

#ManifesteInclusion

Working group “Internationalisation of disability policies”

Focus on India

October 23, 2024

Speakers

- P. Rajasekharan, Co-founder, [V-shesh](#)
- Sreya Ghosch Oberoi, Director of Diversity and Inclusion, [Capgemini India](#)
- Shalini Sinha, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Manager, [Capgemini India](#)

Webinar moderated by Anne Findelair (Deputy Director of Inclusion, [Capgemini France](#)) and Anahi Lafon (Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Impact Director, [L'Oréal](#))

> [Watch the replay](#)

Meeting summary

This meeting took place as part of the “Internationalization of disability policies” working group of the Inclusion Manifesto. The speakers are working on disability in business in India and they give an overview of the Indian context, and the policies that have been implemented by government, businesses, and in particular Capgemini India.

1) Perception and legislation on disability in India (P. Rajasekharan)

Perception

- According to the World Bank, there are about 80,000,000 people living with a disability in India (7 to 10 % of the population).
- In traditional India, disability was often seen as a result of “karma”, leading to stigma. This belief is still deeply-rooted in rural areas, and lack of accessibility leads to people being confined to their homes. There is more awareness and acceptance in urban areas, even though some stereotypes persist.

Education and employment

- 61% of children with a disability have access to primary education (100% access for children without a disability). 20% acquire secondary education (versus 75%), 5% graduate from university (versus 25%).
- Even among those who graduate, the employment gap is huge. Representation of people with a disability in the workforce is less than 1%, even with the quota system for government and public sector (4% of vacancies reserved). More than 70% of people living with a disability are unemployed.

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Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

- The law was passed after India ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007). Amendments are still being added. It represents a shift from the earlier welfare approach and also raised quotas for government jobs (to 4%) and for higher education (to 5%).
- Contrary to the previous law (1995), it includes the private sector, but without employment quotas. Companies must publish an “equal opportunity policy” and appoint a liaison officer to be a guardian of the policy and revisit all HR practices. The law also requires organizations to maintain records of employees with disabilities (on the basis of voluntary disclosure); to conform to accessibility norms ; and to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.
- The number of identified disabilities has increased from 7 to 21 and now includes a lot of invisible conditions such as learning disability, chronic neurological conditions, etc.

Government support and incentives

- Central government provides assistance for acquiring aids and equipment, as well as scholarship schemes. It centralizes the databases to create a unique disability ID. As part of the “Accessible India Campaign”, funding was made available for accessibility audits and implementation of recommendations in public spaces.
- At state level, a disability pension represents a very basic level income support. Social security is provided by most state governments, as well as scholarships and funding for schools.
- Fiscal incentives are available, such as the National Apprentice scheme (the monthly stipend of an apprentice with a disability is paid by the central government) and additional tax deductions/exemptions for employees with disabilities.

Industry best practices

- V-shesh has worked with companies on 4 pillars:

Enable: for example, encouraging new employees to voice their needs, doing accessibility audits in the entire workplace, centralizing budget so that accommodation becomes an HQ level cost, providing a catalogue of all services a person might need.

Employ : for example, changing HR recruitment practices, or making sure that caregivers can benefit from adjustments.

Engage : this includes awareness campaigns, developing general eLearning content and more specific case study scenarios.

Empower : this includes mentoring and coaching programs, checking in on people with disabilities who can feel especially left out in a remote or hybrid working environment, reporting potential mental health problems so that the individual can receive support.

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- Disability confident organizations have a very strong equal opportunity policy, with good internal consultation, centralized provision of budget, new selections processes. Most of them have launched a self ID campaign.

Questions from the audience

- **Annemette Jocteur-Monrozier (Renault)**

Even though Renault has launched a self-identification campaign, it has proved difficult. Are there any messages that efficiently engage people to identify themselves ?

- **P. Rajasekharan (V-shesh)**

People are reluctant because they are afraid of being judged. This is probably true globally, and not just in India. In most of the places where self-identifications campaigns worked, the message from management was that providing reasonable accommodation was no favor, but a way to enable people to express their talent. Communication should also come directly from line functions, not from HR.

2) Persons with Disability Inclusion at Capgemini India (Sreya Ghosh Oberoi & Shalini Sinha)

Diversity & Inclusion at Capgemini

- Capgemini has been rated as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies® by the *Ethisphere*® Institute. Diversity and inclusion is part of the company's culture and the senior management is committed to promoting an inclusive environment.
- In India, Capgemini has about 175,000 employees on 13 locations. As part of its special disability inclusion framework, it promotes talent through its Digital Talent Academies, targeted mostly to socioeconomically marginalized communities. The employee resource groups in the organization are dedicated to supporting and empowering employees with disabilities.
- Capgemini India is aligned with the Disabilities Act. The Equal opportunity policy caters to all sorts of diversities. Sponsors from all business lines work on the ground to bring the required change.
- The 4 pillars driving the initiative within the organization are Accessibility (accommodation, accessible infrastructure), Career (non-discriminatory recruiting processes, training and HR policies), Engagement (sensitization in the teams, and through webinars, social media internal networks), and Evangelism (a network of companies sharing best practices, initiatives, etc.).
- Key initiatives include voluntary self-declaration, communication campaigns, helpdesk services that cater to the needs of people with disabilities, celebrating significant days like Autism Day International.

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A special empower and include disability awareness and sensitization series targets different stakeholders in the organization, including a lot of role-playing case studies.

Neurodiversity inclusion

- Last year, focused programs were implemented for neurodiversity inclusion. Fact sheets are provided to employee network groups, business leaders are encouraged to hire neurodiverse people in their teams, and work is being done on workplace accommodation and flexibility employee support and engagement. There is also an insurance covering neurodiversity.
- There are now 2 separate Employee resource groups : CapAbility for persons with physical disabilities (around 180 members) and NeuroAbility (around 200 members) for persons with neurodiversity. Members include allies and caregivers.