

# A Qualitative Study of Selected Organisations' Reward and Recognition Policies to Motivate People with Disability Employees

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## Abstract

A World Bank report in 2019 observed that approximately one billion differently abled in the world are a source of talent and contributors to the world economy. The concept of disability entered the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2006. After its entry into UNCRPD, the issue related to disability has been seen as a human right and human development issue. The challenges faced by the differently abled at physical, intellectual, psychological and mental impairments multiplied when they face undue isolation and restrictions in society.

This article is based on in-depth qualitative data in the form of case studies of selected business organisations that have modified their HR practices to include differently abled people as an employee. This study is based on a theoretical framework of high-performance work practices (HPWP) and their policies regarding building reward and recognition for managing employee performance in their organisations. As further scope for research, the recommendations and suggestions of the study may be taken as a reference point to do a detailed primary study in future research.

## Keywords

Differently abled people, human resource practices, employment, workplace challenges, reward, recognition, motivation

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## Introduction

The success of any business or organisation is not based on its building and tangible sources but on its people and processes. Human resource (HR) plays a crucial role and core of any business activity. Therefore, HR practitioners relentlessly work for the management and development of employees in their business. Due to changes in technology and innovation, there is a paradigm shift in the processes of companies which ultimately led them to implement certain changes in their policies which not only bring business to the organisation but also motivate employees to be productive and contribute immensely. When we talk about the reward and recognition for employees, it is not always financial compensation, especially for a diverse workforce, that is, differently abled. The reasonable modification and changes in infrastructure, attitude, policies and behaviour of the staff enhance their morale and keep them loyal and committed. People with disabilities (PwDs) look for a reward in the form of association and encouragement. Employee recognition is a subjective phenomenon. Therefore, there is a need to design a uniform policy in terms of evaluation and acknowledging the workers' contribution beyond performance appraisal. Reward and recognition are a feel-good initiative which helps the workers to de-stress and value their professional expertise and experience. The culture of reward and recognition engages employees and makes them feel happy, loyal and productive. The organisations may give formal and informal reward and recognition to the differently abled. However, it is essential to have a balanced approach considering all the positive and negative effects of appreciation which have on individual and organisational growth.

Thus, the article aims to highlight the high-performance business practices in the form of case studies of a few companies such as ANZ Bengaluru Services Limited, Mindtree Limited, Big Bazaar, etc., that have been practising for building reward and recognition policies to motivate differently abled employees.

## Literature Review

Researchers have studied that organisations' HR practices play a decisive role in the vocational inclusion of minorities. At present, mainstream HR practices have insufficiently addressed the complexity surrounding disability at work. As per a prior study, employer practices can even cause disparities in PwDs' employment. This contrasts with their potential for a positive impact on PwD workforce participation. PwD and (potential) employers are still in a socio-economically inefficient situation. Scholarly and managerial guidance on the appropriate utilisation and adaption of HR practices regarding PwD is clearly lacking. However, HR managers have to become more familiar with appropriate HR practices for PwD, as their decisions impact PwD workplace inclusion. In an effort to reduce socio-economic inefficiency, this review provides a comprehensive assessment of the study on HR practices potentially nurturing the workforce inclusion of PwD.

Aruna Gangapuram (2018) in her descriptive research observed that rewards and recognition have a direct and positive relationship with job satisfaction and motivation. Managers in the organisations may use different strategies to motivate employees, but it should be designed on the basis of every individual's unique values, beliefs and practices.

Boston Consulting Report (2015) identified the changes to be done in the organisational policies to reward and recognise PwD employees. The key suggestions of the study are as follows:

- *Involvement of leadership team:* No changes will start from bottom or mid-level professionals. The leadership team of the organisations should be involved at each step to design the policies and programmes.
- *Specialised recruitment and training* wherein the process of recruitment, selection, induction, training, evaluation of performance and feedback mechanism to be customised according to the needs of differently abled.
- *Recognition and awards:* The disability champions should be recognised as role models, and companies should listen to their success stories or concerns so that these motivate others as well.

ILO (2014) stated that the inclusion of differently abled employees in the business organisation is no more CSR agenda. It is a need of the organisation for their progress and managing diversity ratios. Many business organisations, such as Accenture, the Accor Group, the Adecco Group, Dow Chemicals, IBM, Standard Bank, etc., are reevaluating the aspects of business through the lens of differently abled employees. The reasonable changes in the organisational policies would bring them into the market and encourage them to contribute in the nation's development. Thus, it is observed that for the high-performance workforce, there is a need for the satisfaction of their requirements. Because a satisfied labour force leads to consumer loyalty and great economic performance of organizations. Effective recognition programs and acknowledgment of the work of employees will lead to stability and drive among employees to perform in volatile, ambiguous, and competitive environments.

Testa (2006) observed that for a high-performance workforce, it is essential to have a satisfied workforce which leads to customer satisfaction and good financial performance. The effective recognition programmes are instrumental in motivating employees in a volatile, ambiguous and competitive environment without increasing financial burden. Bell (2004) found that an effective reward and recognition programme will help to generate business benefits as a mutual feeling of respect and trust translates into happier and productive workplaces.

Noonan et al. (2004) conducted primary interviews of successful women in the United States with physical disabilities to identify their motivational factors of career success. In their research, they found that continuous reward and recognition programmes in their organisation gave them self-confidence and determination to succeed. The reward activities in the form of mentoring and receiving best achievers award boosted their confidence and motivated them to excel in their field.

Wiesner and Millett (2003) divided the reward into two types: 'input' reward in the form of fixed pay and short-term incentives and 'output reward' are awards and

recognition of employees' performance. Stone (2002) observed that recognition programmes in business are like an incentive, which focuses on a person's behaviour and sets up their performance objectives and fulfilment of these objectives.

Tawak Charles's (2021) review paper highlighted the crucial role of HPWPs on organizational performance and recommended that organizations should focus on the use of these practices to achieve their targets, retain their talents, and keep a competitive edge. Today, HPWPs not only is essential for maintaining employee performance but also for implementing a win-win situation in organizations to enhance their employee's performance and retain their talents. Organizations should take utmost care while designing and implementing HPWPs. He further states that organizations and leaders need to make critical choices of the practices that have a genuine effect on employees' performance and the broader organization outcome to attain a high-performance culture with clear standards, values, and a sustainable engaging environment.

## Conceptual Definition

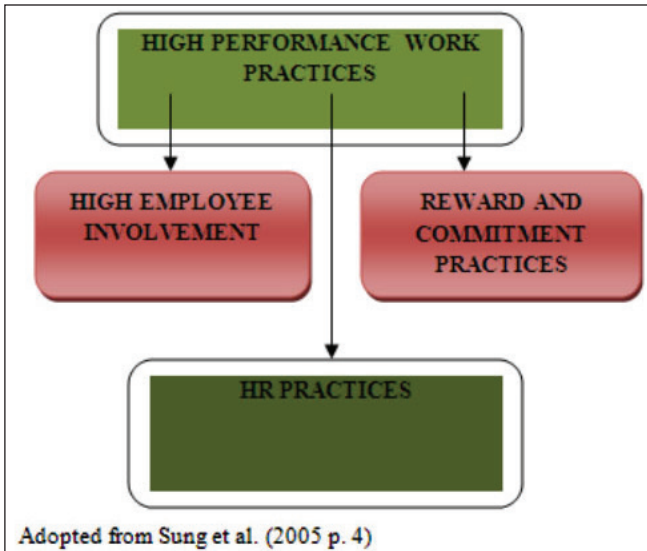
*Reward*: Jack Zigon defines 'reward' as 'something that increases the frequency of an employee action' (1998). *Recognition*: It is a constructive, genuine feedback based on acknowledging people as sincere, worthy of respect, having needs and equipped with their own personal expertise. *Motivation*: Abraham Maslow (1954) defines motivation as the cognitive, aesthetic and transcendence aspects which drive a man towards a developmental change.

## Theoretical Framework

'High-performance work practices' (HPWP) is not a new word in human resources management (HRM). Every company has an aim to manage its people effectively. The term HPWP is defined as those practices of HRM that are adopted by managers to improve employees' performance in organisations. The different types of HPWP identified by various scholars are as follows:

- Universalist (Delery & Doty, 1996): HR practices are universal in nature and produce maximum results when adopted irrespective of the nature and types of organisations.
- Contingency: A combination of HR practices will only work best if it is customised according to the organisational settings or within a specific group of workers. The aligned practices produce the needed outcome.
- Configurational: It describes the structure, boundaries and relationships through which an organisation operates.

Many theories proposed are related to HPWP, such as Huselid's (1995) two dimensions (skills and workers motivation) and Dalery and Doty's (1996) seven HPWP practices in 1996, such as profit sharing, employee participation, appraisals, training, career opportunities, job security and job description, and many more.



**Figure 1.** The Three Broad Areas of HPWPs.

**Source:** Timiyo (2014, p. 10).

However the theoretical framework of the study is based on Sing et al. (2005), who mentioned that HPWP practices are based on three broad areas of reward and commitment, high employee involvement and HR practices as stated by Sung & Ashton. (2005).

These are highlighted in Figure 1.

## Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the HPWP reward and recognition practices of selected companies.
- To understand the impact of reward and recognition practices on motivation for PwD employees in the organisations.

## Research Questions

What are the high-performance business practices in terms of their reward and recognition policies to keep PwD employees motivated in their organisations?

## Research Methodology

The research article is based on the HPWP of selected companies that are building inclusive work cultures and developing their HR practices to initiate the reward and recognition programmes to motivate PwD employees. The article is based on secondary published case studies using various research sources. The article has

also used the data/information available on the organisation through the internet and other secondary sources.

Selected business cases of HPWP that have built the reward and recognition policies to motivate differently abled employees are presented in Table 1.

## **Findings**

Thus, it is found that HPWP focuses on building their human capital and work continuously to engage a diverse workforce in their organisations. The effective reward and recognition programmes are useful not only for PwD employees but for their counterparts as well. The analysed cases proved that the HPWP works on it and creates an inclusive culture with an equal opportunity policy without any discrimination. The reasonable modifications in business premises encourage PwDs to perform better and motivate them to contribute and be productive.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, although ‘motivation’ is a subjective term, it is influenced by a variety of factors, and there is a close relationship between rewards and recognition. The higher the levels of motivation, the greater the satisfaction, performance and productivity. Maslow’s theory of hierarchy of needs reminds organisations to address all levels of needs of PwD employees to remain motivated and self-actualised. The acknowledgement, appreciation, reward, honour, respect and care are magical actions which attract, retain and motivate employees.

## **Future Scope of Study and Managerial Implications**

Organisations are aware that it is essential to have a diverse workforce in their organisations and vocational inclusion of differently abled to overcome the challenges related to a shortage of a skilled labour workforce in future ageing workforces, etc. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016) is a landmark act and passed many important ordinances related to the incentivisation of public and private sectors for employing differently abled in their organisations. Through business cases and previous research, it is proved that PwDs are loyal, committed and productive if they are motivated and have suitable policies. However, a multidisciplinary research approach is still required to identify the various enabling factors of business growth and societal developments. The future research may be taken from these aspects. Companies need to understand that the reward and recognition programme for PwD employees’ motivation is crucial to curtailing stigmatised and biased behaviour towards them. Future research may analyse in detail the different reward and recognition programme of companies that vary from industry to industry and propose future recommendations accordingly.

**Table 1.** Business Cases of HPWP That Have Built the Reward and Recognition Policies to Motivate Differently Abled Employees.

Company Name	Year of Establishment	Reward and Recognition Initiative	Impact on Motivation of PwD Employees	Sector
ANZ Bengaluru Services Limited	1989	Started in 2010 for hiring PwDs, reached up to 2% of the total workforce. Company rewards them with fixed pay, career growth opportunities, reasonable modifications, no discrimination, highlight the best performers, continuous training, etc.	Less attrition, inclusive work cultures, diverse workforce, confidence among PwDs and champions of change.	IT
Big Bazaar	Sabke Liye, 2018	Sabke liye initiative. Worked on a 360-degree approach. Changes in HR policies. Identification of types of disabilities to be hired. Worked on infrastructure, sensitisation, generous leave policies, equal opportunity policy, recognition of PwD employees as an asset, empathetic training and accessibility spaces at workplace	Loyal, committed, optimistic and changing perspectives of employees vis-à-vis their counterparts.	Retail
IHG India	Started hiring in 2016	Changes in HR policies such as providing special assistance toolkits, assigned work front responsibilities, sign language posters, self-assessment with continuous feedback, annual career week for interaction across departments, competency mapping, winning ways Wednesday appreciation initiative, featuring disability champions on company's heroes book magazine, performers to have informal meet with senior level team, etc.	Morale booster increases self-esteem and confidence. There was also a lack of absenteeism and attrition of PwD employees.	Hospitality
Microsign Products	1979	Skill development initiative, zero-defect work output, jobs according to the types of disabilities, induction process post joining, training and upskilling, performance evaluation, feedback, achiever award in annual meetings and outbound programme	Team building, trust and morale with confidence, rigour to perform and engagement in all high-performing positions.	Manufacture
Mindtree Consulting Limited	1999	Performance appraisals identify high performers, fixed pay and incentives, awards to performers, publishing stories of disability champions, setting high value in policies, inculcating the culture of shared values, leadership development initiatives, etc.	Less attrition, retention of employees, self-reliant, confident, stable, mature, optimistic, loyal, committed and productive.	IT

**Source:** CII Report (2020).

## Limitations

As with every study, this study also has limitations. First, the article may be limited due to its search strategy. Articles were included based on only secondary published sources, and cases were also analysed according to the availability of sources on the choice of databases, search terms and journal format (peer-reviewed). The considered cases are also from different industries; therefore, the generalisation of this study may be avoided. However, this study may be taken as a reference point to do detailed research on various reward and recognition initiatives of companies for PwD employees' motivation.

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