, education, social life, and independent living is easily accessible to all.

Number of employees with disabilities: **Between 60-65% of 220+ Employees**

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

As a company that focuses on accessibility testing and consulting services, most of the work is online and therefore, overall, BarrierBreak and its employees, especially PwD, were not majorly impacted.

Considering that a large number of BarrierBreak's workforce comprises employees with disabilities, the company had decided to move to work from home (WFH) even before the first lockdown. Initially, since people did not realise the impact of the outbreak of Coronavirus, employees with disabilities were hesitating to work from home. However, at the management level, the organisation had realised that the risk to health was high and had initiated work from home before the first lockdown by the government. This helped the organisation get a headstart, and the IT teams were able to go to the houses of employees to help set up work-from-home offices.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

The requirements of the PwD related to:

- Technology
- Training
- Communication and social skills
- Infrastructure

Initiatives Taken

- Technology
 - ▶ All necessary devices were transferred to employees whenever required for the smooth functioning of work.
 - ▶ Desktops were replaced with laptops to overcome electricity issues or any system issues.
 - ▶ Live captions, a feature provided by Microsoft Teams which is very helpful in communicating with hearing-impaired employees, was made available for everyone.
 - ▶ An internet allowance was provided to all employees.
 - ▶ Employees were given the option of lazy time on the MYBBLIFE portal to allow them to take breaks wherein the employee can take a break and rest or do anything they would like to, to avoid monotonous work like listening to screen readers through headphones. This is an extra feature apart from the breaks.
 - ▶ A sign language interpreter was available on request.
 - ▶ A dedicated online IT Helpdesk was set up on Teams for visually impaired and hearing-impaired employees, in addition to the support that the regular IT team provided.
- Communication & Social Challenges
 - ▶ Conducted weekly accessible activities/ games online to keep teams energised and help in team-building across the board. Team with persons with disabilities would be formed and games, which were accessible to all, would be selected and executed. This also helped in team building across the board.
 - ▶ Customised mugs and mouse pads were gifted to employees as a surprise. These had the values of BarrierBreak printed on them to create and strengthen team bonding.
- Training
 - ▶ Training new employees with disabilities – training plans and strategies were revised because of the outbreak of Coronavirus to ensure PwD received the kind of support they required.
 - ▶ Training time was extended wherever required. For hearing-impaired employees, along with the trainer, the peer learning method was adopted with a senior deaf employee assisting in the training, in addition to the sign language interpreter, so that learning can take place using the peer-to-peer learning method.
 - ▶ Online demonstrations and training were conducted for visually-impaired employees, and teams worked with other colleagues using screen share to build a similar understanding.

Overall, it was observed that employees with disabilities were able to adapt quickly and effectively, which encouraged BarrierBreak to consider the hiring of candidates across India.

Outcomes

- Employees felt safe and remained healthy due to work from home, which was implemented.
- Since laptops and devices were provided in good time, work continued efficiently without any break.
- Flexible timings have helped employees manage work as well as their domestic responsibilities in a better manner.
- As employees were able to utilise their breaks efficiently, they remained refreshed and active as well.
- Activities and online games kept employees engaged and refreshed.
- Overall, it was observed that PwD employees adjusted well to the WFH setup, with several returning to their hometowns to work from there.
- Even in the Pandemic, the organisation hired new employees with disabilities and onboarded them successfully across India.

Leader Speak



Shilpi Kapoor
CEO, BarrierBreak

“ As a company focusing on digital accessibility consulting, we are proud to say that our employees with disabilities have not been adversely affected in the lockdown. Instead, we are now confident of hiring people with disabilities across India and not limited to Mumbai only, since we have seen the positive side of technology.

”

Anecdotal Story

- Before joining the organisation, a PwD employee was unsure about the ability of technology to bridge barriers between accessibility and ability, but that view changed once he started working with BarrierBreak. He experienced, first-hand, the process where everything was online such as the induction, training, even activities like ice breaker activities/ empathy activity. Also, he was fascinated to see how people with disability as well as those without any disability worked together harmoniously, assisting each other via calls and teams application for successful completion of work.
- A learning impaired employee who did image-related work was keen to upskill, and the organisation assisted him by breaking down the learning process into smaller, easier-to-manage bytes to make it easily accessible and enjoyable for him.

4 ■ Capgemini



Capgemini is a global leader in consulting, digital transformation, technology and engineering services. The organisation is at the forefront of innovation to help its clients successfully capitalise on opportunities in the evolving world of cloud, digital, and platforms. Building on its strong 50-year+ heritage and industry-specific expertise, Capgemini enables organisations to realise their business ambitions through services ranging from strategy to operations. Capgemini is driven by the conviction that the business value of technology comes from and through, people. Today, it is a multicultural company with 264,600 employees in almost 50 countries. With Altran, the Group reported a combined revenue of €17 billion in 2019.

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

Although the outbreak of Covid-19 impacted everyone, persons with disabilities (PwD) faced greater anxiety and problems as they felt more vulnerable due to their disabilities. Some of the challenges they faced related to:

- **Ration and groceries:** PwD, especially those staying alone, found it very difficult in the initial phase of the outbreak of Covid-19 to procure groceries, rations, medicines and other essential items.
- **Communication:** People with speech, hearing and vision impairment found it difficult to have conversations over virtual platforms. Most of the platforms do not enable inclusive meetings, and team-mates are not trained to have conversations over virtual platforms.
- **Physical health:** Many PwD faced medical issues such as neck pain due to poor posture as well as neurological problems such as involuntary trembling of hands due to extended screen time.
- **Mental health:** This became a significant area of concern since the ecosystem is not well-developed to identify and support such issues. Mental health was further compromised due to reduced human contact and extended work hours.

Requirements of PwD Employees During the Pandemic

Faced with unprecedented challenges, PwD sought support from the organisation in many areas. These included:

- Information related to Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), mental health practitioners and teleconsultations with doctors.
- More inclusive communication such as videos with subtitles; sharing a meeting agenda over mail before the meeting and giving PwD employees enough time to respond.
- Ergonomic chairs and desks for their homes.
- Continuous support through counsellors/psychologists. They also sought sensitising team members and managers to create a better work schedule since extended work hours were taking a toll on their health.

Initiatives Taken

Capgemini's employee-targeted initiatives are in tune with the organisation's 'People First' philosophy. PwD were a key focus of such initiatives. During this time, the health and well-being of colleagues and their families became a focus area.

The organisation instituted a Benevolent Fund for India colleagues and their families, under which a corpus of €25 million (₹200 crores) is parked separately, and the income generated from this corpus is used towards health and safety areas for Capgemini India colleagues and their families.

To support PwD Capgemini:

- Allocated laptops on a priority basis.
- Hired PwD resources for specific roles and ensured accessible onboarding and training.
- Shared helpline numbers and resources providing help to PwD during Covid-19.
- Shared helplines of mental health practitioners and 24*7 Employee Assistance programme (EAP).
- Conducted sessions on guided meditation and on ways to maintain mental health and well-being.
- Connected one-on-one sessions – periodically and whenever required – to understand issues, address insecurities and resolve queries, as well as enable project staffing.
- Enabled a new digital learning platform in partnership with Degreed, which included courses from Coursera, Pluralsight, and Harvard Mentor Managers, to help PwD upskill and learn.

Outcomes

The employees appreciated the steps taken by the organisation, especially the Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) team getting in touch with them personally. They felt valued, and their feeling of belonging was further strengthened by the introduction of new platforms of digital learning and upskilling for them.

Emphasising on quality time with family, focus on elderly care and inclusive family sessions to strike a balance between personal and professional commitments have proven to be a huge help for PwD. Providing a forum to all the employees for guided online meditation and fitness sessions has proven to be a game-changer in employee connect.

A lot of systemic inequality has been exposed as the realities of the pandemic response set in. It's easier for some people to deal with the crisis than others. The focus of the organisation has been on providing the best care for all employees, with PwD colleagues a key target group for the initiatives.

Initiatives by a PwD Employee During the Pandemic

Meghana Bhalekar, a Consultant with Capgemini for over 7 years, is actively engaged with various NGOs working in the areas of education, HIV awareness, distribution of food and clothing and empowerment of underprivileged sections of society. She was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2013-14.

Apart from her regular CSR work, during the lockdown, Meghana collaborated with her NGO contacts to execute joint projects on a pan-India scale. These included:

- Providing financial help to cancer and critically ill patients through fundraising.
- Arranging platelets/plasma/granulocyte /blood/stem cell donors for children afflicted with Thalassemia, whose survival depends on frequent and regular blood transfusions.
- Conducting food donation drives for daily wage workers and in slum areas across Mumbai.
- Sponsoring education.
- Handling Amphan and Nisarga cyclone relief projects – collecting funds, purchasing material such as foodgrain kits, arranging transport and distributing it among the needy in remote areas of Kolkata and Raigad.

Initiatives for the PwD Community

- All Digital Talent academy sessions were conducted online.
- 8000+ families with disabilities were provided with food and medical kits during the lockdown.
- A toll-free helpline number to connect with counsellors to maintain mental wellness was provided.
- The CSR programme supported families whose only earning member was a PwD.
- Masks and sanitisers were distributed amongst the PwD communities to ensure they are protected from the virus.
- Employment opportunities for deserving PwD candidates, despite the hiring freeze during this time, were generated. The hiring and onboarding process of PwD people was conducted virtually.

Impact of Intervention on PwD Employees

Employees felt more included, engaged and cared for.

Leader Speak



Ashwin Yardi
CEO, Capgemini

“ At Capgemini, equal opportunity is a business prerogative. It allows us to explore untapped talent and leverage it to create increased value for our clients through the diversity of skills, ideas and knowledge. Our inclusion programme brings together employees and stakeholder communities, including our suppliers and partners, and has helped us create both tangible and intangible benefits for the organisation and the larger ecosystem. A few key areas where we are seeing an immediate impact for the organisation from the employee perspective are high employee morale and, hence, improved productivity as well as better engagement and lower attrition. Our inclusion outreach programme reiterates our commitment to societal well-being through our civil society partners – we invest in projects that promote skilling and employability of underprivileged youth, including those with disability.

”

My Story

Balkrishna Shirgaonker
Senior Consultant, Mumbai

“I joined Capgemini, Mumbai, in August 2016 and it has been a wonderful experience. I was hired in Service Management for Group IT as a Process Manager with expertise in ITIL as an ITIL® Expert. Although I was hired for change management, I took up the role of continual service improvement and learnt a lot from my managers and team members. But life does not always flow linearly and I had to take leave due to medical reasons. After I returned to work, I was given a challenging role in Availability and Capacity Management for a project in Service Integration and Management.

This was a techno-functional role requiring technical understanding of infrastructure, functional and analytical insights. I was allowed to maintain a healthy work-life balance and successfully delivered. I was awarded the Star of the Quarter Award in the UK Europe Business Unit recently.

I would like to thank Capgemini for highlighting my achievement and rewarding me, and I truly cherish this reward. I completed 4 years in August 2020, and as I step into my 5th year with a new role as Availability Manager, I thank Capgemini for all the opportunities given to me.”

Sonam

Sonam hails from Delhi and comes from a modest background. Being orthopaedically challenged from birth, she faced many challenges during her school life. After graduation, she began exploring job opportunities but faced several rejections due to her disability and lack of communication skills. A phone call she received about LEAP Inclusion Digital Academy from a Sarthak helpdesk executive gave her a new direction. Sonam enrolled in the Digital Academy and successfully completed the training through online classes. It changed her life!

“Prior to this training, I was lacking in good communication skills, sentence construction, computer skills, English communication and domain knowledge. I also lacked in aspects of professional etiquette. I learned these skills at the Digital Academy and have improved considerably. I am working with a reputed service firm now and drawing a good salary. I am grateful to Capgemini and Sarthak for giving me this opportunity and direction in life. Currently, I am working from home and look forward to returning to the office once the pandemic is over.”

The Road Ahead

Capgemini strongly believes in inclusive progress, and its future roadmap will focus on:

- Undertaking targeted hiring of PwD to improve their representation within the organisation.
- Absorbing candidates from Digital Training Academies (DTAs) for client-facing roles.
- Building an ecosystem for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to feel an integral part of Capgemini.
- Continuing to build career aspirations and support for PwD through career counselling and mentoring.
- Breaking the stigma on silent disabilities and creating role models to attract more talent.

5 - Dell Technologies



DELLTechnologies

Dell Technologies provides the essential infrastructure for organisations to build their digital future, transform IT and protect their most important asset, information. Dell Technologies is committed to transforming businesses, shaping the future of innovation and developing technologies to drive human progress. Dell Technologies believes that diversity is power. The goal of the organisation is to build a future workforce that champions racial equity, values different backgrounds and celebrates unique perspectives. The ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion is how Dell addresses societal challenges and unlocks innovation. It's how it wins as a company - and wins the right way.

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

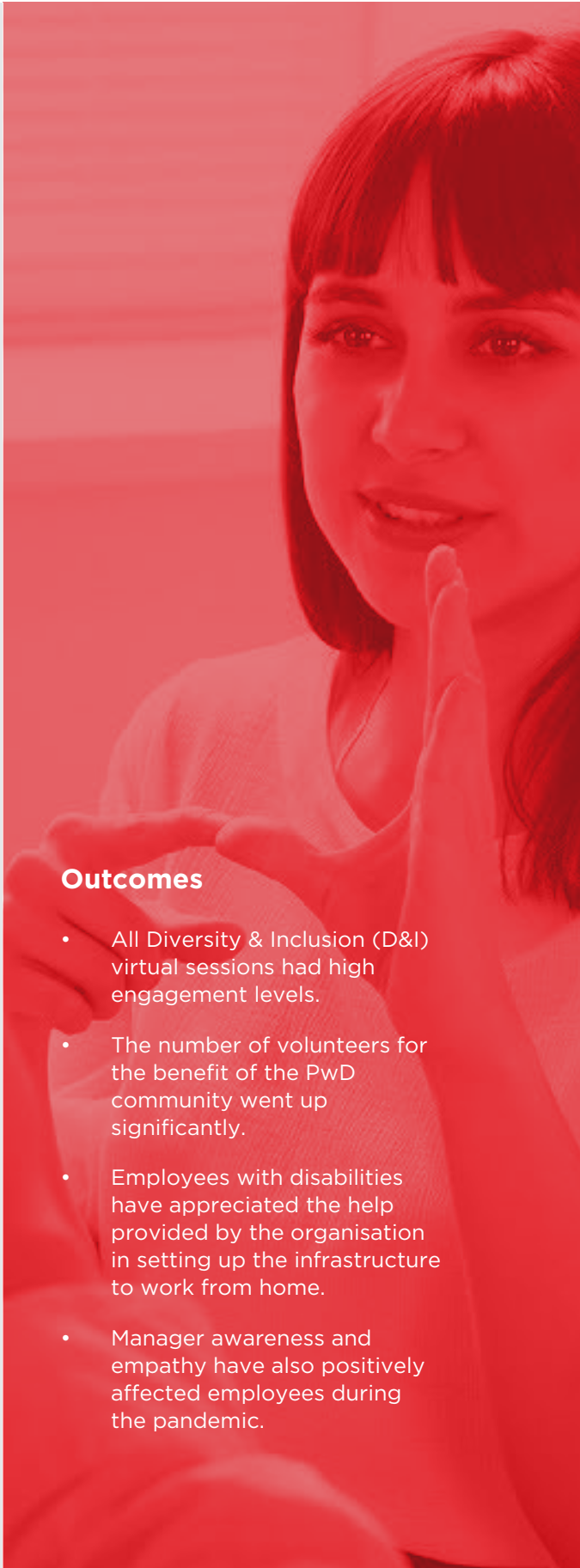
- At the start of the lockdown, all Dell offices were shut down and work from home was implemented for all. This was a very smooth transition since every team member within Dell technologies has work from home options. Some technology barriers and other adjustments for disability team members were immediately addressed.
- Return to the office will be implemented in a phased manner, and at first, only those unable to work from home will rejoin.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

- Creating home offices for employees with disabilities.
- Mitigating technology barriers and providing additional accessible software for a seamless work from home experience.

Initiatives Taken

- Microsoft Teams and Zoom was chosen as the preferred medium for online operations. In April, MST didn't offer the option of subtitles and thus wasn't accessible to employees with hearing impairment. Dell decided to roll out the pilot version of Teams with subtitles to make it more accessible.
- The organisation provided proper infrastructure such as chairs to help employees feel comfortable working from home.
- Any type of assistive device required for employees with disabilities to work from home was provided under the Assistive Tech Project.
- Regular communication was shared with managers on best practices to ensure the inclusion of all employees.
- Mental well-being sessions were conducted for PwD.
- Virtual Platform for 'Out of Box Thursdays', to brainstorm about ways to keep employees engaged during work from home, was used.
- An App is being developed to help transition back to work from the office. The App will guide the visually impaired through the office with voice control.
- Best Practices are being reviewed to implement the best practices when offices reopen to ensure hygiene and safety for all employees.
- Inclusion Hackathon: Teams across India participated to share ideas to make the workplace more accessible and increase inclusivity in offices.



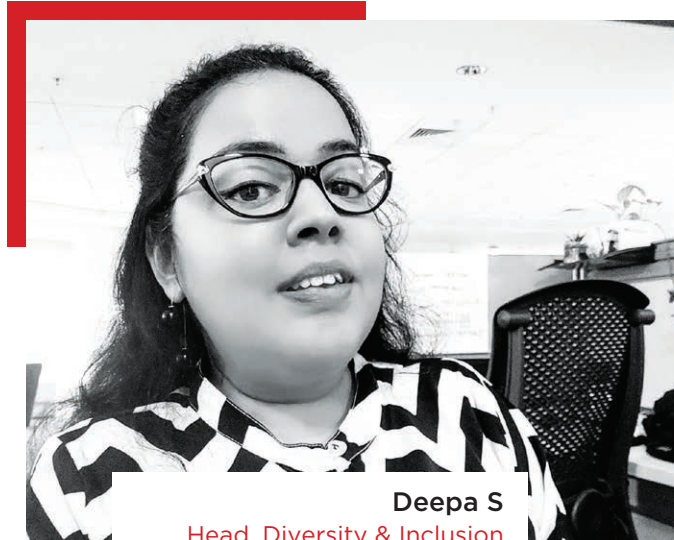
Outcomes

- All Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) virtual sessions had high engagement levels.
- The number of volunteers for the benefit of the PwD community went up significantly.
- Employees with disabilities have appreciated the help provided by the organisation in setting up the infrastructure to work from home.
- Manager awareness and empathy have also positively affected employees during the pandemic.

Initiatives for the PwD Community

- Skill at Dell: Engineer students will be offered the opportunity to take certificate courses from the company that would expand their employment opportunities. This initiative is being rolled out in Q4.
- Dell offers a six weeks Sign Language Certification Training under True Ability ERG to all Dell team members.

Leader Speak



Deepa S
Head, Diversity & Inclusion
Dell Technologies, India COE



The pandemic definitely made us quite aware of inclusion efforts and how we can quickly organise to ensure we are providing safe and seamless access for team members to be productive and effective working from home. Our ERG's played a very prominent role in engaging team members virtually, creating awareness and keeping the rhythm going. We also extended our efforts and volunteering to our communities that needed it most. With the constantly changing workplace dynamics, we continue to create a diverse and inclusive culture as we unlock our innovative spirit and embrace the new normal, so we continue to embrace differences as we pave the path for today and in the future.



The Road Ahead

While Dell will continue pursuing its goal of transforming lives through technology, diversity and inclusion will remain a focus area.

Hinduja Global Solutions



Hinduja Global Solutions (HGS) is a global leader in business process management (BPM) and optimising customer experience lifecycle. HGS is helping make its clients more competitive every day. HGS combines technology-powered services in automation, analytics and digital with domain expertise focusing on back-office processing, contact centers and HRO solutions to deliver transformational impact to clients. Part of the multi-billion-dollar conglomerate Hinduja Group, HGS takes a true 'globally local' approach, with over 37,460 employees across 61 delivery centers in seven countries making a difference to some of the world's leading brands across nine key verticals. For the year ended 31 March 2020, HGS had revenues of Rs. 52,354 million (US\$ 737 million).

Number of employees with disabilities: **160**

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

The Covid-19 pandemic is an unprecedented crisis with its impact felt across the globe by individuals and businesses. Businesses have had to shift from a brick and mortar (B&M) model to a work-from-home (WFH) model in a matter of weeks to adopt social distancing and prevent the spread of the disease.

HGS is a people-first organisation. It believes that the PwD community is an untapped talent pool that can do wonders given the right opportunities. As an organisation, HGS invests in skilling, accessibility and inclusion - the inclusion of PwD employees in the workforce falls at the intersection of these aspects. HGS believes in focusing on the talent and potential of PwD employees.

With the onset of the pandemic, among HGS' top priorities were ensuring the safety and well-being of employees and communities, and career continuity while in remote environments. Some of the challenges were:

- Managing the work of PwD employees from home due to the Covid-19 lockdown which necessitated work from home.
- Unavailability of caregivers, which was a major challenge. PwD had to either seek family support or manage on their own.
- Regular medical care for PwD, which was disrupted.
- Parents with disabilities were facing difficulties with engaging children as HGS-enabled crèche services had to close down.
- Infrastructural and logistical challenges with workstations at home.

Initiatives Taken

HGS ensures a friendly and supportive ecosystem for PwD employees. A Liaison Officer engages with them and supports them vis-à-vis their needs to help them deliver effectively. In fact, as an organisation, HGS proactively addresses all such aspects to avoid any inconvenience. Frequent 'pulse checks' are conducted via chat groups to keep abreast of how they are faring.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of all employees has been an important focus area at HGS. To support PwD, several steps were taken. These included:

- Creating awareness about utilisation of accessible infrastructure.
- Delivering appropriate infrastructure to enable work from home and taking care of logistics, with a special focus on the needs of PwD.
- Creating awareness about hygiene and sanitisation:
 - ▶ Using various communication channels, awareness about personal hygiene as per government guidelines was created. This included advice on washing hands frequently. Since this can be a challenge for PwD, the next best option of sanitisation was promoted.
 - ▶ An awareness campaign about frequent cleaning and sanitisation of personal assistive devices (including wheelchair, crutches, hearing devices, etc.) was run.
 - ▶ Since people with hearing and speech impairment find it particularly difficult to communicate with people wearing a mask, they were encouraged to inform people in their surroundings to use transparent masks that support lip reading.
 - ▶ PwD residing in apartments and societies were encouraged to sensitise the Resident Welfare Associations about their needs and rights.
- Sharing important helplines and details with PwD employees such as the special helpline for PwD set up at NIMHANS for mental health concerns.
- Giving passes on a priority basis to caregivers of people with disabilities which exempted them from restrictions during the lockdown.
- Undertaking sensitisation drives to continue engagement.
 - ▶ Global Awareness Accessibility Day (GAAD): The company marked the 9th GAAD 21 May 2020. The purpose of GAAD is to get everyone talking, thinking and learning about digital access/inclusion for PwD. To know more about accessibility measures at HGS: <https://bit.ly/3cPFtbz>
 - ▶ World Autism Awareness Day: World Autism Day was celebrated to create more awareness and turn the spotlight on the difficulties and challenges that people with autism face every day.
- Conducting a series of parenting webinars to equip people with tips and tools to engage their children through these tough times when they are unable to get support from domestic help.
- Launching an upskilling programme through internal facilitators focusing on communication and overall development to provide equal learning opportunities to PwD employees.
- Undertaking counselling sessions through professionals under the HGS Employee Assistance Programme to discuss concerns regarding mental and emotional well-being.
- Undertaking informal connects through chat rooms for periodic pulse checks on issues and problems that employees may have.



Outcomes

Various initiatives have helped provide proactive support to all PwD employees. These initiatives have enhanced the sense of belongingness that employees feel while re-affirming HGS's commitment to inclusion.

The informal connects help PwD employees to interact, network and share experiences with like-minded individuals. This has now turned into an informal Employee Resource Group where people with similar life-experiences come together to discuss issues and challenges faced by a PwD and suggest innovative solutions.

Overall employee engagement has improved, and there has been a surge in the number of PwD employees participating in internal engagement campaigns at HGS.

Initiative for PwD Employees at the Workplace

The HGS disability inclusion programme aims to integrate more persons with disabilities in the workforce by driving hiring, training and engagement. Some of our noteworthy initiatives are:

- **Reasonable Accommodation Form:** Reasonable accommodation is relevant to all 21 types of disabilities enlisted in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act including blood disorders, acid attack survivors, visual impairment, speech and hearing impairment, locomotor disabilities, dwarfism, intellectual disabilities and mental illness (including depression). HGS launched this initiative in 2018.
- **Digital Accessibility:** Pages/websites/applications which have employee/prospective employee interface and are both internal and external facing have been made accessible. Eleven of the internal platforms are now accessible to people who are visually challenged or hearing impaired. These include:
 - ▶ HGS Connect: Gives news and business updates, media coverage and covers super achievers within HGS.
 - ▶ Client Health Check: The Client Health Check programme is a leading indicator of client loyalty, client retention, reducing churn and increasing revenue; it is also a key point of differentiation that helps us to attract new clients in a competitive business environment.
 - ▶ SPARK: SPARK stands for 'Share Practice and Replicate Knowledge' which helps HGS create, gain and transform knowledge. It is a content management platform which has knowledge workflow system for a business process to share and gain knowledge.
 - ▶ TEAMHGS Website+P3: It is the official HGS website which builds credibility with contacts. It is the source of information for potential customers, clients, and associates.
 - ▶ SPM: Stratified Performance Management (SPM) is a process designed to identify, support and take corrective action for Bottom Performers using a metric-based approach across all geography.
 - ▶ Unified PAT: PAT or the Performance Automation Tool helps operations to be more productive by automating the manual process.

- ▶ TLDC 2.0: TLDC (Training Learning Development Compass) is a learning management system (LMS), a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, and delivery of compliance and behavioural courses, training programmes, or development programmes.
- ▶ All Idea Matter 2.0: All Ideas Matter (AIM) solicits, evaluates and implements process improvement ideas from employees across all levels.
- ▶ Gamification: Gamification is the process of incorporating gameplay elements into non-gaming applications such as products, services, websites, software, processes, marketing and communities to drive participation, engagement and loyalty.
- ▶ ETMS: Employee transport management system is the application developed indigenously to cater to the specific needs of the organisation.
- Emergency evacuation procedures have been made accessible for people with hearing impairment – a fire alarm system which also features warning lights has been installed in the Hyderabad premises, which also has hearing-impaired employees. A light beacon flashes to warn employees of a fire on premises, in addition to the audible alarm.
- Accessible rest-rooms at all locations.
- Dedicated two-wheeler and four-wheeler parking slots.
- Access to wheelchairs provided by HGS for those who can't afford it.
- **International Day for People with Disability:** A special one-month long campaign for the International Day for People with Disability was run at all locations with the theme - Celebrating Abilities. During the campaign, the following activities were undertaken:
 - ▶ Senior leaders learnt sign language.
 - ▶ Employee engagement activities which raised awareness and promoted inclusion were organised.
 - ▶ An Open Dialogue session was conducted by Ms. Meenu Bhambani – D&I Head – State Street on Dos & Don'ts regarding etiquette to converse with PwD.

Initiatives for the PwD Community

The CSR philosophy at HGS is 'Work to Give' for a better tomorrow. The focus is on various social priorities according to the needs of the specific geographies. In India, the CSR programmes primarily focus on health, education, skilling, and PwD welfare while the focus areas in other geographies include environment, sustainable livelihood, and veteran welfare, among others.

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, HGS has been collaborating with the government, fellow corporates, NGOs, and its employees in combating the health crisis. HGS supports the Karnataka State Government, in partnership with a few other BPM companies, with two critical state helpline initiatives: a 24-hour Covid-19 phone helpline with volunteer agents answering various queries from citizens; and Apathamitra, a telemedicine helpline manned by over 50 nurses and doctors. HGS has also donated 30,000+ reusable masks to the Bengaluru City Police to protect police personnel as they continue to enforce prescribed government guidelines.

One of the key focus areas of CSR at HGS is the empowerment of PwD. HGS has been funding projects, and though the pandemic has paused direct volunteer-beneficiary interactions, novel ways to reach out to those in need have been used. Through a remote volunteering initiative called 'Volunteers of Voice', colleagues from Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Chennai have volunteered to help students with vision impairment by creating audio recordings of textbooks from the Tamil Nadu state board syllabus. The recordings have been done in both English and Tamil for different subjects like History, Geography, Science and Mathematics. A few university syllabus books were also included. These books will be distributed in several blind schools and colleges across Tamil Nadu.

HGS is also supporting Hinduja Hospital in setting up isolation wards and purchasing medical equipment and consumables for distribution among the underserved.

Impact of Intervention on PwD Employees

During the lockdown, several remote volunteering opportunities have enabled our employees to contribute from the safety of their homes. The channels of communication for these activities have been telephonic conversations, audio recordings, and document creation.

HGS volunteers in collaboration with NGO partners have conducted 30 sessions with youth on employability skills, and general knowledge to help make them job ready. They also facilitated audio recording of school text books in Tamil to help visually-impaired students. HGS has also guided more than 22,800 people, including migrant workers regarding their food and travel arrangements.

Impact on PwD Community

The lockdown in India has impacted every section of society. Initiatives by HGS volunteers such as preparing audio recording of school text books in Tamil helped visually-impaired students immensely.

HGS has also contributed to the NASSCOM Foundation for the distribution of food and groceries to individuals who have suffered the loss of livelihood across Bengaluru, Chennai, Pune, Hyderabad, Delhi and the national capital region (NCR). Before the pandemic, HGS was involved in establishing Centers of Excellence for the skill-development of PwD, in collaboration with the NASSCOM Foundation across Bengaluru and New Delhi. Over 300 graduates have been hired as a result of the skills they have acquired. The placement of these graduates has happened at a rate of 60%.

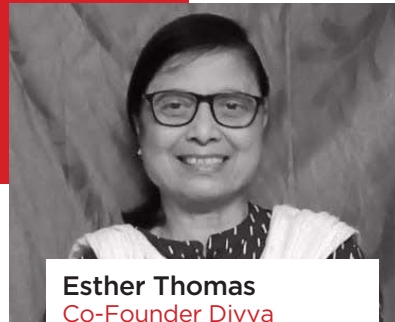
Leader Speak



Partha DeSarkar
Wholetime Executive Director
and Global CEO, HGS

“ Diversity inspires creativity and innovation, and it is not just a good thing to do but the right thing to do. The PwD community in India is a highly talented workforce who may not always have had the right opportunities for growth. We believe that they can achieve amazing things if given the right training to make them job ready. ”

My Story



Esther Thomas
Co-Founder Divya
Downs Development Trust

“HGS volunteers have been supporting us for the last two years. Every week, they engage our children with Down Syndrome in various games and activities and assist us in the handicraft-making department. Their efforts have always been of

significant help, especially to meet our order targets during high demand seasons like Diwali and Christmas. We have come to rely on the volunteer’s contributions every week to help us sustain and continue to care for the beneficiaries in our care.”



Udaya Kumar Kannan
Recruiting Manager, HGS

Udaya Kumar Kannan is a recruiting manager at HGS India. Being a PwD himself (post-polio paralysis), Udaya has a passion for combating employability challenges and creating employment opportunities for PwD. Having faced social and employment rejections early in life, Udaya understands the needs of this fraternity and brings in a strong commitment to hiring and integration of PwD at HGS.

In his two years with HGS, Udaya has contributed commendably at every juncture of the hiring lifecycle—manpower requisition to workforce onboarding, identification of various roadblocks and obstacles at every touchpoint, clearing those roadblocks, and bringing in efficiency in the

workflow. One of his laudable contributions has been to drive disability recruitment in the existing Talent Acquisition strategy of HGS.

Until September 2015, HGS had only 34 PwD employees. In the 21 months since then, HGS has witnessed a spurt in the inclusion of PwD within the workforce. As of June 2017, HGS had 273 PwD in its employee pool, comprising five out of 21 types of disabilities recognised by the Government of India.

Upon joining HGS, Udaya presented a business case for hiring PwD in the organisation, including the operations team. As a pilot for the suggested programme, 38 PwD were hired in outbound sales accounts where keyboarding skills are not as critical as inbound accounts. Post hiring, these PwD candidates underwent customised and accessible training programmes designed by the Operations, Training and HR Teams. The pilot was successful in showcasing the value addition that PwD can bring to the table and has been a primary factor driving PwD hiring in the mainstream HGS hiring process.

The Road Ahead

As an organisation, HGS focuses on creating an inclusive and enabling environment. Going forward, it plans to focus on the following:

- **People with Disability - Upskilling**
Around 15+ employees have been trained in advanced communication skills by the training team.
- **D&I Champions:**
HGS has 31 employees from various roles, levels, centers and businesses who have been nominated as D&I Champions. These employees will be assisting the D&I team at HGS with support for all D&I events/initiatives at their respective centers, and on-going collaboration with various functions to make these initiatives a success. D&I Champions will also assist with inducting new leads/managers for the various active D&I programmes, advocating for the need of diverse teams, and encouraging leaders to adopt best practices.
- **Physical Infrastructure Remediation:**
The administrative and facilities teams across the delivery centers in India are working towards improving physical infrastructure so that the movement of PwD employees is not hampered.
- **International Day of Sign Language:**
To commemorate the International Day of Sign Language, a sensitisation campaign will be run, which will give HGS employees the opportunity to learn sign language from interpreters.

7 Hindustan Unilever Limited

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), a subsidiary of Unilever, is India's largest fast-moving consumer goods company which was established almost 80 years ago. HUL has over 35 brands in 20 distinct categories such as soaps, detergents, shampoo, cosmetics, tea and many more. Some of the nation's most popular brands like LUX, Rin, Fair & Lovely and Kwalita Walls are owned by HUL.

Currently, the company is headquartered in Mumbai and employees over 21,000 people and earned sales of INR 38,273 crore in the financial year 2019-20. HUL began its inclusion journey in 2018 and till date, has 40 facilities (including factories) which have been made accessible to PwD.

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

The most significant impact of the lockdown was the transition of office spaces to work from home.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

Digital accessibility

Initiatives for PwD Employees at Workplace

- The company's medical team reached out to all employees with disabilities to ensure that they had access to all essential items and the required infrastructure to work from home.
- The medical team also continued to monitor the employees with disabilities through weekly check-ins.
- The company uses Microsoft Teams, which is an inclusive platform, to facilitate work from home.
- HUL also has a network for its employees with disabilities that allows them to connect.

Impact of Interventions on PwD Employees

- Microsoft Teams ensured that all employees were able to work from home seamlessly.
- Being able to connect with other employees with a disability helped with respect to the emotional well-being of PwD.

8 ■ Microsoft India



Microsoft set up operations in India in 1990. Currently, it has six business units in India, three data centers, operates in 11 cities and employs more than 13,000 people. The organisation has a network of over 12,000 partners in India.

Microsoft enables digital transformation for the era of an intelligent cloud and an intelligent edge. It is focussed on bringing technology and products together into experiences and solutions that unlock value for customers. Its four solution areas include:

- **Modern Workplace:** To deal with evolving business needs, distributed teams, and an increasingly complex threat environment, organisations must maintain a responsive, flexible workplace. The Modern Workplace solution area addresses the comprehensive scope of an organisation's work needs by providing seamless communication and multi-device experiences to drive digital transformation while securing compliance.
- **Business Applications:** Every process inside businesses is today getting digitised at an increasing rate, causing customers to move away from monolithic suites, disconnected data silos and expensive custom-extensibility frameworks. Microsoft is focusing on building modern, connected business applications that enable organisations to digitise business-critical functions such as relationship sales.
- **Applications and Infrastructure:** Cloud computing is the foundation for enabling digital transformation for any organisation. Microsoft provides customers with a trusted, global, hyper-scale cloud that is unique due to its hybrid consistency, developer productivity and software as a service (SaaS) application integration.
- **Data and AI:** The core currency of any business going forward will be the ability to convert their data into AI that drives competitive advantage. Microsoft is committed to democratising this AI capability - enabling every developer to become an AI developer and every organisation an AI organisation.

The company's platforms, technologies and solutions are driving digital transformation across Indian start-ups, businesses of all sizes and government agencies to build new digital capability, find new growth and seize the opportunities ahead. Microsoft is committed to bringing the benefits of technology to people who need them the most, sparking economic opportunity for all. It supports non-profit

organisations that are working to address humanity’s most pressing issues. For the last 30 years, it has been running several student and teacher empowerment programs, many of which are not-for-profit, to make youth digitally literate and digitally empowered, such as YouthSpark, Partners in Learning.

Initiatives Taken

- Internal evangelism and sensitization: Webinars were conducted to demystify disabilities, enable better communication with PwD and unearth and address biases to promote inclusion.
- Microsoft believes a diverse and inclusive workplace leads to better products and solutions for customers and a better experience for all employees. The Equal Employment policy sets forth Microsoft’s commitment to maintaining and advancing a diverse and inclusive workforce. Microsoft maintains a work environment free from discrimination, one where employees are treated with dignity and respect. These principles are adhered to in all aspects of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training, compensation, promotion, benefits, social and recreational programmes and discipline. Microsoft offers accommodation to interviewing candidates, interns and full-time employees.
 - ▶ The Reasonable Accommodations policy is the policy of Microsoft to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified employees who have protected disabilities to the extent required by applicable laws, regulations and ordinances where a particular employee works. If a medical or disability-related limitation interferes with an employee’s job performance or their ability to access company benefits, they are encouraged to consider accommodation options. Once an employee requests for accommodations, the HR team works with them and their managers to ensure these requests are supported.
 - ▶ Manager En@blement Onboarding Guide:

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

- Adequate and appropriate infrastructure.
- Greater sensitisation of managers in view of the pandemic.

Microsoft India believes that managers play a critical role in onboarding new employees and ensuring their success. To ensure that persons with disabilities are provided with exceptional onboarding experiences, 4-8 weeks before their joining, the HR team advises managers and sensitises them to the accommodations policy and resources like accessibility training, contact details of the Disability employee resource group and detailed guidance on weekly onboarding for the next 30-90 days.

- ▶ Support for PwD hired during the lockdown:
 - Special support was provided from HR, and IT teams to ensure that virtual onboarding training was easily accessible.
 - The IT team proactively ensured that employees had all the support they would require, such as screen reader software.
 - The HR team ensured they had training content as a pre-read and additional time to discuss queries. The HR team did regular check-ins with these employees to ensure their questions were addressed, and they were well supported by their managers and onboarding buddy in their onboarding.
 - Parallely, the managers of employees were sensitised on supporting employees remotely through regular check-ins and provided with resources as per the Manager En@blement Onboarding guide.
 - All employees with disabilities were paired with mentors from the disability employee resource group for mentoring.
 - PwD with locomotor disabilities were provided additional accommodations during relocation to support their new hire experience.

Initiatives for the PwD External Community

Technology and COVID-19: Replace the yellow section with the following:

Creating a digitally inclusive experience for our customers: Upskilling and enhancing productivity in a virtual work environment.

- Designed with accessibility at core, several features of Microsoft Teams—like Narrator, Immersive Reader, Picture Dictionary, and pinning the speaker during a video call—helping learners adapt to the digital world with ease. A customer case study showcasing how virtual work environments open up new opportunities for inclusion -

<https://customers.microsoft.com/en-us/story/847581-v-shesh-microsoft365-en-india>

- Thought Leadership: Centre for Accessibility in the Global South (CAGS). This is a research and outreach unit at IIIT Bangalore, established in partnership with researchers and practitioners at Microsoft Research India and Vision Empower. It aims to be a centre of excellence and scholarship, bringing together academia, industry, government, Disabled People’s organizations (DPOs) and change-makers in the area of accessibility to study and understand the various concerns related to persons with disabilities in the global south and help in creating and disseminating effective solutions.

Leader Speak

Anant Maheshwari
President, Microsoft India

“With more than 1 billion people with disabilities in the world, we believe that accessibility is essential to delivering on our mission of empowering every person and every organisation on the planet to achieve more. Technology can unlock solutions that support people with disabilities to lead richer lives and lead to greater innovation for everyone. To enable transformative change, accessibility needs to be a priority that we all collectively deliver on, and not an afterthought. At Microsoft, accessibility is built-in by design in the products we build for every team, organisation, classroom, and home. Especially in these times of change, technology needs to be inclusive, reflecting the diversity of everyone who uses it.”

My Story

Naveed Khan

In late March, Naveed Khan arrived in Hyderabad, India to prepare for his first day of work as a support engineer for Azure Core. Born with a genetic disorder that renders his bones unable to bear the weight of his body, Naveed’s family came with him to support his move and help him adjust to the first few days of his new job in a new city. Days after arriving, the government declared a national lockdown to stem the tide of Covid-19, stranding Naveed and his family in a small hotel room that was meant to be only temporary housing; it was very difficult for Naveed to maneuver in his wheelchair. Microsoft immediately stepped in to find the family larger accommodation and sent Naveed all the equipment he needed to start virtual onboarding and training. “Microsoft went above and beyond to help me start my new role in as normal a way as possible despite the sudden and uncertain conditions of Covid-19.”

9 ■ Minda Corporation Limited



The Spark Minda Group is one of the leading manufacturers of automotive components for the original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) with headquarters in Gurgaon, India. The Group was founded in 1958 by Late Shri. S.L. Minda and today has over 60 years of legacy as an automotive component manufacturing company. The Group is one of the leading manufacturers of automotive components under four categories - mechatronics, information and connected systems, plastics and interiors, and aftermarket. The Group caters to the two and four-wheeler, commercial vehicles, tractor and off-road vehicles manufacturers in India and overseas market including Europe, US, CIS & ASEAN countries with 34 state-of-the-art manufacturing plants.

Number of employees with disabilities: **360**

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

Like every person, PwD employees too faced several problems. During the lockdown, several faced financial difficulties as work had stalled for some time. The sense of touch plays an important role in the lives of people with vision impairment. During this time, they needed to be extra careful to minimise touching people or surfaces since they may carry the virus. Moreover, while the government issued guidelines and instructions to cope with the challenges during the lockdown, there were no practical demonstrations for persons with vision or hearing disability, who found the guidelines for Covid-19 difficult to understand.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

Persons with disabilities wanted job security and reasonable pay to fight the pandemic.

There was also a need for easy access to food for sustenance due to restrictions on mobility.

Initiatives Taken

The organisation provided support in various ways. There were no job losses, and PwD employees received grocery items and other essentials to meet their basic needs.

Initiatives for PwD Employees at Workplace

All factories were sanitised to ensure the safety and well-being of all employees. Masks were provided to all employees. Apart from this, awareness lectures by doctors were conducted on ways to deal with the pandemic and to help PwD stay abreast of the latest developments.

Impact of Interventions on PwD Employees

The PwD felt grateful for all the support they received.

Initiatives for the PwD Community

Food packets were distributed in New Delhi for the PwD.

Experience of a PwD during the Lockdown

A PwD employee met with an accident where he lost his hand. Two days after he was admitted to the hospital, the lockdown commenced. Due to lockdown, he was unable to procure an artificial limb, which left him very upset. He contacted the Pune Centre of the company and was given a prosthetic hand. The organisation helped him procure it.

Leader Speak



Ashok Minda
Chairman and GCEO, Spark Minda Group

“ This Pandemic has been a test for all of humanity, but it has been the biggest challenge for the more marginalised sections of society.

It is our moral and ethical responsibility to continue to support PwD in this hour, more so than ever, in whatever capacity we can.



My Story



Jeevan

“I live in the Khed block of Pune District. This lockdown was very difficult for my family and me, especially due to the closedown of all services. It was a while before the clinics for the specially-abled opened. In case an aid/device malfunctioned or broke, we had nowhere to go, and it wasn't possible to go long distances due to the ban on public transport. Things of daily use like cleaners for canes/crutches/prosthesis/orthosis, became expensive over time. The situation improved considerably once the Pune Centre for Divyang Empowerment opened and we received help from the organisation.”

The Road Ahead

Considering the situation, the organisation is planning to start a training centre for PwD, so that skilled manpower trained in the trades of manufacturing roles is readily available. Since the manufacturing sector is the largest employer of people, it becomes easier to absorb PwD as well. The trained PwD will be recruited by Minda and other like-minded manufacturing companies. This will be facilitated by the Sector Skill Council for PwD. Apart from that, the organisation is also planning an entrepreneurship model for the PwD who use tricycles as a mode of mobility, as well as the establishment of a Centre for the empowerment of PwD in Noida, which will be the second centre after the one in Pune, Maharashtra.



10 ■ NatWest Group



The NatWest Group in India, formerly RBS Services India Pvt. Ltd., provides world-class services and solutions to 19 million banking customers in the UK by leveraging India's technology talent, best-in-class back-office operations, and fast-growing Fintech eco-system. As the Global Capability Centre of the Group, the NatWest Group in India drives innovation and transformation to champion the potential of customers, colleagues, and communities.

Impact of Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

The pandemic disrupted lives and livelihoods across sectors. Persons with disabilities (PwD) were impacted too in various ways. For instance, the hearing impaired found it challenging to participate in team meetings, which moved online due to the outbreak of Coronavirus. Moreover, given the impact of the pandemic on the world economy, some of PwD employees felt very vulnerable.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

- Infrastructure to facilitate work from home such as laptops, ergonomic chairs and tables.
- Virtual support from the Leadership Team.
- Support for mental and physical well-being.

Initiatives Taken

Recognising the apprehensions and anxieties, the organisation took several steps.

- To improve business communication skills, a session was conducted on Manager awareness levels to ascertain the level of support required by them. Personalised sessions were then chalked out to improve their business communication skills over the next 7 months.
- A Business English Bootcamp was initiated across India to enhance language and communication skills.
- '24/7 Family Doctor Support' in association with Practo - a service offering 24/7 medical support via call/chat/video - was initiated.
- A dedicated medical helpline for all employees was provided.
- WFH infrastructure was provided on a priority.
- Wellness sessions covering yoga and meditation were held for PwD. The sessions will continue until the end of 2020.
- Flexible work arrangements were offered to enable a healthy work-life balance.
- Remote accessibility and other work-related adjustments to facilitate seamless WFH experience, digital self-serve options via ChatBot- e.g. Ask Archie were initiated.
- Outreach sessions for engaging with parents/in-laws/spouse of the PwD colleagues were organised.
- The organisation continued to focus on hiring PwD despite the pandemic impacting the overall businesses.

Outcomes

- Improved employee morale.
- Increased trust in the organisation.
- Upskilled PwD who are now able to support themselves efficiently.

Initiative Taken by a PwD Employee at the Workplace

A PwD colleague took the initiative to share sign language videos with other colleagues. He also shared dos and don'ts to be followed during the pandemic, which was appreciated by everyone.

Initiatives for the PwD Community

- The organisation is partnering with CII to roll out a social networking platform for PwD and their caretakers. This one-of-a-kind platform will help connect people and promote experience-based learning and resource sharing for the greater good. This platform will be a part of the India Business and Disability Network, a CII initiative which the NatWest Group is a founding member of. The objective of this website is heavily linked with the purpose of the NatWest Group - to champion potential, helping people, families and businesses to thrive. In the current scenario, the NatWest Group strongly believes that the platform will be useful and allow people to share experiences and resources.

- A mentoring session for school children with a disability was initiated in partnership with two schools in Chennai. However, due to Covid, it was discontinued, with plans to resume at an appropriate time.
- 10 wheelchairs were donated to the Nipman Foundation, thus enabling livelihood for the vulnerable members of society and students.

Impact on PwD Community

Students who were provided wheelchairs were pleased since it enabled mobility.



Leader Speak



Punit Sood
Head of India, NatWest Group

“

The Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the way we live our lives. The degree of impact varies for each individual. For colleagues with a disability, getting the right support during this time is critical. I am proud to see how our Disability Smart team is championing the potential of our disabled colleagues and supporting them during this pandemic. They have found opportunities even in the present situation to scale up our efforts and ensure our disabled colleagues are supported through various initiatives.

”

My Story

Rajesh Chandran

“I attended the Business English Communication sessions conducted by the Vishesh Team. I am now able to independently write in English using correct grammar. My Managers have appreciated my email communication skills. The NatWest Group has also provided the necessary work-related support, like laptop and chair, which has helped me immensely. I have also attended the yoga and meditation sessions. This helps me relax. The IT Helpdesk team helped me to resolve the VCSE migration in a timely manner.

My line Manager is concerned about my well-being and development. We communicated regularly, and all these things have helped me to perform well without any stress.”

The Road Ahead

The NatWest Group in India has taken several initiatives to help its employees develop personally and professionally. In 2019, it launched a development program called ‘Aspire’ for its employees with disability. This program helped PwD upskill themselves.

As a purpose-led organisation, NatWest aims to continue its learning mission. With that vision, the firm has continued to give its employees exposure to a wide variety of learning opportunities. This has helped them to upskill themselves, which is so relevant in the current macroeconomic situation. The Group, apart from championing the potential of its employees, also aims to help families of their employees and society thrive and is helping the families by providing free medical consultation for a year through Practo. Apart from this, the Group will

- Engage with the Talent Acquisition team to work through a special approach for PwD
- Offer tailor-made wellness sessions for PwD staff
- Team up with the L&D squad to offer sign language training as part of their L&D offerings.

11 Sarovar Hotels



Sarovar Hotels is an Indian hospitality chain with 86 hotels of which 83 are in India and 3 in Africa. It is one of India's leading hotel chains with both corporate and leisure hotels.

Number of employees with disabilities:
25+ (Pre Covid-19)

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

Due to the outbreak of Coronavirus, the hospitality sector is facing several challenges, not just in India but across the world. Lay-offs, pay cuts, inability to generate business and managing the supply-chain are some of the issues lakhs of small, medium and large hotel chains are grappling with.

With reduced business due to Covid-19, the demand for all manpower, including PwD manpower, has fallen.

Initiatives Taken

- In Chandigarh, Sarovar provided 500 free meals daily to its employees as well as daily wage workers.
- Given the challenging times, the organisation regularly communicated with all employees apprising them of the business reality. The company stated, especially to all PwDs, that as and when business improves, they will be brought back into the workforce.

The Road Ahead

The outbreak of Coronavirus has had a significant negative effect on the hospitality sector. It will take time for business to return to the pre Covid-19 days, and the company is expecting to see full recovery by October 2021. While currently manpower required is very limited, but as the situation improves and business picks up, manpower hiring, including hiring PwD, will go up.

12 Sodexo Services India Private Ltd



Sodexo India provides a bouquet of 100+ service offerings to various corporates, healthcare organisations, manufacturing locations, oil and gas rigs and schools and universities. The solutions include food and catering, facilities management, technical services, workplace experience, energy management and benefits and rewards services. All the solutions are aimed at improving the quality of life of the consumers, clients, employees and the communities at large. To evolve with the changing needs of the consumers is an ongoing effort. To do this, the organisation associates with start-ups to bring innovation into its services and consequently, digital convenience in the life of its consumers, with unfailing emphasis on a sustainable universe.

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

Sodexo is one of the few multinational companies that employ persons with disabilities (PwD). These individuals, via NGOs and Self-Help Groups, are recruited, trained and provided on-the-job training to earn and sustain their livelihoods. They are employed in frontline (consumer/client-facing roles) across offices in different sectors. The pandemic impacted Sodexo's operations with a complete shut-down situation or partial operations, just as it affected every other sector. Having a diversified portfolio of clients helped the organisation mobilise staff, including persons with disabilities, to essential services sectors like manufacturing, pharma and healthcare facilities where demand for labour prevailed. Those who could be transitioned to a work-from-home model were successfully transitioned.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

As the lockdown was lifted gradually across the country, a new normal emerged. The concept of social distancing, hygiene and sanitation gained tremendous importance. It did pose specific challenges for employees with disabilities; for instance, persons with hearing disability rely heavily on lip movement to understand conversations and interact with peers/externals. But due to the masks that people wore, they found it challenging to communicate. Sodexo was one of the first in the industry to introduce the use of transparent masks in its locations. Besides, close captioning was mandated in virtual meetings for them to be able to participate, contribute and engage. Additionally, a comprehensive manager's guide was developed, and virtual training sessions were organised to induct leaders on dealing with PwD in the new normal.

Initiatives Taken

Sodexo undertook several measures to continue being diverse and inclusive through the pandemic.

- Regular training sessions were organised to help PwD adapt to the newly designed workplace.
- For employees with non-visible disabilities, upskilling processes were introduced. Likewise, a supervisor's guide - Covid-19 guidelines for employees with disabilities - was rolled out. Managers took an online course outlining the challenges faced by PwD to help them address those better to ensure their retention in the organisation.
- Information regarding health and wellness, both physical and mental, was shared regularly with employees.
- The company kept track of employee attrition from all field offices to ensure that no PwD left the organisation due to managerial oversight and an inability to recognise PwD challenges and address them suitably. (Exit alerts were initiated to find out why a person left to keep control). This made businesses and manager's responsible and accountable.
- The HR workforce learnt sign language. Through the pandemic, 40 vocabulary sign language modules were put together for peers and managers. The roll-out is underway.

Outcomes

Due to the initiatives of the organisation, the employees were able to adjust to the new normal quickly. Though the company did have to contract its workforce initially, the 'Track and Trigger' policy eliminated the possibility of an employee with disability being let go due to a deficiency in managerial knowledge and understanding. Overall, 75-80% of the PwD staff was retained through the pandemic.

Leader Speak

Rohit Bahety

Country President, Sodexo Services India Private Ltd.

“

By 2025, Sodexo Group is committed to providing access to 100% of our workforce to initiatives supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities. Sodexo in India is supporting this commitment by making our organisation disability inclusive by working progressively with NGO partners, Self-Help Groups, industry platforms and our clients and partner organisations, to introduce favourable initiatives to improve

the quality of life of PwD on jobs and give them equal access. Our internal studies and those from the industry have made it evident that companies which have embraced best practices in employing and have PwD in their workforce have outperformed their peers. We're committed to double our numbers in the next two years and have brought the topic of mental health and well-being into the spotlight as well.

”

The Road Ahead

Given its commitment to diversity and inclusion, going forward Sodexo will:

- Endeavour to create awareness amongst all managers and empower them to recruit and facilitate the growth of people with disabilities.
- Ensure workplaces provide a safe space for employees to feel comfortable about disclosing and requesting for accessibility support.
- Create and leverage alliance like that with CII India Business and Disability Network to enable and strengthen its inclusion programme.



13 - Startek



Startek is a leading global provider of technology-enabled business process outsourcing solutions. The organisation provides omni-channel customer experience management, back-office and technology services to corporations around the world across a range of industries. The organisation has more than 42,000 outsourcing experts across 49 delivery campuses worldwide that are committed to delivering a seamless and transformative customer experience for clients. The organisation offers services such as omni-channel customer care, customer acquisition, order processing, technical support, receivables management and analytics through automation, voice, chat, email, social media and IVR, resulting in superior business results for its clients. Startek believes in transformative experiences and relies on its engagement specialists to service its clients.

Number of employees with disabilities: **550+**

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

Over the last 9 years, the company has hired more than 5000+ PwD who have been working from different locations and answering millions of calls every day. Currently, it has 500+ PwD employees in 13 countries. With the outbreak of Coronavirus, PwD employees faced several challenges emerging out of a need for working remotely. The challenges ranged from adapting to a new work style, adopting new technologies and processes, virtual engagement and supervision.

The other issues that cropped up related to client approvals for smooth work-from-home operations due to data security, lack of direct supervision to understand the needs of the differently-abled, inadequate infrastructure at employees' homes and logistics issues.

Although this pandemic has created havoc in the lives of everyone, its impact has been worse on PwD.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

As an inclusive organisation, Startek recognised that PwD would be subjected to higher risk and impact because of their pre-existing health conditions, difficulty in accessing health care and other essential services, and adapting to a virtual environment. Hence Startek decided to

support them in every possible way such as helping them develop new skills, offering job security, recognising their achievements and empowering their growth. The table below illustrates their requirements and the organisation's initiatives to meet those:

Requirements of PwD	Action Taken
Security, stability and adapting to a virtual work-at-home (WAH) environment	Steps taken to protect employees, new policies related to WAH and motivational stories were shared with PwD regularly to address anxiety and concerns. For employees working virtually, immediate transitioning was done to a WAH model, and computers/other systems were delivered at their residence to enable work from home.
Sensitising peer group and supervisors	Virtual sessions were conducted to sensitise peers and supervisors and relevant information shared through online platforms to promote inclusivity.
Virtual engagement	Online platforms like Microsoft Teams, Moodle, Telegram, Zoom etc. were used for sessions focussed on leadership and feedback as well as to update people on policies; reward and recognition or to simply chat to help PwD resolve their queries and to address their grievances.
Emotional well-being	Webinars such as 'The Road Never Travelled: Integrating Mind, Body & Wellness'; 'Motivating Teams with Emotional Intelligence', 'Covid-19 Employee Advisory Webinar Session by Fortis Hospital' etc. were conducted. These offered practical advice on coping during this difficult time.
Availability of HR SPOCS	A dedicated HR Helpdesk was set up to help PwD connect and communicate easily.

Initiatives Taken

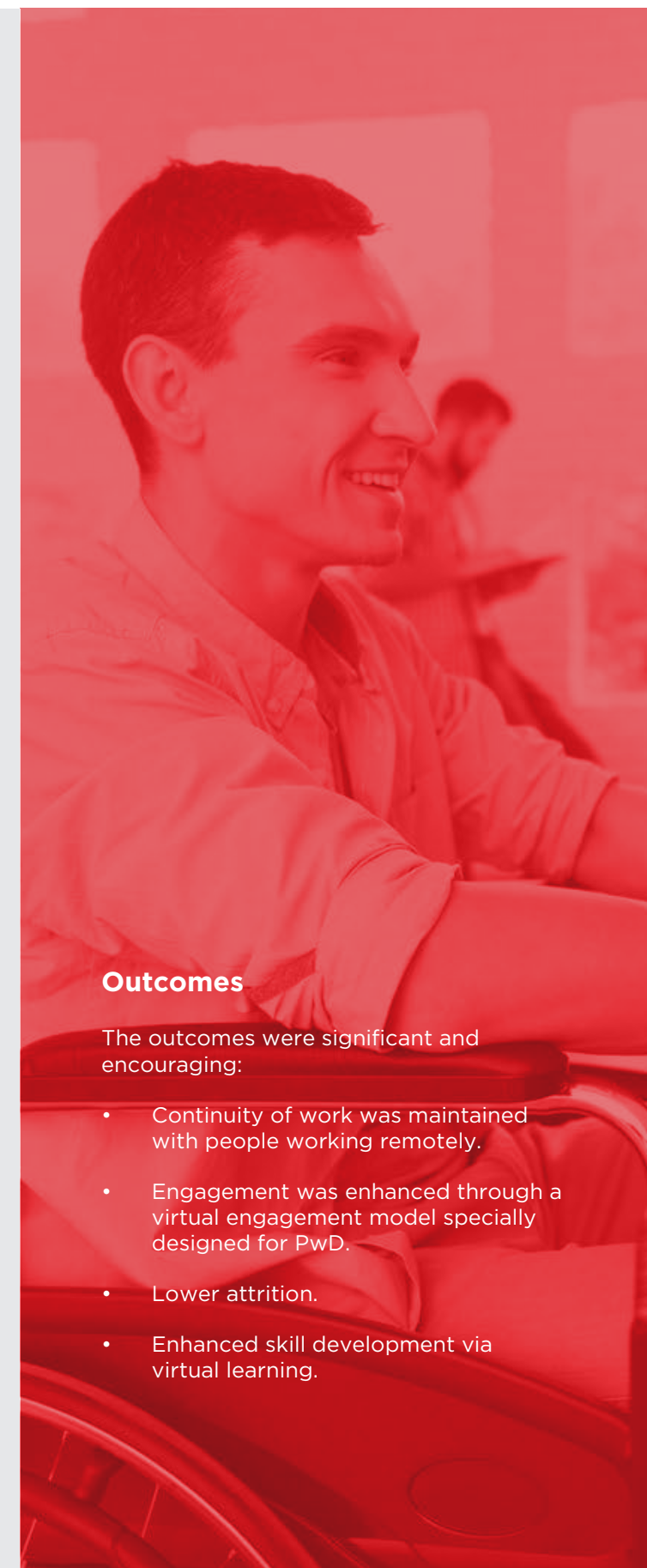
Startek took several steps to ensure the well-being of PwD.

- Supervisors and Employee Relation SPOCS proactively approached PwD to understand their concerns and address their anxieties.
- For PwD who were going out to work as opposed to working from home, mobile clinics, digital scanners, masks, sanitisers, medical practitioners, and testing stations were provided.
- Great care was taken to eliminate any unconscious bias while working remotely, especially during virtual meetings and work allocation.
- Refresher sessions on sensitisation were conducted to help PwD and employees associated with them adapt to the changes due to the outbreak of Coronavirus.
- Pulse surveys and virtual engagement models were specially rolled out for PwD to seek their feedback and enhance mental health.
- Banners and advisories for PwD were used to educate them about back-to-office basic hygiene.
- All forms of assistance in the form of helpline numbers and voluntary groups were provided to PwD.

Outcomes

The outcomes were significant and encouraging:

- Continuity of work was maintained with people working remotely.
- Engagement was enhanced through a virtual engagement model specially designed for PwD.
- Lower attrition.
- Enhanced skill development via virtual learning.



Impact of Interventions on PwD Employees

- Zero or negligible attrition resulting in greater job security and stability helped foster respect for the organisation and a sense of belonging amongst PwD.
- The virtual engagement activities and focussed employee engagement initiatives like virtual R&R programme, catch-up sessions through Teams or Zoom, dedicated HR helpdesk etc. helped achieve greater engagement.
- Employee loyalty and commitment increased as PwD became economically independent, felt productive and found purpose.
- There were no reported cases of emotional or mental health issues from PwD.

Leader Speak



Aparup Sengupta
Executive Chairman & Global CEO, Startek

“ At Startek, diversity is a conscious effort to collectively create an environment where inclusion, empathy and acceptance are appreciated and welcomed. This, in turn, leads to a sense of belongingness, fosters a culture of collaboration and nurtures a progressive workplace. Diversity and inclusion, therefore, brings about a positive and measurable change within the organisation.

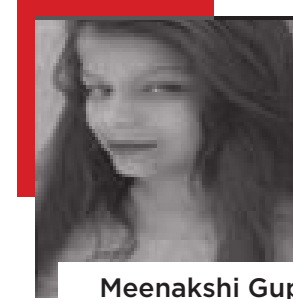
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My Story



Sanjeev Pawar

“I have been working with Startek for 2 years in a telecom process. I enjoy working here and the organisation has helped me a lot, financially as well as socially. During this pandemic when many people are sitting at home and struggling financially, I am able to continue my job and help my family. This motivates me and builds my belief in myself.”



Meenakshi Gupta

“In the difficult time of the lockdown due to Covid-19, Startek supported me completely, which was very good for my family and me.”



Preeti Bhal

“I want to thank Startek for the assistance provided during the lockdown. Thank you, Startek, for supporting me.”



Naeem

“I have been working with Startek for the last 2 years. I want to thank my organisation for its support during the lockdown. I am really grateful and proud to be a part of the Startek family.”



Farmaan

“I would like to thank Startek for understanding my situation and helping me in these difficult times.”

Tata Consultancy Services



Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is an IT services, consulting and business solutions organisation that has been partnering with many of the world's largest businesses in their transformation journeys for over 50 years. TCS offers a consulting-led, cognitive powered, integrated portfolio of business, technology and engineering services and solutions. This is delivered through its unique location independent Agile™ delivery model, recognised as a benchmark of excellence in software development.

A part of the Tata group, India's largest multinational business group, the company generated consolidated revenues of US \$22 billion in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2020, and is listed on the BSE (formerly Bombay Stock Exchange) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE) in India. TCS' proactive stance on climate change and award-winning work with communities across the world have earned it a place in leading sustainability indices such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI), MSCI Global Sustainability Index and the FTSE4Good Emerging Index.

TCS inherits its core values of diversity, equity and inclusion from the rich lineage of the TATA group with its 150 years of history and commitment to ethical business practices, inclusion, respect and community pay forward articulated in the TATA Code of Conduct and reflected in the TCS Core values.

TCS recognises that a diverse workforce is to their competitive advantage and their leadership commitment comes from the CEO. Their focus is to leverage individual strengths and power innovation to build a future forward mindset through the lens of human relationships and 'One TCS'.

The TCS Diversity and Inclusion motto is 'inclusion without exception'.

TCS has one of the world's largest base of diverse intellectual capital with 448,464 employees; FY 2019-20 from 144 nationalities deployed across the world. TCS is one of the largest employers of women in the world with women constituting over 36% of the company's workforce. The company has a multi-generational workforce with Gen Y employees constituting 85% of the company's workforce.

The company has a diversity policy which prohibits discrimination on the basis of diversity parameters that include: race, caste, religion, colour, ancestry, marital status, gender, age, nationality, ethnic origin, physical ability, and sexual orientation. These parameters are also acknowledged as 'anti-discriminate' parameters in the context of the Tata Code of Conduct (TCoC). Strict disciplinary action is taken against any violations in terms of workforce diversity. There are robust grievance redressal and investigation mechanisms in place.

Inclusive practices on Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) are:

- Creating a Culture of Inclusion
 - ▶ Policy
 - i. Diversity or Equal Opportunity Policy
 - ii. Prevention of Sexual Harassment which is gender agnostic
 - iii. LGBTQ+ addendum with medical coverage for SRS procedure and same sex partner as beneficiary
 - iv. Disability Policy (as per the Rights of Persons with Disability Law of India)
 - ▶ Infrastructure
 - i. Physical and digital access for persons with disability and/or reasonable accommodation
 - ii. Unisex washrooms
 - ▶ Creating a Supportive People Ecosystem
 - i. Awareness Sessions on Diversity, LGBTQ+ Inclusion, Disability inclusion
 - ii. Role/ function specific sessions for recruitment team, RMG team, BHRs, people managers
 - iii. Champions of Equity - nearly 1300 leaders starting with the CEO, have pledged their commitment to make this an equitable organisation
- Development of Diversity Segments
 - ▶ Focus on specific diversity segments of Gender, Culture, Disability and LGBTQ+
 - ▶ Diversity of the mind as a cross-cutting initiative towards equity and inclusion
 - ▶ Leadership and role model connects including Be Inspired Sessions and Diversity Library
 - ▶ Learning programmes and webinars
 - ▶ Coaching and mentoring programmes

- Employee Resource Groups
 - ▶ Platforms for sharing, identifying issues and solutioning where the community has agency to articulate and advocate for change
 - ▶ Customized initiatives for community engagement

Disability

Vision: To Remove the Culture of Silence and Stigma around Disability through an Environment of Access and Knowledge

Disability diversity is an area that TCS has been engaging with over a decade now. While the company has proactively hired persons with physical disabilities for over five years now, it has recently moved into the domain of recognising and embracing mental health and neurodiversity as well.

Access, Accommodation, and Engagement are three key pillars on which the company basis its approach.

The priorities for intervention include:

- Policy - a globally relevant disability policy which is aligned to the law of the land (RPWD Act of India 2016) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
- Access
 - ▶ Physical Access - in the premises as per industry benchmarks
 - ▶ Digital Access - for all especially in the context of remote working during Covid-19 times
 - ▶ Reasonable accommodation - provided on a case by case basis when there are gaps in universal physical or digital systems.
- Safety and Security - looking at physical safety and mental well-being
- Sensitization
 - ▶ Focussed webinars for associates, people managers, administration, HR functions such as TAG and RMG, to make them aware of the issues and ways in which to engage with persons with disability

- ▶ Celebrating specific days like World Disability Day, World Mental Health Day, World Disability Day
- Community Engagement
 - ▶ Employee resource group called ENABLE across locations and along with a virtual presence
 - ▶ Community Connects
 - ▶ Facilitating access to learning resources, coaching, counselling, telling stories on knome and other platforms

Post Covid, the company has adapted all initiatives to the virtual context and remote working paradigm and successfully leveraged and strengthened their global outreach approach.

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

The impact of the pandemic has been minimal because the organisation created interventions and support mechanisms starting April 2020.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

- Digital access for remote working
- Sessions for mental wellbeing

Initiatives Taken

The priority during the pandemic for associates with a disability has been

- Digital Access
 - ▶ A cross-functional team between the digital team and the PwD associates was formed to ensure that all access matters are highlighted and resolved with least turnaround time.
- Mental well-being and resilience building amongst PwD
 - ▶ Experts conducted webinars on mental well-being and resilience.
 - ▶ PwD shared their personal experience of coping with the pandemic.
 - ▶ Providers spoke about ways to access essential services.
- Parenting sessions for parents with children with disability
 - ▶ Webinars were conducted on
 - Parenting and autism
 - Parenting children with anxiety
 - Parenting children with physical and intellectual disabilities



Outcomes

The response to the initiatives taken during Covid-19 has been significant and encouraging.

- Significant increase in retention post-Covid (March 2020 to August 2020).
- Increase in head count of PwD associates.
- Increase in the number of associates joining the virtual employee resource group for PwD and allies.
- High attendance in webinars
- Demand for disability inclusion sensitisation by business and HR

Initiatives for the PwD Community

TCS runs a 45-day Advanced Computer Training Curriculum for visually impaired persons to enable employability in the TE-ITeS sector.

Impact of intervention on PwD Employees

The interventions created a sense of belonging amongst PwD. They felt valued as team members and felt they were 'change-makers' since they were part of a team working closely with the IT team on enhancing digital access.

TCS employees who are parents of children with disability have felt included because of the conversations and webinars initiated on disability.

Leader Speak

Rajesh Gopinathan
CEO and MD,
Tata Consultancy Services

“ TCS believes in leading by example, and for us, diversity and inclusion is a core tenet of our business strategy. We are led by merit in our decisions and also by creating an environment that brings out the best in our people.

”

My Story

“As a blind associate who is part of a cross-function team working on digital access, I have been able to contribute to enabling remote working for the PwD community directly.”

“As an associate with a disability, I felt very alone till I listened to other stories of how people with disability are coping. Thanks to the Diversity team!”

“I attended the resilience coaching sessions and benefitted.”

“I am the parent of an autistic child, and the sessions conducted by the diversity team helped me a lot.”



15 ■ Teleperformance



For over 40 years, Teleperformance has been connecting the biggest brands with their customers by helping their clients manage their operations and by delivering simpler, faster, and safer interactions. Teleperformance is a global leader in outsourced omnichannel customer experience management and the trusted provider of digital integrated business services. Using technology to assist humans, Teleperformance offers exceptional customer experience, back-office, and knowledge services, ensuring consistently positive customer interactions on every channel. It is present in 80 countries, employs 330k+ people, provides services in 265 languages and dialects and services 850+ clients.

Number of employees with disabilities: **165**

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

Teleperformance has always been a people-oriented company. With the Covid-19 pandemic, the scope of adapting to a 'new normal' while extending support to all employees and serving clients was huge.

Several initiatives were taken to engage and support employees, especially based on the work from home agent (WAHA) model, while keeping in mind the needs of the PwD employees. Some of the steps taken are mentioned below:

- **Communication-** Town halls were conducted to address concerns received and clear, concise communication shared with all.
- **Grievance Handling-** 24/7 availability and a tracking mechanism to address concerns/queries were put in place.
- **Provisioning-** Quick asset allocation and configuration by IT and admin teams in coordination with the operations team and HR for smooth and better work efficiency was put in place.
- **Support System-** Regular sessions were conducted, and virtual touchpoints set up over different platforms to address concerns/issues.
- **Equality-** All employees were treated equally while deploying WAHA.
- **Reward & Recognition-** To keep enthusiasm and motivation high, several remote Reward & Recognition sessions were conducted, and about 60 employees rewarded with personal Thank-You notes and e-gift vouchers from the CEO.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

All employees required support to be able to deliver to the best of their ability, given the circumstances. In particular, they required:

- Systems to be shipped to their house.
- Screen reader software. Visually impaired candidates use screen reader software which enables them to work on a computer without any hindrance. The PwD wanted to know if the CRM supports screen reader.

Initiatives Taken

To help the PwD, the organisation took several steps.

- WHM deployment for PwD candidates was prioritised.
- Dedicated PoCs provided for any help/support from an HR perspective.
- Participation of PwD candidates in all employee engagement programmes and Reward & Recognition ceremonies was ensured since these were conducted virtually.
- Bi-monthly follow up calls were made by HR to check the real-time pulse.

Initiatives for PwD Employees at the Workplace

- The organisation initiated work with skill development agencies that work to upskill people with disabilities.
- Complete assessment of all sites was undertaken to make them compliant with the needs of the PwD staff, especially as the back to office (BTO) movement was started in some locations.

Impact of Intervention on PwD Employees

The interventions instilled a lot of faith in the culture of the organisation, and the overall response has been very positive.

Initiatives for PwD Community

Under its Citizen of the World (COTW) initiative, Teleperformance supports the school of blind for the welfare of blind girls at the Society for the Care of Blind in Mohali.

In 2019, Teleperformance, under its Samarath programme, visited an NGO of PwD along with its specially-abled employees to motivate them and organised several games for them. The response was incredible. Target campaigns on social media were also initiated to hire PwD, and PwD were hired across all grades. The recruitment team also supported PwD to ensure a seamless experience during the hiring process.

Impact on PwD Community

The overall impact has been positive and encouraging.

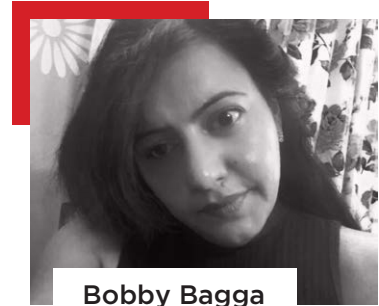
Leader Speak



Aditya Arora
CEO, Teleperformance India

“Teleperformance is committed to diversity and inclusion, and this also encompasses equal opportunities for all genders and specially-abled people. With the advent of the Teleperformance Cloud Campus and our shift to digital hiring, our selection pool has increased, and we are now able to recruit, onboard and train people from all walks of life and from across locations. With the online training, all employees, regardless of their abilities, can work from the safety and comfort of their homes and get trained for their roles.”

My Story



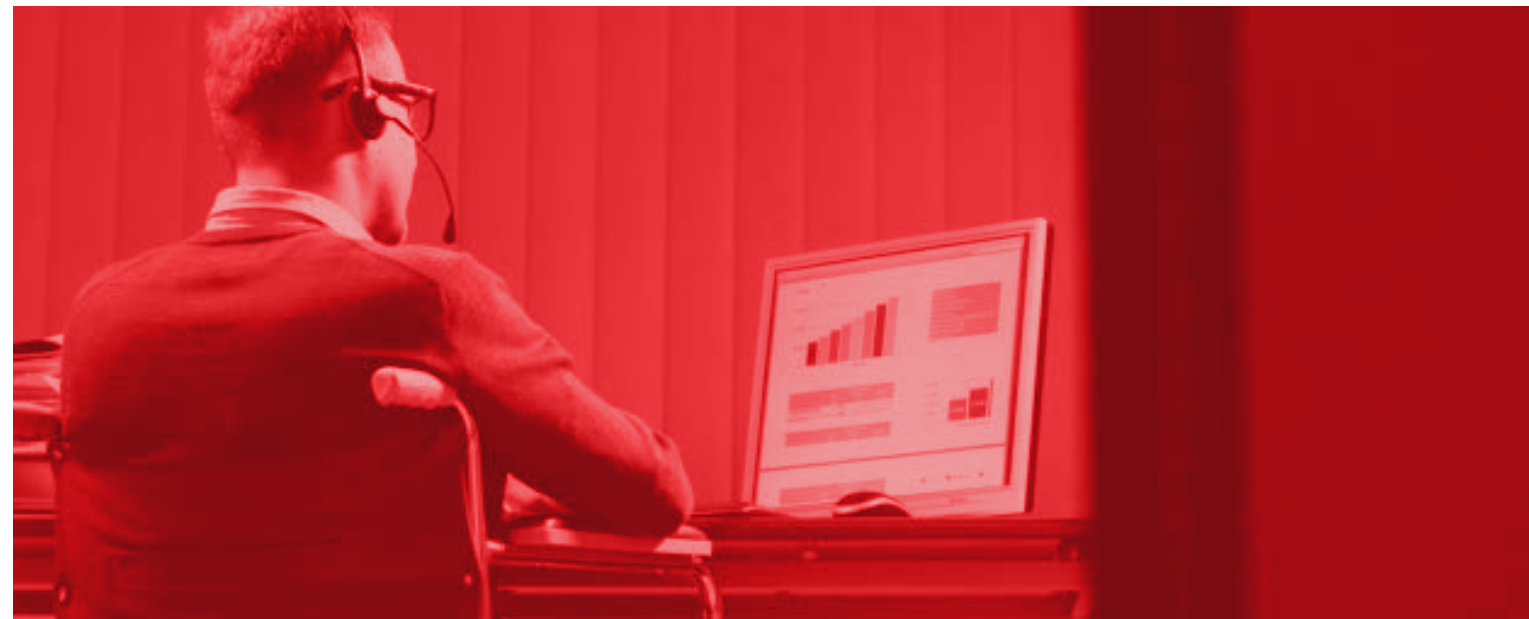
Bobby Bagga

“Covid-19 has impacted every aspect of our life, including our working style. It was challenging because access to the office was barred, but the WFH option that Teleperformance opted for during lockdown helped tremendously. The administrative and technology departments ensured quick execution and smooth functioning to facilitate WFH by asset allocation and access to the required data. WFH obviously offered more flexibility and better work-life balance.”



Vinay Aggarwal

“Teleperformance took appropriate action in response to the outbreak of Covid-19, which has accelerated the trend of working remotely from home, and the adaptation to the ‘new normal’ was successful. We’ve been working from home since March 2020 but without prior experience of WAHA. So, the leadership helped tremendously to support this transition. I got some quality family time, not having to spend time on commuting. Furthermore, we have a daily team meeting, and virtual coffee breaks with co-workers to stay connected. Keeping employee engagement in mind, regular interactive sessions and fun-activities were arranged. Recently, an R&R ceremony was organised by the HR team covering almost 150+ employees. I was rewarded as the Best WFM and was appreciated in the presence of our senior leadership team and clients. I feel motivated and glad to be a part of such an organisation.”



16 ■ Wipro Limited



Wipro Limited is a leading global information technology, consulting and business process services company. The company harnesses the power of cognitive computing, hyper-automation, robotics, cloud, analytics and emerging technologies to help its clients adapt to the digital world and make them successful. Recognised globally for its comprehensive portfolio of services, strong commitment to sustainability and good corporate citizenship, Wipro has over 180,000 employees serving clients across six continents.

The Spirit of Wipro, which represents its values, is the core of Wipro. The Spirit is deeply rooted in the unchanging essence of Wipro while embracing what the company aspires to be. It is the indivisible synthesis of four values -

- Be Passionate about the client's success.
- Treat each person with respect.
- Be global and responsible and
- Unyielding integrity.

The Spirit is the company's character and is reflected consistently in all behaviour.

Number of employees with disabilities: **600**

Impact of the Pandemic and Lockdown on PwD Employees

The company remains focussed on inclusion and diversity, and this was reflected during the lockdown as well. The company joined The Valuable 500 global movement on disability, which is a testament to their commitment to ensuring an inclusive workplace.

The Covid-19 pandemic has upended normal lives and caused an unprecedented health and humanitarian crisis. The challenges were greater for persons with disabilities (PwD) or people with chronic medical conditions. Some faced barriers in terms of access to relevant information. Some with disabilities needed additional reasonable accommodation to work from home or office (if their work required them to be present in office), while some had difficulty accessing essential/health/support services. Underlying health conditions made some persons with disabilities more vulnerable during this time.

Wipro, however, took several proactive measures to ensure the safety and well-being of all their employees during this period.

Requirements of PwD Employees Due to the Pandemic

Just like the others, the employees with disability needed workplace infrastructure support, including laptops/desktops and dongles for internet connectivity, among others. This was enabled quickly wherever feasible, in line with the organisation's practice. Some of them reached out for ergonomics infrastructure support which was addressed on a case-to-case basis. Initially, while working remotely, some of the employees with hearing disability faced challenges in connecting effectively with their manager and peers. The company then developed a guide for managers/peers articulating effective methods and etiquette to engage virtually with colleagues with hearing disability.

Initiatives For PwD Employees at the Workplace

At Wipro, disability inclusion is aligned with their strategic framework CREATE (Career, Recruit, Engage, Accessibility, Train and Enable) which provides a holistic approach to foster an inclusive workplace. The initiatives are driven both at a strategic level with leadership involvement and through its Inclusion Champions, a cohort of people who implement the initiatives across the organisation. This has ensured that the company's programmes remain sustainable.

Given below are the key practices, policies, and initiatives that are a part of the CREATE framework:

Career - Fueling aspirations and enabling career growth

AspireNxt, a career-mapping initiative, guides employees on ways to hone their skills in line with their aspirations. It directs employees to relevant courses, besides providing one-to-one mentorship.

Recruit - Hire based on skill and will

The company has a robust system for hiring suitable talent.

- Disability due diligence and a job feasibility study are conducted pre-hiring to proactively prepare for reasonable accommodation requirements and determine the fitment of the candidates.

- Besides tapping into the traditional hiring channels, the company also runs focussed social media campaigns and unit-level employee referral programmes, among others.

It also has customised hiring strategies like 'Train and Hire' to strengthen the numbers.

Engage - Deepening the inclusivity quotient

The company follows a two-pronged approach to create enriching experiences for all stakeholders. They actively engage with employees with disability, besides educating managers and key stakeholders on disability matters.

- Social Bridge is a platform designed to understand the ground level concerns of employees with disability and mentor them for mainstream integration. All concerns are addressed effectively. For example: making policy exceptions for sponsoring travel to another city to get a visa, ensuring inclusive practices, and more.
- Stakeholder sensitisation programmes are conducted across the 'hire to retire' lifecycle. This enables recruiters, trainers, human resources representatives, hiring managers, peers, support staff, and others to engage effectively with colleagues.
- The company celebrates global days, including International Day of Persons with Disability, Global Accessibility Awareness Day (GAAD), among others by organising inclusive walkathons and informative sessions to raise awareness and encourage inclusive behaviour. They also have a reverse mentoring programme to break disability-specific biases, where colleagues with disability mentor teammates without a disability. This has ensured a greater understanding of disability within teams.

Accessibility (Digital and Physical) - Essential lever for inclusion

Accessibility is intrinsic to the company's systems. They recognise that accessibility helps create a level-playing field for all employees.

- The company offers Digital Accessibility as a service to clients to make their digital assets fully compliant.

- Just like user testing, accessibility testing is critical for their in-house applications/courses/communication. As a result, several applications, online courses, the career website, among others, have been made accessibility compliant. For instance, the learning courses are enabled with audio description and text transcript to cater to the accessibility requirements of learners with sensory disabilities.
- The organisation adheres to the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) in the US and has adopted the Harmonized Guidelines in India (laid down by the government) to ensure accessible infrastructure. In addition, Wipro has trained some of their architects in India to consider accessibility at the design stage itself. As a result, tactile pathways, audio-based elevators, among others, are present in many of their new premises.
- The company has put specific policy measures along with a channel to contact accessibility champions and experts to ensure adherence to the universal accessibility guidelines.

Train - Bridging the gap

In their constant endeavour to foster an inclusive culture, the company educates key stakeholders on the importance of disability inclusion.

- They ensure that the classroom / facilitator-led training is inclusive in nature.
- They also run exclusive training batches for learners with disability.
- Facilitators are groomed to curate learning modules that are disability-friendly. These include modules on how to train learners with a sensory disability, how to explain complex concepts in an accessible manner, how to impart training through sign language, among others.
- The company has been following this approach for all training, including technical, business communication and leadership, career enhancement and behavioural programmes to make them more useful and accessible to learners with disabilities.

- An exclusive sign language training teaches employees to engage effectively with team members with hearing disability. This training is imparted by none other than colleagues with hearing disability.
 - To ensure safety during transit, drivers and escort security guards are trained on disability etiquette. It helps them be aware of how to escort persons with a visual disability and provide necessary assistance in a dignified manner.
- Similarly, the housekeeping staff is trained on methods to effectively assist employees with a severe disability.

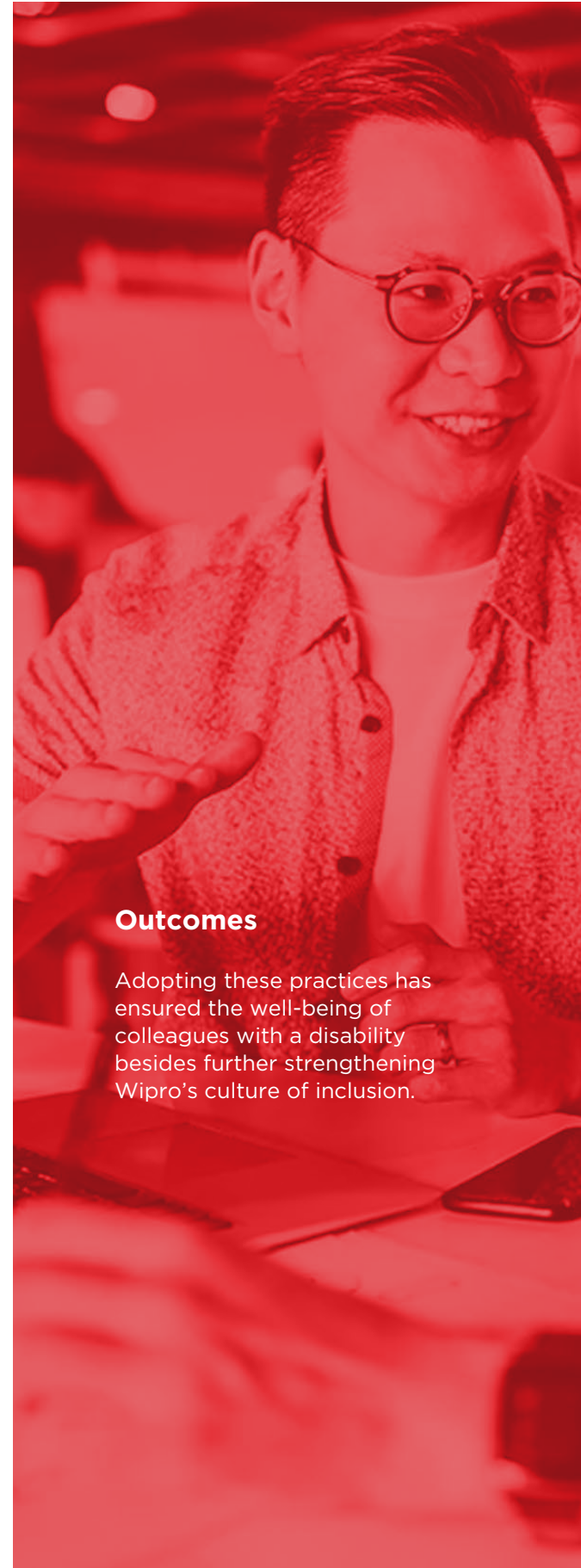
Enable - Robust systems for structural inclusion

The inclusive employment practices are reinforced with robust policies enabling long-lasting structural changes.

- In FY 2019-20, Wipro rolled out the Equal Opportunity policy that underscores their commitment to providing equal opportunities in employment and fostering an inclusive workplace where all employees are treated with respect and dignity.
- The organisation also has a policy on reasonable accommodation requirements. In addition, disability mandates are integrated into key policies such as the Procurement policy, among others. Consequently, accessibility is a mandatory requirement while procuring any new product.
- Disability is also embedded in the security systems. Personalised Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is devised for the safe evacuation of employees considering disability dynamics. As part of this plan, employees with different disabilities such as cerebral palsy or locomotor disability will have different, individualised evacuation plans, specific to their needs.

Initiatives for the PwD Community

- Wipro Ltd and Azim Premji Foundation have together committed Rs 1125 crore (\$154 million) towards tackling this unprecedented health and humanitarian crisis arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- As a responsible organisation with a deep commitment to social responsibility, they have enabled a wide range of interventions on the ground. Wipro Ltd, along with Azim Premji Philanthropic Institute (APPI), has been working primarily in the humanitarian, healthcare, and livelihood domains.
- Wipro Ltd directly supported the Fourth Wave Foundation and Urmi Foundation - organisations working for Children with Disabilities (CwDs) during this pandemic.
- Through their partnership, they have managed to reach out to over 1100 CwDs in North Karnataka and Mumbai and provided them with dry ration, basic medical care, and medication for Epilepsy.



Outcomes

Adopting these practices has ensured the well-being of colleagues with a disability besides further strengthening Wipro's culture of inclusion.

Leader Speak



Sunita Cherian

Global Head, Inclusion and Diversity,
Chief Culture Officer, Wipro Limited

“

At Wipro, nurturing diversity and inclusion is integral to our culture, and we are committed to it. We celebrate the plurality of ideas, perspectives and experiences that come from varied backgrounds. Disability

inclusion is one of the key focus areas for us. We believe demonstrating inclusive behaviour and providing accessible platforms are critical to ensure a level playing field for employees with disability.

”

The Road Ahead

While inclusion is in the company's DNA, Wipro realises that this journey is an evolving one. To further strengthen disability inclusion, Wipro plans to:

- Strengthen affirmative actions to increase the representation of persons with disabilities at the workplace and influence other corporates.
- Focus on training and hiring for unrepresented groups like those affected by Autism, psychosocial and other disability types.
- Develop more decision makers with disability in the business through career integration programmes.
- Actively scale up disability-specific recruitment in other countries and revise/create policies accordingly.

CII India Business and Disability Network - Response to Covid-19

Initiatives for Persons with Disabilities

As India's leading developmental institution, the Confederation of Indian Industry has launched several initiatives towards making India an inclusive, developed nation. In January 2019, it launched the CII India Business and Disability Network (CII-IBDN) in partnership with the ILO Global Business and Disability Network (ILO GBDN) and the Employers' Federation of India (EFI).

CII-IBDN is a network of companies that promotes and enables the inclusion of persons with disabilities (PwD) at the workplace through policy advocacy, creating and disseminating knowledge and facilitating partnerships to create an inclusive ecosystem. It supports its Member companies in employment, cross-learning and capacity building while also recognising best practices to encourage inclusion.

The outbreak of Coronavirus early this year severely impacted lives and livelihoods across the globe. Even as countries and people grappled with the challenges, PwD found themselves extremely vulnerable to the vagaries of Covid-19 as it spread across the country. Shortly after the lockdown was imposed in March 2020, IBDN convened a meeting with Member companies to understand and address the challenges faced by PwD in these trying times. The primary challenges that emerged pertained to the safety and security of the PwD as well as the support they required in their day-to-day life. Basis this understanding, CII-IBDN adopted a two-pronged approach:

- Directly supporting PwD and supplementing government efforts
- Supporting employees with disabilities

- ▶ To support PwD, CII-IBDN, in partnership with the Sector Skills Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPwD) provided free tele-counselling services to PwD to help them cope with anxiety and access online platforms for work, amongst other concerns. Certified counsellors responded to the audio and video calls received from various parts of the country. Around 200 calls were received in the first few weeks itself.
- ▶ To ensure access to daily essentials, CII appealed to e-commerce companies to offer priority delivery of items to customers with disabilities and the elderly. E-commerce companies such as Big Basket and Big Bazaar rolled out a process to prioritise delivery to PwD, the elderly, those unwell and those under quarantine.
- ▶ CII-IBDN facilitated the distribution of ration kits to families of vulnerable daily-wage earners supported by CLP India and Spark Minda in Delhi, Haryana and Jharkhand. This included support to the visually impaired and leprosy affected.
- ▶ Webinars were organised to promote guidelines and sensitise companies to the digital infrastructure and content required to enable employees with disabilities to deliver while they worked from home.
- ▶ The Covid-19 situation also led to many companies ushering in new working norms and

processes, especially in terms of remote working or what is popularly called the 'work-from-home' model. This model has opened new opportunities for PwD, especially for those for whom movement has been a challenge. To leverage the opportunity, CII-IBDN instituted a certificate training programme on Creating Diversity Champions and Leaders at the Workplace, with a vision to equip and empower companies to open workplaces for PwD. The course was spread across eight sessions and aimed to train workplace executives on hiring, managing, retaining, developing and advancing employees with disabilities, besides building an inclusive culture at the workplace. The first Cohort of champions included mid-to-senior level executives who gained a better understanding of accessibility, job identification, mapping and recruitment of PwD. The faculty for the training programme comprised Government representatives, senior industry representatives, heads of leading NGOs, leaders and experts, including international experts, from the inclusion sector.

- ▶ To support employers, Wipro, a CII-IBDN Member company and the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Centre (DOEC) released a set of guidelines in partnership with CII-IBDN that will help companies formulate Covid-19 policies that are inclusive.

Promoted by



Confederation of Indian Industry
125 Years - Since 1895



deoc
creating an inclusive world

Covid-19: Disability-inclusive Response at the Workplace

These are unprecedented times. The world has not dealt with a crisis of this magnitude and scale in living memory. As countries across the globe take strict containment measures to stop the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, companies too are developing policies and taking steps for the safety and well-being of their employees, besides ensuring business continuity. These policies and initiatives must be inclusive.

For persons with disabilities, these are even more challenging times. They may face barriers in terms of access to information being circulated within the company. Some people with disabilities may need additional reasonable accommodation in order to work from home or office (if their work requires them to be present in office), while some others may have difficulty accessing essential/health/support services. Some people with disabilities may have certain underlying health conditions which makes them more vulnerable during these times. Some managers may assume that persons with disabilities may not be as effective working from home and therefore may ignore their rights. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 mandates non-discrimination and equal protection during an emergency. Hence, it is important to take proactive measures to protect employees (including contract workers) with disabilities during this period.

Here are some broad recommendations for organisations to ensure inclusion and support to employees/partners with disabilities during the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Ensure that employees with disabilities receive accurate information about the disease, prevention methods and the services offered by the company,

government and civil society organisations (including disability-specific information) regularly, in easy-to-read and accessible formats. If sign language videos can be made, it would greatly help the hearing impaired.

- Proactively reach out to all employees who have identified themselves as persons with disabilities and medical conditions, employees who are caregivers and pregnant women regarding their health and check if they need any support/additional accommodation (such as assistive technology, furniture or any other support) to ensure that they continue to remain productive.
- Some people with disabilities may need assistance in accessing essential health services (for example, blood transfusion, dialysis etc.) and in buying groceries, medicines, food and so on. Connect them with organisation /shops that are providing these services. If some people with disabilities have been asked to vacate their places of stay, help them find an alternate place to stay or provide accommodation at a company guest house during the lockdown period.
- Send out a communication to all managers/supervisors to ensure non-discrimination of employees with disabilities while allocating work, organising meetings, among others. Companies must follow the government's directive against laying off people or cutting salaries of employees during the pandemic.
- Managers should interact frequently with the entire team including team members with disabilities, to help boost their morale

during this time. Some of the measures that managers can take are: have regular team meetings (ensure these meetings are accessible to people with visual, hearing and communication disabilities by using platforms which also have a transcript facility or have an online sign language interpreter); have an informal conversation at the beginning of the meetings to know how each one is doing; give time for employees to adjust to the altered work routine/remote work and seek feedback, among others.

- An employee assistance programme/counsellor on call can be introduced to provide counselling for personal and work-related issues. If the company already has such a programme, send out a mail to all employees informing them about the availability of such a programme. In Bangalore, NIMHANS is offering free counselling over the phone.
- People with disabilities may need gloves and sanitisers in addition to masks as they may need to hold railings to walk or climb stairs. Ensure the disinfection of entrance doors reserved for persons with disabilities, handrails of ramps or staircases, wheelchair rims, etc.
- All preparedness initiatives and plans should be inclusive. For example, if there is a phone-based support system available, ensure that the support system is accessible through SMS and email as well.
- Hold an awareness session for the emergency response team members and HR managers regarding disability-inclusive responses and educate them regarding disability-inclusive practices.

- In case an employee with disability requires access to health services/hospitalization /requires to be quarantined, ensure the availability of a sign language interpreter, personal assistant, transport, counselling and/or any other reasonable accommodation that may be required.
- If an employee who is a caregiver of persons with disabilities needs to be quarantined or hospitalized, help find a person to support the person with disability at home and/or provide caregiving allowance.
- Ensure that persons with disabilities in need of health services due to the Covid-19 pandemic are not deprioritised on grounds of their disability.

Pan India Resources for any Support

- Common Helpline Number: 1075, 9013151515, 011- 23978046
- Delhi Government Online Support Link: <https://epass.jantasamvad.org/epass/init/>
- NIMHANS - for counselling/ mental health concerns: 080 46110007
- National Thalassemia Welfare Society Federation of Indian Thalassemics: Tel (off) +91-11-25511795, 796 Mob (off) 9312273959 Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Society of Bangalore: 9880188874 (for blood requirement)



Confederation of Indian Industry
125 Years: 1895-2020

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government, and civil society through working closely with Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness and business opportunities for industry.

For 125 years, CII has been working on shaping India's development journey and, this year, more than ever before, it will continue to proactively transform Indian industry's engagement in national development. The premier business association has more than 9100 members, from the private as well as public sectors, and an indirect membership of over 300,000 enterprises from around 288 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

With 68 offices, including 10 Centres of Excellence in India, and 8 overseas offices in Australia, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Singapore, UAE, UK, and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with 394 counterpart organizations in 133 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

Confederation of Indian Industry

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The India Business and Disability Network (IBDN) is a CII initiative to facilitate inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and workplace diversity in India.

The primary purpose of IBDN would be facilitating inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and workplace diversity in India.

The IBDN is going to be a one-stop solution to promote employment of PwDs while responding to the needs of the private sector. The IBDN will give a platform for companies' mutual learning and experiences as well as context-based solutions and engagement with other stakeholders.

Goal of IBDN: Promote and enable inclusion and equal opportunities for Persons with Disability at workplace through knowledge sharing, collaborative action, and improving technical skills of member organizations as well as to facilitate and assist companies in adopting products and services to create inclusive and accessible workplace.

Join the exclusive network for inclusion & mainstreaming of PwDs #CII4PwDs

For further information on IBDN, please contact

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