

An Analytical Study on Health and Safety of Differently-Abled Workforce Employed in Indian IT Organizations

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Abstract

Life is a roller coaster filled with lot of thrills, twists and turns. Once your ride is complete you get down with a big sigh of relief but do not stop there instead try it once more. In this fast paced life survival becomes very difficult if you are not able to sell and one such place to prove your skills is the work place. In this research article we use the term differently- abled instead of disabled as the society is fast approaching to a pace where there is no discrimination. Providing Health and Safety to Differently-Abled is a major and visible factor of ethical business. The Paper focuses on Health and Safety of Differently-Abled Employees in Indian IT Organizations w.r.t to Chennai. A sample of 20 was collected from various Differently-Abled employees in IT Organizations .The aim of the paper is to find out from the targeted respondents if they have provisions for proper health and safety at the work place and give suggestions for the same.

Key Words:Health and Safety, differently-abled, IT industry

I. INTRODUCTION

In many countries the term Disability is interpreted in so many ways that convey variety of meanings in different communities. At the same time in many developing countries the situation is even worse and job prospects for differently abled workforce is much more worse. The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 mandates that: “The appropriate Governments and the local authorities shall, within the limits of their economic capacity and development, provide incentives to employers both in public and private sectors to ensure that at least five per cent of their work force is composed of persons with disabilities.”

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Employment is the main aim of all individuals and differently abled people are not exceptional. Out of the total world population around six hundred million people are differently abled, among this 8 percent live in India which comes to 40 -80 million thus having one differently abled for every 12 households. In India with the amendments and acts the life of differently abled people is not worse as everyone is talking about an inclusive society where differently abled are at par with a normal person. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 desired to eliminate discrimination, and has been extended, notably by the DDA 2005, providing differently-abled people additional rights in their employment and education and placing duties on their employers and educational institutions. The thought behind using the term differently-abled is that they should not be looked with sympathy and people around should treat them equally and give a feeling that being disabled is in no way a hindrance for success.

Health and safety in the workplace is nothing but to be safe in the workplace. Providing safety for the employees is the prime duty of an employer and a responsibility to be shared by both. In this process there should not be any discrimination related to the workforce. Health and Safety is important as it protects the well-being of everyone associated with the organization.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) provides a wide range of duties to employers whose bound duty is to protect the 'health, safety and welfare' at work of all their employees without and discrimination. Employers must ensure that they have special provisions for differently abled employees as well while framing the policies related to health and safety. Few provision of the act is as follows:

- Provide and maintain safety equipment and safe systems of work
- Proper usage of materials related to stored, handled, used and transported
- Provide information, training, instruction and supervision
- Provide a safe working environment
- Provide a written safety policy/risk assessment

An employer is forbidden to charge his or her employees for any measures which he or she is required to provide in the interests of health and safety (for example, personal protective equipment).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A huge number of research and evaluation studies have been published on differently-abled people and their employment.

Anderson, S. D et.al (1995) viewed that laws bring changes in the workplace where some fight or avoid while others fully embrace and promote it. In the present scenario many workplaces have revamped their structure that has easy accessibility for differently abled people giving independence for differently abled people to be on their own. For example - height of water fountains, width of bathroom stalls, hand rails inside the stalls and long ramps instead of stairs and much more provide confidence to differently abled people that they are at par with others in terms of work.

Zolna, J. S et.al (2007) mentioned on universal design in the workplace that is best defined as designing products and work spaces to allow use by everyone, regardless of the physique. A well designed work spaces can increase function for all employees, regardless of any physical barriers.

Larson, L. K., Larson, A. (2008) insisted that safety professionals should involve workers' compensation because it deals directly with an injury that occurs in the workplace. An employee is entitled to coverage if an injury arises out of and in the course of employment which also comes under the provision of the act.

OBJECTIVES AND NEED FOR THE STUDY

The primary objective is to conduct a study on Health and Safety of Differently-Abled Workforce Employed in Indian IT Organizations.

Organizations are now far more willing to recognize the crucial importance of their people power especially with regard to Equal Employment and Opportunity and how they deal with their personnel with regard to health and safety which is now considered as a fundamental concern and a matter of their highest priority.

III. METHODOLOGY

A sample size of 20 from IT industry was taken for the study. Questionnaire was distributed to the samples based on Likert's Scale. As the study focuses on IT industry, respondents were also from IT companies. The selection of the samples was based on the presence of differently-abled employees in the Organization.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant difference on health and safety of differently – abled employees in the Organization.
2. There is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and the way they are treated in the organization.
3. There is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and their opinion of denial of discrimination in their workplace with respect to their physical conditions.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS & INTREPRETATION

Table 1

One Sample t Test

Statement	Mean	SD	t Value	P Value
Clear about rights and responsibilities in relation to workplace health and safety	3.50	0.827	2.703	0.014

Note: Average =3

H_0 –Opinion regarding that the respondents are clear about rights and responsibilities in relation to workplace health and safety is equal to average level.

H_1 –Opinion regarding that the respondents are clear about rights and responsibilities in relation to workplace health and safety is not equal to average level.

Since the P value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence, the opinion regarding that the respondents are clear about rights and responsibilities in relation to workplace health and safety are not equal to average level. Based on mean score, respondents are clear about rights and responsibilities in relation to workplace health and safety is above the average level.

Table 2

One Sample t Test

Statement	Mean	SD	t Value	P Value
Know to perform the job in a safe manner	3.65	0.813	3.577	0.002

Note: Average =3

H_0 –Opinion regarding that the respondents know to perform their job in a safe manner is equal to average level.

H_1 –Opinion regarding that the respondents know to perform their job in a safe manner is not equal to average level.

Since the P value is less than 0.01, the null hypothesis is rejected at 1% level of significance. Hence, the opinion regarding that the respondents know to perform their job in a safe manner is not equal to average level. Based on mean score, regarding that the respondents know to perform their job in a safe manner is above the average level.

Table 3

Independent sample t test

Statement	Gender				t Value	P Value
	Male		Female			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Organization provides utmost priority to the health and safety.	3.00	1.00	3.33	0.90	0.699	0.493

H_0 – There is no significant difference between male and female with respect to opinions towards Organization provides utmost priority to the health and safety.

H_1 – There is a significant difference between male and female with respect to opinions towards Organization provides utmost priority to the health and safety.

From the Table 3, P value is greater than 0.05, null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of significance. Hence there is no significant difference between male and female with respect to respondent's opinions towards Organization provides utmost priority to the health and safety. It can be concluded that Organization provides utmost priority to the health and safety between male and female are same.

Table 4

Independent sample t test

Statement	Gender				t Value	P Value
	Male		Female			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		

Aware of necessary precautions in the job.	3.80	0.862	3.13	0.447	2.143	0.044
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H_0 – There is no significant difference between male and female with respect to respondents being aware of necessary precautions in the job.

H_1 – There is a significant difference between male and female with respect to respondents being aware of necessary precautions in the job.

From the Table 4, P value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence there is a significant difference between male and female with respect to respondents being aware of necessary precautions in the job. From the mean value, it can be concluded that male respondents are better aware of necessary precautions in the job compared to female respondents.

Table 5
Independent sample t test

Statement	Gender				t Value	P Value
	Male		Female			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Understands the communication about workplace health and safety procedure.	2.40	0.676	3.47	0.578	2.932	0.009

H_0 – There is no significant difference between male and female with respect to respondents understanding the communication about workplace health and safety procedure.

H_1 – There is a significant difference between male and female with respect to respondents understanding the communication about workplace health and safety procedure.

From the Table 5, P value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Hence there is a significant difference between male and female with respect to respondents understanding the communication about workplace health and safety procedure. From the mean value, it can be concluded that female respondents are better in understanding the communication about workplace health and safety procedure compared to male respondents.

V. CONCLUSION

The results revealed that the organizations provide utmost health and safety to differently abled people. It must be noted that despite all legislations, funds, technical assistance a large number of differently abled people have not yet identified an opportunity that meet their basic social and economic needs. They need to break their shell and prove that they are at par with any normal person. The reasons could be many - insufficient or inappropriate education and training or experience, transportation problems in reaching the place of work, demands or constraints imposed by family members, unrealistic job aspirations, social and cultural problems, and personality complications. Thus differently abled people are liable to all of the problems that affect everyone. The problems of differently abled people cannot be solved in an acceptable fashion unless there are a huge number of work opportunities that are socially and economically viable.

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