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## Talent management activities of disability training and placement agencies in India

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This study seeks to outline activities of training and placement agencies in India aimed at employment of persons with a disability. We contend that persons with a disability are an underutilized human resource and that utilizing their abilities should be a key part of an inclusive approach to talent management. As there is little empirical research on this subject, our approach is exploratory and we seek to create a platform for further studies. A key finding of the study is the preference of agencies to engage in non-traditional and ad hoc approaches to build and showcase underutilized talent of those with a disability. Based on present findings and the contextual approach to talent management, a more comprehensive agenda for future research areas in inclusive talent management is outlined.

**Keywords:** disability; employment; inclusive talent management; India

### Introduction

Talent management is increasingly identified as a critical success factor within organizations and has become a key issue for business leaders (Thunnissen, Boselie and Fruytier 2013; Sparrow, Scullion and Tarique 2014a). Definitions and conceptualizations of what talent management comprises are myriad (Lewis and Heckman 2006) and the rapidly growing field of talent management is expanding our understanding of what constitutes talent management and the conceptual boundaries of this emerging field (Cappelli 2008; Vaiman, Scullion and Collings 2012). Particularly, the effectiveness of and types of talent management activities are now being understood in different national contexts and in different types of work spaces (*cf.* Scullion and Starkey 2000; Iles, Chuai and Preece 2010; Stahl et al. 2012; Saridakis and Cooper 2013).

Within this expanding field, we operate from a broad understanding of talent management. Specifically, we understand it to be activities aimed at identifying, selecting, developing and retaining productive employees (*cf.* Stahl et al. 2007; Scullion and Collings 2011; Valverde, Scullion and Ryan 2013). We also follow the notion of talent management as focused on different talent pools as well as talent categorization (Lewis and Heckman 2006). Leveraging this broad understanding, we move away from a focus on talent management activities within organizational boundaries engaged in by organizational stakeholders. Instead, we examine activities engaged in by external stakeholders to identify, groom and deploy talent within organizations.

We specifically outline talent management activities of disability training and employment agencies aimed at employees with a disability. Our aim in this paper is to map the talent management activities of disability training and placement agencies in India. Our research question is: How do disability training and placement agencies manage talent

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of a traditionally underutilized workforce? More specifically, which activities do such agencies engage in so that people with disabilities can secure and maintain gainful employment? To realize our aim, we interviewed 12 policy makers at 5 national-level disability employment agencies in India. Of the five agencies, two are global such that one has offices in the USA and another one is headquartered in the UK, and has several global offices. The focus of this study is on outlining how such agencies engage with identifying, building and showcasing talent of those with a physical disability.

Through this paper we hope to contribute to the development of the talent management field both conceptually and empirically. Conceptually, the paper attempts to add to the definition and ambit of talent management research by identifying practices and principles used in developing traditionally underutilized talent. While most talent management research has focused on talent management within organizations by organizational stakeholders (Farley 2005; Farndale, Scullion and Sparrow 2010; Schuler, Jackson and Tarique 2011a), there have been calls for understanding talent management also from the supply side or before talent enters an organization (Scullion and Collings 2011).

Through our focus on the supply side, we expand the conceptual boundaries of the talent management field. As a related point, we further the notion of who is a talent (McDonnell and Collings 2011) by focusing on a traditionally under-researched source of talent. In addition, this paper explicitly considers the national context of talent management activities in India, an under-researched context compared to the American and European contexts (Stumpf, Doh and Tymon 2010; Tymon, Stumpf and Doh 2010).

The rest of the paper is broadly divided into the following sections. First, we outline relevant literature on talent management, and focus on what exclusive and inclusive talent management practices and notions imply. Second, we outline the talent management context in India. Third, we outline the methodology in this paper. Specifically we note the talent management context for persons with a disability in India. This contextual explication is followed by how we obtained access to participants. Third, we outline all findings of the present interview-based study. Finally, we conclude with implications for research and practice.

### ***An inclusive approach to talent management***

Two views are prevalent regarding the inclusiveness of the talent management approach: the first sees talent exclusively in terms of high performers and high potential, whereas the second approach views talent in a more general, universal and inclusive way, focusing on the majority of or even all employees who are seen as able to create value for the organization (Lewis and Heckman 2006; Collings and Mellahi 2009; Schuler, Jackson and Tarique 2011b; Dries 2013). Sparrow, Farndale and Scullion (2013) highlight that 'talent' is often measured in organizations through competency frameworks that differentiate high potential employees from the rest of the workforce; suggesting that some employees possess unique qualities that ensure their capability to progress within the organization (Briscoe and Hall 1999).

The exclusive approach to talent management is based on the notion of workforce differentiation which involves organizations using differentiated human resource architecture (Becker, Huselid and Beatty 2009). This involves selecting high potential employees who can contribute more to achieving organizational goals than other employees and using high commitment human resource practices to achieve organizational goals (Lepak and Snell 1999; Schuler et al. 2011a,b).

However, there is some debate around the issue of whether people have inherent abilities, resulting in the favored few being seen as key talent or whether all employees

have strengths that can be developed (Groysberg 2010; Bothner, Podolny and Smith 2011). The inclusive approach to talent management thus, alternatively, is based on the assumption that all employees have the potential to have a strategic impact on organizational performance (Yost and Chang 2009; Sparrow et al. 2013). It is argued that this approach reduces the negative effects of workforce differentiation on collaborative working, commitment and productivity (Sparrow et al. 2013).

As suggested in the aforementioned research, talent management can differentiate between taking an exclusive approach (differential approach) and an inclusive approach (egalitarian approach) to the management of talent. In practice, both approaches exist, but the exclusive approach is much more common in the literature and in practice (Oltra and Vivas-Lopez 2013; Swailes 2013). This reflects the view that the allocation of more resources to high performers leads to higher returns on investment, since resources are allocated where more returns can be expected (Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and Gonzalez-Cruz 2013). However, there are a number of critiques of the exclusive approach which focuses on the lack of objectivity of both the evaluations of performance and potential and of the process of identifying potential (Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013). The approach we follow in this study is the inclusive approach as we focus on how traditionally overlooked or underutilized talent pools (Lengnick-Hall 2007; Lengnick-Hall, Gaunt and Kulkarni 2008) are supported, so they can become productive members of a workforce.

### ***Talent management of persons with a disability***

Talent management issues of this group are critical for human resource practitioners to understand as the worldwide incidence of disability is on the rise (International Labour Organization 2010; Sanchez 2010) and those with a disability do not get opportunities to fully demonstrate and utilize their talent in their workplaces (Houtenville and Ruiz 2011; Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall 2011). Specifically, as compared with their counterparts without a disability, those with a disability have lower employment rates, lower earnings and are more likely to be underemployed (Houtenville and Ruiz 2011).

Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall (2014) have outlined various barriers that those with a disability face when trying to gain organizational access. For example, ideal profiles as opposed to essential requirements may imply inadvertent exclusion of persons with a disability during the recruitment stage (Stone and Williams 1997). Recruiters may also not recruit in places where those with a disability are specially trained, and negative biases such as perceived poor-fit with certain jobs may creep into recruitment decisions (Louvet 2007; Kulkarni and Lengnick-Hall 2014). Employers may also express concerns about performance potential, and fear that hiring persons with disabilities would alienate co-workers (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2008). Post organizational access, employers may be concerned about how co-workers may react if a particular group of employees seems to get more aids to increase productivity. For example, as co-workers are directly affected by their team members when tasks, resources and rewards are interdependent (Colella 2001; Colella, Paetzold, Belliveau and Hollenbeck 2004), they may form judgments about distributive (Colella 2001) and procedural (Colella et al. 2004) fairness with respect to requested or granted accommodation. Thus, offering productivity enhancements to a particular talent group may seem unfair to others.

However, the talent of this group can be utilized as they are loyal and hardworking employees (Hernandez et al. 2008) who can lead successful careers and can serve as role models for others who may have disabilities (Noonan et al. 2004; Kulkarni and Gopakumar 2014). Disability training and placement agencies or vocational rehabilitation

agencies can especially help build such a talent base (Buys and Rennie 2001; Dutta, Gerver, Chan, Chou and Ditchman 2008). Such agencies invest in developing talent or reconstructing it so that people with disabilities can competitively participate in the labour market. For example, agency services usually comprise job training, counselling and placement of people with disabilities (Dutta et al. 2008; World Health Organization 2011).

### *Talent management context in India for persons with a disability*

India has about 21 million people with a disability according to the last available census data (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment 2013). According to the official communication of the Department of Disability Affairs of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, only half the population with a disability is literate and 34% are employed. Studies outlining employment gaps are few and have had a narrow focus, such as that on a specific part or a rural part within India (Mitra and Sambamoorthi 2008). This group of employable people experience stigma or a sense of being seen as relatively less competent, as other factors such as poverty, gender and/or caste intensify the experience of stigma (Buckingham 2011; Kumar, Sonpal and Hiranandani 2012). They may be seen as someone suffering or atoning for past sins and as those who should display gratitude for whatever inclusion they experience (World Bank Report 2007; Peters, Gabel and Symeonidou 2009; Kumar et al. 2012). Possibly complicating the employment situation, the connections and communications between field actors such as the government and the non-governmental organizations are weak (Cobley 2013), thereby making the employment terrain difficult to navigate.

To include this underutilized segment of society, the Indian government is undertaking several steps. For example, India is a signatory to the Declaration on the Full Participation and Equality of People with Disabilities in the Asia Pacific Region and the Biwako Millennium Framework for action toward an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment 2013).

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, specifically engages with employers in various ways to ensure that the talent of those with a disability is recognized and leveraged. For example, the seminal Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995 provides a quota of 3% in vacancies in identified posts within governmental organizations including various public sector organizations. Of the 3% quota or reservation, 1% each is reserved for persons with blindness or low vision, hearing impairment and locomotor disability or cerebral palsy. However, non-compliance in hiring this talent group is not met with sanctions (Dawn 2012) and people with disabilities do not always secure employment (World Bank Report 2007; Confederation of Indian Industry report on disability 2009; Diversity and Equal Opportunity Centre report 2009).

Despite the millions with a disability in India, research does not yet fully inform us of the exact nature of talent management activities aimed at this subset of the population. There are several reasons that those with a disability remain an 'underutilized' or 'overlooked' pool of talent (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2008). The institutional or social context may pose impediments to the leverage of their talent. For example, some research shows that only coercive institutional pressures appear to affect organizational practices with regards hiring those with a disability (Harcourt, Lam and Harcourt 2005). However, despite employment guidelines, governmental incentives aimed at employers or employment quotas for those with a disability, this talent pool remains unemployed or underemployed (Dawn 2012). The organizational context may also thwart utilization of

the talent of employees with disabilities if policies do not encourage complete assimilation of this segment of the workforce (Robert and Harlan 2006) or if employers espouse negative or ambivalent attitudes toward people with disabilities (Hernandez, Keys and Balcazar 2000; Lengnick-Hall et al. 2008). In this context, research on disability has been based relatively more on the medical model of disability (Mehrotra 2011) and not on organization-specific talent management.

In this research we sidestep barriers to utilization of those with a disability and instead focus attention on how agencies in India develop and urge utilization of this under-tapped talent pool. In the following section we outline the methodology followed in our study.

## **Methods**

### ***Participants and procedure***

The latest available Confederation of Indian Industry report (2009) on disabilities helped us identify agencies engaged exclusively in managing the talent of those with a disability. This report is published in concurrence with the Diversity and Equal Opportunity Center of India and serves as an authoritative guide to employment issues in India with regards those with a disability. As the report clearly identifies national level agencies per city, we could obtain contact information of agencies. Five agencies thus identified and contacted were able to assist us. We collected data through in-depth interviews with those in charge of overall training and placement or policy-making at these five agencies.

Respondents were key decision makers in their organizations (e.g. Chief Executive Officer, National Director, Placement Officer and so forth) and could hence offer us insights toward answering our research question. The semi-structured and open-ended interviews covered the specific work their agency conducted and all talent management activities they engaged in to help people with disabilities secure employment. All interviews were conducted in the offices of our respondents and lasted for about 50 minutes on average. Interviews were transcribed verbatim. Following prior disability research with comparatively small sample sizes (Hernandez et al. 2008), we content analyzed all transcribed data. For example, here we coded activities engaged in pre- as well as post-employment and whether activities were aimed at employers or the focal talent. Considering our intention of identifying all activities these large-scale national agencies engaged in to manage the talent of those with a disability, we have listed all activities in the Findings section.

### ***Findings***

In this section we describe specific talent management activities that agencies engaged in to ensure talent was appropriately identified and groomed for employment, how agencies supported this talent base post-employment and which ongoing activities they focused on with regards employers and policy-makers. Thus, the broad sections below reflect activities pre- and post-employment, and activities that are ongoing.

#### ***Pre-employment talent management activities aimed at those with a disability***

Respondent narratives led us to identify four clear pre-employment talent management activities: (a) identification of talent, (b) ensuring a match between possible vocations and the candidate, (c) crafting of employment-specific activities and (d) provision of ad hoc support. We describe each one below.

First, when identifying talent, agency personnel seemed proactive in seeking talent from non-traditional locations (e.g. rural and poor neighborhoods) as well as involving non-traditional stakeholders (e.g. siblings, parents and/or well-wishers). This did not imply exclusion, of course, of traditional or conventional locations such as integrated 4-year degree granting colleges from where talent was also sought. In explaining how they sought talent in non-traditional locations, a National Director at Agency 3<sup>1</sup> explained,

We have volunteers and employees in all the twenty-five centers. We try and do door-to-door survey. We visit slums or link up with any of these NGOs<sup>2</sup> like World Vision or any of these and try and find out how many people with disabilities are there and try and get them to register with us.

Agencies involved all stakeholders, and not only the focal talent, based on the belief that diverse stakeholders may be helpful in getting a holistic picture about the individual with a disability as well as her surroundings and background. For example, such stakeholders included parents or other family members. When referring to involvement of stakeholders other than the candidate with a disability, a Senior Training Officer at Agency 1 mentioned,

When they enroll here, we counsel them at least for half an hour – the candidate and parents or well-wishers. After this discussion we will know if he wants training or employment or education or financial support. After counseling we come to know what are the skill gaps.

Next, considering that the target population agencies aimed at is not always affluent and urban, agency personnel also spoke of the criticality of matching vocation or job with the person and her background. While some noted that grooming talent began with basics of mobility, others spoke of imparting skills to those who were uneducated but capable of some work. The Chief Executive Officer of Agency 4 and the Senior Training Officer at Agency 1, respectively, noted,

We pick up the girls from the remote areas where we have to go to the villages . . . These girls are mainly taught how to cope, we give them the training . . . if they have to go to the bank or they have to go to the bus stand and other places, how, so we teach them mobility, how they can go to places. Then for their livelihood . . . we have two courses, one is the basic computer training course and the other one is the advanced computer course.

For uneducated disabled, that is for those who do not have any education, or less than 10th standard, we give horticulture training . . . In that training they will know how to prepare manure, how to maintain nursery, how to take care of plants, how to develop seeds, all things regarding gardening. After the completion of this ten-month course, organization itself will put them into employment . . . Even though he is not educated, he will be able to earn. Otherwise he'd have been in his native place, dependent on others.

The third closely related area that agency personnel focused on regarded crafting of employment-specific activities. Here, respondents noted the importance of educating their candidates who had special needs as well as exposing the candidate to short-term on-the-job training so as to optimize job prospects. For example, in noting talent enhancement of candidates with a visual impairment or those who were blind, the Chief Executive Officer of Agency 4 explained,

We have got two studios where recording is done. Now this is done in three languages, Hindi, English, and Kannada. So we have all the syllabi, whatever the students want as per their requirement, they can always come, collect it and we give them the CD free of cost.

Furthermore, in noting how they engaged in exposing the candidate to short-term on-the-job training, a Manager of the Livelihood Center at Agency 3 stated,

When it comes to theoretical part, like grooming them, building confidence, work ethics, team building, all this is taken care of by us. Industry will help in giving the inputs related to their



sector and they provide on-the-job training. After three weeks theoretical training these candidates will be put into on-the-job training in the workplace itself . . . At the end of six weeks we and the HR team will sit together and look at the candidates.

Finally, agency personnel noted that this traditionally marginalized talent group needed ad hoc support, which their agencies seem to have extended. For example, the Manager of the Livelihood Center at Agency 3 and the Senior Training Officer at Agency 1 noted of the ad hoc help their respective agencies offered,

People approach us to know what kind of government facilities are there for the disabled; where to avail the information related to pension schemes. Many approach us to know where they can get aides and appliances like caliper, crutches, wheel chairs . . . So we have the list of all organizations . . . be it education, mobility, or health.

We will visit their house and assess the situation and then we charge. Even today some candidates are getting free services due to economic conditions.

In summary, pre-employment talent management activities included seeking talent in non-traditional as well as traditional locations, involving relevant stakeholders to understand talent needs holistically, and matching the focal talent with possible jobs or vocations. This phase also involved talent enhancement activities such as tailored as well as generic training activities and general information dissemination.

#### ***Post-employment talent management activities aimed at those with a disability***

Not only did agency personnel help candidates with a disability pre-employment through the aforementioned activities, they also supported this talent base post-employment. They specifically noted how agency personnel aided employees with a disability (those they had helped secure employment) by extending help regarding training and else. For example, a Training Executive at Agency 4 remarked,

Post-employment training consists of orientation and mobility like how to work, how to walk in a company . . . sometimes senior manager will call, sometimes junior manager will call . . . the rooms are different. If you show that same single room to the visual impaired, next time if you call him, he will definitely get lost . . . when the software are giving trouble, you should not stop your work. Company doesn't like that one. So in that time if suddenly some fault is there, our representative will go and our technician will go and solve the problems.

Others noted how they helped with adjustment issues. While adjustment included knowing the physical layout so employees can attend meetings, it also included helping coworkers adjust to the new person. As a Placement Officer at Agency 2 described,

We also conduct peer awareness workshops. That is, after somebody is placed, usually at the time of on-boarding or a few days later we tell them that since your team is new to work with someone with a disability we would like to come and talk to you about how you can comfortably work with them.

In summary, talent management activities post-employment included offering training and other ad hoc support to placed candidates. This training and support was over and above what the organizations may have offered the candidates. Furthermore, if the employer permitted, agencies conducted sensitization workshops for coworkers of the placed candidate so that relational integration could be boosted.

#### ***Ongoing talent management activities aimed at employers and policy-makers***

Present respondents were of the opinion that along with grooming talent and making candidates employment-ready, another critical aspect of the talent management process was to engage with employers so that employers were aware of such talent. The specific

activities here were sensitization of employers via (a) emphasizing a moral duty toward all the members of society, and thereby to people with disabilities, (b) signaling that people with disabilities have talent and (c) demonstrating talent in a workplace environment. Referring to moral duty, a Senior Training Officer at Agency 1 opined,

The barriers I could say are, social barriers. For example, parents are over protective “you are disabled, don’t do anything. We don’t want you to earn. We will take care of you.” Over protection. Especially for girls. Then, disability itself is a barrier. For example, if they want to go to school, they cannot walk/catch buses like others. Especially in rural areas where bus stops are far, transport is a barrier . . . Faculty do not know how to teach such people . . . [but] they are also part of society who need to be given an opportunity. So we tell them (the employers), that you see the skills.

In noting their focus on talent of those with a disability, or ability more than disability, a Manager of the Livelihood Center at Agency 3 stated,

We focus on the skill sets. We tell the employers, “let us know what skill sets are you looking for in a candidate; we will send you the candidate accordingly”. Disability comes later. For example, if you are an employer and you approach me and say that you are in need of a tele-caller. Then I will ask you, up to what level should the language of the person be good; as in should they be fluent in English? Which other languages should they know? Should they know computers? . . . They have the right skills. You just need to understand that they are equally skilled.

In addition, in outlining how they engage in demonstrating talent in a workplace environment, an Employment Officer at Agency 5 explained,

They come here, they see our activities, they see that people with disabilities are working and they will also get confidence and they agree . . . we have around a hundred and fifty-nine employees. Out of that more than fifty people are disabled . . . So whoever comes here can understand what these people can do.

Finally, respondents noted that since this talent pool and its issues are not usually discussed as much as they should, they also engaged in advocacy and in trying to influence national policy-making with regards disability-related issues. As the National Director at Agency 3 and Placement Officer at Agency 2, respectively, noted,

Also another thing – we are attending a national level seminar in Delhi in a few days where we will be trying to make some policy level changes. Yes, there will be a minister, but mostly other NGOs and such organizations; people working for people with disabilities will be present. In that, we will try and again advocate the cause of people with disabilities and their employment.

We want to form the, what do we say, group or association where people with disabilities, organizations etc. come on one platform to discuss concerns and come to conclusions. And they can also locally tap the companies and merge with some NGOs and things like that. We are trying to evolve these models.

In summary, along with supporting the focal talent pre- and post-employment, agencies ensured that such talent was noticed by employers. Specific ongoing activities in this realm included sensitizing employers toward a moral duty of including all societal members within organizations, signaling ability over disability, and demonstrating talent in the workplace environment or affording a realistic preview of talent to employers. To even further the cause of those with a disability, some respondents spoke of trying to influence national policy-making.

## **Conclusions**

This study complemented prior research by examining talent management activities aimed at a traditionally underutilized workforce – those with a disability. We specifically noted activities that disability training and placement agencies undertook so that talent of those

with a disability was enhanced by them and appreciated by potential employers. In explicating these activities, we contributed to prior research by conceptually adding to the ambit of talent management practices and principles used in developing traditionally underutilized talent. Furthermore, we considered the national context of talent management activities in India, a very under-researched context compared with the American and European contexts. This allowed us to question whether current assumptions in the talent management literature which are strongly embedded in the context of private sector multinational enterprises are appropriate for understanding talent management in other contexts.

The present findings further the body of knowledge by pointing to three rather unique talent management activities as noted by respondents. First, findings indicated the importance of involving multiple stakeholders when understanding extant skills, needs and choices of the focal talent. Respondents specifically noted involving parents or significant others during the pre-employment assessment stage. This finding departs from conventions of only looking at the competencies and motivation of the talent to be managed (e.g. Schuler et al. 2011a). It is then likely that severely marginalized pools of talent may require (or benefit from) such holistic talent mapping, an idea hitherto unstudied in talent management research.

Second, findings point to notions of extended socialization of new talent and their peers. For example, respondents noted how they extended help to employed candidates via ad hoc support as well as tried to boost relational integration by offering disability sensitization workshops to peers. This finding extends conventional notions of organizationally conducted sensitization and socialization workshops, or orientation and induction programs, aimed at newcomers who have to adapt to the various characteristics of an organization and its members (Taormina 2004) by noting how extant members can also learn to relate to newcomers.

Third, the present findings indicate how agency personnel afforded employers a preview of the talent in a workplace environment. Prior research has noted how employees are generally given a realistic job preview as they decide upon vocations, jobs and organizations (Rynes 1991). This research shows that just as realistic previews help potential *employees* create a realistic level of initial expectations when entering any unknown setting (Caligiuri and Phillips 2003) they may also help *employers* gain initial understanding of candidates who may not belong to their usual labor pool.

Despite these additions to our understanding of talent management foci and activities in an emerging markets context, the study has some limitations. For example, present findings are based on the views of a limited range of respondents in a particular context. We thus cannot be sure how generalizable the results would be beyond the context (even for other marginalized talent groups). The aforementioned ad hoc support afforded to this group cannot be assumed in other groups of applicants or employees. The focus of this study was on outlining how such agencies engage with identifying, building and showcasing talent of those with a physical disability. This meant our conversations exclude other groups of persons with a disability (e.g. those with a learning impairment). As another related point on generalizability of present findings, it is also likely that our source of identifying respondents, the Confederation of Indian Industry report, may not have been fully inclusive of all types of agencies, though it did seem comprehensive and the most legitimate source we could find.

The field needs further empirical research conducted in a wider range of national settings and in such agencies based in a wider range of geographies catering to various forms of disability. Different disabilities proffer different employment and talent

management issues (Stone and Colella 1996) and a finer grained program of study involving different forms of disability and associated talent management activities will bolster our understanding of talent management issues of this talent pool. For example, in this study, we did not ask about the different forms of support that agencies may have given to different employee groups. Someone in a wheelchair may have required different transportation-related help (an activity noted in ongoing support in our findings) as compared with someone who has a hearing impairment.

The study also raises a number of implications for future research. Our study has highlighted the legitimacy and importance of adopting a more inclusive approach to talent management which provides balance against the dominant approach which sees talent management and talent as being restricted to preconceived notions of high potentials and high performers. Our research raises some questions about the ethics of talent management and suggests that the existing literature takes an unduly narrow view on how talent is defined (Swales 2013).

Future research can examine talent management activities of all stakeholders. For example, while we focused on eliciting views only of agencies, future research can involve understanding views of the focal talent (i.e. those with a disability) and activities they engage in to secure and retain skill-specific employment (*cf.* Kulkarni and Gopakumar 2014). Future research can also focus on employer views and best practices on talent seeking and enhancement of employees with a disability. Such a research agenda and possible employer action or policy impact stemming from such research may help ensure appropriate and inclusive talent utilization of this segment of the labor force. Next, as mentioned earlier, the study has minimal generalizability given its setting in a particular context. Future research could engage in similar studies in other national and geographic contexts. As a related point, specific cross-country studies can help human resource practitioners understand which talent management practices are overarching in all contexts and which are (and/or should be) particular to local or national contexts.

Organizations are increasingly dealing with trends of talent migration and associated retention issues (Scullion and Collings 2011; Sparrow, Scullion and Tarique 2014b). Thus, paying attention to the management of talent of groups such as those with a disability who have relatively low attrition rates (Lengnick-Hall 2007) can help human resource practitioners retain a hitherto under-tapped talent base. We agree with Collings, Scullion and Vaiman (2011) that talent management is more of a mindset. Adopting such a mindset, human resource practitioners can specifically engage with external stakeholders such as disability training and placement agencies to become inclusive in their talent management philosophy and approach and broaden the overall scope of or goals of their talent management practices. Such an increased scope can involve working with talent management agencies before the employee is hired as well as afterwards in the form of creating focused training modules or socialization programs. In conclusion, in contrast to the dominant focus on the exclusive approach to talent management, we have highlighted the potential of the concept of inclusive talent management which broadens the conceptual and empirical boundaries of the talent management field and also offer implications for talent management and human resource practice.

## Notes

1. Agency number indicates order in which we approached agencies and does not connote importance of the finding or that of the agency
2. Non-governmental organizations

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