Introduction

Over 1 billion people, that is 1 in 7, are disabled or have a form of disability with 80% of these people living in developing countries. Having a disability means having a mental or condition which refrains the person from using one or more of their senses, or moving. Some of these disabilities include autism, down syndrome, mental health conditions, deaf or hearing disabilities and physical disabilities. It limits the number of activities they could do thus limiting the number of job opportunities available to them. Due to their lack of senses they are treated differently, most of the time with extra care but sometimes this results in lack of education and job opportunities. In terms of education, people with disabilities are discriminated more in terms of what they are not able to do rather than what they can do.

Physical disabilities can be either temporary or permanent as some are from birth while others can be acquired throughout one’s life. These disabilities are said to be more common within boys rather than girls. Acquired brain injuries and spinal cord injuries are the most common of the physical disabilities. Acquired brain injury is can also be either temporary or permanent and caused due to a range of factors which include, stroke, alcohol, drugs, diseases or lack of oxygen. It occurs to the brain after birth thus it is acquired brain injury (BI). People with this disability have trouble processing information and solving problems as quickly as others and may have a change in their behavior, thinking and abilities from before their acquired disability. Spinal cord injuries are mostly permanent and occurs when there is too much pressure applied on the spinal cord. This cuts the blood and oxygen supply to the spinal cord leading to a loss of function and feeling.

In Australia, five people every week develop spinal cord injuries and between 10 to 15 have traumatic brain injuries. In the United Kingdom, there is a total of 13.3 billion disabled people with only 18% working with their disability. Although many organizations are starting up providing jobs for the disabled, there are still lack of opportunities when compared to the “normal” people. Furthermore, there is a major pay gap between the two. This creates an unfair environment for the disabled despite them having the ability or more skills than the “normal.”
In 2015 the United Nations came out with 17 Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, which are a vision of what they wish this world to work towards by 2030. In these 17 goals and their specific targets, persons with disabilities are mentioned 11 times in multiple parts such as inequality, education, employment and accessibility to human settlements. SDG 8 links directly to “decent work and economic growth” in which one of the targets is to “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all including persons with disabilities” and also tackling the unemployment rate for persons with disabilities (indicator 8.5.1). Not only but this directly targets SDG 10 which “emphasizes the social, economic and political inclusions of persons with disabilities” (indicator 10.2.1).

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Disabilities**

A person who is limited to an action due to mental or physical conditions which prevents them from living a normal life. These people are normally referred to as handicapped.

**Discrimination**

Categorization of a person and the treatment of that person based on the category, whether in favor of or against. They could be categorized into groups based on their religion, height, race or class/social status.

**Ableism**

Ableism is the belief and the ideology that disabled people should not be accepted into societies and work environments due to their inability to perform certain tasks independently.

**Prejudice**

A biased opinion, one which is unfavorable and most commonly has been decided before an argument is presented. Usually prejudiced opinions are made with limited knowledge thought or even sometimes a reason but can also be a cause of bribery.

**Intolerance**

Not being able or choosing not to accept one’s views, perspective, or beliefs that is different from their own.

**Rehabilitation**

Often referred to as the act of restoring something to its original form, rehabilitation can happen to a person’s thoughts, habits, actions and their character as a whole.
Background Information

Physical and mental health has not only affected the employment rates, but has also increased suicide rates all over the world. Approximately 350 million people worldwide of all ages suffer from this mental disorder and can cause 800,000 deaths each year. Other factors concerning disabilities include road accidents, war, conflict and even physical damage. Many employers do not prefer to employ such employees as they prove to be a burden or a waste to the company. They feel that there are others who are more qualified for the job and thus not giving them the chance. This can have negative effects as the person will feel excluded causing their mental health to deteriorate further.

Physical disability

Those who are physically disabled are unable to move, have weak hand-eye coordination and even their ability to perform motor tasks are limited. Quite often, they use help aids such as crutches or wheelchairs to get around. These are informally referred to as “cripples” or “handicapped." Most commonly, they are in their positions due to war and extreme sports causing them to become amputees or being unable to move certain parts of their bodies, paralyzed. Those with physical impairments are not provided with the same opportunities or even the lifestyle as an able person would be provided with. Since with their disability they have an inability to perform tasks, whether basic or difficult, to their full extents they are not provided jobs despite their experience or skill level. Not only does this cause a greater range in the economic structure of a country but it also adds social barrier.

Organizations such as Disabled American Veterans provide compensation for service related disabilities of up to $3300 as monthly benefits. Although this eliminates the financial struggle in the short run, the issue of ableism can prove to be very distressing for the physically impaired as they are constantly seen through a lens of pity and disgust within society.

Mental disability

Unlike the physically impaired, the mentally disabled need special aid in terms of social activities, education, decent work and employment. They can be classified as people with mental illnesses such as down syndrome, dementia, schizophrenia and even dementia.

The mentally impaired are not offered the same opportunities as those without, quite clearly due to their inabilities and lack of skills required to take up the job at hand. In addition to them feeling excluded, seeing as PTSD contributes towards a major form of mental disability, it has been estimated that 18-22 veterans commit suicide each day. Approximately 90% of children who die by suicide have a mental health condition. Moreover, around 37% of the students within the age of 14 and 21 with a mental illness drop out while being served by a special education institute. This
constitutes towards the highest dropout rate for any disabilities age group seen throughout the last century. With regards to lifestyles, the mentally impaired are highly dependable. It has been stated that around $193.2 billion are spent on the mentally disabled every year.

**Employment opportunities**

17.5% of people who are disabled are hired into employment professions in the United States. The lack of opportunities is due to various reasons such as the lack of facilities to properly train the disabled and the major risk involved, to the company, in hiring them. Most countries who are able to provide jobs for the disabled are the developed countries as they are the ones with the most easy access to facilities and are able to afford to provide for the disabled. They also have easy access to and from workplaces. For example, the United States has zones for handicapped and wheelchaired people all around, including parking lots, restaurants, hotel rooms and bathrooms. Unfortunately, that is mainly people with physical disabilities. The mentally disabled do not have the same opportunities because with the lack of skills and the inability to perform at the job at hand, it becomes quite difficult to work. However, they are being excluded from society due to not being properly taught the correct and most basic things, such as norms of society. This exclusion could potentially lead to further mental conditions such as anxiety and depression. Overall, this causes a large dependency where a growing number of people are dependent on a certain income which in turn causes economic downfall in a nation. The goal from the SDGs for the disabled is to create and allow persons with disabilities to “full access the job market.”

**Major Countries and Organizations**

**United Kingdom**

The United Kingdom is a nation who is internationally recognized to be a great factor within promote the issue of employment within the disabled and create solutions regarding it. With the rehabilitation act, introduced in 1973, the UK took their first step towards offering a better life for the citizens of the nation. Since the country has a large history of getting involved in wars all across the world, after the second world war their wounded soldiers, due to mental and physical conditions, were looked at differently by the society. Seeing as the numbers of the wounded rose to as high as 565,861 from the army and air force only, their conditions were unimaginable. From amputated limbs to PTSD, despite the conditions, the effects were strongly regarded as crippling their communities. With these numbers so large and the negative effects it had economically on the workforce of the country, the government initiated a rehabilitation act in 1973 which focused primarily on the employment of the disabled people of the country. This later changed into the Equality act of 2010 as an act of parliament by the United Kingdom. In addition to this, they further employed other necessary acts and treaties such as the disability discrimination act in 1995 and 2005 which lawfully condemns the segregation and the discrimination of the disabled. By employing certain
methods such as encouraging service providers to provide extra help for the disabled, not treating the disabled in a different way, etc, the government felt it was the least they could do to make a difference.

**United States of America**

Looking at the history of WWII, the similar application of the war and its effects can be seen in United States of America as well. With a large number of soldiers being killed and many more injured, societies faced trouble with regards to the placement and the use of the disabled people during these peak times. While their honor and their service is regarded, it is also horrifying to many, and some communities even shamed the men who walked outdoors creating the unofficial ‘ugly-laws’. These however, were considered to be abolished in the 1970’s as they were codified into the federal law system. Since its abolishment in 1995 however, the US federal government has made an effort to include the disabled within government jobs for example, the TSA, NSA, Police department and many other fields of operation. Despite these efforts, ableism continues to torment its victims through name calling, bullying, and more importantly, unemployment. Research has shown that the unemployment rate of the United States is 5.1%, however, the unemployment rate of the disabled people is twice of that at 10.7%. This can be a serious issue as the need for excess medical care as well as infrastructure will increase due to various other factors which cause the number of persons with disabilities increases annually.

**Germany**

Germany as a nation has been a fighter for the rights of persons with disability and has proceeded in supporting various organizations in order to do so. An action plan was produced by the German Government for economic development in 2013 which promoted the inclusion of the disabled people within the society and workforce. By enforcing laws such as providing training courses in order to make the disabled more qualified with regards to economic opportunities as well as providing technical aids in the workplace itself to allow easier access into and out of the area. Their assistance has impacted the nation as their output increased and their unemployment rates decreased from being 5.3% in 2013 to 4.2% in 2016 showing clear signs of effects.

**Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN)**

The Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network is a program which focuses to enforce the laws and the rules which were implemented by the UN Convention for the Rights of Disabled Persons. Cooperating with the World Council of Churches (WCC) EDAN aims to fulfil one of the organizations agendas which are concerns regarding the people with disabilities. Their work has extended to countries such as Zimbabwe, Kenya and Brazil. Their primary aim is to integrate the disabled people within society today. This has been done through various methods, one prominent one seen in 2015 with the launch of a 3 year program in Eastern Africa which affected the lives of thousands of people in the region.
United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

There have been many organizations who have campaigned and tried to raise awareness about issues such as this however, UNESCO has had a long standing participator with regards to raising awareness for the disabled community. The disabled have had prominent issue in the world and UNESCO has done ample amount of work towards the issue as a whole. Seeing as one of the organizations aims is to look at education as a necessity, UNESCO has provided education to 150 million children with disabilities world wide. In addition to this, statistics show that fewer than 2% of children with disabilities are enrolled in an education system therefore, UNESCO has been planning on improving, not only the academical aspects but also the quality of life through education of these children. By providing them the opportunity to excel in life, UNESCO has opened doors for various new outlooks in the world today. Through the implementation of the right to education for persons with disabilities, UNESCO hopes to create a solid platform for these young children to achieve what many others before them could not, including employment.

National Disability Authority (NDA)

The national disability authority, NDA, is a non profit organisation that raises awareness on issues within the disability community including education and employment. They work together alongside other well known organizations to provide a platform for employment and education and spreads awareness. They have workshops, seminars and conferences catering for the disabled to help them practice and develop good guidelines as employers. They hope to have companies with at least 3% of their staff with disabilities unless the companies have a good reason otherwise.

Timeline of Events

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description of event</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 26th 1973</td>
<td>Rehabilitation Act was an act that required the government to take action on employment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 3rd 1982</td>
<td>World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Disability Discrimination Act combatted direct discrimination, harassment and victimisation in the United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 13th 1999</td>
<td>International Disability Law which allowed the recognition of the disabled and how they follow political choices due to false assumptions and stereotypes.</td>
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April 7th 2005  Disability Discrimination Act, an amendment towards the first DDA in 1995
October 3rd 2008  Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
October 1st 2010  Equality Act protects discrimination in a work area, set in the United Kingdom.
2014 - 2021  WHO global disability action plan

**Relevant UN Treaties and Events**

- World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, 3 December 1982 (A/RES/37/52)
- Inclusive development for persons with disabilities, 24 January 2017 (A/RES/71/165)

**Previous Attempts to solve the Issue**

Various countries and organizations have been involved in order to tackle this issue as a whole. The key players consist of UNESCO, WHO and National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders, ANED, which the academic network of European disabilities. These organizations have employed large numbers of disabled people within their local stations by providing them with learning opportunities as well as access to these workplaces. ANED especially has collected data on policies and laws not only in European nations, but also internationally. The results allowed them to conclude that although a small percentage of the disabled community is employed, employers are still hesitant on doing so as they prove to be a physical risk to the company. In addition to this, the UN implemented the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which was set as a goal to eradicate the discrimination against them as well as to outline the rights which the disabled are entitled to. Although these solutions have proven to provide a small number of people with a better lifestyle, there is a large number of people still facing discrimination against something they did not chose to have.

Governmental organizations such as the Department of Social Services, DSS, of Australia have started noting the importance of employment for the disabled and started looking for and bestowing opportunities to those. Roughly 20,000 people with disabilities now have jobs with one of 600 Australian Disability Enterprises. Australia also have Disability Employment Services, DES, which help support the needs of the individuals with offering training and other types of required help. alongside Australia, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Canada, New Zealand and many states in America including Tennessee, Pennsylvania and Indiana, have similar governmental organizations.
Possible Solutions

Raising awareness

As seen before, various solutions have been implemented however, not many worked out as the issue is still prominent in today's society. This is due to the mental frame of mind carried down through generations that disabled people are a burden on society and do not provide any outcomes. Providing wheelchairs access and creating special schools are almost short term solutions for the target individuals. However, to catch a problem by its root, we must teach the youth to respect, to identify and to include the disabled persons into the community as much as possible. This can be done by creating ableism friendly schools as well as incorporating the issue into the academics as much as possible.

Education

Although targeting schools is only affecting a small group of people, government campaigns or organizational run campaigns can also help shed light to other people regarding this issue as a whole. In addition to this, the education system, although it in itself does not receive much finding, is not ideal for any member of the community. Therefore, the stress put upon the education of the disabled persons, whether it be a mental issue or a physical, needs to improve drastically. Moreover, the stress on providing the rights to the disabled people is growing more and more everyday. This should be brought to the attention of governments and enforced in the law as done by the some other countries.

Workshops and Seminars for the Disabled

One of the reasons there is a low rate of employment between the disabled is because they are seen as incapable. In order to get rid of this stereotype one of the best options is to set up weekly workshops and seminars for the disabled. Something just like NDA has been doing for the past few years, but on a more regular basis. With getting rid of the mindset of the disabled being incapable, and the disabled being able to work past their disabilities, it would be easier and more common for jobs to be awarded to such people.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

In addition to educating and raising awareness, another possible solution to resolve this issue is to work alongside the sustainable development goals. SDG 8 links directly to employment while through SDG 4, it is even more possible to achieve it. SDG 10 is about reducing inequality which also related and ties in with the disabled and the inequality and injustice towards them. By reaching these goals through their respective means, there is a clear, simple cut to and hope for employment for the disabled.
Bibliography


“Disability and X-Men: Am I Disabled or a Mutant?” Disability Horizons, 22 May 2016, disabilityhorizons.com/2016/05/am-i-disabled-or-a-mutant/.


