INCLUSION BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR CORPORATES

Key Learnings from India Initiatives of Four Champion Companies in IT/ITEs Sector

Contents

Acronyms Used

ABA	Australian Banking Association
ALLEGIS	Allegis Group, India
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAW	Disability Awareness Workshop
D&I	Diversity and Inclusion
EAP	Employee Assistance Program
EFI	Employers' Federation of India
ERG	Empowerment Resource Group
EwD	Employee with Disabilities
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HI	Hearing Impairment
IBDN	India Business and Disability Network
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ID	Intellectual Disability
IEEP	Individual Emergency Evacuation Plan
IT	Information Technology
ITES	Information Technology Enabled Services

ILO	International Labour Organization
JAWS	Job Access With Speech
LD	Learning Disability
MSP	Multi-stakeholder Partnerships
NCPEDP	National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People
NCYD	National Convention for Youth with Disabilities
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSDC	National Skill Development Corporation
NSCS-DA	National Career Service Centres for Differently Abled
OH	Orthopaedic Disability
PEEP	Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan
PwD	Persons with Disabilities
RPwD	Rights of Persons with Disabilities
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
TMS	Transport Management System
WCAG	Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

In 2011, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that approximately 7% of India's population comprised persons with disabilities. It is widely believed that if a survey is to be done now, with its enumeration process in line with the revised definition of disability (as per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016), the number may be as high as 15%. This minority, which anyone can be a part of at any point of time, harbours an enormous wealth of talent, commitment to perform and willingness to work hard. However, the inclusion of persons with disabilities continues to remain an underserved segment due to social and physical barriers. These barriers deny fulfilment of ordinary aspirations and restrict persons with disabilities to the confines of their homes and institutions. Thus, the unemployment rate amongst them is as high as 63% as against 15% in persons without disabilities.
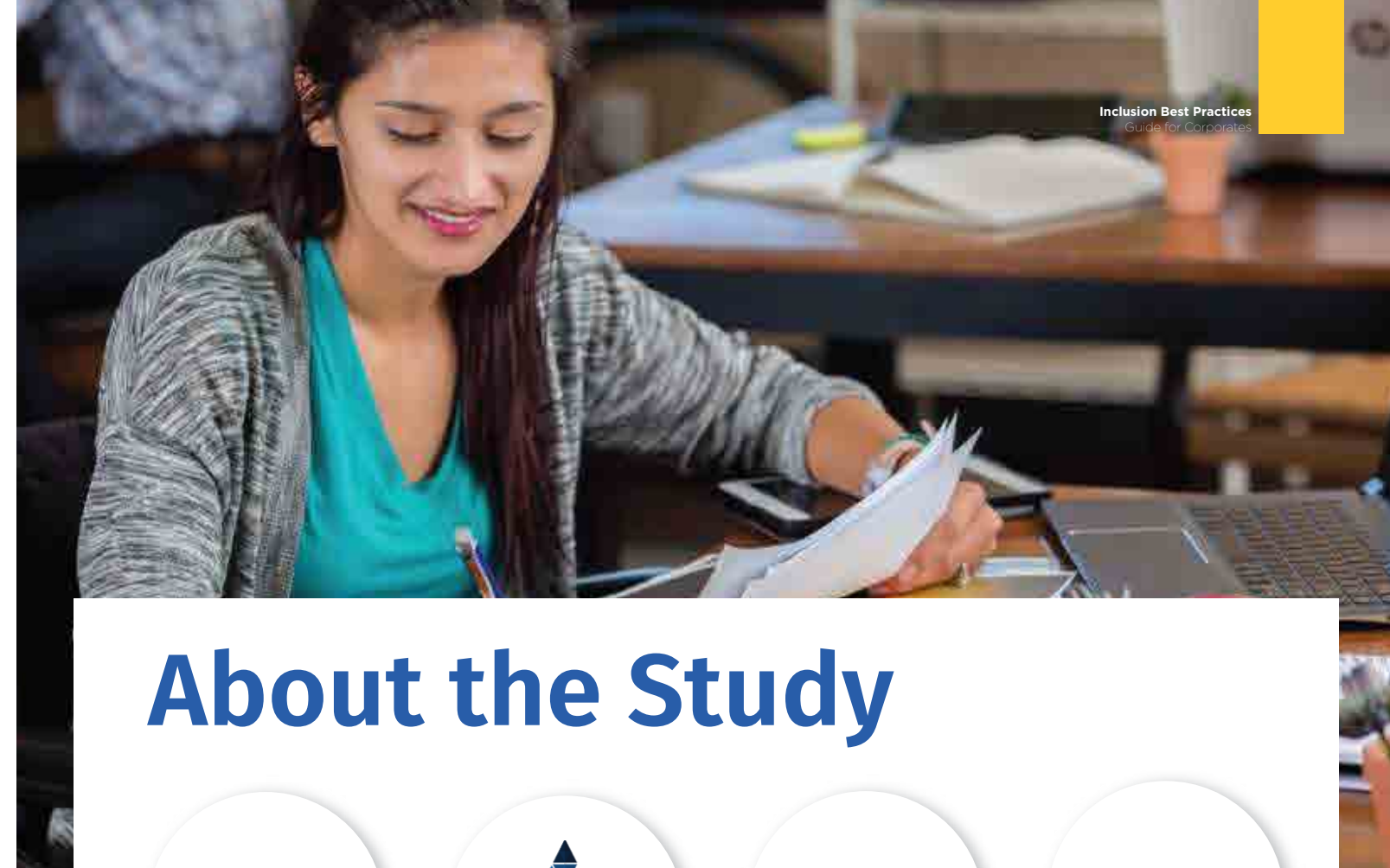
Globally, it is seen that disability confidence provides companies with an opportunity to lead the way and discover the skills and talent that would go unnoticed and untapped, whilst improving reputations by demonstrating a company's commitment to fair employment practices. Additionally, including persons with disabilities in the workplace can help develop new approaches to problem solving, innovation, and identifying new market opportunities. Yet, persons with disabilities constitute less than

1% of the workforce in the Government, private sector and multinational companies.

Recognizing the important role that the private sector can play in mainstreaming the inclusion of persons with disabilities, the India Business and Disability Network (IBDN) is hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Employers' Federation of India (EFI) to engage, enable and empower companies to embrace the inclusion of persons with disabilities. It is envisaged that the IBDN will emerge as a one-stop solution for policy advocacy, knowledge creation and dissemination, facilitating employment, building capacities and sensitizing employers, and catalyzing partnerships.

IBDN is a structured effort by CII to bring together all stakeholders on a common platform to introspect, address challenges and seek holistic solutions, thus promoting and facilitating an inclusive, accessible and a barrier-free workplace. As part of this effort, CII has partnered with v-shesh Learning Services Pvt. Ltd. (www.v-shesh.com) to develop a detailed toolkit for IT companies to kick-start their journey to inclusive workplaces. The toolkit is based on the experience of selected champions in the field who have created an inclusive ecosystem for persons with disabilities in their organizations[1]. Refer to the Annexure for details.

About the Study

Disability inclusion means enabling and empowering those with visible and invisible disabilities to participate fully in the workplace.

Although much of India Inc is still lagging when it comes to employing persons with disabilities, the Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITES) companies have been prominent employers. IBDN thus decided to undertake a sectoral case study focusing on IT/ITES companies and their inclusion practices with the hope that this will help chart a roadmap for several similar companies across sectors.

This study reviews experiences of the companies[2], Accenture, Allegis, ANZ and Dell Technologies, using existing literature, interviews and site visits. These companies started their disability-inclusion journey

more than five years ago, and between fostering innovation and learning to monitor and model their efforts, they have followed an organic process of incorporating several big and small changes which now define the overall ethos of the company. They have achieved high standards, and while it may seem like a formidable agenda now, it is with small, well-crafted initiatives in the right direction that these companies have been able to foster inclusion in their ecosystem.

All these participating companies are Members of CII-IBDN. They have come together to drive this study with the hope that their own journeys will go beyond the walls of their individual organizations and create a multiplier effect in their efforts towards mainstreaming inclusion of persons with disabilities.

[1] Diversity in workplace can include -race, ethnicity,g ender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, generation, disability, personality type, thinking style. This report focuses only on disability inclusion and related practices.

[2] Refer annexure for more details about the participant organizations

Objective

This study aims to enable companies to become disability-confident organizations by focusing on removing barriers and increasing accessibility. The outcome is an inclusion framework, which is built along four pillars, and which will guide execution. These four pillars have emerged out of the common challenges faced by the participating companies on the path of including persons with disabilities and showcases the key best

practices that helped them overcome these challenges. The best practices have been developed and executed by the participating organizations.

While there is no single blueprint that all companies can follow to promote disability inclusion, every company can apply the outlined principles and approaches according to its situation.

Pillars to Build a Disability-Confident Workplace

Inclusive Policy and Governance

- Top Management Commitment, Equal Opportunity Policy
- Inclusiveness in the Supply Chain
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Inclusive Recruitment

- Framework to Guide Execution
- Recruitment & Recruitment Models

Awareness and Adaptations

- Workplace Awareness and Sensitization
- Workplace Accessibility and Accommodation
- Equal Opportunity Workplace

Partnerships

- Leverage / Exchange - External support for raising awareness on disability; sourcing talent; creating an inclusive and accessible workplace
- Combine / Integrate - Partnerships bringing together complementary resources to create value for the organization and ecosystem
- Transform - Multiple actors enable systemic transformation

Limitations

- True integration and internalisation of disability require a change in mindset, flexibility and innovation. It is a gradual learning process, and what may work for one organization may not work for others. This study is a compilation of good practices that have worked for participating organizations. It should be treated as a reference and not a quick-fix solution for all workplace challenges in disability inclusion.
- This study is designed for the IT sector and hence covers associated jobs and recruitment models. Nevertheless, the basic tenets are applicable across sectors.

Executive Summary

While the four participating companies have varied clientele, scale and scope of work, important lessons can be learnt from them to successfully implement diversity and inclusion efforts that are scalable, sustainable and have global relevance. These lessons are outlined below within four pillars.

Pillar 1
Inclusive Policy & Governance

- Senior leaders champion diversity and inclusion (D&I) and participate in the management process, thus setting the tone for the rest of the organization to follow.

- Companies have a well-designed and published Equal Opportunity Policy; global strategies are used as guiding principles, adapted and implemented according to the local situation.

- Integrating persons with disabilities in the overall D&I framework and being involved in engagement forums to sustain a disability -inclusive ethos is a good practice and common amongst all participating companies.

Pillar 2
Inclusive Recruitment

- From the beginning, people are hired in mainstream jobs and not just for support functions or less critical roles. There are well defined and closely-monitored targets for recruitment and penetration across roles and levels.

- Inclusive hiring criteria goes beyond the traditional filtering approach comprising cut-off scores, aptitude tests, multiple interviews to focus on job-relevant skills and overall learnability, interest and attitude for succeeding in the role. In general, recruitment is seen holistically to include specific internal procedures, screening and selection policy, training and adaptation for jobs. The need for redefining policies - recruitment, HR, employee benefit, travel is also addressed simultaneously.

- Companies partner with specialist recruitment agencies and disability organizations. They also network more at forums (with footfalls of persons with disabilities / disability organizations) to extend their hiring outreach.

Pillar 3
Awareness and Adaptations

- Disability inclusion is not treated as an HR-centred initiative. Instead, the focus is on the individual and on creating an environment where the person feels comfortable to voice his/her needs. Thus, in addition to monitoring recruitment numbers, there is a focus on capturing more granular information such as employee responses and feedback about policies and processes.

- Disability inclusion is not treated as a one-off initiative. Monitoring and retaining a diverse talent pool is 'work in progress' guided by tangible goals.

- The focus is on increasing engagement with persons with disabilities and leveraging this experience/ learning to:
  - Build multiple perspectives
  - Find diverse resolutions to a problem through different interpretations and use the learnings to create a more nurturing work environment and produce better products / services / customer experience

All companies closely monitor their disability statistics. Improved statistics mean:
  - Increased disability hiring; many more consider the company an employer of choice
  - Increased number of people feel confident to self-declare
  - Improved retention and overall performance of people with disabilities working in the organization

- Staff sensitization is achieved not just from formal workshops but also through events and campaigns organized regularly. Sensitization of everyone - from guard-to-board - is considered important. Employee resource groups play a key role in creating an overall positive ethos towards disability inclusion. Rather than trying to achieve a total overhaul for complete physical and digital accessibility, these companies started with immediate needs and gradually achieved complete accessibility as per the guidelines. None of these changes were a major undertaking, but they went a long way in enabling:
  - The hiring of persons with disabilities
  - Making the office safer and more accessible
  - Establishing the company's dedication towards creating a more inclusive environment for all

- There are well-defined protocols for reasonable workplace accommodation. Centralised budgets, proactive and not reactive policies enable smooth, effective and dignified access to the accommodation.

Pillar 4
Partnerships

- CSR Budgets are allocated to disability-related partnerships/initiatives and closely monitored for impact. A very hands-on approach and not 'passive box ticking' approach is followed towards these partnerships.

- Diversity in partnerships (having an impact at the organization level or the disability ecosystem level) has helped the organizations in building a very rich and diverse perspective on disability inclusion.

- Joining forces with initiatives such as Mission 1000, CII-IBDN, India Inclusion Summit. have allowed cross-industry partnerships, thus catalyzing their journeys and enabling them to extend impact beyond their organization to the entire ecosystem.

Pillar 1
Inclusive Policy and Governance

The Leadership needs to endorse disability inclusion as an important focus area for the organization and communicate their commitment to ensure it cascades across the organization, thus promoting and sustaining an inclusive culture.

Challenge

Management Commitment and Accountability

- Defining **disability inclusion goals** and **policies** and **cascading** them across the organization.
- Ensuring **compliance, monitoring progress, revisiting goals** and making adjustments as per industry trends / business needs.

Inclusiveness in Supply Chain

Is there an innovative way to make customers, vendors, sub-contractors, and suppliers aware of and committed to the organization's disability inclusion policy **Trickle effect to achieve scale in impact?**

Corporate Social Responsibility

How are **disability inclusion goals** woven into the Corporate Social Responsibility **(CSR) Policy** in a way that they not only serve CSR objectives but also impact the overall ecosystem?

Solution

- **Defined ownership** - specific action plan, earmarked budgets, **D&I Lead/Team** and clearly defined roles
- **Defined targeted goals** for employment/career progression of persons with disabilities.
- **Internal and external communication** strategy to ensure that everyone (within /outside the company) is aware of management commitment.
- Well defined and **published Equal Opportunity Policy.** Specific focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all organizational policies and practices **(as per RPwD Act 2016).**

Disability inclusion policy that extends to clients, vendors, suppliers and dealers, along with employees. This makes the whole disability inclusion agenda mutually reinforcing across the organization.

- Welfare measures for persons with disabilities and raising awareness on disability inclusion as a focus in the organization's CSR policy.
- **Specific budget** earmarked for disability and related practices in **CSR.**
- **Volunteering opportunites and partnerships established** for CSR are with causes and organizations, respectively, which focus on disability.

1.1 Management Commitment and Accountability

For the four companies, disability inclusion efforts started with the desire to mirror the diversity in society in the workplace. While the first set of recruitments may or may not have been a planned initiative, the success achieved through these initial initiatives helped establish the business case for hiring more persons with disabilities and thus kick-started the creation of robust processes and policies for increased scale of hiring.

Though each of the four companies followed their journeys depending on the kind of culture they wanted to build, the common thread across the organizations was the strong vision and accountability of the leader(s). Any disability inclusion program is as good as its leader's vision and accountability and, therefore, all companies which have a strong disability inclusion agenda and have been successful in the journey are backed by a strong leader who not only sets the vision but also creates accountability throughout the chain through purposeful monitoring of progress.

Some of the common best practices which are followed across the participating companies are mentioned below:

- In all companies the strategic thrust came through a 'top-down' approach wherein commitment and accountability are driven by the leaders by establishing vision, setting targets and engaging full-time resources (referred to as D&I team) who commit time and goals to the disability inclusion agenda. The D&I team works closely with various business functions across the organization and sets the pace and purposeful monitoring of progress by engaging individually with leaders of various divisions in understanding their contribution, e.g. hiring goals of the organization for persons with disabilities and, the policy thrust that comes from the management. Plans are drawn up by the D&I Team (Employment Resource Groups) in terms of identifying job roles to be made accessible for persons with disabilities, and targets and timelines are set with the business functions. Integrating the persons with disabilities workstream in the overall D&I framework and involvement in engagement

forums to sustain a disability-inclusive ethos is a good practice and common to all participating companies.

- All companies have designed an inclusion policy as per the Rights for Persons with Disabilities Act. The policy has a written code of conduct that reflects the rights of employees with disabilities and addresses topics such as harassment and discrimination. The Code extends to grievances of vendors, clients, suppliers, customers and other stakeholders with disabilities. The policy also identifies a designated team / ombudsman as a focal point for addressing any complaints / grievances.

- The Inclusion Policy is made available on the intranet / corporate website/ and displayed in prominent places in the Head Office and Regional Office. Key principles are re-iterated in townhalls and large gatherings. The relevant policies are included as mandatory on-boarding topics and communicated to and re-iterated for all employees through e-modules or through classrooms sessions.

- Prestigious awards instituted by NASSCOM and NCPEDP have spurred the disability inclusion efforts and motivated the team to further scale-up and channelize their energies.

Innovative strategies followed by the partnering companies

ANZ

To establish a dedicated focus on diversity and inclusion priorities, the Bengaluru D&I Council has been set up. It brings together existing networks comprising of FORWARD (an employee resource group championing gender balance and creating a supportive networking environment), PRIDE (a voice, contact point and support mechanism for LGBTIQ+ people and their allies), Abilities Network (an employee resource group making a positive difference for people with disability) and the CSR together. The D&I Council is chaired by the MD and comprises of Business sponsors, Enablers and Network co-leads. The D&I Council framework helps in:

- **Global Alignment:** All networks are connected with their respective global chapters and leverage best practices.

- **Accountability & Governance:** The Council ensures tight alignment with the organization's overall business strategy, creates strategic accountability and provides governance and oversight. The D&I Council periodically reviews the focus, outcomes and progress of the networks to ensure that there is a diverse and robust inclusive culture and workforce. Overall the Management is committed to measuring the efficacy of the Inclusion Policy on the ground and if needed, re-design and re-adjust strategies.

- **Participation and Engagement:** Each of the networks has its own Steering Committee which creates and implements a focused plan every year that is approved by the D&I Council. Objectives of each network are set at the beginning of the year and socialised with the India Management Team (IMT).

Objectives of the Abilities Network:

- Increase the number of persons with disabilities employed by ANZ Bengaluru, identify new opportunities and promote cross-skilling

- Create a positive environment for persons with disabilities to bring their ideal self to work.

- Create career paths for existing persons with disabilities by x mentors and organizing need-based training.

- Organize in/formal meets - A calendar of events is put in place at the beginning of the year which not only includes celebrating key days but also in/formal meets with MD and COO on a regular basis through floor walks, 1:1 sessions over tea breaks and exclusive interactions with senior management.

Due to its robust policy and practices and a very open inclusive culture, the Employee Engagement Scores for D&I ranges in the 90s. The annual employee survey, 'My Voice' captures the D&I score. The D&I scorecard is aligned to the ANZ Group D&I agenda and to the respective Network's agenda.

S V Venkataraman
Managing Director
ANZ Bengaluru
Service Centre

❝ **ANZ is committed to building a community where every single person is valued, heard, respected, empowered, and feels a real sense of belonging. We at ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre drive accountability by setting targets and measuring performance across our business, governed by our Diversity & Inclusion Council. We are keen to play our part in supporting the communities in which we operate as it aligns strongly with our purpose – to shape a world where people and communities thrive.** ❞

accenture

Accenture is a signatory of the ILO Global Business and Disability Network Charter, a founding member of the CII-IBDN and a member of Valuable 500 Inc. Through these networks, it expresses its solidarity towards the cause and its commitment to promote and facilitate an inclusive, accessible and a barrier-free workplace.

- A dedicated body, India Accessibility Council, is responsible for ideating, strategizing, executing and reviewing the entire process related to the inclusion of persons with disabilities at Accenture. The Council reviews the growth strategy for persons with disabilities, drives sensitization and awareness programs and plans, and champions engagement and accessibility enhancements strategies.

- Accenture's initiatives for inclusion of persons with disabilities in its workforce is built on 4 principles – Employ, Enable, Engage and Empower (refer to Accenture's disability inclusion research report for details).

- While there are practical challenges of creating a robust and active model for such a big

> **Through our India Accessibility Council, comprising senior leaders across businesses, we are enabling physical, technology and attitudinal accessibility. We are also deploying assistive technologies to help our people harness their unique skill-sets and achieve success in roles they may have not considered before.**
>
> **Nizar Sajan**
> Managing Director, Accenture India Persons with Disabilities Sponsor

> **As a responsible business, we are committed to accelerating equality for all to drive innovation. We began our inclusion and diversity journey a few years ago and developed a robust framework and programs to create opportunities for persons with disabilities to thrive in our organization.**
>
> **Deepashree Basu**
> Associate Director, India Talent Strategy and Inclusion & Diversity Lead for India, Accenture India

and diverse organization, a well-designed, centrally-run structure with business sponsors (for inclusion and diversity agenda) from each business unit drive the program strategy, implementation rigour, governance and communication (through informal and formal channels such as Leadership Meetings, Townhalls). It cascades an ethos of inclusion across the organization and ensures that the process / policy decisions are cascaded across the India business, comprising more 200,000+ employees.

DELLTechnologies

Michael Dell chairs the Global D&I Council, which is a strong foundation for the company to drive diversity and inclusion. The ERG Network (13 globally; 7 in India) consist of 6000+ members, with each of the India ERGs sponsored and governed by an India Leadership Team. These ERGs define how the D&I agenda is driven in the organization. The India sponsor for each ERG and respective site leads make plans for the entire year in line with the following strategic focus area defined for each ERG:

- Professional development – mentoring opportunities, networking session, workshops and brown bag sessions - leadership connects in informal settings.
- Business innovation – product / process innovation resulting in direct / indirect impact on the bottom-line.
- Team member experience – aligning communication and impact across the organization.
- Community impact – partnerships with the local community, volunteering opportunities.

True Ability ERG provides support networks and a knowledge base for Dell employees with disabilities or family members with special needs. Due to its dedicated efforts, the number of people with disability working at Dell has tripled since 2012. The Dell Mission 1000, launched in 2019, is a flagship program under True Ability ERG that aims to create 1000 opportunities for 1000 people with disabilities in 1000 days.

ALLEGIS GROUP

The MD of ALLEGIS Group India, Pravin Tatavarti, is a personal champion of disability inclusion and is directly involved in setting the direction for the D&I agenda at Allegis. The personal attention of the leader in understanding the needs and journey of each employee with disabilities has helped in gaining important insights and designing the future course of action.

- A D&I lead and a dedicated team for the recruitment and training of persons with disabilities, whose capability has been built through a partnership with a grassroots disability expert organization, has ensured the rapid rise of the number of persons with disabilities at Allegis.
- The MD's emphasis on setting a culture of acknowledging and appreciating efforts as against rewarding outcomes and his personal involvement in removing bottlenecks in the D&I journey (through monthly reviews with the D&I lead) has ensured that managers and other leaders are willing to try new things.

1.2 Inclusiveness in Supply Chain

A key factor in furthering the impact of disability inclusion in the entire ecosystems, as understood by the participating companies, is the need to enlist as many constituent groups (i.e. suppliers, clients, contractors) as possible. All participating companies reported having established (or attempting to establish) a policy or criteria on disability inclusion in their contracting processes with suppliers or contractors. To tangibly enable inclusion, supply chain policies have a direct reference to accessibility standards for vendors and suppliers and vendors who incorporate/ agree to incorporate accessibility features in their infrastructure facilities (both physical & digital, product / services) are preferred. Additionally, such cascading supply chain policies are helping boost employment for people with disabilities by empowering and supporting vendors working with them.

> **"**
> **At ANZ, we believe that different backgrounds, perspectives and life experiences help forge strong connections with customers, help innovate and make better decisions for our business. We not only create opportunities at work but also encourage vendors supporting this cause like having food counters of service providers with either complete or partial PwD teams – Mitti Café, Artinci Ice-cream, Hatti Café**
>
> **Aravindan Madhava Murthy**
> Chief Operating Officer – ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre
> **"**

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

> **"** **We try our best to procure products and services from suppliers who employ people with disabilities. For something as basic as purchasing toiletries or buying souvenirs, our efforts are to partner with organizations working with persons with disability. By empowering these organizations, we have seen a direct positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities working there.** **"**

Ajay Vij
Managing Director, Geographic Services Lead, Accenture India

> **"** **We believe that our supplier inclusion program allows us to benefit from a diverse business ecosystem, and create long-term value for our clients and communities. In partnership with our suppliers, we endeavour to create a culture of equality and a level playing field for persons with disabilities.** **"**

1.3 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

CSR is one of the key levers that has been leveraged by companies to focus their efforts on wider community impact when it comes to disability inclusion. Some of the study participants creatively used the CSR platform to combine their efforts at sensitizing their employees on disability inclusion while creating direct and indirect impact for the community itself. Close collaboration between the D&I team and the CSR team was a common feature in almost all the participant organizations. Some of the other common features which define the CSR policy of the participating companies are outlined below:

- 'Think Globally, Act Locally' and accordingly design plans which have implications for all stakeholders - employees, customers, suppliers, and the communities in which businesses operate, and encourage a strong sense of volunteerism.

- Community initiatives are chosen keeping in mind the essence of the organization and the core competencies and interests of the employee to garner maximum participation (e.g. 'Money Minded- ANZ' and 'Interview Preparation Sessions – Allegis')[3]

- CSR budgets are allocated to disability-related partnerships / initiatives and closely monitored for impact. A very hands-on approach and not 'passive box ticking' approach is followed towards these partnerships.

- Opportunities to volunteer with partners or causes are set up in a way that employees are able to choose events and/projects that are most suitable for their circumstances, viz, their work timings and goals. Some companies also encourage volunteering amongst employees by giving paid time off for volunteering, i.e. 1 or 2 days in a year.

- None of the participating companies considers hiring persons with disabilities a part of their CSR agenda. Recruiting persons with disabilities is a business activity and an essential dimension of overall workforce diversity.

- As part of Skills to Succeed corporate citizenship initiative, Accenture has been working with non-profits to equip persons with disabilities with job skills. It also builds capacities of non-profit partners in several areas like strategy, technology roadmap and infrastructure, knowledge management. Some of the projects delivered are: Business Case and Technology Roadmap for a Persons with Disabilities Livelihood platform; process automation & salesforce implementation, HR systems - Performance Management System, recruitment process for hiring employees and Learning, Training and Self Development Platform for employees.

- Participation in activities ranging across a spectrum (in terms of disability type and thematic area; employability skills training for persons with disabilities to blind cricket, reading for and recording audiobooks, building a signs repository for banking terms) has helped the organizations in developing a multifaceted understanding of disability and related issues. This learning directly feeds into the overall decision making, disability goals and into building an overall positive ethos for disability inclusion.

[4]Refer Section 3.1 Workplace Awareness and Sensitization for details

> **At ANZ, 25-30% of the CSR budget is for Not-for-Profit organizations that work towards mainstreaming persons with disabilities. All partnerships are established basis a robust step-by-step approach which comprises of assessing, committing, developing strategy, verifying and reporting progress, evaluating and improving. We have a group of volunteers who regularly audit the projects against the plan and provide critical monitoring and evaluation feedback to the CSR team.**
>
> **Sanjay Purandare**
> CSR Lead, ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre

> **We believe we cannot progress ahead without the participation of our community and other stakeholders. At Accenture, we are focused on inclusive skilling programs that enable persons with disabilities to hone their skills and progress their livelihoods. Together with our strategic NGO partners, we have equipped more than 18,000 persons with disabilities in India with employability and entrepreneurship skills.**
>
> **Kshitija Krishnaswamy**
> Managing Director, Corporate Citizenship, Accenture India

Pillar 2
Inclusive Recruitment

79% of international business leaders agree that enhanced customer satisfaction was a core outcome from a diverse and inclusive workforce, with 85% believing it enhanced business performance[4] .

Looking at how we recruit will enable us to embrace diversity and value inclusion.

Challenge

Inclusive Recruitment

- What are the pre-requisites before an organization embarks on its journey of hiring persons with disabilities?
- How does the organization build practices to make hiring of persons with disabilities a part of its **regular recruitment process?**
- How does the organization find the **right skill-sets** to match their need?
- How can an organization progress to achieving disability diversity in its workforce?

Solution

- **MUST HAVES** before recruitment -
  - Basic accessibility of premises - transportation, washroom access, entry / exit ramps, fire-safety and evacuation preparedness.
  - Sensitization for core HR & Recruitment Team on inclusive recruitment - a) Conducting Job analysis b) Designing an inclusive JD and interview process c) Selection and accommodation.
  - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to seeking and provision of reasonable workplace accommodations.
- **Innovative Recruitment Practices** to attract candidates with disabilities including hiring rare and severe disabilities, hiring across levels and bridging skill gaps.
- **Defined and closely monitored targets for** - a) hiring persons with disabilities b) diversity in disability type c) penetration across functions / roles /levels.

4 EHRC Equality Act 2010 – Statutory Code of Practice for Employment

The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) in 2006 has further strengthened the social model of disability and granted persons with disabilities a wide spectrum of human rights including the right to employment based on the principles of equal treatment, accessibility and non-discrimination. This forms the basis of the recruitment policy for the participating companies. The key common practices of these companies, which laid the foundation of inclusive recruitment, can be categorized under the following three headings:

Assessment	**Job Analysis & Recruiter Sensitization**	**Ensuring Readiness to Recruit**
Physical accessibility[5] of premises (entry to exit)[6] • External & Internal Environment • Fire Safety & Evacuation Social Inclusion of Workplace • Employee survey (formal/informal) to gauge the level of disability awareness, unearth hidden biases, understand the willingness to work with colleagues who are persons with disabilities. • Review HR/ other employee policies and SOPs with a disability lens; protocol for reasonable workplace accommodations.	• Revisiting a set of job descriptions (a) Segregating essential and marginal functions for each job description, (b) Defining physical demands and work environment demands c) listing out typical workplace accommodations. • Identifying the first set of job-roles for inclusive hiring; for each job-role specifying workplace accommodation provision that is available as per policy which will guide recruiter/ hiring manager. • Training HR / Recruitment Teams in conducting job analysis, understanding and making reasonable accommodations.	MUST HAVES before proceeding to recruit • Basic accessibility of premises - transportation, washroom access, entry / exit ramps, fire-safety and evacuation preparedness. • Sensitization for core HR & Recruitment Team on inclusive recruitment. • SOPs related to seeking and provision of reasonable workplace accommodations. All other recommendations from the assessment stage are NECESSARY changes which can be implemented over time.

Laying the Foundation for Inclusive Recruitment

Some of the common best practices which are followed across the participating companies are mentioned below:

• **Mainstream Employment** - People are hired in mainstream jobs and not just for support functions or less critical roles. There are well defined and closely monitored targets for recruitment and penetration across roles and levels.

• Best practice includes adding an accommodation statement such as below

> If you require a reasonable accommodation in completing this application, interviewing, completing any pre-employment testing, or otherwise in participating in the employee selection process, please direct your inquiries to ...

to the career portal, application, or other recruiting materials.

• **Partnerships** - All organizations have partnered with specialist recruitment agencies and disability organizations. Additionally, the organizations started networking more at forums to extend their hiring outreach program and build their candidate pipeline. Assistance from specialist agencies can vary from accessing a trained pool of candidates to training managers in the recruitment and on-boarding process.

• **Inclusive hiring criteria** - All participating companies tried to go beyond the traditional filtering approach comprising cut-off scores, aptitude tests, multiple

[5]Refer Pillar 3.2.2, Section Workplace Accessibility for details
[6]As per GoI Harmonised Guidelines*

interviews to an approach with a focus on job-relevant skills and overall learnability, interest and attitude for succeeding in the role. In this shift in approach, skill-to-skill match for the job requirement is replaced by customised job-role specific skill assessment to accommodate persons with disabilities who are often discouraged by tough entry assessments.

• **Seeking Diversity** - Best practices include training and sensitizing hiring managers before initiating the recruitment process. All hiring managers have gone through detailed training to conduct job analysis, identify essential and marginal functions, design inclusive job descriptions and learn the etiquette for an inclusive interview process.

> ❝ We have seen tremendous success when we relaxed certain basic selection criteria and got a buy-in from the organization to hire candidates who fit the job role irrespective of their educational background. In 2016, we interviewed a candidate who is visually impaired and selected him for the role he was interviewed for, but when he submitted his documents before the offer release, we realised that he was just 10th pass. We were so overwhelmed with his performance during the interview that we didn't have any reasons to withdraw his candidature on the basis of his education. We went ahead with leadership approval to hire him. Even today, he is in the organization, doing well in all the roles that are assigned to him.
>
> Post this experience, there was no looking back, and during 2017-18, we hired people irrespective of their educational background and trained them on required skills.
>
> Major focus while selecting candidates should be based on learning capability, aptitude and attitude of the candidate and not their educational qualifications and / or past experiences. ❞
>
> **Shilpa Jingade**
> Manager – Hiring Persons with Disabilities, Allegis

> ❝ The drive to hire people with disabilities is our commitment to ensure our workplace welcomes, supports, values and celebrates the unique contribution of all our people. Backed by strong support from the top leadership, it is now part of the organization's core belief to recognize that disability is part of human diversity, and is relevant to every aspect of our business.
>
> We are mindful of diversity at all stages of the recruitment process that enables us to capitalise on the inherent strength of each candidate. We have a structured approach to identify roles suitable for PwD where skills mapping is done with the help of experts from our hiring partner Enable India. Recruiting people with disabilities gives ANZ access to yet another range of perspectives and ideas. We have enabling policies, practices and employee network that fosters an environment where people of all abilities can thrive in their careers . ❞
>
> **Kanitha K K**
> Head – Talent & Culture, ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre

> ❝ We have introduced different approaches to enable disability inclusion in our recruitment process. All our job descriptions are checked for bias and our recruitment process is accessible for all candidates with disabilities.
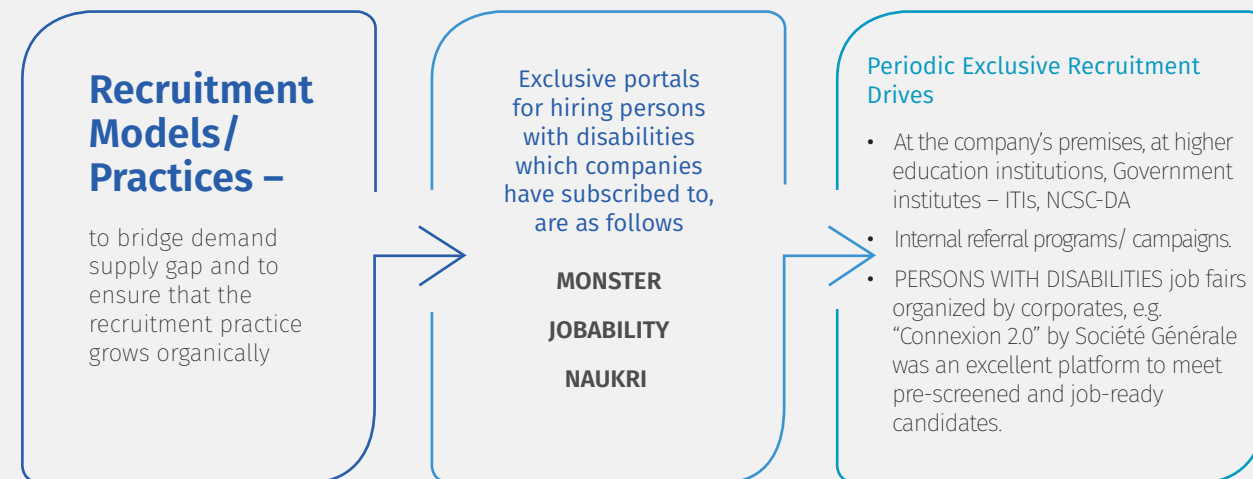>
> **Deepashree Basu**
> Associate Director, India Talent Strategy and Inclusion & Diversity Lead for India, Accenture India ❞

Innovative strategies/ recruitment models followed by the participating organizations.

Recruitment Models/ Practices –

to bridge demand supply gap and to ensure that the recruitment practice grows organically

→

Exclusive portals for hiring persons with disabilities which companies have subscribed to, are as follows

MONSTER

JOBABILITY

NAUKRI

→

Periodic Exclusive Recruitment Drives

- At the company's premises, at higher education institutions, Government institutes – ITIs, NCSC-DA
- Internal referral programs/ campaigns.
- PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES job fairs organized by corporates, e.g. "Connexion 2.0" by Société Générale was an excellent platform to meet pre-screened and job-ready candidates.

ALLEGIS GROUP

Train and Hire Model

To ensure that Allegis could circumvent the skill gap and continue to organically grow the number of persons with disabilities in the organization, it put together the Train & Hire model, which aimed to develop the persons with disabilities talent pool to be employable in Allegis and in other organizations, including Allegis's clients and suppliers/vendors.

A pool of 10 to 15 pre-screened persons with disabilities go through a 3-week full-time training comprising of a) communication and computer skills for the workplace b) exposure to the corporate environment c) recruitment process concepts and recruitment industry basics d) mobility training – specific to candidates with visual impairment. Regular interactions with potential recruiters of the candidates, within Allegis, during the training, dispels myths and improves overall preparedness to hire persons with disabilities. This program is in its 5th year now with 4 batches ~47 persons with disabilities (33 in Allegis and remaining in partner companies) trained and placed in roles ranging from recruiters to back-office operations executives and HR functional executives.

Success Parameters -

- Relaxed selection criteria enabled access to a large talent pool that would otherwise go unnoticed due to lack of traditional qualifications; the focus is on learning capability of candidates and their interests and passion which can be leveraged with appropriate job-role based training.
- In-house training capability – equipping the organizational team with the capability to train persons with disabilities rather than relying on or outsourcing the training to disability experts has enabled a deeper understanding of the needs of persons with disabilities and engagement; this

capability was built through a three-way collaboration between our NGO partner, L&D team & persons with disabilities hiring team to sensitize internal teams on how to reconsider training with a disability.

- Dedicated persons with disabilities recruitment team, sensitized to specific disability needs - working on sourcing, selecting, training and placement of candidates.
- Highly individualised service offering, enabling the inclusion of candidates with severe disabilities and specialised accommodation needs.
- Structured approach to onboarding candidates which includes buddy assignments for navigating the physical workplace, breaking down of job role processes into small units that are easily understood by the new hires, peer sensitization to help team members understand the kind of support the new hire requires, a review at the end of the first month with the manager and employee with a disability (an observation template shared by the persons with disabilities employment team is used by the manager to record progress so that analysis can be done and challenges, if any, can be discussed and resolved).
- The active development of persons with disabilities hired through this program serves as an influencer for other parts of the businesses to become more open about hiring pass outs from the train and hire batcheses to become more open about hiring pass outs from the train and hire batches.

ANZ

Partnership Model

- ANZ offers career guidance to students of training providers such as Dr Reddy's Foundation. This model helps build a talent pool and also sensitises and prepares hiring managers to work with persons with disabilities.
- 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.
  - Provide internship opportunities in the Cafeteria Management department for work such as 'plate and glass wiping'.
  - Food counters in the cafeterias are allotted to service providers with either complete or partial team of disabled members such as Mitti Café, Artinci Ice-cream, Hatti Kaapi.

Other best practices

- In 2016, ANZ launched 'return-to-work program' for persons with disabilities who had taken career breaks. ANZ 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.
- 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.

accenture

Partnership Model

- Accenture partnered with Leonard Cheshire Disability (an NGO) to launch the 'Jobability' portal that matches job seekers with job vacancies; it is not only used by Accenture but is also used widely across other companies for talent search.

- Accenture has partnered with NGOs across the country to enable employment, training and upskilling of persons with disabilities.

- Accenture has partnered with Enable India to create a rural social networking platform connecting the community through one missed call. It empowers persons with disabilities to share their experiences in the employment space, welfare measures, government schemes and community level services. It reaches over 70% of Indian states and on an average receives 1 call every minute.

- Accenture has worked with Dr. Reddy's Foundation's GROW skilling program for persons across India with locomotor disabilities and hearing impairment, focused on communication and work-readiness skills; skills for targeted service industries such as information technology (IT), hospitality and retail and basic digital skills. The program also helps connect disabled persons with suitable jobs. The Anudip Foundation's Specially Abled Vocational Education (SAVE) program in West Bengal and Odisha is tailored to the physically and visually challenged. The three-month program provides IT and business-process-outsourcing-specific training informed by employer requirements and available positions.

Inclusive Internship Model

Accenture has developed a 6-month inclusive internship program wherein fresh graduates or those who are yet to get an employment break are chosen through a carefully customised job-role based assessment. In most cases, the candidates are selected from a pool of pre-trained (for basic employability skills) persons with disabilities and placed as an intern across various job roles. During the internship, the candidates go through on-job training, skills and tools refreshers, and professional and soft skills training - enabling them with relevant job role understanding and experience which makes them readily employable within / outside Accenture. These internships eventually turn into permanent opportunities based on the intern's performance.

The program has built traction since its inception in 2018 with several businesses endorsing it, which is a testimony of its success.

Lakshmi Chandrasekharan
Managing Director, Accenture India
Human Resources Lead

" At Accenture we launched an Inclusive Internship program in India a few years ago. This program enables us to create equal opportunities for persons with disabilities through a differentiated recruiting approach. Further, through the program the participants benefit from on job skill building and relevant work opportunities. "

DELLTechnologies

- 'Redefine Abilities' launched in 2015, provided corporate internship opportunities to people with profound disability - deaf-blindness, cerebral palsy, muscular atrophy. The program was a huge success with several interns joining full time. The program has been followed year on year.

- Resume building and interview sessions for students with disabilities across universities.

- Inclusive Hackathons - hiring through hackathons (events where participants are expected to crack company given challenges) is a meritocratic process wherein if the candidate is skilled enough to solve the challenge posed, what is left to check is whether s/he has a good cultural fit with the organization. Hackathons are designed to be inclusive so that persons with disabilities get required accommodations to fully and effectively participate.

Employee Referral Program

These programs help organizations build engagement with existing employees (persons with disabilities or otherwise) but more importantly help build trust with potential job-seekers who are persons with disabilities as they're likely to understand the company and its policies better from an employee of the company.

" Our corporate ICARE values of Integrity, Collaboration, Accountability, Respect and Excellence guide our actions, decisions and interactions with all our employees and stakeholders, including the ones with a disability. We keep an open mind about how a job might get done as we believe that maintaining a rigid view only limits our choice of a suitable candidate, as many may either not be able to apply or choose not to apply. We also encourage hiring managers to consider PwD candidates and also conduct sensitization training for our teams to ensure that the new member from the community does not feel uncomfortable.

Prabhakar Varadarajan
Chief Operating Officer, Institutional Operations - Service Centres, ANZ "

In general, alternate models such as Inclusive Internships and Train and Hire models have several merits.

- It helps interns hone their skills, apply knowledge to real-world situations, learn about their strengths and weaknesses, build a network and earn while learning.

- In addition to building a pipeline of trained resources, it helps the company, more specifically the hiring manager, get a flavour of working with candidates across disability types, break stereotypes and more importantly get a first-hand experience of the intern's skills and aptitude for long-term employment within the company.

- They may be cost and time-intensive, but they are an excellent platform to enable businesses to work with persons with a more severe disability who may not be hired otherwise due to several inherent biases. Extended periods of engagement enables better preparedness of business, and the candidates reduce skill gaps and improve conversion.

Pillar 3
Awareness and Adaptations

Creating disability-inclusive workplaces is by no means an easy task, but the merits far outweigh the efforts. Research shows that the return on investment includes access to a wider talent pool, higher retention rates, enhanced engagement and productivity, and a stronger brand as an employer of choice for all.

Challenge

Workplace Awareness and Sensitization

- How does an organization create an overall positive ethos for persons with disabilities to feel equal and grow in the organization?
- How does an organization ensure that all its employees are sensitized, and disability etiquette standards are reiterated and strictly adhered to?

Workplace Accessibility & Accommodations

- How does an organization ensure comfortable and dignified access to accomodations?
- How does an organization ensure consistency in decision taken and budget allocated across organisation?
- Is accessibility of physical and digital infrastructure as well as of information and communication systems mandatory?

Equal Opprtunity Workplace

How does the organization normalise disability and make persons with disabilities confident that the organization will offer a nurturing growth environment, unbiased by their disability?

Solution

- **Structured Disability Etiquette standards** to which all employees conform.
- **Disability etiquette** training as a regular feature for all (on-line, in-person sessions) including vendors, dealers and customers. Additionally innovative methods of sensitization and awareness building which go beyond regular classroom sessions to include volunteering with organizations working with persons with disabilities, participating in disability-related events.

- **Disability Specialist/Team** (internal or external) to handhold and support smooth induction on-boarding and access to accommodation.
- **SOPs** in place to request for and provide reasonable workplace accommodations (pre/post recruitment for productive working and career growth), overseen by a dedicated/centralised team.
- **Physical Infrastructure, digital Infrastructure, information and communication systems** which are accessible; thus addressing several accommodation needs related to these.
- Process in place to review accessibility and incorporate need-based changes.

- **Creating a positive ethos where persons with disabilities feel confident to self-declare,** thus enabling systematic changes in policy and processes related to disability inclusion.
- A career plan is defined for all persons with disabilities, and need-based support is extended.

3.1 Workplace Awareness and Sensitization

In almost all organizations, leadership and senior management are receptive towards creating an inclusive and accessible workplace. However, employees at various levels may not be, and this becomes one of the greatest hurdles in pursuing an inclusion agenda for the organization. The reasons could vary, stemming mostly from several inherent biases which can be addressed through awareness building and sensitization. Organizations engage specialists to conduct various types of awareness and sensitization workshops ranging across thematic areas related to disability inclusion.

For each of the participating companies, the focus is not only on hiring a diverse workforce, but leveraging diverse perspectives for the benefit of the business as a whole. This is done by bringing awareness of unconscious biases and organizing open forums / direct communication lines to bring out, share and discuss multiple perspectives.

Types of Training

The training covers:

- Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act and its impact and relevance to organizations.
- Creating an inclusive recruitment process including selection, interviewing and onboarding.
- Creating an inclusive workplace.
- Designing and delivering an inclusive training program.
- Disability etiquette for various groups of employees.
- Accessibility of built-in environment and accessibility standards.
- Emergency preparedness and evacuation of persons with disabilities.
- Importance of digital accessibility and accessibility standards.
- Deaf awareness and sign language.

Some of the common best practices across these companies in bringing about awareness and sensitization are mentioned below:

- While regular and mandatory sensitization trainings (in-person, online modules) and etiquette classes are a great way to instil disability awareness, for the participating companies, sensitization is not always a formal classroom format session/ workshop. Organization-wide awareness about disability and inclusion is built gradually through a combination of internal and external activities/events which enable interaction with persons with disabilities directly / indirectly. The leadership vision prioritises active volunteering as a means of awareness creation with close and purposeful monitoring of the a) contribution by each business division and b) its

> **An aware workforce is also an empowered workforce.**
>
> **For employees with disabilities to be fully integrated into a workplace, it is essential that all employees are familiar with the affirmed commitment of their organization to being disabled-friendly and this needs to be reiterated in all forums and to every single person in the company; from the facilities staff to senior leaders, they all need to be made aware.**
>
> **Deepa S**
> Head, Diversity & Inclusion,
> Dell Technologies, India COE

collective impact. This ensures that a positive ethos permeates the organization subtly highlighting an inclusion mindset.

- All participating companies have structured disability etiquette standards to which all employees have to conform. This is made a part of the on-boarding processes and is re-iterated in several ways in multiple platforms. This training is extended to vendors, dealers and customers as well.

- A proportion of Learning & Development budget / activities is earmarked for workplace awareness, and sensitization as this is seen as the single most important step towards creating an inclusive workplace.

> " **We have chosen volunteering as the means to create awareness about disability inclusion. More than 50% of our total volunteering hours are spent in and with the persons with disabilities community. We have seen the impact of this in the all-round development of our employees which has transcended into creating a very positive work culture all around.**
>
> **Pravin Tatavarti**
> MD, ALLEGIS Group, India "

> " **At Accenture, we make every effort to ensure accessibility arrangements for persons with disabilities, wherever needed. In particular, we deploy assistive technologies, provide appropriate accommodation with respect to the workplace and transport arrangements. This enables them to make the most of their skill-sets and achieve success in roles they may not have considered before.**
>
> **Lakshmi Chandrasekharan**
> Managing Director, Accenture India
> Human Resources Lead "

> " **We have established a network of persons with disabilities champions who support initiatives and programs that help create an inclusive workplace for all. Our training programs offer guidance to our people to effectively integrate persons with disabilities into the workplace so that they can perform at their full potential.**
>
> **Deepashree Basu**
> Associate Director, India Talent Strategy and Inclusion & Diversity Lead for India, Accenture India "

Innovative strategies (in addition to classroom sessions) followed by the participating organizations to build awareness about disability inclusion in their respective organizations

ANZ regularly conducts drives and initiatives to create awareness and sensitize employees about the challenges faced by people with disability, such as:

- A mix of awareness and learning sessions covering diverse aspects of disability are organized regularly, e.g. Invisible Disability Symptoms Awareness session by Shankar Subramanian (Multiple Sclerosis Society of India's (MSSI) World MS Day (WMSD) representative)

- Online modules and refresher courses

- ANZ's annual Star Awards recognize and celebrate employees who have gone 'above and beyond' in supporting people with disability, be it their customers, staff or those in the wider community. It is a

tradition at ANZ to celebrate the winners of the Star Awards on International Day of People with Disability, 3 December.

- Innovative Volunteering activities

  - ANZ partnered with NCPEDP to create awareness about the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016. Further, as part of the project, the Act was translated into seven regional languages. It helped build a good understanding of the Act and its implication amongst the employees.

  - ANZ's flagship adult financial education CSR program 'MoneyMinded' helps create awareness and improve money skills, knowledge and confidence of students, people with disability and people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Given that most employees have finance background, it was easy to get volunteers to conduct these MoneyMinded sessions.

- NGOs are invited to participate in Market Place and put up stalls to create more awareness about disability in general with particular focus on the disabilities that the organizations are working for

> **Campaigns through the year based on UN recognized dates**
>
> 04 January - Braille Day
> 21 March – World Down Syndrome Day
> 2 April - World Autism Awareness Day
> 13 June - International Albinism Awareness Day
> 23 September - International Day of Sign Languages
> 10 October - World Mental Health Day
> 15 October - World White Cane Awareness Day
> 03 December - International Day of Persons with Disabilities

- Events such as Wheelchair cricket tournament are conducted to create awareness in a fun way beyond the boundaries of office

- Abilities Network (an employee resource group) fosters inclusiveness and raises awareness about disability. The network includes staff with severe disability like cerebral palsy, autism, muscular atrophy. It is driven by the objective to increase persons with disabilities hiring, identify new opportunities, foster career progression and engagement with senior leadership.

Allegis Group India's MD chose the path of volunteering by the employees as a way to encourage interactions with persons with disabilities thus creating awareness and wherever possible, furthering that initial interaction into informed hiring choices for the future. On an average, a total of 3000+ hours are spent annually on volunteering which constitutes 50% of the overall volunteering hours spent by the company collectively. Some of the volunteering activities followed are:

- Persons with disabilities talent pool nurturing activity - regular in-house activities including workshops on preparing resumes, preparing for an interview and a corporate career which are conducted on a monthly basis according to a calendar. Employees are encouraged to volunteer their time to participate in these activities, and this is monitored and reported by way of collective volunteering hours.

- Other volunteering events such as blind cricket, wheelchair badminton, blind treks, are held.

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- Disability sensitization extends beyond recruiters and hiring managers to contract staff including housekeeping, security, workplace operations staff, drivers and transport team, through experiential learning games and activities.

- Disability etiquette training and sign-language training is organized for teams working with persons with disabilities.

- Accenture's senior leaders undergo 'reverse mentoring' sessions in which the executives learn about the opportunities and challenges of persons with disabilities. This first-of-its-kind initiative addressed some of the actual and perceived barriers persons with disabilities face at the workplace. These interactions help in revisiting modules on accessibility and innovation, workplace sensitization, mentoring, career advancement and recruitment, all geared toward highlighting both existing and future ways in which Accenture can help its community of persons with disabilities.

Manasi Suresh
New Associate
Accenture India

" **My disability is not my identity, it is something I have, not something I am and when you have colleagues who believe in your abilities the workplace becomes your support place.** "

DELLTechnologies

Some interesting and highly impactful sensitization sessions conducted at Dell include –

- Building inclusive leaders (awareness workshop for the India leadership team).

- PEEP's Training (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan for persons with disabilities).

- Identifying and developing job coaches for persons with disabilities (SPOC's who help with analyzing job roles and tasks, identifying accessibility requirements for onboarding persons with disabilities).

- Building a buddy system for employees with profound disabilities (SPOC's who support team members with profound disabilities, e.g. deaf blindness).

- Embedding D&I in you DNA (simulative and interactive workshop for senior / hiring managers).

- Vendor awareness programs (sensitization programs for facilities / transport and 3rd party vendors).

- MARC (Many Advocating Real Change - unconscious biases training covering the entire organization

In addition to this, sensitization is created through

- Diversity Triumphs, which is a series which features diverse role models within the company.

- Exposure visits for students with disability to Dell's offices.

- Events & gatherings (celebration of world disability day, autism awareness week, international week of deaf, accessibility day.

3.2 Workplace Accommodation and Accessibility

3.2.1 Workplace Accommodation

How an employer engages, develops, recognizes, and supports job applicants and employees is critical to creating a diverse pool of talent in the workplace and optimizing the productivity of workers to increase job satisfaction and business performance. Every employee is different - from abilities to job needs, from how they consume information to how they prefer to collaborate and communicate with others. For many, workplace accommodations enable the best of their abilities. It reduces discrimination, increases access to the workplace, and changes perceptions on the ability of people with disabilities to be productive workers.

The role of some people becomes critical in enabling access to accommodation:

- Leadership team in ensuring that workplace accommodations form an important part of the equal opportunity policy and that there are sound processes to enable respectful and easy access to such accommodations.

- Recruiters, who need to understand accommodations required for recruiting, interviewing, and onboarding.

- Supervisors and managers who need to know how to recognize an accommodation request and understand their role in the accommodation process including enabling comfortable and respectful access.

- D&I team, which needs to harmonize and centralize processes, support training of all employees on workplace accommodation, and support building accessibility into all aspects of governance.

- IT team members for providing digital accommodation as well as ensuring the accessibility of workplace tools.

- Employees with disabilities in understanding the accommodation process and reaching out to respective people or teams as and when needed.

Common workplace accommodation requests

- Purchasing or modifying equipment or products
- Making work-site and/or work-station accessible
- Job restructuring
- Modifying work schedule and/or timings, leave, work-from-home
- Modifying methods (e.g., tests, communication, training)
- Modifying policies
- Providing readers and interpreters
- Reassignment of sub-tasks basis disability needs

Some of the common best practices across these participating companies are mentioned below:

- Centralised Accommodation Process – All companies follow a proactive accommodation process with centralised funds, clearly defined SOPs and a strong leadership overseeing implementation. Disjointed, reactive, and inconsistent accommodations and processes across lines of business results in lower retention rates and increased hiring and retraining costs.

- Respectful and Easy Access to Accommodations - Truly enabling employees with disabilities means that they not only have a seamless experience whilst requesting for reasonable accommodations, but are also encouraged to avail such benefits.

Question: Should the employer check with the employee if he needs a reasonable accommodation, even when he has not asked for it?

Answer: An employer has to make sure that everyone is aware of the reasonable accommodation policy and that the process of availing it is easy, accessible and respectable. As a rule, it is the individual with a disability who has the best understanding of his/her needs for reasonable accommodation and should approach the employer, if needed. The employer should initiate the reasonable accommodation interaction (without being asked by the employee with disability only if s/he knows, or has reasons to know, that the employee has a disability and /or s/he is experiencing workplace problems because of the disability or his/her disability is preventing him/her from requesting a reasonable accommodation). If the individual with a disability states that s/he does not need a reasonable accommodation, the employer will have to respectfully accept the same.

Innovative strategies followed by the participating companies

- ANZ provides house nurses/assistants to help employees with disability in their movement and other personal requirements at work.

- The company has special medical cabs for persons with disabilities. For hearing and speech impaired employees, the ANZ Transport team is trained to communicate through SMS. About 85+ employees with disabilities are using the company's transport facility to commute to the office. The vendor partner for this service, Kickstart, specializes in providing accessible cabs for people with disability.

- Wellness coaching and counselling is also provided to Support and house-keeping staff with/out disability

- Some of the enablement programs that are provided by Accenture are as given below. Each of these are sponsored and led by a senior leader
  - Accessibility Program views accessibility through four lenses: physical, technological, assistive technologies and attitudinal accessibility. This program aims at identifying the accessibility and usability requirements and institutes strategies and processes to weave accessibility through the organization.
  - Persons with Disabilities Champions Network brings together PwD employees, PwD supporters and friends for networking, collaboration, mentoring and awareness-building.
  - Persons with Disabilities Mentoring Program is designed to support mentors in mentoring PwD mentees.

Accenture India put in place a central 'Accessibility Fund' to enable employees to request for reasonable adjustments without going through the loop of special approvals and budget constraints. Establishing this fund was a unified effort of the India leadership to ensure all transport, workplace and assistive technologies requests are centrally budgeted and approved seamlessly. Employees can raise their requests on a central platform which enables them with personalized experienced and customized solutions as per their need. Such requests are directed to the concerned teams that enable accessibility to arrange the required provisions.

> " For us, the ease and dignity in accessing accommodations is of paramount importance. We have well-defined processes to enable our true abilities members to access a wide range of accommodations such as access caregiver support (while in office), powered wheelchairs and assistive technology. In case they have a very specific need, our processes are robust enough to address them on priority.
>
> **Deepa S**
> Head, Diversity & Inclusion,
> Dell Technologies, India COE "

> " Abilities Network, comprising of ANZ employees who are passionate about making a positive difference in the lives of people with disability, regularly engages with PwD members. They understand the needs and concerns and helps in building capability. They create supporting work arrangements to enhance career growth and wellbeing of persons with disabilities. Over a period, many targeted interventions and platforms have been created to bridge any developmental gaps. One such initiative that came from these discussions was creating an exclusive dictionary of banking words in sign language so that our hearing and speech impaired staff can communicate well.
>
> **Vaidyalinga Siva Vaidyanathan**
> Abilities Network Co-Lead
> ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre "

> " Through our India Accessibility Council, comprising senior leaders across businesses, we are enabling physical, technology and attitudinal accessibility so that all our people can bring their whole selves to work - unleashing their creativity, and driving innovation.
>
> **Deepashree Basu**
> Associate Director, Associate Director, India Talent Strategy and Inclusion & Diversity Lead for India, Accenture India "

The need for a centralised, well-designed accommodation policy cannot be emphasised more. When the request for accommodations are budgeted/accounted for ex-ante, there is a potential requirement of justification by the requesting employee, dissonance in approvals and a potential hesitation from projects to onboard employees with disabilities due to cost impact. This can have long standing implication on not only the career and tenure of the employee with disability in the organization but also on how the company's disability inclusion practices pan out over time.

3.2.2 Workplace Accessibility

A freely accessible workplace is extremely important to employees with disabilities. It instils a sense of dignity in them and enables them to complete their work independently and enjoy the time spent at the workplace.

3.2.2.1 Physical Infrastructure -

The ultimate goal for any organization should be that their workplace is accessible to everyone. The step-by-step approach followed by most participating companies is as follows:

Starting with immediate need	Rather than trying to achieve a total overhaul, these companies started with immediate needs such as disabled-friendly parking, wheelchair accessible doorways, ramps at entries and exits of buildings, wide corridors and easy access to workstations/meeting rooms, accessible operating buttons and/or braille in lifts and accessible washrooms and gradually achieved complete accessibility as per the guidelines. None of these changes was a major undertaking, but they went a long way in enabling a) hiring of persons with disabilities b) making the office safer and more accessible for employees c) establishing the company's dedication towards creating a more inclusive environment for everyone.
Enlisting expert insights	In addition to engaging accessibility consultants, these companies sought inputs from their employees with disabilities in understanding the issues/areas of improvement. Many insights can be gathered through the lived experience of employees with disabilities working in the premises.
Investing in employee education & training	Basic concepts of accessibility are included in all training to ensure that everyone understands the needs of persons with disabilities and they can support each other well.
Revisiting Accessibility	An internal team is established which comprises members from facilities, civil works and persons with disabilities who conduct periodic audits and propose need-based changes. Some companies have also organized master training sessions for a group of employees to make them adept at the basic concepts of accessibility and enable them to conduct regular reviews with their disabled colleagues.

Some of the focus areas are detailed below:

1. Transport

- ANZ has partnered with MoveInSync to design a detailed Transport Management System (TMS), an online interface which completely automates travel-related information including employee roster, cab tracking etc. It has made persons with hearing impairment completely independent. Additionally
    - It captures and stores information about the special needs of the passengers, and that helps the co-passengers to make necessary accommodations.
    - An SOS button ensures safety of the person with hearing impairment
- ANZ has partnered with Kickstart, which provides special vehicles for wheelchair users (with ramps /removable front seat) that allows entry/exit with a wheelchair. The drivers are sensitized and trained to assist users who face difficulty getting in and out of vehicles and buildings. These are exclusive cabs which accommodate one user per vehicle.
- ANZ also provides medical cabs - sedans (with low flooring) with drivers trained to assist persons with disabilities.

Other practices

- Regular training of drivers and security staff on disability etiquette / special needs for persons with disability while travelling. Training is conducted in local language and through interesting mediums such as street plays.
- Regular coordination with medical attendants (from in-house medical room, Soukhya, to provide support to person with disabilities with severe needs), to enable them to board /de-board cabs.
- Special alighting point for persons with disabilities.

Dell Paratransit Service has been introduced by Dell Transport as a commuting service wherein vehicles are retrofitted with accessibility features and the drivers are specially trained to assist the travellers in and out of the vehicles.

Fire Safety and Evacuation

The focus on access into the premises needs to be matched with arrangements for safe egress and evacuation in the event of an emergency for every single employee. Failure to comply with the requirements is treated as an offence with serious legal implications. Arrangements for the evacuation of disabled people needs to be compatible with the general evacuation strategy and the emergency fire action plan for the premises and the responsibility for this rests fully with the company.

[8]https://www.moveinsync.com
[9]https://www.kickstartcabs.com/

2. Emergency Response

Some of the common best practices across companies are as follows:

- Regular training, including the following, for staff involved in the evacuation process-

    - Disability awareness and disability evacuation etiquette

    - Moving, lifting and handling techniques

    - Good practices in communication, including use of communication systems

    - Importance of using pre-planned routes

    - Design and use of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

- One-to-one mapping of persons with disabilities with fire marshals / floor wardens / buddies

- Regular checks of systems and equipment used for evacuation

- Regular fire-drills (morning / evening to cover all shifts) and simulated carry-downs for people with severe disabilities.

Innovative strategies followed by the participating companies

DELLTechnologies

Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Team has designed detailed PEEPS for all people with disabilities and people with other specific health issues – heart problem, epilepsy. This enables improving safety for everyone using the building whilst identifying any weaknesses in existing evacuation plans. The following principles guide design of PEEPs at Dell:

- Disabled people should not be treated as a 'health and safety' problem to be resolved; the same rules of courtesy and respect apply to them.
- See the person not the disability; needs and preferences may vary across individuals.
- Persons with disabilities should be involved and consulted at all stages of PEEPS design; ask and not assume, as the individual best understands the nature and effects of his or her impairment.
- Treat PEEPs as an evolving document; be ready to make changes as per individuals needs / comforts.

> **"**
>
> **To demonstrate inclusion in all facets of the workplace, we have developed infrastructure and processes to assist staff in performing to the best of their capability. Very early in our inclusion and diversity journey, we realised that emergency response for persons with disabilities during workplace emergencies required a very different approach. Three workplace buddies are identified and aligned to each person with disabilities staff, thus having at least one buddy always present. These volunteers are provided training in specific carriage techniques applicable to the person they support. The arrangement also caters to the fact that the persons with disabilities are familiar with their colleagues and vice-versa. Realistic building evacuation drills using the most appropriate carriage technique are rehearsed using three/four hand carry, stretchers and building evacuation chairs keeping in mind safety and comfort.**
>
> **Gerard Lobo**
> Head of Protective Security, Travel, Staff and HSW, ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre
> **"**

3.2.2.2 Accessible Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Accessible ICT can be one of the prime movers in organizations given the extent to which digital technologies drive businesses, and assistive technology is one of the biggest equalisers in successful mainstreaming and inclusion of persons with disabilities. Promising business practices with reference to accessible ICT include the development of comprehensive strategic action plans that include the following:

- Securing leadership 'buy-in' to establish and sustain corporate commitment to accessible ICT

    - Adopting and implementing ICT accessibility policy to include technical accessibility standards, protocols for evaluation and testing, feedback, training and guidance.

        l Adopting specific technical ICT accessibility standards and functional performance criteria (eg Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, WCAG 2.0 A and AA) regarding software applications and operating systems, web-based intranet and internet applications, telecommunication products, video and multimedia products, self-contained closed products (e.g., copiers and printers) and computers.

    - Establishing a mechanism for centralized expertise and/or funding by appointing dedicated resources -

        1 Appointing a chief digital accessibility officer who is knowledgeable about the accessibility policy and legal requirements and responsible for coordinating implementation.

        2 Appointing a cross-functional committee charged with monitoring, maintaining and reporting to the chief accessibility officer.

    - Identifying 'best practices' describing steps and resources for implementing and maintaining sustainable ICT.

    - Establishing measurable objectives and benchmarks; designing and implementing data collection and continuous improvement strategies, including tracking and reporting systems and regularly scheduled reporting.

    - Providing outsourcing guidelines to suppliers and business partners, including copies of the ICT accessibility guidelines, and ensuring that ICT accessibility standards are included in all deliverables.

- Designing a dynamic list of all platforms, devices and applications that use ICT and prioritise testing and implementation of changes based on factors such as frequency and nature of use.

    - Using automated accessibility testing tool to evaluate conformance with WCAG 2.0 A and AA.

- Enabling manual testing by users with different disabilities to identify any accessibility barriers not otherwise apparent through automated testing. User testing may include individuals who are blind or have low vision, individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and individuals who have physical disabilities affecting manual dexterity.

- Conducting training for WCAG 2.0 A and AA accessibility requirements, for all employees and contractors who design, develop, procure, maintain, or have other responsibilities related to ICT (in-house staff, including program managers, contracting and procurement officers, software developers, web developers, and video and multimedia developers, including IT help desk staff).

- Retaining an independent website accessibility consultant (in-house / outsourced) who advises businesses on how to conform their website and mobile applications to WCAG 2.0 A and AA.

- Incorporating a robust system to handle feedback -

   - Contact information for employee responsible for ensuring that the ICT purchased, maintained or used by the company is readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities and

   - instructions on how to file a complaint.

Some of the common best practices across companies are mentioned below:

- All participating companies ensure that

   - Pre-hire and onboarding material is provided in alternate accessible formats (Braille, audio, large print) and common portals – HR Systems etc are fully accessible.

   - Training videos / multimedia content is accessible (captioned and audio described).

- Processes are in place to test all high traffic internal applications, tools and websites for adherence to the WCAG on a regular basis. Any new applications that are being developed or procured are required to be compliant to the WCAG as a standard onboarding process.

> " We are committed to making our workplace and culture welcoming and supportive of people with disability. We have a sensitized ecosystem and policy/process to support the same. To change people's perspective and help our people learn about these diverse groups, we regularly run targeted communication campaigns where we use a mix of different mediums to celebrate and create awareness about our diversity and inclusion agenda. We at ANZ aim to make our website and digital channels accessible to all, by working towards conformance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and the Australian Banking Association's Every Customer Counts: Accessibility Principles for Banking Services. We ensure that our workplace welcomes, supports and celebrates the unique contributions of differently-abled people.
>
> **Swati Akhouri**
> Communications Lead, ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre "

Innovative strategies followed by the participating companies

ANZ

- There is a specialised team in Melbourne (ANZ headquarters) which looks into digital accessibility and ensures that all software/products are tested for accessibility before roll-out in any part of the globe

- Tech Bars / Tech Kiosks are set up in common areas such as cafeterias to a) make colleagues aware of IT developments, and b) address issues (if any)

- Sign-language videos with financial terminologies are designed for process training for employees with hearing impairment

accenture

- Some of the on-going initiatives include -

   - An Accessibility Centre has been set up in one of the facilities which has all the commonly used assistive technology aids including one hand keyboard, color-coded keyboards, big key keyboard, refreshable Braille displays, specialized screen reader software, assistive listening devices, speech recognition and sign language applications, noise cancellation head phones and browsers that provide user-friendly and customizable web interface. Staff is present in the lab to guide users in choosing the devise that fits their requirement the best. There is provision to send the devices to other offices as well. In addition to the 'Standard List', which is a comprehensive list of assistive technology that an employee would need, in case of some special requests, there are well defined processes in place to assist with the same.

   - Regular training for persons with disabilities to use and get comfortable with accessible technology. Constant research and development and regular upgradation on assistive technology as per the need of the employees.

> " **Accenture deploys assistive technologies, provides reasonable accommodation with workplace adjustments and transport arrangements to help people harness their skill - sets and achieve success in roles they may have not considered before.**
>
> **Lakshmi Chandrasekharan**
> Managing Director, Accenture India Human Resources Lead "

- Tech4Good initiatives – To deepen its learning and experiences and to create a more accessible ecosystem for persons with disabilities, beyond the doors of Accenture, Accenture Technology Labs has established the following partnerships for continued R&D -

   - BleeWatch - co-created with Bleetech to enable hearing-impaired to listen to music.

   - Drishti - a co-innovation with the National Association for the Blind; AI powered application that narrates physical environment to the visually challenged.

- Hamaari Vaani – co-launched with Enable India to create a rural social networking platform connecting the community through one missed call. It empowers persons with disabilities to share their experiences in the employment space, welfare measures, government schemes and community level services. It reaches over 70% of Indian states and on an average receives one call every minute.

DELLTechnologies

Being a technology company, digital accessibility is core to their work.

- Regular awareness training for WCAG 2.0 A and AA accessibility requirements are conducted for all employees and contractors who design, develop and procure digital assets for Dell.
- Regular accessibility testing is conducted for all platforms to ensure that all aspects of a job are fully accessible and there is no dependency.

Additionally, Assistive Tech Project 2020 has been launched to –

- Deliver assistive technology software and hardware tools for users with accessibility needs
- Deliver frictionless request, delivery, and sustaining processes that do not require disclosure
- Set a limited global catalogue of standard assistive technology offerings. Deliver frictionless request, delivery, and sustaining processes that do not require disclosure
- Test and validate assistive technology offerings against standard device catalogue
- Deliver validated and approved assistive technology peripherals on demand per need from an established catalogue

Tech Expos are organized to showcase innovations in technology and the company's commitment to accessibility.

> **For any new role or disability type that we hire, we ensure an accessibility check happens and we set things up before the employee joins including approvals for the procurement of licences for screen readers (JAWS). Recently, a new software application procured globally in one of our business groups was partially accessible, thus affecting the employees with vision impairment during the transition stage. The leadership ensured that the software vendor made the necessary rectifications and makes the application completely accessible.**
>
> **Devika Nair**
> D&I and CSR Lead, ALLEGIS Group, India

> **We recognize assistive technology as a key enabler for persons with disabilities and we have made provisions accordingly for JAWS screen reading software, Braille enabled keyboard, software for people with deaf blindness and voice to text for people with severe disabilities. We are also well equipped to assist people who need anything specific or need assistance in identifying technology best suited for them.**
>
> **Deepa S**
> Head, Diversity & Inclusion
> Dell Technologies, India COE

3.3 Equal Opportunity Workplace

An equal opportunity workplace is one where people feel confident that the systems, the leadership and the team will provide them with a nurturing growth environment, unbiased by their impairment. For all the participating companies, one of the most important indicators suggesting that they were indeed doing well in creating an inclusive environment for persons with disabilities was the improved disability statistics. This included:

- Increased disability hiring as many more considered the company an employer of choice

- Increased number of people who felt confident to self-declare

- Improved retention and overall performance of people with disabilities working in the organization

Some of the common best practices across companies which have normalised disability and encouraged people to come forward and self-declare and find ways to grow and thrive in the organization are mentioned below:

- On a day-to-day basis, frontline supervisors and managers usually have the maximum contact and the closest relationships with employees. In fact, research shows that for best possible disclosure on the need for accommodation, employees with disabilities are more likely to disclose to their supervisor than to the human resources department. Hence all participating companies prioritize disability sensitization training for frontline managers and supervisors.

- All participating companies maintain detailed data on the total number of employees with disabilities and their percentage in the enterprise or group. This data is disaggregated by gender, disability type and need for specific accommodations. Reasons for attrition are closely monitored and necessary actions are taken wherever needed.

- Workplaces promote role models with disabilities to encourage others to come forth and share their journeys – challenges and solutions that worked.

- Upskilling training, career enhancement support program, mentorship sessions are a common practice across these organizations. They are designed as per the accessibility needs of the persons with disabilities.

Company-specific practices towards creating an inclusive work culture which keeps employees engaged, happy and productive span the spectrum of wellbeing, career development, training, opportunities to network and collaborate. Key best practices followed by the participating companies are outlined below –

Health Safety and Wellbeing Forum (HSW) reports to the COO and has representation from all business units. There are well defined SOPs for outreach and redressal of issues. Regular meetings are conducted to brainstorm on new ideas, issues and discuss the progress of key initiatives. Specific communication campaigns are designed to create awareness about various initiatives and to garner participation. ANZ HSW forum follows a holistic approach to wellness:

- Tie-up with reputed hospitals such as Colombia Asia
  - Doctor and nurse are available on campus at specific hours for free consultation and support
  - Trained medical attendees (one male and one female) are available for people with severe disabilities who may need assistance with personal chores including accessing washroom, boarding / off-boarding cabs etc. Care is taken to ensure that they are present at all times when severely disabled staff is on campus, and they are mandated to attend to their needs on priority.

- Each month of the year is dedicated to one health concern such as heart, kidney health. Lectures and demonstrations, as well as group/individual consultations help in creating awareness, dispelling myths and enabling prevention. Over 140 + discussions were organized in 2019 around these identified thematic areas.

- Wellness efforts
  - The Management Team is sensitized about the impact of mental health issues on businesses and employees and on the importance of dedicated intervention
  - Tie-up with 1to1help, an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider which offers psychological counselling and comprehensive wellness solutions that help employees deal with various work-life challenges like stress, anxiety and work-life balance. They provide access to their website (with articles, assessments, success stories, etc.) and a toll-free number. A wellness coach (trained clinical psychologist) visits ANZ thrice a week. Six free sessions are available to each employee and immediate family
  - As a part of 'Hakuna Matata', mental wellness program, a short and impactful street play is delivered by ANZ volunteers to create awareness about mental wellbeing and how to build resilience to cope.
  - Employee resource group comprising of volunteers, trained by specialists from NIMHANS are able to identify early signs of mental health issues and refer staff to Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
  - Hobby Clubs have been set up to promote common interest engagement and well-being.

> **I have Osteogenesis Imperfecta, a condition which has made my bones very brittle and I need special care in boarding / off-boarding my wheelchair. The organization has provided me with a trained house nurse who assists me with my chores and a special cab for home pick-up and drop, in which I can wheel-in my wheelchair. My safety is given utmost priority, I am made a part of the fire drills, and all the necessary care is provided to ensure a smooth and comfortable experience. Our comfort is of paramount importance for all leaders and staff members. The enabling systems and infrastructure makes the overall experience of working with ANZ very comfortable.**
> **Sirisha K V**
> Analyst, ANZ- Bengaluru Service Centre

11https://1to1help.net/

> **At ANZ, we are committed to providing a healthy, safe and happy work environment where all are treated with dignity and respect. ANZ firmly believes it is the right of all people to work in an environment that is inclusive and free from discrimination, harassment, workplace bullying and victimisation/retaliation.**
>
> **Our holistic wellbeing and employee assistance programs have helped in improving the performance, productivity, engagement and communication with co-workers. We not only offer these programs to our employees but also to their family members and to their support staff, including drivers, security guards, housekeeping and Café staff. One of the most important outcomes of these wellness efforts is that the whole stigmatisation around mental health is removed and many people feel confident to come forward, self-declare and take support.**
>
> **Close to 48% of full-time employees have registered for EAP, and the number of people accessing counselling sessions has increased by 22%".**
>
> **Rekha Shashidhar Hiremath**
> Manager- Health, Safety and Wellbeing, ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre

The Champions Network at Accenture brings together persons with disabilities, supporters and friends of persons with disabilities for networking, collaboration, mentoring and awareness building. Champions are employees across business and levels who are passionate about supporting persons with disabilities and are on-boarded through disability awareness training, workshops and detailed SOP which specify disability-related practices at Accenture and the expected role of a Champion. Details of Champions are published and persons with disabilities can reach out to them for any support. In addition to this, they lead all the volunteering activities and CSR initiative with organizations working with persons with disabilities.

Accenture has a robust Employee Assistance Program which has been running for more than a decade to create awareness and build a strong network of advocates to foster mental resilience. The organization has used some of the following steps to create a strong support framework for person with mental disabilities in the organization:

Leslie Noel Simonemme
Senior Analyst, Accenture

> **My colleagues at Accenture have made me feel equal and included by learning sign language to communicate with me. They join my work calls to lend a voice to my ideas.**

- Counseling sessions with expert consultants - Helping employees manage uncertainty, anxiety, building resilience, and self care habits

- Employee engagement at scale - Communication through Leadership townhalls, awareness sessions, employee touchpoints (desk cards, mails, screensavers, video bytes, portal), and the advocate network have been leveraged extensively.

- Supervisor sensitization and enablement - Helping supervisors identify early warning signs and creating awareness on the support framework available while maintaining privacy and confidentiality

D≪LL Technologies

The True Ability ERG (with 1000+ volunteers across businesses) is driven by the objective of a) empowering team members (serving as a resource group for team members with disability) b) raising awareness about disability inclusion c) creating jobs (leading initiatives which create opportunities for persons with disabilities at Dell) d) growing membership of true ability volunteers.

Through training and education programs this group empowers and advances team members with different abilities. Interventions are not restricted to persons with disabilities within the organization but extend to the entire ecosystem of partner organizations, CSR initiatives etc. Strong governance and communication keep the whole model together.

ALLEGIS
GROUP

- Monthly counselling support and Employee Assistance Program by an external vendor provides counselling support to all employees inclusive of the employees with disabilities, and the counsellors are sensitized to the needs of persons with disabilities.
- Regular sessions or webinars on mental wellbeing topics such as stress management, mindfulness, are conducted for all employees and persons with disabilities participate actively in these sessions.

Development and Career Progression

Career development and progression is one of the cornerstones of an engaged, motivated, productive and satisfied workforce. Organizations increasingly understand the importance of strengthening their career development and progression agenda to be an employer of choice, retain employees and gain a competitive edge in productivity and financial returns. While career development and progression is being accepted as an imperative for the non-disabled workforce, participants in this study consider this as an essential component of becoming a disability-confident organization. This is due to the view that career progression of employees with disabilities shows the commitment of the organization and its leadership in truly making the organization inclusive and not just making hiring of persons with disabilities an image-building exercise. Participating companies in this study, while emphasizing the importance of this component, also shared that the approaches being used for career development and progression are still in the evolutionary stage. Methods being used are adapted to the needs of individual employees with disabilities and focus on creating an environment for employees with disabilities to gain access to professional development training and access internal leadership networks. This is seen as a way for employees with disabilities to enhance their skills and competencies to position themselves competitively for future progression.

Innovative strategies followed by the partnering companies

ANZ

ANZ focuses on developing the skills and charting long-term career goals for people with disabilities, thereby helping them build confidence. They are treated equitably and are aware of the value that they add. ANZ's 'mentor-mentee' program for staff with disabilities helps in checking-in and providing professional development guidance, networking opportunities with senior leadership, more in-depth understanding of their ambitions and address challenges that the PwD staff might be facing at the workplace.

The mentor/coach shares relevant information with HR or the Health, Safety and Wellness (HSW) team to address specific requirements.

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Abilities Unleashed is a learning intervention which was launched in 2017 to deal with the challenge of the thinning pipeline of persons with disabilities at the executive level. It is a leadership and mentoring program wherein top performing employees with disabilities are selected (based on recommendations from business leaders) and put through an eight month all round development program where they are mentored by various leaders at Accenture. The program starts with detailed competency mapping and an individualistic leadership development plan is made for each participant. It is functional and technical training which grooms them to work in a large ecosystem as leaders. The program has customised training plans aligned in accordance with the employee's potential and aspirations. People are chosen from across businesses, disabilities and genders to be part of this initiative. A majority of those who were part of this program have progressed in their careers.

Employees were exposed to new and emerging technologies, trained on industry best practices and underwent team-building exercises. This was a rigorous and targeted training and skill enhancement program, designed as per a structured training calendar. Depending on the achievement of assigned milestones, the next set of skills were determined, and training was imparted accordingly.

> **"**
>
> **Beyond accessibility, we also empower persons with disabilities through skilling programmes, leadership development opportunities and tailored experiences to ensure advancement in their careers.**
>
> **Lakshmi Chandrasekharan**
> Managing Director, Accenture India
> Human Resources Lead
>
> **"**

ALLEGIS
G R O U P

Equal opportunity at Allegis extends to employees much beyond the selection and hiring process into the career development cycle. Employees with disabilities have access to the same leadership development programs, internal transfers for exploring new businesses or responsibilities and coaching opportunities. The principle is to adapt the process to suit employees with disabilities. For e.g. for the women leadership development program, the facilitator is sensitized to the needs of the employee with disabilities and is helped by the L&D team making the learning material accessible. With the support of the persons with disabilities hiring team, external training consultants who run some of the leadership development programs are sensitized to the learning needs of persons with disabilities and the team works together with the consultants in co-curating the sessions. Given the principle of adapting these programs to the needs of the persons with disabilities, sometimes the approach is for the facilitator to sit with the persons with disabilities and work through the challenges together.

Pillar 4
Partnerships

The core of good partnerships is the ability to bring together diverse resources in ways that can together achieve more: more impact, greater sustainability and increased value for all

Challenge

Solution

Partnerships

- What are the innovative partnerships a company should seek (with vendors, customers, external agency / consultants)?

- What should be the governance mechanism to ensure the success of these partnerships?

- Partnerships with a) individuals / organization (of persons with disabilities and/or other disability organizations) for raising awareness, sourcing talent and creating an inclusive and accessible workplace b) multiple stakeholders to bring about a systemic change at the ecosystem level. All partnerships driven by the agenda of progressing disability inclusion in the organization and achieving the larger goal of holistic development of persons with disabilities.

- A diverse portfolio of partnerships in-turn to build a wider spectrum of disability understanding

- A very hands-on approach and not 'passive box ticking' approach is followed towards these partnerships. Companies are directly involved in partnership design, implementation, monitoring progress and assessing impact.

Partnerships

Collaboration across sectors and partnership have grown to become an essential paradigm in meeting the goal of sustainable development. Partnerships, all of them, consider creation of value as the basis of success. However, the challenge is defining value as the associated question 'value to whom?' often lends itself to ambiguity. In the context of partnerships in the journey of disability inclusion in organizations studied, this aspect has been rather clear. All these progressive organizations consider holistic development of persons with disabilities as

the ultimate value of their partnerships. Partnerships ranging from those working on improving health outcomes of persons with disabilities, training and employment, skills development, access to infrastructure and information that can improve their economic situation to platforms that help share experiences that provide individuals and organizations the opportunity to learn how to truly drive inclusion are included in the strategy of these organizations for disability inclusion. A diverse portfolio of partnerships in turn helps the organization build a wider spectrum of disability understanding which directly feeds into their planning and decision making for the organization.

Mentioned below is a summary of the types of partnership explored by the participating companies.

		Applicable when	Value created
LEVERAGE/ EXCHANGE	Partner contributes to each other's work / exchange resources thus enabling one or both to deliver more. Often transactional, one-way transfer or reciprocal exchange of skills, knowledge, funding	each partner has something that is more valuable to the other than to themselves, resulting in net gain on exchange.	Organizational Value
COMBINE/ INTEGRATE	Partners combine their resources to deliver more than each could deliver alone Characterized by co-generation, mutual accountability and innovative approaches to create value together	bringing together complementary resources results in new approaches for delivering value to all.	Organizational Value Mission Value
TRANSFORM	Multiple actors work together to enable systemic transformation Requires multi-stakeholder dialogue to understand the system, engage and bring together unique and complementary resources	a systemic approach is required to bring about ecosystem level changes.	Organizational Value Mission Value

Some of the common best practices across companies are mentioned below:

- Training sessions are organized with external champions or organizations which have excelled in their field of work. People with disabilities are invited to share lived experience. These sessions attract huge turn-outs and are seen as important tools for sensitization and awareness creation. These sessions have also helped the companies to learn from varied experiences of participants and incorporate some of these best practices in charting their own journey.

- Multi-stakeholder partnerships and engagements borne out of programs such as Mission 1000 have helped the companies in extending their disability inclusion work beyond their ecosystem. In addition to creating several sustainable opportunities, it has helped the companies in gaining the confidence and experience to become #DisabilityInclusiveCompanies.

Innovative strategies and flagship programs followed by the participating companies

Leverage/ Exchange

Allegis was one of the initial funders for the Mission 1000 project, an initiative by Enable India & NGO Alliance to support non-profits working with people with intellectual disability and other severe disabilities. Allegis helped support the initial efforts to bring the non-profits and parent's community together. Allegis' funding support impacted close to 50 beneficiaries in the first phase and about 27 persons with disabilities and 25 trainers in the next phase.

Allegis continues to contribute to Mission 1000 through inclusive procurement from the participating non-profits; induction kits and gifts for internal and external leaders and guests have been procured. Such inclusive procurements have created widespread impact for some non-profits not only by way of awareness creation of their work but also by enabling the non-profits to remunerate beneficiaries for the work being done. One such example is the procurement of t-shirts for the India Inclusion Summit through a non-profit named Bubbles that enabled the organization to pay a stipend to its beneficiaries for the first time.

Transform

Garv Se is a one-of-its-kind Disability Employment Resource Centre in India that brings together all information pertaining to disability inclusion for organizations and employment for people with disabilities in one place. This model centre, launched in partnership with Enable India, a not-for-profit organization provides information on solutions for those organizations contemplating or starting out on their journey with disability inclusion alongside information about the various job roles available and the key skills needed for persons with disabilities to get economically viable employment. The Centre is seen by its D&I and CSR lead, Devika Nair, as a natural extension of the work done by Allegis to share the best practices that the company has learnt over the years in hiring people with disabilities. The Centre acts as a learning and awareness hub, aiming to break down unfounded biases and barriers to hiring persons with disabilities by throwing light on various aspects of disability inclusion, including learning about assistive devices, knowing about the job fitment analysis, onboarding, retention and training requirements.

The Centre showcases a range of workplace solutions to enable a supportive environment that helps bridge the gap between a person's disability and the job requirements such as a vibrating cane for the visually impaired, a joystick to help physically challenged people control their computers effectively and screen reading software, among others. This is along with complete information about nearly 291

different job roles that person
mapping analysis was a comb
wealth of information with rea
audio-visual system, which he
takes for persons with disabil

Over the last 18+ months, alm
replicate the best practices ar
company has managed to get
placements are through its Ga

ANZ

ANZ follows a detailed due di
screening, the CSR team revie
A weighted average selection
compliance, location of the p
practices in building and sust

- ANZ is in the process of la
  process of NGO evaluation

- It has an internal team of

- While 'one day' paid volun
  difference in the commun
  stepping out of campus ar

Leverage/ Exchange

Investments a
areas range fr
impairment a
with severe in
from funding social and rehabilitation training for people with spinal cord injury to
setting up multidisciplinary physiotherapy centres.

ANZ's flagship financial literacy program – 'MoneyMinded 'has trained 4500 people
including 700 persons with disabilities from across organizations in less than three years.

Combine/ Integrate

ANZ started an in-house Recording
Centre, which gives employees an option
to add the magic of books in the lives of
those who are visually impaired. These
voice recorded books on different
subjects become a part of
Samarathanam's (NGO) digital library.

> **The graffiti on the walls of the recording room and the training before recording dispels several myths surrounding vision impairment.**
> **Swati Akhouri**
> Communications Lead
> ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre

Transform

Accenture has signed the ILO Global Business and Disability Network Charter with 15 other companies to express its commitment to promoting and including persons with disabilities throughout its operations worldwide. In addition to this, it was amongst the first few companies which joined the Valuable 500 movement to publicly declare its commitment towards disability inclusion. Accenture is also the founding member of the Confederation of Indian Industry – India Business & Disability Network which was formed to engage, enable and empower people with disabilities by promoting and facilitating an inclusive profile and a barrier-free workplace within the corporate sector.

Nizar Sajan
Managing Director
Accenture India Persons
with Disabilities Sponsor

" **Businesses today have a critical role to play in helping bridge the employability gap for persons with disabilities.** "

Transform

aims to create 1000 OPPOURTUNITES, 1000 SMILES in 1000 DAYS . The spectrum of opportunities include the following –

- Direct – create opportunities for hiring

- Indirect – inclusive procurement, outsourced work at facility, CSR project through non-profit

- Ecosystem - Awareness workshops and community engagement activities and events

Dell launched 'One Step Closer', a CSR funded program (under Dell Mission 1000) to skill persons with severe disability and create livelihood opportunities for them. Thirty people with severe disabilities were trained and 75 members were trained to become job coaches to candidates and guide their progress and support their families. A network of domain and demand partners supported the program and it culminated into successful placement of the candidates.

Enable

• Centralized budget for cost of accommodation
• Well-defined reasonable accommodation protocol

https://www.accenture.com/_acnmedia/PDF-89/Accenture-Disability-Inclusion-Research-Report.pdf

Annexure

Participating Companies

Accenture

Accenture, a global management consulting and professional services firm, provides strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations services and is a Fortune Global 500 company. As a professional services company, Accenture focuses on professional development for its employees, including substantial investments in re-skilling to help them stay .The company has an unwavering commitment to inclusion and diversity, and offers an inclusive environment regardless of ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability.

With a focussed approach, Accenture employs 1,000 plus persons with disabilities as technical architects, marketing, human resources, business operations and quality analysts' roles. Accenture has been recognized as a 'Role Model Company' by the National Center for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People's (NCPDEP) 2016 Helen Keller Awards.

Awards and Recognitions

- Brandon Hall HCM Excellence Awards - Winner in the gold category for Inclusion & Diversity practices for 4 consecutive years (2015, 2016,2017 & 2018)

- Business Today's Best Companies to Work in India- Ranked #2, 2017

- Disability Matters Asia Awards – Workforce Category – 2017

- NCPEDP Mindtree Helen Keller Award - Role Model Company in Disability Segment, 2016

- Association for Talent Development in Practice award- Inclusion & Diversity – 2016

- **NASSCOM Corporate Awards for Excellence in Diversity and Inclusion** for Persons with Disability Program - 2019"

ALLEGIS Group, India

ALLEGIS Group (Allegis) is a $12.3 billion global leader in talent solutions with over 500 locations around the world. Through a network of specialized companies, Allegis offers a wide gamut of services ranging from talent acquisition services to fully outsourced workforce management offerings to optimize human capital strategies and solve the toughest talent challenges for clients. Allegis Group companies virtually span all industries and markets including engineering, legal, technology, life sciences, finance, etc. Allegis services nearly 20,000 clients across 500 locations around the globe.

Allegis Group was formed in the year 2000 and includes a wide network of specialized companies including Aerotek, TEK systems, Aston Carter, Allegis Global Solutions, Allegis Partners, Marketsource, EASi, Stamford Group, Getting Hired & Major, Linsey & Africa.

Allegis disability inclusion journey started 5 years ago with the hiring of the first persons with disabilities , a person with autism. As the person had the requisite skills, the opportunity to work with Allegis was extended. With this accidental start, Allegis put discussions about disability at the center in the organization. As a talent organization, Allegis believes that its purpose is to 'create opportunities' for people day in and day out but after the first persons with disabilities hire, realized that they were not being true to this entire talent segment because of stereotypical notions about this segment. This very realization led to its disability inclusion journey with a focus on understanding this space better and hiring more talent from this segment - first internally and then supporting Allegis clients.

Awards and Recognitions

Late Mrs. Piloo Dorab Khambatta Memorial Award, by the NAB, in the year 2019 - given to the Best Employer (organization engaging highest number of blind persons in a year.)

ANZ Bengaluru Service Centre (ANZ Banking Group Limited)

ANZ, one of the four largest banks in Australia, started Bengaluru Service Centre more than 30 years ago. It provides Technology, Operations & 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 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. approx. 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 partnerships with experts gives momentum to the 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.

Awards and Recognitions

Late Mrs. Piloo Dorab Khambatta Memorial Award, by the NAB, in the year 2019 - given to the Best Employer (organization engaging highest number of blind persons in a year).

- 2020 Top 100 Best Companies for Women & Avtar Champion of Inclusion
- NASSCOM GCC Conclave 2019 - The Learning and Skill Development Award
- 2019 Working Mother & Avtar 100 Best Companies for Women in India
- 2019 Most Inclusive Companies Index
- Zinnov Award 2019 - Inclusion and Diversity
- 2019 Best In-candidate Experience award by People Matters, second time in a row
- JobforHer 2020 top 5 in most innovative divHERsity hiring practices
- JobforHer 2019 top 5 in most innovative diversity programs
- Best 50 People Capital Index (PCI) companies for 2019
- CRO Leadership Summit and Awards – Feb 2019
- People Matters League Awards – Diversity and Inclusion –2018
- World Congress - 2017 - National Award for Excellence in Training & Development
- NASSCOM D&I Award 2016
- Equal Opportunity Award 2016 by Nipman Foundation
- NCPEDP – Lemon tree Helen Keller Award 2015 – Role Model organization for inclusion of persons with disability

ANZ also take immense pride in the achievements of its employees with disabilities. One of their staff, Sirisha KV, has been recognized by the President of India in 2017 as the best women employee with multi-disability.

DELL Technologies

Dell is the world's leading developer and provider of information infrastructure technology and solutions. The India Centre is host to all product, services and support groups within Dell. It delivers engineering of Dell's information infrastructure products. As Dell EMC's largest R&D center outside of North America, India COE delivers product engineering, services and integrated innovation for every product group including management, security, virtualization, and enterprise content management. It has also significantly scaled out Global Services offerings to offer product support and consulting globally. Having all groups in India creates a compelling value proposition for customers and Dell – that of market innovation, solutions and services and engineering excellence.

True Ability ERG is a Dell Technologies-sponsored initiative that provides a support network and knowledge base for Dell Technologies employees with disabilities or family members with special needs. True ability has been a role model in the inclusion of persons with disabilities, sensitizing managers and leaders on disability awareness, engaging 7000+ employees over last 6 years to create an inclusive ecosystem within Dell Technologies. With the inspiring work from the members of the ERG, the numbers of persons with disability at Dell EMC India COE has tripled since 2012.

Awards & Recognitions

True Ability has achieved many milestones through its work and has been awarded on many occasions. This ERG received the prestigious Hellen Keller awards in 2016, 'Disability Matters' Asia Pacific award in 2014 and 2015, NASSCOM award for Most Innovative Program for Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) in 2015, Zinnov Award for "Most Effective People Organization" in 2016 and many more.

- Naveen Rabindranath, Executive, Retrieval Center, IT Asset Management, Dell EMC India COE, was recently named for the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled Persons – Mindtree Hellen Keller Award for the year 2018.
- Pradeep Sinha is the 2017 recipient of the 'Role Model-Disabled Person' category of the Mindtree Helen Keller Awards
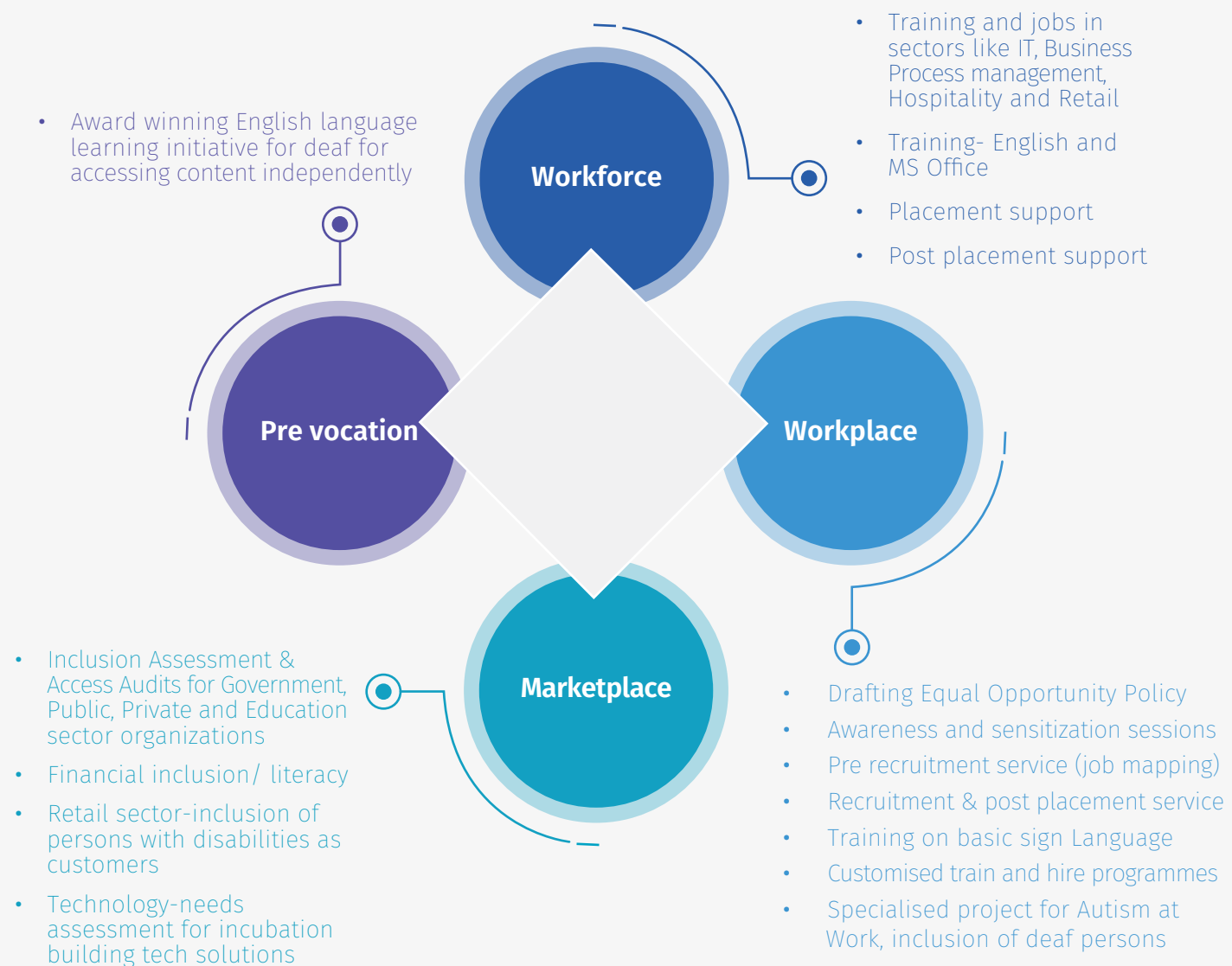- Community Business - 2018 Disability Confidence Award

v-shesh Learning Services Pvt Ltd

v-shesh is an award-winning impact enterprise that prepares students and job-seekers with disabilities for suitable opportunities with a strong focus on employability & making the first job connection. v-shesh provides job posting, counselling and training services, equipping job-seekers with disability to perform to his/her potential in a corporate setting. Constantly endeavouring to find "quality" jobs, v-shesh has made over 2000 job connections in the last three years. v-shesh has been working with all types of disabilities – including autism, intellectual & learning disability.

v-shesh facilitates disability inclusion at workplace in policy and action, through a range of pre- and post- recruitment services – disability awareness workshops, accessibility audits, inclusion solutions, job analysis. v-shesh has worked with 100+ organizations and conducted 100+ disability awareness sessions & 200+ accessibility audits.

v-shesh is structured as a business in its efforts to build a self-sustaining organization. v-shesh's team is an example of diversity both in terms of gender (40% women) and disability (25% Persons with disabilities) and has offices spread across Bengaluru, Chennai , Delhi NCR, Hyderabad and Mumbai . v-shesh's work in disability inclusion has won recognitions by way of 2013 NCPEDP Shell Helen Keller Award for Workplace Disability inclusion and 2014 NCPEDP Mphasis Award for Universal Design, 2018 CNBC ICICI Social Enterprise of the year award. V-shesh is mentioned as Top 10 Diversity consultants in the Global Diversity List (supported by The Economist magazine).

Workforce

- Training and jobs in sectors like IT, Business Process management, Hospitality and Retail
- Training- English and MS Office
- Placement support
- Post placement support

Workplace

- Drafting Equal Opportunity Policy
- Awareness and sensitization sessions
- Pre recruitment service (job mapping)
- Recruitment & post placement service
- Training on basic sign Language
- Customised train and hire programmes
- Specialised project for Autism at Work, inclusion of deaf persons

Pre vocation

- Award winning English language learning initiative for deaf for accessing content independently

Marketplace

- Inclusion Assessment & Access Audits for Government, Public, Private and Education sector organizations
- Financial inclusion/ literacy
- Retail sector-inclusion of persons with disabilities as customers
- Technology-needs assessment for incubation building tech solutions

CII

Confederation of Indian Industry

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
The Mantosh Sondhi Centre
23, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi – 110 003 (India)
T: 91 11 45771000 / 24629994-7 • F: 91 11 24626149 • E: info@cii.in • W: www.cii.in

cii.in/facebook   cii.in/twitter   cii.in/linkedin   cii.in/youtube

IBDN
India Business and Disability Network
A CII Initiative

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 | Kirti Sharma / Sarbani Chakravarty T: +91-124-4014079– 289 E: ibdn@cii.in / W: www.ciiibdn.com | /IndiaBusinessDisabilityNetwork/ /linkedin.com/company/indiabusinessdn /IndiaBusinessDN |