

Evaluating the Implementation of DEI Communication Policies for Deaf and Speech-Impaired Employees in Indian IT Workplaces

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Abstract:

The Indian Information Technology (IT) industry has a strong sense of responsibility towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), there exists significant gaps in the implementation of Communication Accessibility in the workplace for Deaf and Speech Impaired users. Highest gaps in communication accessibility in workplace for Deaf and Speech-Impaired is observed in Indian Information Technology (IT) industry which has a strong focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). This study is a mixed methods study involving primary data from 51 HR/DEI managers from Indian IT organizations, 65 team managers and qualitative narratives from ten Deaf and Speech-Impaired employees. The study was done in organisations of varying sizes from medium scale IT organisations to large scale multinational IT organisations with presence in India. This analysis took place in the context of four goals.

Objective 1, the mean policy scores were 55.3/100 on a composite scale of 0–9, including disability mention in DEI policy (3.94/9); explicit Deaf/SI coverage (1.04/9); support technology provisions (5.04/9); training commitment (1.08/9); and budget allocation (4.02/9).

In Objective 2, actual implementation was measured with frequency coding and binary indicators, with a mean implementation score of 2.45 (normalised: 40.8/100) on three dimensions. The gap between policy and practice was identified as 14.5 normalised points, of which 64.7 per cent of the respondents had a gap of three or more points.

Objective 3, used thematic coding of the open-ended responses to identify response statements, underlying meanings, sub-themes and main themes, and found four dominant barrier categories: infrastructure deficit, organisational resistance, capacity gaps in management and awareness.

Objective 4, showed a comparative gap table, broken down by policy score bands, showing that even high-policy organisations get medium implementation. Results from qualitative feedback from Deaf and Speech-Impaired employees supported the trend of self-managed compensation, career marginalisation, and lack of policy-experience congruence. The study ends with suggestions in alignment with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016.

Keywords:

Accessibility of communication, deaf employees, disability inclusion, policy-practice gap, Indian IT sector, and speech-impaired employees.