

Barriers to Employment for Persons with Disabilities in India: A Sociological and Economic Review

Divya Duggal

Podar International School, India

Abstract

Despite the laws aimed at inclusion of people with disabilities in India, individuals with disabilities still face many barriers for their involvement in the labour market. This review explores the sociological and economic barriers for unemployment and underemployment of people with disabilities in India. It focuses on the issues of stigma, education inequality, inaccessible infrastructure, workplace discrimination and ineffective implementation of policies. It also identifies many gender, caste, class, and rural and urban disparities. Over 40 academic and institutional articles ranging from 1990 to 2026 were critically reviewed. This paper uses the framework of Social Model of Disability, Goffman's Stigma Theory and Human Capital Theory to explore how economic exclusion occurs due to the interaction between the social attitudes and socio-economic situation of people with disabilities. The results reveal that disability-related unemployment does not occur because of personal limitations, but discriminatory social attitudes, inaccessible transportation and workplaces, poor education and ineffectiveness of laws prevent the employment of people with disabilities. Moreover, exclusion has economic costs because of loss of productivity and earning power. There is a need for enforcement of the Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) Rights Act, inclusionary employment policies, disability sensitization, education access, and increased awareness about invisible disabilities. Further studies are needed to investigate intersectional disparities and the efficacy of legislation and business inclusion efforts.

Keywords: Disability, Human Capital Theory, Stigma Theory, Barriers To Employment