INCLUSION IN ACTION

A CURATED COLLECTION OF BEST PRACTICES FROM INCLUSIVE COMPANIES

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Introduction

The best practices captured in this document have emerged from organizations that applied for the *CII Award for Excellence in Disability Inclusion-2025*. These insights have been thoughtfully collated to foster collective learning and inspire others to emulate and adapt proven approaches.

If Amazon and Zomato can successfully engage wheelchair users as gig workers, other retail and delivery-based businesses can follow suit. If Spark Minda can build strong community linkages to create a captive recruitment pool in remote areas, other manufacturing firms with plants in similar geographies can adopt similar models. Similarly, Société Générale work with developing neuro-inclusive policies and workplaces is trend-setting, paving the path for meaningful career pathways for neurodivergent talent.

Several powerful enablers are already at work. Vindhya E-Infomedia, for instance, enables young, aspiring students with disabilities to learn while working, contribute meaningfully, and become industry-ready.Similarly, BarrierBreak plays a vital role in helping companies identify and address digital accessibility gaps, while simultaneously focussing on building a talent pipeline of trained professionals with disabilities who carry forward the principles of accessibility.

Each of these examples demonstrate what's possible. This document goes beyond showcasing best practices; it is an invitation to cross-learn, collaborate, and push the boundaries of inclusion across industries.

Inclusion is a continually evolving ecosystem. Through shared learning and collective action, there lies immense potential to replicate and scale inclusive practices across sectors, creating a more accessible and equitable environment for all.

CII-IBDN

About the Awards

Aligned with the core philosophy of the CII National Committee on Special Abilities and the CII India Business & Disability Network (IBDN), this award aims to recognize and inspire businesses progressing disability inclusion in India. Targeting companies in both the Manufacturing and Service Sectors, with categories for Large Enterprises and MSMEs, the awards has adopted a multi-pronged approach to ensure broad sectoral representation and balanced focus across key inclusion themes.

Award Categories:

Disability Inclusion Excellence Award - Champion Company

Recognizes innovative and impactful leadership in advancing inclusion within the workplace and broader community

Best Employer - Accessibility Award

Recognises commitment to physical, digital, and communication accessibility

Best Employer - Disability Inclusion and Culture Award

Recognizes efforts in embedding inclusion within governance, workplace culture, and policies

Best Employer - Inclusive Recruitment Practices Award

Celebrates excellence in equitable hiring and retention of persons with disabilities

Emerging Companies

Recognises organizations that are in the nascent stages of their disability inclusion journey but have demonstrated a clear strategic intent, made measurable progress, and adopted promising practices that indicate long-term commitment to inclusive growth.

The following 5 Pillars were used to identify and categorize the participating companies.

Inclusive Policy & Governance	Accessible Workplace	Workplace Practices and Culture - Awareness, Sensitization and other affirmative actions	Inclusive Employment Practices	Allyship
Does leadership actively support disability inclusion, with senior leaders championing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) by example, and does the company have clear policies, targets, and strategies for monitoring progress?	Has the company met physical and digital accessibility guidelines, ensured a safe and accessible workplace, and established clear protocols and centralized budgets for effective and dignified access to accommodations?	Is disability inclusion an ongoing focus with engaged Persons with Disabilities enhancing creativity, regular staff sensitization, active Employee Resource Group promotion, affirmative actions for career enhancement, and processes ensuring the ability to provide feedback or raise concerns with confidentiality?	Are Persons with Disabilities hired for mainstream roles with well-defined and monitored recruitment targets, inclusive hiring criteria focusing on skills and attitude, clear goals for attracting diverse talent, inclusive recruitment policies, and collaboration with specialist agencies and disability organizations?	Has the organization participated in initiatives that drive change both internally and at the ecosystem level-allocating budgets, tracking impact, and exploring the intersection of Employee Resource Group, CSR, and disability inclusion?
Leadership Commitment	Accessible Infrastructure	Awareness and Sensitization	Recruitment Lifecycle - Recruitment, Training and On-boarding	CSR, Volunteering Effort, Partnership and Collaboration
Policy Framework and Strategy	Assistive Technology and Devices	Affirmative actions and Career Enhancement	Disability Representation: Headcount, Role Diversity, and Tenure	Innovation
Providing Accommodations and Ensuring Confidentiality	Accessible Communication	Employee Resource Groups (ERGs); Buddy Support & Mentoring		

About the Document: A Curated Collection of Best Practices

This document is a curated collection of insights, practices, and approaches that highlight how organizations are advancing their inclusion journeys. Drawing from a diverse range of industries and company sizes, this compilation offers both a reflection of what's working and a resource to inspire cross-sector learning and adaptation.

Key Highlights

1. Impact through simplicity: Effective inclusion doesn't require grand or large scale initiatives. Small, intentional actions can create significant impact. This document brings together several such simple practices that have delivered wide-reaching results

2. Shared approaches across organizations: Many of the practices outlined are not unique to individual companies, but rather reflect common strategies employed by organizations that are more advanced in their inclusion efforts.

3. Promoting cross-industry collaboration: This compilation is intended to promote learning and collaboration across sectors, including among organizations already recognized for their leadership in inclusion.

4. No one-size-fits-all: There is no one-size-fits-all blueprint for inclusion. Organizations are encouraged to adapt these strategies to suit their unique contexts. As such , this document is envisaged to serve as a reference point rather than a prescriptive guide.
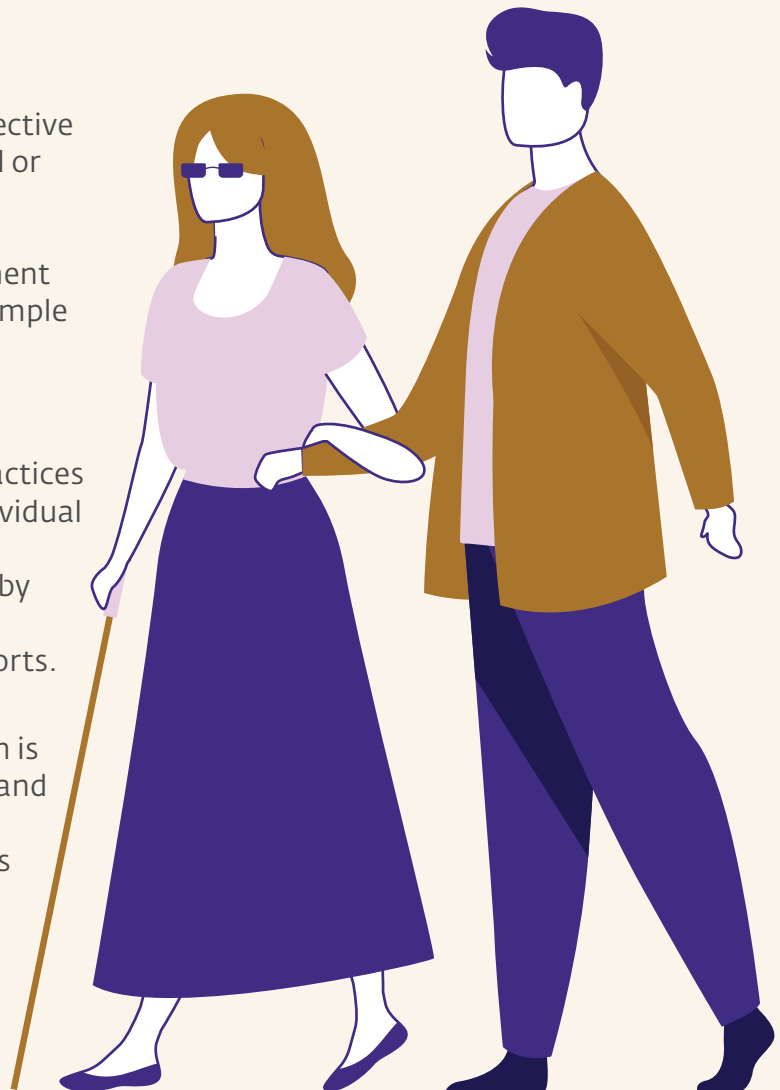
Pillar-1

Inclusive Policy & Governance

1. Leadership Commitment

Top management commitment is foundational. Organizations with strong leadership buy-in can scale and sustain disability inclusion effectively. Without top-down commitment, efforts lack the necessary support, alignment, resources, momentum and often stagnate or collapse entirely

What do champion companies do?

Common leadership practices observed among disability-inclusive companies:

- **Starts at the top**: CEOs and Executive Leadership see inclusion both as a moral responsibility and a strategic advantage.

- **Empathy, Emotional Intelligence, and a Culture of Belonging**: Inclusive leaders commonly exhibit high levels of empathy and emotional intelligence, often shaped by personal experiences or meaningful engagement with individuals with disabilities. They cultivate a culture of listening, co-creation, and respect for lived experiences; ensuring that inclusion is not merely performative, but deeply embedded in the organization's values and day-to-day practices.

- **Data-Driven Accountability**: Inclusive organizations establish clear metrics to track progress in areas such as hiring, retention, and accessibility. Leadership holds itself accountable by embedding these goals into defined Key Result Areas (KRAs), ensuring sustained focus and measurable outcomes. Furthermore, setting ambitious goals-whether through specific targets or through introduction of new and expanded practices-demonstrates genuine commitment and drives change from the top.

Our leadership is not invisible or hidden behind layers of hierarchy. AskBharat platform enables direct communication between employees and our CEO, fostering transparency and open dialogue.

Startek

It is common for companies to leverage Business Intelligence tools to track key disability related metrics such as Persons with Disabilities hired, department-wise distribution, and real-time updates on new joiners. Wipro takes this further by also tracking redeployment and bench time for employees with disabilities alongside their non-disabled peers, integrating these insights into broader workplace metrics and tracking systems.

"We set an initial target of 5% disability representation in our workforce, which is now progressing toward 7.5%-the highest in the manufacturing sector. While low disability representation is often blamed on a demand-supply mismatch, a systems thinking approach revealed deeper root causes. A holistic internal strategy, combined with sustained ecosystem-building efforts, has helped us attract, retain, and build a steady pipeline of empowered Persons with Disabilities.

Minda Corporation Ltd

- Cross-functional Ownership: Disability inclusion isn't confined to HR or a single sponsor-it's embedded across functions, from product design to customer service

- Voice and Representation of Persons with Disabilities : Voice and representation are strengthened through robust Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), accessible grievance redressal systems, and feedback mechanisms. Regular in-house or third-party surveys-though not always disability-specific-help capture diverse perspectives and ensure that disability inclusion remains part of the broader organizational pulse.

- Innovation Mindset: Accessibility is seen as a driver of innovation that improves products, services, and workplace culture. A standout example is IndiGo, which set a benchmark in inclusion by becoming the first Indian airline to introduce a ramp on its aircraft-enhancing accessibility, elevating customer experience, and expanding its business appeal.

Amazon's **Born Inclusive Solutions** framework ensures that accessibility is intentionally designed, built, and tested into every new product the company creates. Cross-functional teams-including employees with disabilities co-design these solutions, **fostering innovation through inclusion, not just for inclusion.**

Amazon

What should emerging companies do?

Companies like Persistent show us how to accelerate progress despite having started recently -

- **Measure gaps against benchmarks:** Assessed gaps against key benchmarks like the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act and ESG goals.

- **Set clear, time-bound targets:** Defined specific, measurable targets to close identified gaps within a set timeline.

- **Focus on core elements:** Prioritized strengthening policies and improving accessibility as key components of the inclusion strategy.

- **Actively engage senior leaders:** Ensured senior leaders remained actively engaged, using data to track progress and maintain accountability.

- **Collaborate with experts:** Partnered with disability inclusion experts and organizations with mature practices to fast-track learning and the adoption of best practices.

2. Policy Framework and Strategy

What do champion companies do?

Champion Companies know that having a disability-specific policy alone isn't enough-it's about thoughtful design, implementation and evaluation. They take a dual approach of creating and adapting existing ones through a disability lens to ensure equity and accessibility. Below is a list of common policies reviewed or implemented -

1. **Equal Opportunity Policy (EOP)**

   All companies maintain EOP that explicitly include Persons with Disabilities, aligning with the RPwD Act, 2016. Multinational corporations typically use a central policy framework, adapted to local legal and cultural contexts.

2. **Disability Specific Policy**

   Mentioned below is a list of policies designed by companies

Policy Name	Purpose / Objective
Reasonable Accommodation Policy	Outlines the process for requesting and providing accommodations to support Persons with Disabilities in performing their roles effectively
Accessible Workplace Policy	Commits to physical, digital, and communication accessibility across office spaces, tools, and systems
Inclusive Hiring Policy	Integrates disability-specific sourcing, accessible hiring processes, and unbiased selection practices
Disability Self-Identification and Confidentiality Policy	Encourages voluntary self-identification while protecting employees' privacy and data
Return-to-Work and Job Reassignment Policy	Supports employees with acquired disabilities/ changed personal and professional context in transitioning to suitable roles or modified duties
Employee Resource Group (ERG) Policy	Supports the formation and functioning of disability-focused ERGs to amplify the voices of Persons with Disabilities
Inclusive Procurement Policy	Promotes engagement with inclusive suppliers and service providers

3. Policies revised through a Disability-Inclusion Lens

Mentioned below is a list of policies revised by the companies using a disability inclusive lens

Policy Name	Disability Inclusive Revision
Leave and Attendance Policies	Revised to accommodate medical or therapy needs of Persons with Disabilities
Travel and Mobility Policies	Updated to include accessibility considerations
Work-from-Home/Flexible Work Policies	Adjusted to provide hybrid and flexible work environments for Persons with Disabilities
Learning & Development Policies	Adjusted to ensure that the training materials and platforms are adapted to be accessible to the varying needs of Persons with Disabilities
Anti-Harassment and Grievance Redressal Policy	Includes mechanisms for Persons with Disabilities to report discrimination and ensure timely resolution
Training and Sensitization Policy	Mandates regular disability awareness and inclusion training for all employees, especially managers and HR

Designing disability-inclusive policies is just the beginning-making sure they are understood, accessible, and effectively implemented is equally important. Innovative tools like Persistent's Divopoly board game help turn awareness into action by promoting key DEI concepts such as cultural sensitivity, unconscious bias, inclusive language, and shared communication. Similarly, initiatives like Minda Corporation Ltd's " Policy Mela" and "Chai Pe Charcha" and Amazon's "Listening Circles" offer regular, interactive platforms for awareness creation, dialogue and feedback.
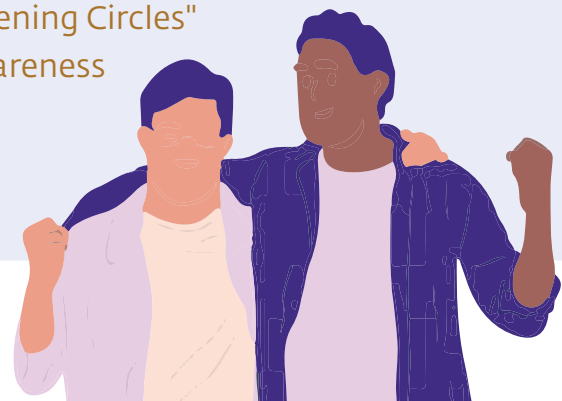
4. Company specific disability inclusion policy

Many organizations have policies that are tailored to their specific context, ensuring they address their unique needs and challenges in promoting inclusion and accessibility.

For example-

- Zomato's Focus on Gig Partners with Disabilities: Since many persons with disabilities at Zomato work as gig partners, inclusive policies are extended to support their well-being and foster solidarity. These include support budgets for assistive devices, medical and accident insurance, subsidized vehicles or low-EMI ownership plans for improved mobility, access to affordable group housing for those who have migrated and financial literacy sessions

- Vindhya E-Infomedia's Support for Marginalized Employees: Vindhya E-Infomedia extends support through interest-free, non-insurance education loans that cover both educational and healthcare needs, allowing employees to repay easily through salary deductions and become industry ready post completion of their education

5. Innovations beyond standard policies

Several companies are moving beyond compliance, adopting innovative disability inclusion policies that shift the focus *from support to empowerment and culture-building.*

Key Feature	Details
Enhanced Insurance Coverage	• Reimbursement for assistive aids (co-pay and full pay model), which covers both work-related and personal use, supported by an increased budget and extended block period • Therapy and mental health service • Extended coverage to Children with Disabilities (coverage includes children with birth defects and continues up to the age of 35 or without age limit for especially dependents with neurodivergence)

Caregiver-Focused Practices:
Targeted support for caregivers of children with disabilities-especially neurodivergent children and elderly family members; aimed at promoting well-being and improving work-life balance.
	• Therapy Coverage: Reimbursement/co-pay/full coverage for occupational, speech, behavioural therapies for the child, and mental health support for primary caregivers
	• Educational Support: Part / Full support for special educators, shadow teachers, and specialized education programs
	• Cost coverage of diagnostic assessments through a specialist partner
	• Leave Policies:
	  - Caregivers leave in addition to standard leave entitlements
	  - Pooling of all leave types (sick, annual, etc.) without categorization or requirement for justification
	  - Leave donation pool wherein employees can contribute surplus leave for caregivers
	  - Sabbatical leave of up to 3 months with support for gradual reintegration

Key Feature	Details
Flexible Work Options	• Hybrid working - flexibility to adjust in-person workdays • Location flexibility-work from offices in different cities • Shift Flexibility - choice of shift hours for roles involving shift work • Part-time working options - ensuring fair pay and equal career advancement opportunities

Several best practices from the industry demonstrate how organizations are supporting employees with care and flexibility. For example:

• Wipro offers flexible remote work provisions, allowing employees to avail a set number of work-from-home days each year to support personal or caregiving needs

• The Persistent Employees Benefit Trust (PEBT) is a voluntary act of care-where employees can donate leave and up to Rs 500 to support colleagues in times of need during medical crises or specific personal and financial emergencies.

Key Feature	Details
Concierge Service	• Guidance Support - access to experts, specialised agencies, support in identifying resources based on specific needs • Relocation assistance, including support for identifying local support in a new location
Neuro-inclusion Policy	• The policy supports neurodiverse employees with tailored adjustments, training of relevant stakeholders, and peer support to foster an inclusive work environment

3. Providing Accommodations and Ensuring Confidentiality

What do champion companies do?

Champion companies create safe, supportive workplaces by encouraging self-identification, ensuring timely and personalized accommodations, and protecting the confidentiality of disability-related data. Intranet platforms like Wipro's Disability Inclusion Hub provide centralized access to policies, accommodation processes, self-identification options, and grievance redressal, ensuring requests are tracked and resolved with accountability.
To foster disclosure, organizations share success stories, offer visible leadership support, and make the process voluntary, confidential, and accessible at any career stage. Multiple identification channels-such as HR teams and digital portals-further simplify the experience.

Access to reasonable accommodation is a key pillar of inclusion. Leading companies ensure the process is transparent, dignified, and tailored to individual needs, with regular check-ins to ensure effectiveness. Many also provide 24/7 Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs), wellness desks, and confidential support services-offering continuous access to mental health resources and personal assistance, while respecting employee privacy.

A high volume of reasonable accommodation requests is a positive indicator of employees' trust in the system. To foster this trust, Wipro has established a streamlined, confidential, and well-communicated accommodations process. It actively normalize the use of accommodations/ adjustments and workplace solutions through open dialogue and inclusive communication.

At Société Générale, separate self-identification processes exist for job seekers, employees, caregivers, and neurodivergent individuals, allowing for tailored support. Wipro's approach includes a self-identification system with distinct categories for benchmark disabilities, temporary impairments, and chronic conditions under "Other." Employees have the option to submit either a disability certificate or a medical certificate, allowing for flexibility and personalization in accessing accommodations and support.

At Zomato, inclusive communication channels such as accessible forms, local languages, and assistive technologies are used to ensure that delivery staff, primarily gig workers across locations, can request accommodations and access support.

Below is a list of common accommodation needs for which processes should be established to minimize lead time in providing access

Category	Examples of Accommodations
Workplace Adjustments	Ergonomic furniture, modified lighting or reduced noise environments, preferred seating, reserved parking spaces
Assistive Technologies	Screen readers, speech-to-text tools, amplification devices
Flexible Work Arrangements	Remote or hybrid work options, modified work schedules, extended or additional breaks
Job Restructuring	Reassignment of non-essential tasks, modified job duties within the same role
Leave and Time Off	Medical leave beyond standard policy, intermittent leave for treatment or recovery, mental health time off
Communication Support	Sign language interpreter, written materials in accessible formats
Support for Neurodivergent Employees	Quiet or sensory-friendly workspaces, visual schedules, written instructions, structured feedback and reminders

To include people with severe disabilities, especially spinal cord injuries, WORTH Trust prioritizes ergonomics and machine posture. It has engaged an in-house physiotherapist and partnered with the Mary Varghese Institute of Rehabilitation, CMC Vellore, to address accessibility and ergonomic needs for training and employment.

Worth Trust

Under Project AmPoWerD, Amazon promotes accessible and inclusive learning for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Associates by offering over 110 hours of technical training in Indian Sign Language (ISL). The initiative includes an ISL-based new hire course and enables peer-led learning and onboarding support across sites.

Amazon

Industry Best Practice

Few champion companies offer their employees the opportunity to create a Personalised Support and Inclusion Plan, providing a safe space to share how a disability, health condition, or mental health concern impacts their work. This approach enables timely and tailored workplace adjustments that foster inclusion and effectiveness. It also ensures consistent support as employees transition between roles of managers and promotes autonomy by focusing on each individual's lived experience.

The plan includes the following practice and more -

• **Adjustment of work arrangements -**

    a. Health related - recurring commitment to maintain health (doctor's visit, physiotherapy, blood transfusions etc), fluctuations in health condition, ongoing medication that can impact work

    b. Workstation/equipment: Use of assistive technology, ergonomic furniture, or other supportive tools.

    c. Work practices: Flexibility in role expectations, shift timings, or performance metrics

• **Adjustment for Learning Needs -** Tailored training / mentoring, other support services

• **Adjustment for Travelling -** Flexible commuting times, travel support, or remote working options.

• **Preferred Communication Style -** Adjustments for how feedback, meetings, and instructions are communicated

• **Emergency Needs -** Specific support during emergency

We strongly recommend that all organizations systematically track and analyze data related to workplace adjustments including the type of adjustments provided, associated costs, time taken to implement them, and employee satisfaction with the process. This not only ensures accountability but also helps improve efficiency and inclusivity in the long run.

v-shesh

How do champion companies ensure confidentiality?

Champion companies ensure confidentiality in their disability inclusion efforts by providing multiple safe, accessible, and confidential channels for gathering employee feedback. They analyze aggregated data to identify patterns and equity gaps while safeguarding individual privacy. They close the feedback loop by sharing key insights and actions taken, fostering transparency and accountability. They also train managers and Employee Resource Group leaders in confidentiality and inclusive communication, ensuring sensitive information is handled consistently and respectfully. Following the principle of *"Nothing about us, without us,"* champion companies actively involve persons with disabilities in identifying and solving workplace challenges, ensuring solutions are effective, practical, and truly inclusive.

Channels Available

- Diversity & Inclusion Mailbox

- Online connect sessions for raising concerns

- Ethics Hotline/ Ombudsperson/ whistleblower mechanisms for reporting violations of the Code of Conduct.

- 24/7 Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offering support related to accessibility needs, emotional wellness, mental health, childcare/eldercare, domestic violence, legal, and financial matters-available to employees and their families.

- Anonymous surveys and listening sessions - formal and informal connect

Pillar-2

Accessible Workplace

Accessibility of environments, systems, and communication is fundamental to creating an inclusive ecosystem for colleagues and clients with disabilities. From physical and digital navigation to accessible content and social media, every element reinforces the principle of equal opportunity.

Champion organizations adopt an **"Accessibility by Default"** approach-embedding accessibility into all operations, products, and services from the start, rather than as a retrofit. This reflects a deep cultural commitment to inclusion and drives both business and social value.

Common practices include:

- Inclusive co-creation, involving people with disabilities early in the design process to ensure usability and relevance.
- Built-in accessibility testing within development pipelines to address gaps in real time and align with global standards like WCAG 2.2.
- Vendor evaluation based on accessibility capabilities alongside cost and performance.

While some emerging companies are still scaling up, many are addressing immediate accessibility needs through phased, practical steps, steadily moving toward long-term, systemic inclusion.

1. Accessible Infrastructure

What do champion companies do?

Champion companies ensure compliance with the Harmonized Guidelines and Standards for Universal Accessibility in India (HGSS 2021)[1] by:

- Conducting audits through government-empanelled agencies[2]
- Training administrative and facilities staff to identify and address accessibility gaps
- Implementing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to maintain consistency across locations
- Reviewing evacuation plans and accommodation systems annually to address evolving needs

What is the industry-wide gap?

While most organizations have good evacuation plans that include persons with disabilities, they often miss critical details that can potentially put individuals at risk during emergency evacuations. The challenge is further amplified by hybrid work arrangements and flexible seating, where Emergency Response Teams (ERTs) may not know who has a disability, who is present in office during the emergency and their exact seating location. To address this gap, organizations should:

- Work with ERTs to proactively identify and plan for disability-specific evacuation needs.
- Maintain voluntary data to flag employees needing higher evacuation support.
- Create PEEPs (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans) for individuals requiring personalized evacuation assistance.

[1] https://niua.in/intranet/sites/default/files/2262.pdf
[2] https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3e58aea67b01fa747687f038dfde066f6/uploads/2024/02/20240228695199670.pdf

How can organisations address this gap?

Evacuation Accessibility Assessment – General Emergency Evacuation Plan (GEEP)

When drafting an inclusive evacuation plan, it is important to address the following key questions to ensure the safety of all individuals, including persons with disabilities:

Evacuation Phase	Key Question	Assessment Focus
Notification	How effectively does the notification system alert all building occupants, including those with sensory impairments?	Visual alarms, vibrating alerts, audio clarity in public and private locations EPL's Nalagarh factory piloted vibrator chips for employees with disabilities, ensuring deaf employees are alerted during emergencies through vibrations
Finding the way to safety	Are current wayfinding measures adequately supporting all individuals, especially those with visual and cognitive impairments, to navigate evacuation? It may not be sufficient to enable wayfinding only from where a person is seated; frequently visited areas must also be mapped, and evacuation routes should be accessible from all such points. This is observed to be particularly important in case of employee with neurodivergence	Tactile maps, Braille signage, contrast markings, clear directional signage, detailed PEEPs and frequent drills (individual drills too, basis need)
Proceeding to exit	Do evacuation paths meet accessibility standards and remain free of obstructions for individuals with disabilities?	Ramp availability, door width, obstruction-free paths, evacuation equipment
Evacuating floors and buildings	Are refuge areas and fire lifts integrated into the evacuation plan, and is vertical evacuation ensured for those who can't use stairs?	Refuge areas with 2-way communication systems, accessible fire lifts, trained support teams
Exiting the building and going outside	Are assembly points accessible, clearly marked, and equipped to accommodate individuals with mobility challenges?	Ground-level access, seating availability, signage visibility, space for wheelchairs and assistive devices

Evacuation Accessibility Assessment – Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

When drafting custom escape plans for individuals who may need assistance to reach safety during an emergency, it is important to address the following key questions

1. Is PEEP integrated with the GEEP ?

2. Is it tailored for high-need individuals while enabling independence where possible?

3. Is it customized to individual needs, even among similar disabilities?

4. Is dignity ensured for individuals and their assistive devices during the process?

5. Was a need assessment conducted during onboarding, with PEEPs tailored accordingly?

6. Does PEEP include a clear, step-by-step plan (with visual routes) to the assembly point?

7. Are persons with disabilities involved, informed, and assured of confidentiality through signed documentation?

8. Is the plan shared with, and training provided to, relevant personnel (buddies, wardens, etc.)?

9. Is it practiced during fire drills or through individual drills if needed? Is it checked if Persons with Disabilities are comfortable and satisfied?

10. Is the plan reviewed regularly to reflect changes in people, infrastructure, or needs?

PEEPs should be treated as living documents, updated regularly (at least every six months, ideally aligned with drills , to reflect changing needs) . For employees with high support needs, track progress closely and provide additional support as needed. Share updates within a closed group of stakeholders to ensure accountability and coordinated support.

Société Générale

2. Assistive Devices and Technology (AD and AT)

Assistive Devices (AD) and Assistive Technology (AT) are fundamental to creating inclusive, equitable, and safe environments for persons with disabilities. AD ensures that spaces, products, and services are accessible & suitable for all users. . AT complements this by providing tools such as screen readers, hearing aids, and communication devices that empower individuals to perform tasks independently. Together, they not only promote equal participation but are also essential for legal compliance with frameworks like the RPwD Act, 2016.

AD and AT are not optional extras-they are core enablers of dignity, opportunity, and inclusion

What do champion companies do?

Elements	Key features
Has a Clear Digital Inclusion Policy	Aligned with standards like WCAG and IS 17802, the policy defines goals, timelines, responsibilities, and budget for accessibility
Builds Accessible Digital Platforms	Ensures public websites, intranet, and internal applications are accessible to all users, including persons with disabilities
Ensures Compatibility with Assistive Technologies	All digital systems support screen readers, magnifiers, voice input, and other assistive tools used by employees and customers
Conducts Regular Staff Training	Provides ongoing training for developers, content creators, and business teams to integrate accessibility into design and delivery
Engages Users with Disabilities in Testing	Involves persons with disabilities in usability testing to uncover real barriers and guide continuous improvement
Maintains a Central AT Resource Hub	Provides a repository of assistive technology tools and ensures easy access for employees who need them
Forms a Dedicated Accessibility Team	A cross-functional team that drives digital accessibility
Implements Regular Audits & Monitoring	Conducts accessibility audits by certified agencies[3] and tracks compliance through KPIs and internal reporting systems
Mandates Accessible Procurement	Ensures all third-party digital tools, software, and platforms procured by the organization meet accessibility criteria
Seeks and Acts on User Feedback	Continuously collects input from employees with disabilities , innovates and collaborates with experts to address gaps proactively

The Accessibility Widget launched by Société Générale is an innovation that enables users to personalize accessibility settings-like font size and colour contrast-across applications and systems, ensuring a more inclusive digital experience for all employees.

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[3] https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3e58aea67b01fa747687f038dfde066f6/uploads/2025/02/20250207186084055.pdf

3. Accessible Communications

(includes visual, auditory, cognitive, and language considerations to ensure content is understandable to all)

What is the industry-wide gap?

Across most companies, while strategies for accessible communication exist, along with SOPs and even online training modules, they are often followed only by the communication teams, not across the organization. Moreover, there are usually no checks or accountability measures in place to ensure consistency in implementation. This gap is critical because it directly impacts how employees access information, and feel included.

How can organisations address this gap?

Key Features	Details
Design Digital Inclusion Policy	Clarifies the company's plan on digital accessibility - preparedness to providing accessibility across internal and external systems, plan for compliance, digital accessibility standard being followed, budget allocated, etc
Design SOP Guideline	• Standards and practices to be followed across the organization to ensure accessibility is integrated into all communications sent out • Guidelines to clarify creating content in multiple formats (e.g., audio, visual, and text) with tools to support diverse needs: - Closed captions for videos and meetings - Sign language interpretation for live or recorded events - Alt text for images in digital content - Screen reader compatibility for websites, PDFs, and emails - Plain language and clear formatting for better comprehension - Assistive technology support (e.g., text-to-speech tools)
Conduct Accessibility Training	Ongoing training to staff on accessible communication techniques and tools to be used across the organization
Seek Feedback from users	Provide a mechanism to receive feedback and make changes ensuring continuous improvement
Engage External Consultant	Partner with accessibility consultants to stay updated on best practices and compliance standards Amazon India has partnered with SignAble, a virtual and interactive interpreter platform to enable effective communication and real time trouble shooting for associates with hearing and speech impairments.

To bridge communication gaps for people with speech and hearing impairments, Godrej Properties is developing "This Able Me Echo" - an AI-powered real-time sign language interpreter. It converts speech into sign language and captions, supporting inclusive interactions across Chrome, Edge, and Teams. The mobile app features avatar-based translation, text-to-speech, and session archiving. Piloted with over 50 users, it has received strong positive feedback, marking a major step toward inclusive, barrier-free communication.

Godrej

Pillar-3

Workplace Practices and Culture

1. Awareness and Sensitisation

Across the board, organizations are making visible progress in promoting sensitization and awareness. While the scale and maturity of these efforts vary - with some companies implementing comprehensive, enterprise-wide programs (from the guard to the board), and others taking more modest need-based steps. *Sensitization is no longer treated as a peripheral activity. Instead, it has become a core enabler of driving meaningful and lasting change.*

What do champion companies do?

Focus Area	What Champion Companies Do
Training and Awareness	• Conduct year-round sessions, workshops, webinars on disability awareness, unconscious bias, and inclusive language • Facilitate experiential sessions with individuals with lived experience • Offer e-learning modules to increase reach • Observe UN-recognized disability days to promote awareness[4]
Inclusive Communication Channels	• Use newsletters, internal emails, and portals to disseminate information • Ensure all communication is accessible (e.g., alt text, screen reader compatibility, sign language)
Recognition and Celebration	• Celebrate key inclusion milestones • Formally recognize individuals and teams who drive disability inclusion
Tailored Support for Persons with Disabilities	Conduct sessions tailored to the specific needs of persons with disabilities - These commonly include, but are not limited to, - Awareness of the Unique Disability ID (UDID), helping employees, caregivers, and parents understand eligibility, benefits, and the application process - Caregiver-focused sessions cover diagnosis, education, therapy, and navigating support systems - Regular sessions on mental health and wellbeing further promote holistic and inclusive employee support

The "This is me" campaign at Barclays features employees with disabilities sharing their personal stories and the support they receive at work. It encourages self-identification and fosters inclusion by creating a safe space for open dialogue. In this campaign, persons with disabilities are presented as valued professionals recognized for their skills and contributions.

Barclays

[4] https://www.un.org/en/observances/list-days-weeks

What is the industry-wide gap?

Most organizations, barring a few exceptions, lack structured annual plan with activities throughout the year; and also lack robust mechanisms to measure and track impact. Additionally, many digital platforms used for promoting or hosting events are not fully accessible, and there are limited checks to ensure that vendors deliver content that meets accessibility standards

2. Skill Development and Career Enhancement

Companies acknowledge the significant disparities between employees with disabilities and their peers, largely stemming from societal and systemic barriers that restrict access to skills and opportunities. To bridge this gap, organizations are making concerted efforts through a range of interventions, from sponsoring 'train-and-hire' programs at the entry level to offering mentoring and executive development programs across various career stages.

What do champion companies do?

Focus Area	Champion Company Practices
Train and Hire	Actively recruit persons with disabilities and provide accessible onboarding and training
Accessible and Tailored Trainings	Adapt induction and on-the-job training materials for various disabilities. Many develop customized training programs, such as English language training for Deaf employees (e.g., NatWest, Société Générale), to address specific skill gaps
Structured Career Paths	Offer skill-building, coaching, and track promotion data to ensure equitable advancement opportunities Vindhya E - Infomedia and BarrierBreak serve as important training grounds for persons with disabilities, offering them foundational skills and work experience. These organizations also provide pathways for career mobility, giving employees the opportunity to transition to other roles or sectors when they encounter a glass ceiling in their current environment
Career Enhancement Options	Provide vertical promotions and horizontal development opportunities for employees preferring similar roles with less aggressive targets
Supportive Learning Policies	Provide access to tailored courses (e.g., Coursera), education leave, subsidized education loans, and financial support to encourage continuous learning and growth
Listen & Improve	Use climate surveys and listening sessions to understand lived experiences and refine strategies for sustainable inclusion

3. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs); Buddy Support & Mentoring

What do champion companies do?

Mature organizations recognize the importance of a supportive and inclusive ecosystem at the workplace. To foster this, many are implementing initiatives such as buddy systems, mentoring programs, and employee resource networks. These networks often include employees with a good understanding of disability, who support not only colleagues with disabilities but also caregivers of children or elderly family members with disabilities.

Companies have established various Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)-both formal and informal, voluntary or company-led-focused on different dimensions of disability inclusion and caregiver support.

Caregivers need support, not just at home, but also at work. Our Caregiver ERG empowers employees to advocate, lead, and create a culture where caregiving is understood, supported, and respected.

Natwest

What is the role played by ERGs in advancing disability inclusion within companies ?

ERGs play a critical role in fostering disability inclusion within organizations. While many companies have ERGs, they are most impactful when backed by leadership support, a clear charter, defined deliverables, and a calendar of meaningful engagement activities. These elements help ensure sustained momentum and genuine collaboration between employees with and without disabilities.Partnering with experienced external experts can further strengthen ERG efforts by bringing in deeper insights and helping address complex challenges in inclusive practices.

Key Role played by ERGs

- **Build Community:** Provide safe spaces for employees to share experiences and feel heard.

- **Drive Change:** Collaborate with HR and leadership to influence culture and systems.

- **Enable Growth:** Facilitate access to mentorship and sponsorship opportunities, connecting employees with disabilities to senior advocates and leaders.

- **Engage Allies:** Involve non-disabled colleagues and external experts to promote awareness, allyship, and targeted inclusion efforts.

Mentorship & Sponsorship for Employees with Disabilities -

Champion companies pair employees with disabilities with mentors and executive sponsors to foster professional growth, enhance visibility, and build allyship.

1. Sensitization of mentors and mentees: Build awareness, empathy, and a safe space for open dialogue.

3. Group & One-on-One Mentoring: Blend shared learning with personalized guidance

3. Personalized Action Plans: Align personal goals with strengths and career aspirations.

4. Regular Progress Check-ins: Monitor growth, provide ongoing support, and adjust plans as needed

5. Feedback & Continuous Improvement: Gather feedback regularly to refine and enhance the mentoring experience.

Reverse mentoring, as practiced at Minda Corporation Limited, involves employees with disabilities mentoring senior leaders to share lived experiences and insights on inclusion. This builds empathy, challenges biases, and drives more inclusive policies and practices at the leadership level

Pillar-4

Inclusive Recruitment

1. Recruitment Lifecycle – Recruitment, Training and On-boarding

Below is a synopsis of key patterns in inclusive recruitment of persons with disabilities, as observed across participating service and manufacturing companies

Aspect	Service Companies	Manufacturing Companies
Nature of Roles and Accessibility	Primarily office-based (admin, tech, customer service). A good starting point can be fresher roles which require a large number of persons. Job Role can be evaluated to understand essential functions of the role so a large number of people can apply	Factory/shop-floor roles involving manual or technical labour. Job Role needs to be evaluated from the perspective of physical and sensory demands of the work. Accommodations made once can enable hiring of many individuals with disabilities
Recruitment Reach	Via digital platforms, online recruitment, and disability network partnerships	Localized outreach, often through partnerships with local NGOs and government bodies
Inclusion Focus	Emphasis on digital and physical access, sensitization of team and flexible work options (remote/hybrid)	Focus on practical changes to the physical environment, safety measures and on-site adjustments at the workplace. Sensitization of co-workers is important. Limited flexibility due to the nature of the job
Onboarding Process	Often includes digital onboarding with accessible materials and virtual meet-and-greets	Includes site visits, physical tours, on-the job training (incl interpreter support for deaf colleagues) and buddy/ supervisor interactions
Flexibility and Adaptability	Flexible hours, work-from-home options, and role customization are considered	Lower flexibility; accommodations made on a case-by- case basis for production floor roles

What do champion companies do?

Below is a summary of some of the best practices followed by companies that go beyond the basics to ensure success in recruitment

Pre-requisite before recruitment	Work on creating ecosystem readiness through
	• Physical Accessibility of the premise - audit aligned to 2021 HGSS requirements.
	• Social Inclusion - sensitization trainings and workshops, events around disability and Employee surveys (formal/informal) to assess biases (if any)
	• Inclusive Policies & Processes - Review HR/organizational policies with a disability equity lens; ensure protocols for reasonable accommodations are in place.
	• Recruitment teams - train on disability etiquette and inclusive interview practices. All job platforms, social media posts etc to be tested for accessibility (web & mobile).
Steps for Inclusive Recruitment Preparation	• Identify roles that require refresher profiles and involve bulk hiring for inclusive recruitment efforts.
	• Create Inclusive JDs with clear functions, accessibility information, and DEI messaging.
	• In addition to partnering with disability networks to expand outreach use innovative strategies such as inclusive hackathons, internships, and mentorship programs with college students for sourcing,

> ### *Best practices from Manufacturing Companies*
>
> The following practices with manufacturing units have helped bridge the skill gap, extend outreach and build candidate pipeline to organically grow strong community outreach
>
> - in-house training programs including government certified courses run at the company premise
> - apprenticeship programs culminating into full time employment gradually
> - partnerships with local NGOs/ DPOs and organizations such as the following for their pan-India recruitment efforts - Youth4jobs, Sarthak, Vishwa Yuva Kendra, v-shesh, and Samarthanam .
> - periodic exclusive recruitment drives at the company's premises, at higher education institutions and other government Institutes such as ITIs , NCSC-DA
> - internal referral programs/campaigns etc have helped in sustaining the effort but do not contribute to big numbers

Accessible Screening & Selection	• Provide support to the candidates through the application process with provisions for availing accommodations as required • Diverse interview panel to minimize bias. • Candidates to be assessed objectively based on the job description, without assumptions or asking questions related to the candidate's disability condition. Allow Flexibility in case the profile has gaps in education, limited experience, or compensation mismatches. • Feedback is gathered from new hires to improve future processes
Steps for inclusive On-boarding and Training	• Accommodation needs for every candidate need to be understood and provided for on Day 1 • Accessible Welcome Kit include checklists, FAQs, contacts,. Based on individual needs, relevant documents and policies are shared in advance. A concierge is appointed to guide new hires through the process. • Trained Buddies (beyond the reporting lines) along with HR SPOCs assigned in advance to build familiarity and extend handholding support
Inclusive On-boarding	It is ensured that all accommodation needs of new employees with disabilities (EwD) are met from Day 1. Meet-and-greet sessions are arranged with SPOCs, buddies, and the team at accessible locations, with introductions extending beyond the immediate team to include key contacts such as Facilities, Admin, and Transport. Additionally, extended orientation sessions are provided for individuals with specific needs, such as those with hearing impairment or autism, to ensure a smooth and supportive onboarding experience.
Inclusive Training	• In addition to the role-based training, skill gaps are bridged with targeted training: competency, skill-based, and disability-specific. • Training materials are offered in multiple formats basis individual needs (text, audio, video with subtitles). • For online modules clear instructions and on-call support is provided • If needed, training is broken into shorter, spaced-out modules for better understanding. • Candidate Feedback is gathered consistently, with need-based changes incorporated for better impact In case of manufacturing companies, given the nature of work, most companies have developed in-house training capabilities for onboarding candidates. The process typically involves a two-day induction, followed by 2-3 days of observation on the shop floor. Once candidates gain a basic understanding of the role, they transition into the position with ongoing support from a supervisor.

Shifting from traditional filtering methods to customized, role-specific assessments made it easier to include persons with disabilities, who are often deterred by rigid entry criteria. Teams built confidence by starting with roles needing minimal adjustments and through inclusive apprenticeships ; working alongside persons with disabilities proved to be a valuable learning experience.

Worth Trust

We have designed detailed Inclusive Hiring Toolkit that includes practical tools like SOPs, recruiter checklists, quick guides for first-time managers, and web-based trainings-alongside ready reckoners, and communication templates that streamline and standardize the hiring process.

TCS

At Minda Corporation Ltd., the employment potential of persons with disabilities in advanced tech production has significantly increased using Kaizen philosophy and poka-yoke (error-proofing) techniques[5]. Employees participate in "Kaizen Hours", where each person must suggest a poka-yoke improvement quarterly as part of their KPAs.

Notably, many suggestions come from peers and buddies of Persons with Disabilities, who observe and recommend practical changes to enhance accessibility, safety, and efficiency. This reflects a culture where employees are empowered, and inclusion is driven by genuine understanding and collaboration.

Minda Corporation Limited

People with disabilities are now taking on mainstream roles across DEI, HR, and recruitment , not just support positions. Who better to shape inclusive policies than those with lived experience? Their presence in decision-making spaces ensures that inclusion is intentional and authentic, not an afterthought.

Zomato

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kaizen

Adapted process of recruitment for inclusion of neurodivergent employees

The following additional steps help in smooth induction and inclusion of persons with neurodivergence

1. Spectrum Analysis: Understanding the candidate and their accommodation needs - Assess specific needs and match candidates to roles based on strengths and preferences.

2. Job Adjustments: Modify roles, tasks, and work environments (e.g., flexible schedules, quiet spaces) to suit individual needs.

3. Tailored Onboarding: Use clear, structured onboarding with visual aids and step-by-step guidance

4. Training: Train managers and teams on neurodiversity awareness and sensitivity.

5. Assistive Technology: Provide tools like speech-to-text software etc basis need

6. Buddy Support: Assign buddies to guide new hires through the process of training and every day interactions with the teams.

7. Collaboration : Partner with organizations working with people with neurodivergance for sourcing talent, implementing best practices and providing ongoing support .

   Collaborating with primary caregivers is observed to be very impactful in understanding and providing for needs

8. Feedback Collection: Regularly gather feedback to adjust processes and accommodations.

Spectrum analysis allows us to assess and recognize the unique abilities of individuals across a wide range of conditions such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and more. We can accordingly provide targeted support and make informed decisions on accommodations, ensuring that candidates are placed in roles where their strengths are fully utilized, enabling them to thrive and contribute meaningfully to the organization.

EY

The Employee Assessment Model is a modified framework designed to support individuals with cognitive impairment. It breaks down performance and conduct criteria into simple, easy-to-understand elements. It promotes fair, inclusive hiring and helps track performance in an accessible and equitable way.

Grundfos Pumps India Pvt. Ltd.

Companies have launched pilot projects for neurodivergent roles, such as Copilot Testing at EY, specific product testing and development at Amazon, and software testing at Nagarro. By evaluating performance and accommodations, these pilots are scaled to other locations, expanding opportunities and driving inclusion for neurodivergent individuals. While current numbers are modest, the market is deepening and broadening.

2. Disability Representation: Headcount, Role Diversity, and Tenure

Mentioned below is a synopsis of Disability Representation across Manufacturing and Service Sector Companies basis the analysis -

Aspect	Manufacturing Companies	Service Sector Companies
Headcount of Persons with Disabilities	Often higher in volume roles (e.g., shop floor, packaging, assembly)	More balanced across functions like HR, admin, customer service, tech
Diversity in Disability Types	Typically focuses on physical disabilities (mobility, hearing)	Broader inclusion (physical, sensory, neurodivergent)
Representation Across Levels	Concentrated in entry-level or operational roles	Growing presence at mid-level and corporate roles (e.g., tech, HR, ops)
Tenure	Varied tenure; job stability in case of local hiring	Varied tenure; higher turnover in gig roles, stability in white color roles

In the manufacturing sector, automation, increased multitasking demands, and inaccessible or non-modifiable machinery are limiting opportunities for persons with disabilities and restricting diversity in job functions.

Type of Adaptations observed in Manufacturing Sector		
Type	**Details**	**Prevalence across companies**
Workplace Adaptations		
Adaptation of workstation / work area	Physical accessibility, safety protocols, ergonomics	Common; case by case basis
Adaptation of machinery and equipment	Physical design and functioning of machinery / equipment	**Uncommon - contingent on parameters such as - availability, cost etc.**
Reasonable Accommodations		
Review of job description, Flexibility of work schedule	Process changes -Splitting core (essential) functions into sub-parts, changes in marginal functions	Common - contingent on overall flexibility -number of roles available, size of the team etc.

> Like we have standards for physical and digital accessibility which every organization must conform to, there should be similar standards for machines as well. Only then will we have the desired flexibility to consider persons with disabilities across majority of roles on the shop floor

Minda Corporation Limited

Best Practices for Scaling and Sustaining Disability Hiring Beyond the Basics

What do champion companies do?

Best practice from Service Sector Companies

1. **Hiring Persons with Disabilities as Gig Workers (Amazon and Zomato):** Delivery-based companies, such as Amazon and Zomato, have created accessible gig work opportunities in roles like delivery, customer support, and testing. By offering training, insurance, and mobility solutions, these companies ensure not only the hiring of Persons with Disabilities but also retention through comprehensive support structures.

   What began as a pilot project in 2021 has evolved into ZEAL-Zomato's Equitable Action for Livelihood-empowering over 2,000 Persons with Disabilities as gig workers, with a goal to reach 10,000.

   Through partnerships with organizations like NeoMotion, Zomato and others companies like Amazon and Zomato are not only hiring Persons with Disabilities as delivery partners but also transforming public perception by integrating disability inclusion into everyday spaces, homes, and services.

2. **Enhancing Employability (STARTEK):** Startek support borderline performers in interviews by providing additional training in soft skills and product knowledge. This helps in skill enhancement for interviewees who get a second chance for employment at Startek or an opportunity with another manufacturing unit

3. **Technology-Driven Accessibility in IT/BFSI:** IT and BFSI companies are leveraging technology to enable accessible hiring, remote onboarding, and flexible work arrangements. Virtual interview platforms, AI tools, and assistive technologies help create a seamless hiring process, ensuring Persons with Disabilities have equal access to opportunities and can work effectively from any location. However, the reliance on such technologies should be carefully evaluated, especially from the perspective of neurodiverse individuals, as these tools may not always meet their specific needs.

4. **Community Hiring Model Vindhya E-Infomedia:** Vindhya E-Infomedia focuses on regions with a high population of Persons with Disabilities. By leveraging local partnerships, community engagement, and sensitization, Vindhya E-Infomedia ensures the development of sustainable talent pipelines and long-term goodwill, creating an inclusive environment for all employees.

Best practice from Manufacturing Sector Companies

1. **Inclusive Apprenticeship:** Companies are partnering with ITIs, vocational centres, and disability training institutes-not just for hiring, but to support them through knowledge-sharing, CSR initiatives, and fostering camaraderie between students and company employees.

2. **Employee referral and allyship models:** Companies encourage existing employees to refer candidates with disabilities or mentor new hires-building a network of allies and internal champions.

3. **Role Diversity across Shop Floor:** Companies move beyond common roles like packaging; integrating persons with disabilities across various teams and tasks.

4. **Accessible Role Types:** Companies start with tasks like assembling small parts, quality checks-roles that are adaptable for various disabilities, require low capital, and involve minimal training

5. **Breaking Gender Stereotypes:** Companies place women with disabilities in non-traditional roles from the start-especially on the shop floor-breaking stereotypes about what women "can" and "should" do-while also expanding the talent pool.

6. **Retention Through Comfort & Support:** Companies address commuting concerns and remote location challenges by organizing plant visits, involving families, and offering peer counselling during onboarding.

The key advantage of assembly-line tasks-like assembling small parts or conducting quality checks-is their modularity. These processes can be broken down into simple steps, making them accessible to individuals with diverse disabilities. Often, all that's required is dexterity in one hand and the ability to follow a few clear instructions.

By setting up production units inside prisons and providing end-to-end support-training, inventory, and oversight-we've scaled operations without additional real estate or manpower, while contributing to inmate rehabilitation. Encouraged by this success, we're now exploring similar partnerships with NGOs, DPOs, and rehabilitation centers.

Minda Corporation Limited

Additionally, companies are ramping up numbers through effective backward and forward linkages. Backward linkage involves empowering and supporting vendors to work with persons with disabilities by impact sourcing from NGOs/DPOs and selecting vendors that hire or include persons with disabilities as potential partners.

On the forward linkage side, companies encourage their clients, for whom products are produced and services are delivered , to hire people with disabilities and embrace accessibility principals. This is achieved by organizing floor visits, facilitating interactions, and providing hands-on support in the process

Worth Trust: A Self-Sustaining Model for Disability Empowerment

Worth Trust exemplifies a self-sustaining model that seamlessly integrates disability inclusion with business efficiency. Over 83% of its workforce comprises of Persons with Disabilities - rising to 95% in its industrial units. Its unique model-focused on rehabilitating, educating, training, employing, and empowering persons with disabilities-seamlessly integrates business sustainability with social impact. Through its unique self-supporting, cross-subsidizing model, it provides dignified employment while reinvesting surplus into community initiatives. Key Success Factors:

1. Corporate Partnerships: WORTH Trust has built deep, long-term partnerships with its clients - leading companies like TVS, Murugappa Group and RANE Group. Senior leaders from these firms serve on WORTH's board, consult post-retirement and contribute to ongoing knowledge exchange. A substantial volume of assembly and manufacturing work is subcontracted to WORTH Trust, while many ITI graduates from the Trust are hired directly, fostering sustained employment for persons with disabilities

2. Business, Not Charity: It runs as a business, balancing surplus generation with disability empowerment (surplus funds supports initiatives like training programs, schools and outreach activities.), ensuring both commercial and assistive products are made with impact.

3. Adaptability: Product lines are tailored to local market needs, ensuring inclusive manufacturing while meeting demand.

4. Fit for Purpose Products: The Trust focuses on producing products that are accessible and relevant for Persons with Disabilities

This model demonstrates how a business-first approach can drive meaningful social impact for the disability community. Through organization-level and local coalitions involving companies, investors, governments and civil society, WORTH Trust has expanded to Pondicherry, Trichy, Chennai, Tirupattur and Ranipet. These partnerships have fostered ecosystem-level change, enabling production and rehabilitation efforts to grow together-making it a standout model of inclusive employment.

IDEATION
Find strong local partner to host WORTH TRUST Model

TESTING WATERS
Understand local industry and their requirements - what is being outsourced , what can be produced by WORTH TRUST in line with the ultimate goal of mainstreaming PwD

REMOVING BOTTLENECKS
Using strong community outreach programs , identify youth with disability and train in the required skill sets - Birth of Technical Training Centre

EXPANDING BEYOND BUSINESS
Produce , sell , generate surplus and as business stabilizes , plough back surplus into rehabilitation related projects

Ideation to Expansion – WORTH Trust Way

Pillar-5

Allyship

It's encouraging to see companies leveraging CSR initiatives and strategic partnerships to drive meaningful societal impact, both internally and across the broader ecosystem. These efforts foster systemic transformation, build mutual trust among stakeholders, and strengthen the company's own inclusion practices. Partnerships span areas such as healthcare, skill development, training and employment, accessible infrastructure, and knowledge sharing platforms. This diverse portfolio not only supports the economic and social empowerment of persons with disabilities but also deepens organizational understanding of the disability landscape.

Additionally, platforms such as Mission 1000, Valuable 500, CII-IBDN, NASSCOM Foundation, Wadhwani Foundation etc enable cross-sector collaboration, allowing companies to co-create solutions, share insights, and amplify impact.

Here are some interesting anecdotes from companies that have funded or supported innovative disability inclusion projects with large-scale impact:

1. Accessibility

- **Société Générale has partnered with ISLRTC to create** a Financial Dictionary in Indian Sign Language to standardize finance-related terms. This initiative aims to support the Deaf community by providing a consistent vocabulary, benefiting financial companies, educational institutions, and others, in addition to Deaf individuals.

- **Zomato and NeoMotion collaboration** is a standout example of blending operations with broader impact ; where wheelchair-using gig workers assess accessibility at pick-up and drop-off points. Their input contributes to a comprehensive city-level accessibility map, driving both service improvement and systemic change for inclusive urban infrastructure in future.

- **TCS has invested in several impactful accessibility initiatives, including:**
  - Sugamya Pustakalaya: An accessible online library that provides digital books and resources for people with persons with disabilities, those with visual impairments.
  - Assisto: An AI-driven communication aid that helps non-verbal children express themselves in their native language, fostering better communication and understanding for those with speech disabilities.

VHab is a VR-based therapy tool developed for children with cerebral palsy allows for engaging, virtual therapy that helps children with motor impairments improve their physical skills. Developed through a collaboration between TCS and Barclays, VHab combines tech expertise and a shared commitment to inclusion-demonstrating how cross-sector efforts can deliver scalable, high-impact solutions[6].

2. Skill Building

- Several companies have established strategic partnerships with state governments to run inclusive skilling programs and create employment opportunities for persons with disabilities across their operational networks.

- Several companies run 'train-and-hire' programs with NGOs and DPOs to equip candidates with job-ready skills and build a sustainable talent pipeline.

- Mentorship in colleges and apprenticeships with ITIs also help identify and support students with disabilities early, strengthening future talent pools and promoting long-term inclusion.

- Minda Corporation Limited is seeking affiliation with NSDC[7] to customize the Assembly Technician course[8] and offer it at its centres, training a captive workforce, including persons with disabilities through rural outreach and walk-ins.

[6] https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/tcs-and-barclays-partner-to-help-specially-abled-children-121120801111_1.html
[7] https://nsdcindia.org/
[8] https://nsdcindia.org/sites/default/files/ELEQ6303_Electronic_Sub_assembly_Technician_v1_29_05_2019.pdf

Empowering Potential: Spark Minda's Inclusive CSR Approach

Spark Minda has emerged as a frontrunner in inclusive employment within the manufacturing sector, employing over 1,400 persons with disabilities across its operations-spanning five business verticals and twenty-eight factories.

At the core of its inclusive hiring strategy is a centralized sourcing model, where business unit requirements are shared with the Spark Minda Foundation. Through its Saksham - Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities programme, the Foundation adopts a comprehensive approach to candidate mobilisation, offering assistive aids, UDID registration, counselling, skill development, and on-the-job training-supporting both talent acquisition and deeper community engagement.

It is continuously innovating to create more viable solutions and deepen its reach into rural areas. Notable collaborations include its partnership with Jaipur Foot to expand access to affordable assistive devices, and with reputed academic institutions like IITs for innovation in technological solutions for Persons with Disabilities such as a flexible

3. Small businesses and individuals

Companies are supporting small vendors and disability-focused initiatives by providing platforms to showcase and sell their products. These efforts not only generate economic opportunities but also act as a form of indirect sensitisation

- **Godrej Properties has launched Equali-TEA Cafés at its project sites**—vibrant spaces operated by staff with disabilities, located right at the heart of real estate construction activity. These sites are also supported by Indian Sign Language (ISL) interpreters, who take on administrative roles to eliminate communication barriers on site.

Along similar lines, Mitti Café has opened inclusive outlets within the office premises of several companies, fostering a culture of everyday inclusion in the workplace.

- **Nestlé has implemented outreach initiatives like ART-** which features pieces created by artists with disabilities. Similarly, many companies hosts regular stalls showcasing products made by Persons with Disabilities. These efforts not only celebrate diverse talent but also raise awareness and promote authentic representation.

The Path Forward

This document, in addition to providing disability-led perspectives and recommendations on how to approach this work, serves as an invitation to start where you are and acknowledge that many other organisations are in the same position.

Our hope is that the insights shared here will help break down barriers and support the integration of disability data into business performance. As you build trust, adopt inclusive language, and navigate implementation and legal frameworks, we strongly recommend engaging people with disabilities to guide your efforts.
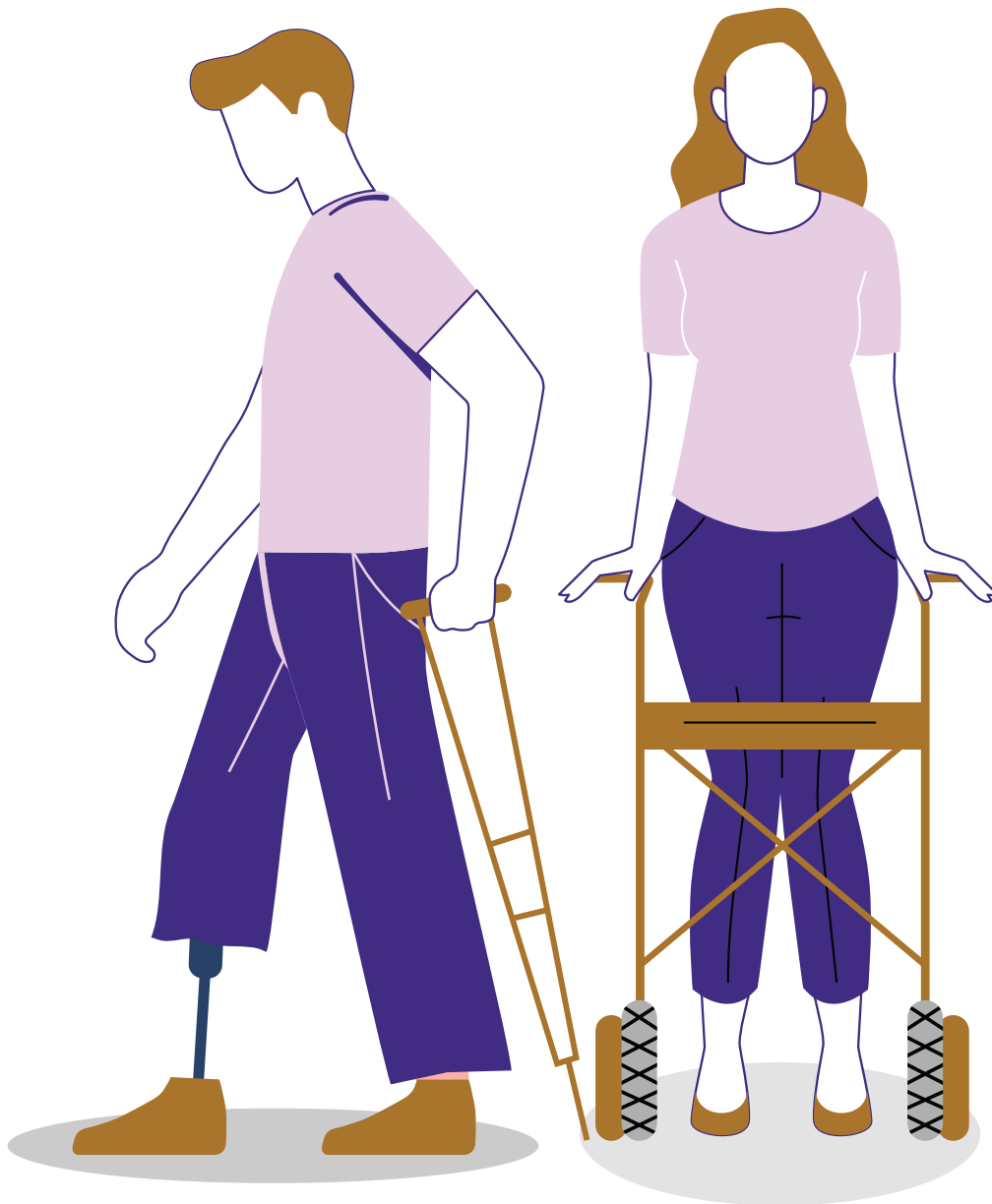
Confederation of Indian Industry

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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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

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