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Empowering People: Effective Social Work Approaches & Strategies



PERFORMANCE AT WORK - A WAY TO EMPOWER PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN COIMBATORE

KEYWORDS
Persons with disabilities, employment, empowerment and HR Personnel

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ABSTRACT *Persons with disabilities are the people who face lot of difficulties in all walks of their lives. The global estimate of persons with disability has a considerable increase over the last few decades due to raise in world population, decrease in infant mortality, pharmacological developments and other forms of modern advancements in the field of medical science and technology as well as longer life expectancy (Murickan, 1995). Existing in the present day situation is a challenging task, that too for a disabled person encumbers are numerous to overcome, they are yet to be benefited from the society by all means. It is through employment any individual can lead a life atleast by meeting their own personal needs. There is an inequity between the employment rate of persons with and without disabilities and when comparing it is half the rate of non-disabled (Schrader, S. Von, & Malzer, V. 2011). The study was conducted among the persons with disabilities working in private organisations to measure their level of work performance by using descriptive research design. In this study an attempt was made to know the different work related factors that are involved in effective performance of person with disabilities which helps to make the disabled potent to live a better way of life, in the long run leads to the empowerment of persons with disabilities.*

Introduction
Persons with disabilities were given inequitable treatments in different societies during different period of time. Persons with disabilities are the people found in our society who face more hurdles and saddles due to considerable inequalities in all areas of social life and starve for the services and facilities available to their non disabled counterparts. Therefore, specific attention is essential for the disabled population in India not only for their identification but also to improve employable conditions which helps them to live the rest of their life in a dignified and fulfilled manner.

Persons with disabilities
Persons with disabilities in India are the people who are ignored by the society as they do not have economic or social or political power. In almost all the societies of the World, some people use to suffer from one or the other types of physical or mental disabilities. In India, this segment of population needs specific consideration not only for the identification but also necessitates special attempt for creating conditions so as to allow them to live their rest of life in a dignified manner and with a sense of fulfillment (RGCCI, 2006).

World Health Organization (WHO, 2006) estimated that about 10 percent of the World's population (approximately 650 millions) experience some form of disability or impairment. Of this, 80 percent live in low-income countries and most are poor and have limited or no access to basic services, including rehabilitation facilities. There is possibility of increase in the number of people with disabilities due to higher population growth, ageing process, emergence of chronic diseases and medical advances that preserve and prolong life. Chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer; injuries such as those due to road traffic crashes, conflicts, falls, landmines, mental impairments, birth defects, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases are said to be the most common causes of disability and impairment.

Work Performance
Work performance is often used for different measures of performance whereas it has to be clearly differentiated from other measures as it focuses on the actions and behaviours. As Campbell (1990) describes work performance is the individual effectiveness of an evaluation based on the results of individual's action. Oxford Dictionary explains performance as 'the action or process of performing a task or function'.

Work performance is defined as the actions and behaviours of an individual that are controlled and contributed by the individual towards the attainment of organizational goals (Rotundo & Sackett, 2002; Johnson Emily C., 2010). The action as well as the behaviour of an employee at his organisation which contributes towards meeting the goals is termed as work performance (Campbell, 1990). Performance is one of the important prerequisite for potential career development and achievement (Van Scotter., J. R, and Steel R., P, 2003). When the individual performance levels are raised, it will have a direct result on the performance of organisation (Armstrong & Baron, 2005).

On the fundamental level, Borman and Motowidlo (1993) have distinguished between task and contextual performance, the components of work performance. Task performance refers to the proficiency of an individual with which one could perform the activities that contributes to the 'technical core' of the organization. This contribution can be both direct and or indirect. The activities that do not contribute to the technical core of the organisation but involves in supporting social, organizational and psychological environment in which organizational goals are pursued are termed as contextual performance. This includes not only behaviours of helping co-workers or being a trustworthy member of the organization, but also make suggestions on how to improve procedures at work. Task performance is formally recognized as part of the job and contributes to the organization's technical core.

Persons with disabilities have many talents that have been undervalued and underutilized in organisations was the argument made in the study based on analyzing the organisational

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characteristics comprising of technology, norms, values, organisational policies and practices and it has its effect towards the attributes of disabled individuals, co-workers and nature of job covering nature of disability, concealability, performance level, gender, reward system, ability requirements, interdependence and personality factors (Stone Dianna L. and Adrienne Colella, 1996).

Methods & Materials

The study was conducted among the employees working in private sector organisations in Coimbatore who got their employment with the support of UDIS Forum, Coimbatore. Among the 992 persons with disabilities 278 respondents were selected by using simple random sampling tippet method. Descriptive Research Design was the research design adopted for the study.

The objectives of the study include:

- To study the personal profile of the persons with disabilities
- To find out the level of work performance of persons with disabilities working in private sector organisations
- To identify the factors that influence the work performance of persons with disabilities
- To offer suitable suggestions and recommendations based on the work performance of persons with disabilities for their empowerment

Results & Discussion

The study was conducted among persons with disabilities working in private sector organisations in Coimbatore with an idea to measure their performance at work. From the study it was found that 40.3 per cent belong to the age group of 31 - 40 years, more than half of the respondents 68 per cent were males with disabilities, 29.5 per cent completed their bachelor degree of education, and nearly 2/3rd of the respondents 65.10 per cent of the respondents are married. 51.4 per cent of the respondents are living in joint family system, 24.1 per cent are working in Non Governmental Organisation sector, 31.3 per cent are provided with office work including assisting in the regular work routine with the support of electronic media. Among the types of disabilities 57.6 per cent were locomotor disabled individuals followed by other types of disabilities and 40.3 per cent of the respondents' percentage of disability is identified as between 61-80% and 78.8 per cent have their disability identity card. In this present study the performance was measured with respect to persons with disabilities and found that 50.4 per cent of the respondents have moderate level of performance at their work, 25.9 per cent of the respondents have low level of performance at their work and 23.7 per cent of the respondents have proved high level of performance at their work. From the results of regression it was inferred that there is no significant influence between disability percentage, education and performance at work of persons with disabilities whereas there exists a significant influence between the age, salary with respect to the performance of persons with disabilities at work.

Suggestions

- Persons with disabilities are the people who are developing their skills and talents along with their education; hence the employers and the organisations are expected to promote a climate of non discrimination and equal participation.
- For getting the disabilities involved in their work, the organisations are expected to remove a range of barriers, such as physical inaccessibility and negative stereotypes so as to make them work close to the development of organisations.
- Government has already regulated the appointment of persons with disabilities in public sector by insisting 3% reservation, likewise a statutory norm has to be legalized by the Government for the private sector also to promote and regulate the employment of persons with disabilities.
- Social workers must intervene to help persons with disabilities to deal with personal or social problems, cope in crisis situations

Conclusion

Persons with disabilities are the weaker sections of the society whom get into the work place for their betterment in their standard of life. There are practical barriers and hurdles the persons with disabilities are susceptible in their work environment. The performance of an employee at their work is the factor that determines the knowledge, skill and abilities of employees in the organisation; in this study it was found that the level of work performance is moderate among the persons with disabilities. It is essential that improving the technical and contextual knowledge of the employees helps to enhance the work performance among the persons with disabilities. Efforts are essential to integrate the skill and knowledge to increase the performance at the work place which increases the standard of life of disabled employees.

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