

INCLUSION IN ACTION
A CURATED
COMPENDIUM
OF EXEMPLARY
INCLUSIVE PRACTICES



Presenting Partner



Purpose Partner



Inclusion Partner



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Technical Partner



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Dear Reader,

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is pleased to present 'Inclusion in Action', a compendium of Exemplary Inclusive Practices, a knowledge resource that reflects the growing commitment of Indian industry toward building inclusive, equitable, and accessible workplaces.

This compendium draws upon the disability inclusion practices and initiatives, submitted by organizations that participated in the CII Awards for Excellence in Disability Inclusion 2026.

In two years, the Awards have emerged as a credible platform to recognise and celebrate organisations that are setting benchmarks in inclusive business practices. More importantly, they have evolved beyond recognition to become a catalyst, encouraging organisations to translate intent into meaningful, measurable action.

These applications represent a diverse range of sectors and showcase thoughtful, innovative, and scalable approaches to integrating disability inclusion into business strategy, workplace culture, and operations.

This edition builds on that momentum by going a step further. This document is a curated set of practices from the participating organisations that have the potential to influence not just individual workplaces, but the broader inclusion ecosystem. The focus of this year's knowledge edition is on approaches that signal systemic shifts: the rise of disability-focused startups and innovative corporate partnerships, the integration of neurodivergent talent into roles not traditionally considered suitable, the transition from sheltered models to mainstream workforce participation, and the growing presence of persons with disabilities in customer-facing roles. Importantly, it also highlights the recognition of customers with disabilities as a distinct and valuable business segment driving accessible design, inclusive service delivery, and unlocking new market opportunities.

These are not isolated interventions, but emerging, scalable pathways that can be adopted and adapted across industries. As you read through this compendium, we invite you to view these practices not just as examples, but as signals of a broader shift, one where disability inclusion is increasingly embedded within core business strategy and ecosystem thinking. The opportunity ahead is not only to enable access, but to actively reshape markets, talent pipelines, and societal perceptions.

We hope that this knowledge document will encourage organizations across industries to reflect, adapt, and replicate these practices, thereby contributing to a more inclusive workforce and society at large.

We extend our appreciation to all participating organizations for their valuable contributions and for setting benchmarks that inspire progress.

CII-IBDN

About the Document: Reframing Inclusion Through Practice

This compendium moves beyond intent to showcase inclusion in action, featuring organisations that are not just participating in the agenda, but actively reshaping it. Across sectors, the practices highlighted here reflect a shift from isolated initiatives to approaches that influence systems, behaviours, and markets.

The document brings together a curated set of (1) Established Practices, those that have demonstrated impact and driven change, (2) Emerging Practices, those with the potential to shape the future of the inclusion ecosystem and (3) Progressive Industry Practices seen in various companies on the path of inclusion. These are not rigid categories; practices continue to adapt to new contexts and insights, sustaining their role as catalysts for ongoing transformation.

Some practices may appear familiar or overlapping. Their inclusion, however, reflects the depth of learning and contextual

adaptation required to make them effective. It is this steep learning curve, along with the nuances of implementation across diverse settings, that makes them valuable for wider dissemination.

As the ecosystem continues to mature, the insights captured here aim to encourage broader adoption, foster deeper collaboration and sustain progress towards a more inclusive and equitable future. The various themes adopted by organizations highlight the core principles that cut across these practices, shaping how inclusion is designed, implemented, and scaled.



Established Practices

Proven, scalable disability inclusion models that have demonstrated sustained impact and systemic integration across sectors.

Lemon Tree Hotels: Champion Company, 2026

▶ *Lemon Tree's journey reinforces a powerful insight: meaningful inclusion is not about creating standalone opportunities, but about redesigning mainstream systems to unlock the potential of diverse talent at scale, delivering impact not only for employees, but also for customers, businesses, and the wider ecosystem.*

Lemon Tree Hotels stands out as a pioneer in embedding disability inclusion into the core of hospitality operations. Its approach demonstrates that service excellence and inclusion can go hand in hand. Backed by strong leadership commitment, the organisation has institutionalised inclusion at scale, with approximately 3.3% of its workforce comprising persons with disabilities (PwD) across owned, managed, and franchise properties. This reflects a clear shift from inclusion as an initiative to inclusion as a business practice.

The organisation's efforts are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and are reinforced by consistently positive customer experiences. A defining feature of **Lemon Tree's model is the diversity of disabilities represented in its workforce. Employees with hearing and speech impairments work alongside those with locomotor disabilities and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including Down syndrome and Autism. The organisation follows a disciplined approach of piloting each new disability category before scaling, ensuring strong role fit and operational readiness.**

Rather than being confined to segregated roles, persons with disabilities are fully integrated into mainstream hotel operations. Notably, **99.7% of employees with disabilities are engaged as full-time staff on the company payroll,**

reinforcing dignity, stability, and parity in employment.

The inclusion model is underpinned by strong systems, processes, and partnerships. Lemon Tree has established robust policies, structured training programmes, and high levels of physical accessibility across its properties. Job roles are designed to enable seamless collaboration between employees with and without disabilities. A cornerstone of its success is its **deep engagement with NGO and DPO partners across hiring, training, and ongoing support.** These partnerships enable detailed job mapping aligned to individual abilities, supporting both productivity and employee confidence.

Beyond its own operations, Lemon Tree actively collaborates with industry peers, contributing to cross-sector learning and encouraging wider adoption of inclusive practices. Internationally too, the organisation has shared its expertise in training and hiring persons with disabilities.

▶ *Over the past decade, Lemon Tree has emerged as a recognised global role model, with standardised and scalable hiring and training systems that can be replicated across geographies. Its work has been widely acknowledged and continues to serve as a benchmark for organisations across sectors.*

TVS Motor Company: Champion for Inclusive Recruitment, 2026

▶ *TVS Motor Company is emerging as a strong example of inclusive employment in manufacturing, demonstrating how persons with disabilities, traditionally not hired on shopfloors can be meaningfully integrated into core operations. Through a multi-layered approach spanning inclusive policies, accessible infrastructure, cultural transformation, and ecosystem partnerships, the company is building a scalable and replicable model for inclusive manufacturing. Its journey reflects a broader sectoral shift: from viewing inclusion as compliance to recognising it as an operational capability that strengthens workforce resilience, productivity, and equity.*

Anchored by strong leadership commitment, TVS has developed its Hosur facility as a model site for inclusion. The company has set a clear target of 5% workforce representation of persons with disabilities, of which approximately 4% (nearly 500 employees) has already been achieved. Around 80% of this workforce is engaged in plant operations, including persons with hearing and speech impairments, as well as employees with low vision and locomotor disabilities. This reflects **a deliberate effort to integrate persons with disabilities into core manufacturing roles rather than limiting them to peripheral functions. Notably, an entire manufacturing line is operated exclusively by employees with disabilities.**

The company's efforts are supported by a robust policy framework, characterised by a lifecycle approach to inclusion spanning hiring, onboarding, retention, and career progression. A strong ecosystem underpins this work, including employee resource groups, sign language interpreters, external partners, and dedicated HR and DEI support systems. A strong focus on blue-collar workforce inclusion is complemented by sustained investments in retention and structured upskilling pathways, enabling progression from shopfloor to white-collar roles and reinforcing long-term

career growth. Infrastructure improvements are guided by accessibility audits, standard operating procedures, and structured feedback channels, ensuring that inclusion is embedded in systems, not just intent.

A distinctive feature of the TVS model is the integration of **real-time support mechanisms on the shopfloor, such as sign language-enabled kiosks that facilitate seamless communication and reduce dependency barriers.** Inclusion is further reinforced through ongoing sensitisation programmes and sign language training for the wider workforce, fostering a culture of **shared responsibility.** A responsive and well-structured accommodation system ensures that individual needs are addressed effectively, while inclusive policies such as support for para-sportspersons extend inclusion beyond the workplace to broader identity and wellbeing.

▶ *From a few to many, what began as an accommodation for some has evolved into a shared language for all. On the shopfloor, sign language is not an exception but an ethos, shaping how people communicate, collaborate, and belong.*

PricewaterhouseCoopers: Champion for Disability Inclusion and Culture, 2026

PwC's work demonstrates how strong, leadership-led governance supported by robust policies, structured accommodation systems, deep cultural engagement, and active allyship can create a solid foundation for meaningful and scalable disability inclusion.

Backed by committed leadership, PwC has embedded disability inclusion into its governance framework, with a **clear annual roadmap reviewed quarterly by a dedicated Executive Sponsor to ensure sustained strategic focus.** Senior leaders actively drive the agenda through governance forums, ERG initiatives, awareness sessions, and representation across internal and external platforms.

Since 2021, the organisation has strengthened inclusive policies and workplace practices through a comprehensive framework anchored in the Equal Opportunity, Reasonable Adjustment, and Personal Assistive Devices policies, supported by well-defined systems. This is reinforced by **global medical coverage for employees and their families, including therapy support for children with disabilities extending into adulthood.** A structured, centralised reasonable accommodation process ensures post-onboarding needs are addressed consistently and in a timely manner by the Inclusion & Diversity team, while inclusive onboarding practices such as buddy support and sensitisation of hiring managers enable smoother integration into teams. Accessibility is reinforced through annual assessments aligned with national standards, alongside in-house digital accessibility capabilities, tools, and trained teams conducting regular reviews to ensure continuous improvement.

Equitable performance evaluation practices further strengthen inclusion, recognising the limitations of standard bell curve assessments and focusing on individual roles, goals, and

outcomes. **The Abilities & Allies Network drives engagement through regular interactions, awareness sessions, and dialogue forums that bring together employees with disabilities and allies, supported by leadership sponsors.**

Confidential self-identification through Workday, reinforced by periodic campaigns, enables employees to disclose needs and access support, complemented by dedicated DEI points of contact and structured grievance redressal mechanisms that strengthen trust and accountability.



Through sustained efforts, PwC has, in a relatively short span, built a strong culture of inclusion, positioning itself to scale and support a diverse workforce of persons with disabilities, while continuing to evolve its practices and systems.

Persistent Systems Pvt. Ltd (Aryabhata-Pingala Site)–Champion for Physical Accessibility, 2026

Infrastructure accessibility reflects an organisation's sustained commitment to creating a barrier-free environment for all. It reinforces the responsibility to continuously improve spaces, guided by ease of access and the lived experiences of persons with disabilities.

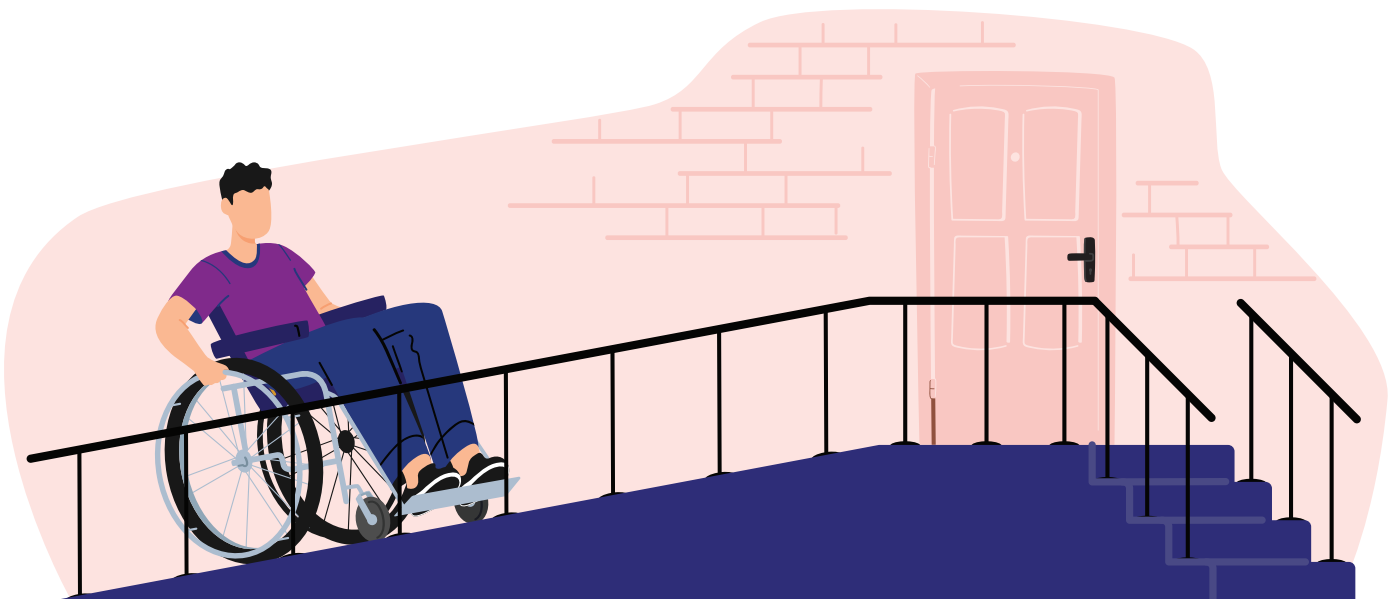
Persistent Systems has adopted a comprehensive approach to accessibility across its office infrastructure, aligned with the Harmonised Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India (2021). While managed properties are designed to meet essential accessibility requirements, owned facilities have been systematically upgraded to fully adhere to these standards. The Aryabhata-Pingala office is developed as a model, with other locations progressively aligning to this benchmark.

Persistent's facilities team has effectively balanced aesthetics with accessibility, working collaboratively with access auditors and in-house architects to embed inclusive design across locations. Co-design, audits, and ongoing validation with persons with disabilities are integral to their approach, enabling a deeper understanding of diverse

accessibility needs. Fire safety processes have also been made more inclusive, with accessible evacuation protocols, assistive alerts, and trained response teams to support persons with diverse needs during emergencies.

Senior management has committed dedicated budgets to ensure that accessibility interventions are not only implemented but also sustained and scaled. By integrating physical, digital, behavioural, and safety dimensions of accessibility, the organisation has moved beyond compliance to meaningful inclusion.

This holistic, user-centred approach positions Persistent Systems as a strong example of how organisations can operationalise universal design in a practical and scalable way.



Union Bank of India: Champion for Digital Accessibility, 2026

Access to financial systems for persons with disabilities must be foundational, not optional, as true financial independence depends on it. Union Bank of India demonstrates this through a user-led, governance-backed model that ensures decisions, policies, and systems are designed with persons with disabilities, not just for them. By embedding accessibility into core banking systems, it highlights the critical role and large-scale potential of public sector banks in advancing inclusive financial access.

UBI's Union Access Programme is a benchmark digital accessibility initiative by a public sector bank, focused on enabling financial inclusion and independence for customers with disabilities. With its wide network across urban and rural India, the programme has the potential to reach millions.

A defining strength is its user-led model. Driven by employees with visual impairments, including a team of IAAP-certified professionals who are screen reader users, accessibility is embedded through lived experience, shaping design, testing, and implementation. This marks a shift from compliance-led efforts to operational ownership.

The programme is supported by strong governance, including regular audits, defined KRAs, and leadership reviews. Internal policies

mandate accessible digital communication, while the Divya Portal serves as a central hub for resources, assistive technology guidance, and user feedback. Awareness initiatives and accessible learning content further embed accessibility into everyday practices.

A dedicated customer feedback channel ensures accessibility issues are tracked, resolved, and communicated. Inclusive features include talking ATMs, Braille-enabled cards, the Sparsh Credit Card, accessible welcome kits, captioned and Indian Sign Language-enabled videos, and access to Sugamya Pustakalaya.

Through a user-led approach, robust governance, and consistent execution, Union Bank of India is building a scalable model for digital inclusion anchored in practicality and sustained by user insight.



Emerging Practices

Early-stage disability inclusion models and innovations that are evolving, testing scalability, and shaping the future of inclusive ecosystems.

India's Emerging Disability Investment Landscape

India's disability inclusion startup ecosystem, while nascent, is gaining real momentum, driven by 2.68 crore persons with disabilities, less than 5% assistive device access, and persistent gaps across built environments, digital platforms, and skilling systems¹. An estimated 150–250 startups and social enterprises are innovating across assistive technology, health tech, accessibility, and skilling, largely at early stages with hybrid, impact-led models. These ventures are leveraging AI for early diagnosis and personalised solutions, mobile-first platforms for Tier 2/3 reach, low-cost products far more affordable than global alternatives, and co-creation with persons with disabilities for better adoption. Assistive technology remains the largest segment; health tech and early diagnosis are the fastest growing. Growth is being enabled through impact investors, CSR

capital, and innovation platforms with corporates evolving from adopters of inclusive practices to active ecosystem enablers through partnerships, pilots, and startup investments.

Key gaps persist around growth-stage capital, low awareness in smaller markets, a shortage of trained rehabilitation professionals, and sector fragmentation. Opportunities for scale lie in deeper corporate partnerships, integration into government health and education systems, export potential for affordable assistive tech, and AI-driven solutions.

▶ *As this momentum builds, corporates are emerging as co-creators of an enabling ecosystem, likely to catalyse greater investment, deeper venture engagement, and a stronger pipeline of scalable solutions for systemic inclusion.*



¹ Census 2011; WHO & World Bank (2011); NITI Aayog reports on disability and assistive technology.

SignAble Communications - Silence to Seamless Communication

How communication access and workplace innovation are unlocking opportunities for persons with hearing impairments

Hiring persons with hearing impairment has long been constrained by workplace communication barriers. Reliance on physically available interpreters limited scalability across shifts and locations, restricting hiring and excluding deaf employees from critical interactions.

To address this, organisations such as Amazon , TVS Motor Company and EPL Limited have integrated real-time Indian Sign Language interpretation through SignAble in manufacturing environments. The solution provides on-demand access to interpreters within seconds, enabling seamless communication across production, safety briefings, and daily operations. Enabled through Video Remote Interpretation and Video Relay Services, it reduces dependence on physical interpreters while offering scalable, multilingual access.

At EPL Limited, interpretation is embedded into shop-floor operations through dedicated screens, supporting over 100 deaf employees. At TVS Motor Company, the model has been

scaled across shop-floor screens, mobile devices, and internal platforms, benefiting over 450 employees across plant and corporate environments. This has enabled a shift from limited hiring to scalable inclusion by embedding communication access into core systems. The model is now gaining traction across organisations, particularly in manufacturing, where real-time communication is critical.

▶ *Real-time interpretation removes the biggest barrier to scale; communication, unlocking the potential for mass hiring of deaf talent. As more companies across sectors adopt this solution, it is enabling organisations to move beyond pilots to large-scale workforce integration. The opportunity now extends far beyond manufacturing, into banking, healthcare, retail, public services, and Tier 2/3 markets, positioning interpretation not as a support service, but as core infrastructure for inclusion at an ecosystem level.*

SignAble Communications



Yunikee - Inclusion for Education and Employment

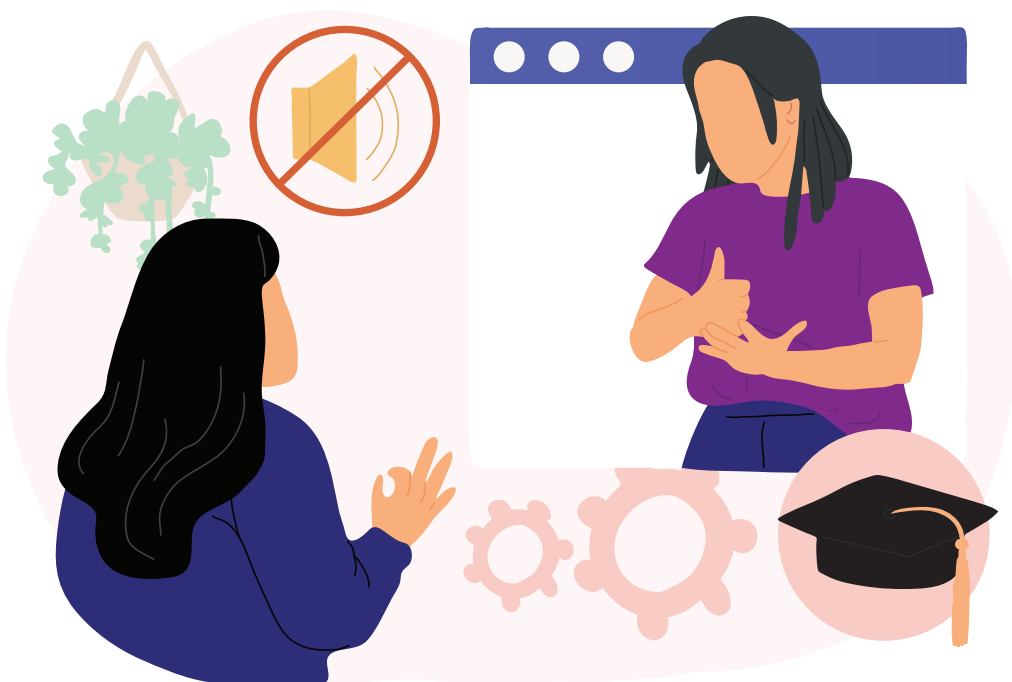
How education, skilling, content, and employment are designed as a single, connected ecosystem in sign language

Yunikee is a social enterprise enabling Deaf inclusion through a sign language-based ecosystem that integrates education, skilling, and employment pathways.

Since, 2018 Yunikee has been working on developing learning resources in Indian Sign Language (ISL), which includes curriculum-aligned school content, videos which explain concepts, ISL dictionaries in collaboration with ISLRTC which documents signs to be used for common academic words, and book summaries designed for visual-first learning. These resources support access to structured education for Deaf children and have been deployed in government special schools. Digital platforms, help extend reach across both academic and livelihood domains.

Yunikee offers a wide range of ISL-based training courses creating direct pathways to employment and entrepreneurship. ISL based trainings offered include **digital skills, vocational courses such as tailoring, employability programs for coding, finance, entrepreneurship skills, design, and trading, along with preparation for competitive exams.** Internally, the company embeds inclusion by maintaining a **Deaf-inclusive workforce and ensuring sign language fluency across teams, making accessibility a lived operating principle.**

▶ *Yunikee is a strong example of a purpose-led business rooted in accessibility, where inclusion is not an add-on but the foundation of design, delivery, and impact.*



Gabify - Bridging the Diagnosis Gap

How AI-enabled screening and accessible health technologies are improving early identification and care for persons with communication and developmental needs

Nearly 15% of the population faces communication disorders, with one in eight children affected by neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism, ADHD, or speech delays. Despite this scale, early detection remains limited, with only one speech therapist per 10,000 people. Long wait times, high costs, and low awareness delay intervention beyond critical early years. The challenge is especially acute in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, where access and awareness remain low.

Founded in 2024, Gabify is an AI-driven startup focused on early, accessible, and scalable screening and therapy for neurodevelopmental conditions. It is among the first assistive health startups validated by AIIMS and ICMR under the NCAT initiative, marking a key step in clinically governed AI innovation in India. Field research across Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities reinforced the need for a scalable, technology-led solution for early identification and intervention.

Gabify's platform, powered by its **AI system Gaby**, enables early screening through a multi-modal approach combining speech recognition, facial analysis, and eye tracking.

Designed for children as young as eight months, it analyses behavioural markers such as speech patterns, eye contact, and responses to identify early signs of developmental conditions.

Using frameworks such as DSM-5 and ADOS, the system evaluates multiple parameters to generate objective profiles, personalised therapy plans, and ongoing progress tracking. What typically takes weeks of clinical visits can now be completed within minutes through a mobile-based assessment.

Gabify listens and observes like a trained therapist, analysing how a child speaks, looks, and responds to build an objective developmental profile. By making AI-led screening accessible and offering structured, home-based therapy, we are enabling consistent, affordable care that fits into family routines. Our approach shifts inclusion upstream from intervention to early identification.

Sahil Chopra
Founder, Gabify

Gabify delivers a continuum-of-care model that combines personalised therapy, caregiver coaching, and AI-enabled progress tracking integrated into daily routines. Parents are active participants, supported with tools to continue therapy at home. To scale impact, the organisation has partnered with over 35 preschools and 15 healthcare institutions and is planning a clinic and R&D centre in Delhi. It also addresses supply gaps through therapist enablement and global collaborations, with AI augmenting clinical expertise and enabling more personalised care.

Beyond care delivery, Gabify engages with parents, schools, and communities through workshops, digital content, and awareness initiatives to reduce stigma and promote early screening. As Sahil Chopra notes, the organisation is “not just solving a medical problem, but addressing hesitation, denial, and misinformation by working with schools and communities to normalise early intervention.”

▶ *Therapists can focus on clinical judgment and meaningful connections while the system handles routine tracking and insights. The real promise lies in time, saved for parents and returned to children who need early support. Our goal is to impact one million lives by 2028.*

Vasyl Leshchuk

Chief Technical Officer, Gabify



Zomato - Opportunity: Redefining Livelihoods for Persons with Disabilities

How assistive technology and platform partnerships are creating an inclusive gig economy for persons with disabilities

The question that sparked this innovation was simple yet powerful: how often do we see a wheelchair user in our daily lives? In India, especially in rural areas, most wheelchair users remain confined indoors, as conventional wheelchairs are not designed for outdoor terrain. A one-size-fits-all approach further worsens the problem, leading to poor posture, physical strain, and long-term health issues due to lack of personalisation. Mobility outside the home is highly restrictive, often requiring users to transfer between a wheelchair and a tricycle or scooter. This process is painful, undignified, and typically dependent on another person. As a result, locomotor disability has locked millions out of livelihood opportunities, reinforcing both social isolation and economic exclusion.

Zomato addressed this challenge by reimagining delivery roles to be accessible for persons with locomotor disabilities, leveraging assistive technology and ecosystem partnerships. Startups such as NeoMotion have enabled this shift through **a dual-product approach that combines personalised wheelchairs like NeoFly with motorised add-ons such as NeoBolt, converting them into road-ready devices and enabling seamless indoor-to-outdoor mobility without transfers.**

Building on this, NeoMotion's Livelihood on Wheels initiative created pathways to income through **Zomato's Project ZEAL. The programme integrates persons with disabilities into the delivery workforce by combining platform access, including orders, earnings, waived onboarding fees, optimised short-distance delivery zoning, and safety features, with partner-led support on assistive devices, training, and on-ground enablement.** Devices are often supported through CSR funding and nonprofit partnerships, reducing entry barriers and making participation viable.

ZEAL delivery partners consistently achieve 4.5-to-5-star ratings, challenging assumptions about performance and demonstrating that when systems are designed well, inclusion and productivity can go hand in hand at scale. The visibility of persons with disabilities in everyday delivery roles also helps normalise disability in public spaces. This model is gaining traction across organisations, signalling the emergence of a broader inclusive gig economy for persons with disabilities.

The Indian Hotels Company Limited - Ecosystem-Led Inclusion Initiatives : Cross-Sector Examples

How ecosystem-led partnerships can enable disability inclusion

Due to structural constraints only an estimated 3–5% of roles are readily accessible without adaptations in hospitality. IHCL acknowledges that large-scale direct hiring is limited by role-specific service requirements, onboarding complexity, and reliance on specialist-led environments. These challenges are further amplified in managed and franchise models, where standardisation restricts flexibility for workplace adaptations.

In response, IHCL is moving beyond direct hiring to an ecosystem-led inclusion model, leveraging skilling, entrepreneurship, procurement, and partnerships to create scalable livelihood pathways beyond organisational boundaries, offering a replicable approach for sectors facing similar constraints.

Key Initiatives

- **Sheroes Café (Chhanv Foundation):** Training acid attack survivors in food preparation, service, and café management, enabling dignified, public-facing livelihoods and social reintegration.
- **Blind Café Model (NAB Delhi):** Training women with visual impairments in café operations, leading to independently run cafés, scaled from Taj Mansingh, New Delhi to corporate locations including TCS offices.
- **ABLE Skilling Framework:** Defined pathways through internships and apprenticeships, enabling certification and transition into hospitality roles, including potential IHCL absorption.
- **Inclusive Procurement:** Livelihood support for over 300 persons with disabilities through sourcing of corporate gifts, hotel amenities, and upcycled products in partnership with NGOs.
- **Micro-Entrepreneurship Model:** Small tuck shops operated by persons with disabilities within hotel premises, enabling independent livelihoods where traditional roles are not feasible.

Across sectors, organisations are building broader inclusion ecosystems where impact extends through skilling, access, and market participation.

- In banking and financial services, institutions like State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank are enabling financial inclusion through the following initiatives – (1) partnering with external skilling organisations to build financial literacy and job-ready finance skills for persons with disabilities, (2) supporting disability-led startups through entrepreneurship financing and credit access, and (3) improving accessibility of digital banking platforms for customers with disabilities across the ecosystem.
- In IT, companies such as Microsoft, TCS, and Accenture are expanding ecosystem impact through creation of accessible product and platform designs, initiatives for training persons with disabilities on AI and digital skills
- In retail and consumer services, organisations like Walmart, Amazon, and IKEA are enabling inclusion through tie-ups with inclusive procurement systems, creation of market access pathways for PwD entrepreneurs and integration of disability-led enterprises into supply chains.
- In manufacturing and industrial sectors, companies including Tata Steel, Mahindra Group, and Schneider Electric are strengthening ecosystems through PwD-led vendor onboarding, structured external skilling partnerships, and procurement-linked integration across value chains.

Inclusion does not scale through isolated job placements or standalone initiatives; it scales when it is embedded into systems that continuously generate opportunities across roles, institutions, and markets for persons with disabilities. Sustainable inclusion emerges only when skilling, hiring, procurement, entrepreneurship, and accessible design are interconnected, allowing persons with disabilities to participate not as exceptions within organisations, but as part of a broader ecosystem that consistently creates, expands, and reinforces pathways to work and economic participation



Indigo - Mainstreaming Disability Inclusion in Aviation

How airlines can become a carrier of choice through the twin role of disability inclusion in workforce integration and customer experience design.

IndiGo is a pioneer and early mover in mainstreaming disability inclusion at scale in Indian aviation. They have not only integrated persons with disabilities into core airport operations roles but have also worked on designing service journeys to be more accessible and responsive for their customers.

Indigo's inclusion efforts have been supplemented with large-scale capability building, which includes **sensitisation and training for appx 17,000 ground staff members in basic Indian Sign Language and deployment of interpreters across operations.** The airline also runs targeted recruitment drives for persons with disabilities, **employing ~250-300 employees (about 1% of non-crew workforce) across 13 of 21 disability categories.**

IndiGo links employee inclusion directly with customer experience. Representation improves service design, empathy enhances interactions, training ensures consistency, and feedback loops drive continuous improvement. The model is strengthened through partnerships with ISLRTC for developing aviation-specific sign language, Sector Skill Councils for inclusive role design and talent pipelines, and NGOs for training and ecosystem capacity building.

Together, these elements position IndiGo as a systems-level inclusion leader in aviation, operationalising disability inclusion at scale across workforce and customer experience.



LTM - Ramping Disability Inclusion in Technology Firms

How can organizations rapidly ramp up the learning curve to create inclusive and equitable environments for persons with disabilities?

Formed through the merger of two independently listed companies, LTM has, within a relatively short span of time, focused on thoughtfully amalgamating distinct organizational cultures and charting a unique path for its disability inclusion efforts. The company's DEI initiatives are anchored in visionary leadership and supported by a strong governance framework. The CHRO, in close partnership with global business leaders, continue to provide strategic guidance and oversight.

An annual Disability Inclusion (DI) plan clearly defines goals across representation, accessibility, awareness, and capability building. These targets are structured as a forward-looking five year roadmap to strengthen access and inclusion at LTM.

The company has committed to achieving 1% representation of persons with disabilities in its workforce by 2030. Progress is consistently tracked through a DEI dashboard, quarterly reviews, and structured reporting to the CHRO. This governance framework ensures transparency, drives improvement and reinforces accountability for delivering on inclusion commitments.

A standout aspect of LTM's approach is its strong culture of creating a level playing field for employees with disabilities through individualized reasonable accommodations across the employee lifecycle—from recruitment and onboarding to performance management, learning, and career progression. DEI efforts are

further strengthened by an active Employee Resource Group (ERG) network that acts as allies to colleagues. The ERGs facilitate monthly connects, support forums, policy consultations, and reviews of physical and digital accessibility initiatives, while also enabling buddy and mentorship programs. Comprehensive and well designed policies provide a strong backbone to these systems and practices.

As a technology consulting organization, LTM places particular emphasis on enhancing usability for employees with diverse needs by embedding accessibility by design into all internal applications. Accessibility considerations are integrated throughout the development lifecycle, including requirement analysis, design reviews, coding, testing protocols, and remediation planning. The IT function, working closely with DEI and HR teams, also enables access to assistive technologies and educates employees on available accessibility features.

Ecosystem building for a broad base of colleagues is actively underway at LTM - not only through structured training workshops and panel discussions, but by creating platforms that amplify disabled employees' voices. **These include features in podcasts and quarterly publications to highlight individual perspectives, experiences and narratives, to foster deeper awareness and inclusion across the organization.**

Equitas Small Finance Bank - Enabling Financial Inclusion & Entrepreneurship for women with disabilities in rural and semi-urban India

How accessible banking, tailored credit, and ecosystem partnerships that support skilling, enterprise creation, and market access for persons with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities, especially women in rural and semi-urban contexts, face a double disadvantage shaped by intersecting barriers of gender and disability. Limited access to education, restricted mobility, dependence on caregivers, weak infrastructure, and deep-rooted social norms significantly reduce their participation in formal employment. As a result, traditional hiring-led inclusion models are insufficient to drive large-scale economic participation.

In this context, inclusive microfinance emerges as a critical enabler of livelihood inclusion, shifting the focus from wage employment to entrepreneurship-led self-reliance. It addresses structural exclusion by enabling access to capital, enterprise creation, and income-generating opportunities within local ecosystems.

Equitas Small Finance Bank was among the first microfinance company to address this gap through an entrepreneurship-led inclusion model **that extends beyond employment by enabling access to microfinance and tailored financial services for persons with disabilities, particularly women.** This approach supports the transition from dependency to sustainable, self-owned livelihoods and financial independence.

The model is strengthened through **an integrated ecosystem of finance access, skilling support, and community linkages, with a focused emphasis on empowering**

women with disabilities. It is further complemented by limited back-office employment opportunities within the organisation, reinforcing a hybrid inclusion pathway.

In practice, Equitas advances disability inclusion through the following microfinance-enabled mechanisms:

- **Easier access to credit:** Relaxed eligibility norms and simplified documentation to reduce exclusion
- **Collateral-free or low-collateral lending:** Reduces dependence on asset ownership
- **Tailored repayment structures:** Flexible repayment aligned with irregular or seasonal incomes
- **Special lending products:** Lower interest or priority lending to improve affordability
- **Linkages with livelihood support:** Credit combined with skilling and enterprise guidance
- **Entrepreneurship enablement:** Supports PwDs to establish micro-enterprises and build income stability

▶ *Equitas has reached over 1,81,637 persons with disabilities including 35,105 persons who are blind. Our approach demonstrates how inclusive microfinance can act as a scalable lever for disability inclusion, particularly for rural women with disabilities, by enabling economic agency, strengthening local livelihoods, and embedding inclusion within community-based financial systems.*

John Alex

Former Head - Social Initiatives, Equitas Small Finance Bank

Kavita's Story

Kavita lost her vision after a violent incident involving her husband and was confined to her home due to disability and isolation. With no access to formal employment or financial support, she remained excluded from livelihoods for years.

She received a USD 250 microfinance loan from Equitas, along with training, market linkages, and financial literacy

support that helped her start a small business and begin saving. Simple accommodations like verbal assistance and supported participation in meetings enabled her to engage fully with the process.

Her business now supports her and her mother financially. It has restored her dignity, independence, and social acceptance in the community.

Grundfos Pumps India Private Ltd - Neuro-inclusion in Manufacturing

How can manufacturing companies integrate neurodivergent talent into core production roles?

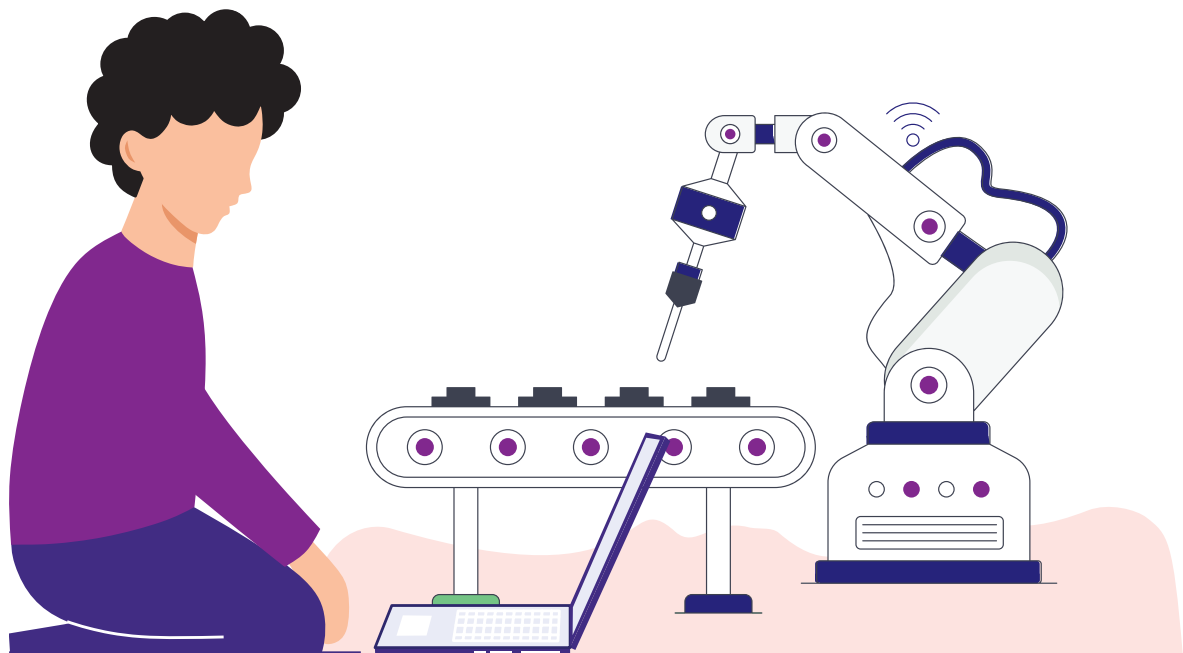
Grundfos Pumps India, a global water solutions company engaged in energy-efficient pump manufacturing, has pioneered inclusive manufacturing at its Chennai plant by integrating neurodivergent employees into core production roles, with the model now being explored for scale across geographies.

Traditionally, manufacturing environments emphasise speed, repetition, and standardisation, which can create exclusion due to rigid job structures and communication norms; however, **Grundfos challenges this by aligning these same characteristics - predictability, routine, and process orientation with neurodivergent strengths through intentional system design.** This has been enabled through partnership with NGOs working in similar field, **structured job redesign into simple and repetitive tasks, predictable workflows, visual step-by-**

step communication, strength-based role allocation, and supervisor training in structured communication and support.

These interventions have improved task clarity, reduced cognitive overload, strengthened consistency, and enhanced both productivity and workplace inclusion. The approach demonstrates that neurodivergent talent can thrive in manufacturing when systems are re-engineered around human cognitive diversity, positioning inclusion as a driver of operational efficiency and a scalable model for high-performing industrial workplaces.

› Inclusion in manufacturing is not about lowering expectations, but about re-engineering work systems so that cognitive diversity becomes a driver of productivity, consistency, and belonging.



Drishiti Pures - From Shelter to Enabling Employment Pathways

How inclusive work models can be designed to build marketable skills while enabling self-sustaining livelihoods?

Established in Drishiti Pures is a leading organisation working with persons with developmental, neurological, physical, and multiple disabilities. It runs one of India's largest residential care facilities, supporting around 270 abandoned children rescued from extreme conditions such as streets, railway platforms, and garbage sites, with no family support. Through intensive, round-the-clock care, Drishiti enables recovery, stability, and the foundation for a dignified life, while actively working to create pathways to livelihood and employment for its residents.

The organisation aligns training to individual abilities, focusing on repetitive, tactile, and structured tasks that require minimal literacy or verbal communication while producing market-ready outputs. It has developed two pioneering ventures-D-Café 16 and Drishiti Pures-that integrate persons with disabilities into structured, **market-facing work, intentionally designed around neurodivergent strengths such as repetition, visual learning, and non-verbal engagement, while ensuring scalability and sustainability.**

In D-Café 16, girls operate a live Amul café, managing food preparation, sales, and customer service, with the Amul partnership ensuring quality systems, operational discipline, and consistent footfall—positioning them as professionals in a functioning retail environment. In Drishiti Pures, boys run a cold-pressed oil and spices unit in a premium, high-growth category, distributed through multiple channels including its own website, Flipkart, IndiaMART, and B2B supply. With strong product-market fit, streamlined processes, and

robust unit economics (priced at 2–3× refined oil), it demonstrates clear commercial viability alongside inclusive employment.



► This model is replicable because it aligns hidden strengths such as sensory focus, visual learning, and repetition with structured roles that translate capability into product value. It ensures early market linkage through corporate partnerships, CSR procurement, and retail channels, while authentic storytelling builds trust and reinforces product identity. Its strength lies in a clear strategic flow—ability to task, task to product, and product to market, anchored in quality, scalable processes, and strong supply chain integration. This shifts inclusion from charity to competitiveness, embedding it as a structural business advantage

Ampera Technologies - A closed-Loop Model for Inclusive Hiring

Can inclusive work models build market-relevant skills for persons with disabilities while creating direct pathways to sustainable employment within core business operations?

Ampera builds a structured train-and-hire pipeline that aligns skilling directly with business demand while integrating persons with disabilities into mainstream service delivery.

Through the Ampera Academy Trust, **candidates with disabilities enter a focused intake and are trained in small cohorts of 10-15 over ~5 months. The curriculum combines technical skills (IT and digital accessibility) with workplace readiness, including communication, soft skills, and professional behaviour. On completion, participants are certified job-ready and transition directly into roles at Ampera Technologies, primarily in accessibility testing and IT services, ensuring immediate application of skills.**

The model functions as a closed-loop system where training is role-aligned, hiring is pre-integrated, and the pipeline is continuously replenished.



► *Our approach is to develop talent organically - ahead of the Business needs rather than wait for it. We hire students with disabilities from various campuses / off-campus and train them in skills aligned to our business needs and onboard them into live client engagements, creating a sustainable inclusion model that benefits both the organisation and individuals. Inclusion is embedded in our business model, driving both workforce supply and competitive advantage. With nearly two-thirds of our delivery workforce comprising persons with disabilities, Ampera implements inclusion at scale, fully integrated into business operations rather than a standalone initiative.*

Damodaran Venkatesan

Founder & CEO, Ampera Technologies

HDFC ERGO - Where accessibility shapes not just hiring, but service

How HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company is building a disability-inclusive workplace and products

HDFC ERGO is building a disability inclusion model anchored in accountability, inclusive design, and access. **Through Project Purple, disability hiring is owned by business heads, with leadership reviews and dashboards tracking both hiring and employee experience.** The company has seen ~3× year-on-year growth across diverse disability groups.

Inclusion is operational from the start. Accommodations begin before onboarding, supported by assistive technologies, a buddy system, and continuous accessibility upgrades. The Digital Offices model enables employees to work closer to home, addressing commute barriers.

The company also demonstrates intentional job design, such as deaf employees running a WhatsApp-based support channel. Culture is reinforced through Purple Hours, which build practical inclusion behaviours, and the Love All campaign, which positions inclusion as a core value. Around 85% of employees are trained in Indian Sign Language.

Beyond hiring, HDFC ERGO is investing in career pathways and ecosystem partnerships

with premier education institutes such as Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIMC), Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (IIMB) along with the Paralympic Committee of India.

At the same time, it is making its product offerings more **disability-sensitive through solutions like EquiCover, a health insurance product designed to improve access for persons with disabilities and other underserved groups.** This reflects a shift from inclusion as an internal practice to inclusion as a customer proposition.



Progressive Practices

Promising disability inclusion models with
demonstrated progress

Systems-Led Inclusion at Scale

Amazon stands out as a global inclusion leader, with strong top-down ownership and a “born accessible” approach embedded across workforce, products, and systems. It combines inclusive hiring at scale (3,000+ employees with disabilities), robust accommodation processes, and strong skilling and career mobility pathways. Accessibility is integrated across digital, communication, and physical environments, supported by in-house expertise, assistive tools, and structured policies.

Its leadership extends to products, where accessibility is built in from the start across Alexa, Fire TV, Prime Video, and AWS, alongside investments in accessibility-led innovation. Strong governance, employee-led groups, and continuous feedback loops reinforce execution. Amazon’s strength lies in integrating inclusion across business, technology, and culture at scale.

Amazon

Culture-First Inclusion in Practice

EY’s has a deeply embedded culture of inclusion, driven by leadership commitments supported by robust policies on self-ID, accommodations, career development, and well-being, creating a safe and enabling environment.

With 1000+ employees with disabilities, the firm emphasizes personalized experiences through inclusive onboarding, buddy systems, and ISL support. Strong digital accessibility and inclusive communication are complemented by innovations like an AI-powered Sign Language avatar.

EY’s culture is reinforced through a vibrant ecosystem of ERGs, mentoring, Ally Up, Purple Champions, and regular inclusion events. An Inclusion Playbook standardizes practices, ensuring consistency while sustaining a culture-first approach to disability inclusion.

Ernst & Young (EY)

Small Steps, Done Right

SLB’s disability inclusion efforts are being championed by their global leadership team. Initiated only in 2021, the journey is rapidly evolving, with India-led practices increasingly influencing global rollouts—demonstrating how strong local culture can scale impact worldwide.

A structured 10-point DI framework and tight global-local leadership alignment drive execution. Progressive benefits (assistive devices, insurance, allowances) and strong accessibility (audits, internal AI tools) embed inclusion into everyday operations. An active ERG with EwD leadership builds ownership and ecosystem partnerships. They closely support the DEI team with building awareness, support forums, mentorship programs and in policy consults. A strong policy framework supports systems. Career advancement opportunities encourages employees to opt for focussed or transferred career options and to explore different options.

With ~3.5% PwD representation in non-field staff, the focus is on retention and sustainability, expanding across diverse disabilities, including neurodivergence supported by flexible and evolving policies

Schlumberger (SLB)

Advancing Physical Accessibility, Step by Step

HSBC's Gurgaon office reflects structured and consistent progress on physical accessibility. Third-party audits have been completed, with active implementation underway and most facilities already meeting accessibility standards. The same principles are being extended across both legacy and new sites, aligned to HGSS 2021 norms, ensuring standardisation across locations.

Site teams have undergone expert-led training, strengthening execution on the ground. Core accessibility features are in place, including tactile pathways, accessible elevators, Braille signage, and accessible washrooms. Fire safety preparedness includes Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for employees with disabilities.

Gurgaon serves as a model site, with similar approaches being replicated across locations. Persons with disabilities (PwD) also play a critical role as accessibility ambassadors shaping changes directly as part of core teams and enabling feedback loops grounded in lived experience.

Overall, the foundation is strong and the direction is clear. The next step is closing last-mile gaps to move from largely accessible to fully inclusive.

HSBC Gurgaon Office

Building Inclusive Banking and Accessible Work Environments

Barclays embeds accessibility across both customer-facing banking products and internal employee systems, creating a unified inclusion approach.

On the customer side, core banking journeys such as payments, onboarding, and account management are designed to be compatible with assistive technologies like screen readers, voice tools, and keyboard navigation, aligned with global accessibility standards and tested throughout development cycles.

On the employee side, internal platforms, collaboration tools, and digital workflows are being made accessible to ensure equitable participation in day-to-day work. This includes compatibility with assistive technologies, accessible document formats, and inclusive communication tools.

Accessibility is reinforced through continuous testing, user feedback, and internal champions across product and technology teams. Employees with disabilities also contribute through feedback loops, helping shape both customer and workplace experiences.

The approach reflects a connected model of inclusion where accessible banking products and accessible employee systems reinforce each other, strengthening both customer experience and workforce participation.

Barclays

Conclusion

The corporate landscape is witnessing a significant change. There has been a sharp and positive increase in both the number and diversity of organizations working with and for persons with disabilities, actively creating ecosystems focused on “inclusion for all,” with a strong emphasis on disability inclusion. Alongside large enterprises and MSMEs, there has been a steady rise in disability-focused startups that bring creative business ideas and innovative funding models. Together, these efforts have acted as powerful catalysts for change.

An increasing number of organizations are now intentionally building inclusive ecosystems through widespread disability awareness initiatives and the creation of accessible structures, processes, spaces, and systems. Business ideas are also being designed with accessibility at the core - ranging from accessible training programs on emerging technologies to improve employment outcomes, to AI-driven solutions focused on WCAG compliance, the development of accessible products and services and financial support for entrepreneurs with disabilities who aspire to launch their own ventures. Organizations are opening their doors to enable and empower individuals with diverse disabilities, many of whom have historically faced high unemployment rates. These include persons with developmental disabilities, visual

impairment, neurodivergent conditions as well as people with blood disorders, acid attack survivors, and many others.

As policies, systems, and processes continue to evolve toward inclusivity, ecosystems will naturally transform to create more opportunities for hiring persons with disabilities. The change is visible in the large number of employees with disabilities hired across different organizations. Concepts such as “born inclusive,” “hiring PwDs as a business imperative,” and “accommodations for my disabled colleague benefit me” are gradually becoming part of the mainstream narrative.

Our best practices document highlights the exceptional efforts of only a few organizations, though many more are emerging and will continue to be trendsetters. We acknowledge all award winners, organizations that have received commendation for special initiatives and best practices and rising stars in disability inclusion. We also recognize the many applicants - who may not have received awards but continue to inspire through their dedicated work in this field. We encourage organizations to come forward and share their journeys so that we can collectively learn, collaborate and inspire one another as we progress toward building a truly inclusive nation.

The background features a large white circle in the center, surrounded by abstract, curved stripes in various shades of purple and lavender. The stripes are layered and curved, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is modern and clean.

PARTNERS

Presenting Partner



ANZ has been in India since 1984 through its presence as Grindlays Bank. ANZ established its Mumbai branch in 2011 and in 2014, received approval from the Reserve Bank of India to open new branches in Gurugram, New Delhi's prime business hub, and in outer Bengaluru. ANZ commenced operations in Gurugram in July 2015 and in outer Bengaluru in May 2016. A major engine of growth in the region, India remains an integral part of ANZ's strategy in Asia.

ANZ is committed to supporting institutional and corporate clients in India and across close to 30 markets in our global network with their banking requirements for local and offshore facilities. ANZ India offers a full range of institutional banking services including Indian Rupee and foreign currency services, working capital and term financing, transaction banking, foreign exchange and interest rate solutions, deposits and advisory services.

Purpose Partner



Embassy REIT owns and operates over 50 million square feet ("msf") portfolio of 14 office ecosystems in India's best-performing office markets of Bengaluru, Mumbai, Pune, National Capital Region ("NCR") and Chennai. Embassy REIT is home to ~280 of the world's leading companies. The portfolio also comprises strategic amenities, including four operational business hotels, two under construction hotels, and a 100 MW solar park supplying renewable energy to tenants. Its industry leading ESG program has received multiple accolades from renowned global institutions.

Inclusion Partner



Spark Minda Foundation, the CSR arm of the Spark Minda Group, is committed to driving inclusive and sustainable development across India. The Foundation focuses on key areas such as skill development, education, healthcare, and empowerment of persons with disabilities, with flagship initiatives like Aakarshan and Saksham. By collaborating with government bodies, industry partners, and local communities, it aims to create meaningful livelihood opportunities, enhance quality of life, and contribute to nation-building through scalable and impactful interventions.

Contributing Partner

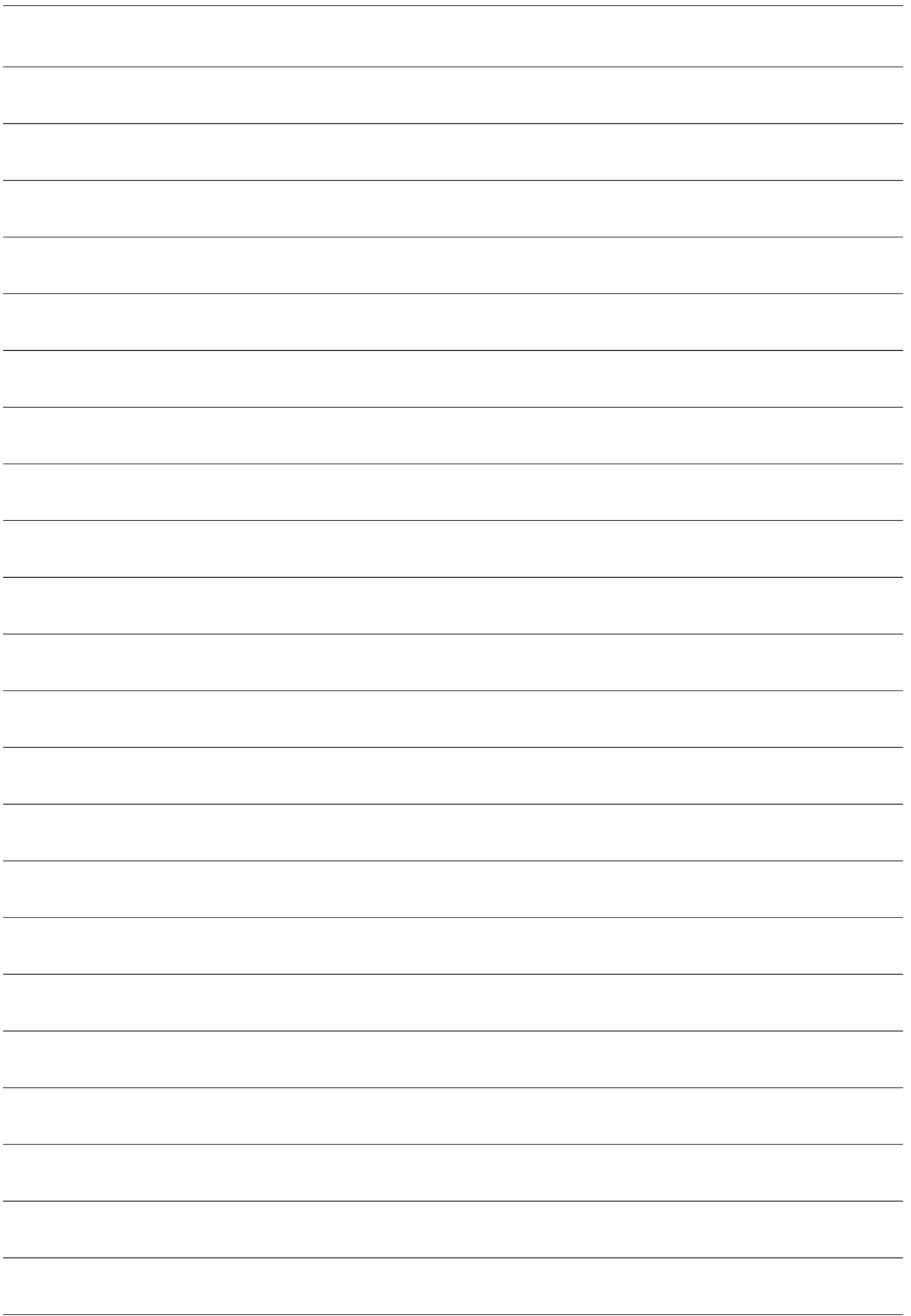


The Hans Foundation, Established in 2009, The Hans Foundation (THF) is a Public Charitable Trust dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all, and empowering marginalized and underprivileged communities in India. With key initiatives in health and wellbeing, and a special focus on children, persons with disabilities, and women empowerment, THF has worked for the benefit of more than 40 million people across the country.

Technical Partner



v-shesh is an award-winning social impact enterprise focused on empowering Persons with Disabilities (PwD) through education, skilling and employment and enabling organizations to build inclusive workplaces. Since its founding in 2009, v-shesh has supported over 10,000 PwDs in securing meaningful livelihoods across sectors such as IT, banking, manufacturing, and hospitality. It has partnered with 100+ organizations to drive disability inclusion through training, accessibility and workplace transformation. A diverse team, comprising 50% women and 25% persons with disability demonstrate strong commitment to "Diversity in Action". v-shesh has been recognized nationally and globally for creating inclusion opportunities for all. In 2016, the company received the National Award for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities by the President of India and has been recognized as a Top 10 Global Diversity Consultants in The Global Diversity List supported by The Economist.





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 advisory and consultative processes.

For 130 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. With its extensive network across the country and the world, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

In the journey of India's economic resurgence, CII facilitates the multifaceted contributions of the Indian Industry, charting a path towards a prosperous and sustainable future. With this backdrop, CII has identified "Accelerating Competitiveness: Globalisation, Inclusivity, Sustainability, Trust" as its theme for 2025-26, prioritising five key pillars. During the year, CII will align its initiatives to drive strategic action aimed at enhancing India's competitiveness by promoting global engagement, inclusive growth, sustainable practices, and a foundation of trust.

Confederation of Indian Industry

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India Business and Disability Network

A  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 Disabilities at workplace through knowledge sharing, collaborative action, and improving technical skills of member organisations as well as to facilitate and assist companies in adopting products and services to create inclusive and accessible workplace.

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

For further information on IBDN, please contact

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