

Transition Planning: A Review of Vocational Training for Persons with Intellectual Disability

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ABSTRACT

Vocational training is very important to make oneself independent. It is important for everybody especially if we talk in context of Persons with Intellectual Disability it is very important for them to lead a better life. It is essential to make a transition plan at prevocational stage that will develop functional academics and some job readiness skills and will lead a person towards different job setups like open employment, supported employment, self-employment, group employment. This review aims to analyse existing literature and identify gaps in vocational training and recommend some strategies to strengthen skill development. This is a narrative review approach in which articles, journals, thesis, government publications published between 2015 to 2025 were searched through databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, using keywords like vocational training, skill development, prevocational skills, employment for persons with disabilities. A total of 10 relevant studies were shortlisted that were based on inclusion criteria (focus on employability of persons with disability, placement in jobs, skill-based education). These reviews highlights that there were many factors like individual, societal, environmental that will impact education and employability of persons with intellectual disabilities and that will create a gap in vocational training and this will become a reason behind job mismatching among persons with intellectual disabilities. The research gap seen in policy making what policy makers promise and what beneficiaries experience. If policy makers address barriers faced by persons with intellectual disabilities and design policies that will cater the needs of persons with Intellectual disabilities, implementation of reasonable accommodation, transition planning from prevocational to vocational.

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INTRODUCTION

“This transition model does not rely on prediction of the employability. It leads towards the beginning of the student's world of work from where they can aspire for better chances towards meaningful adult life with economic independence.”(D Barron, A.,2007) “The role of parents has been given prime importance in this transition model.” (A.T. Thressiakutty & L.Govinda Rao,2001) Vocational training skills are the skills essentials for entry into a specific industry. “These skills help the students with ID in making them a good worker so that they meet the normal work demands, work independently, maintain quality of work and keep good speed.” (Vanitha. C, 2016) “In other parts of the world for example, Karachi- 55% of special schools were providing vocational education for children with disabilities including ID” (Naz and Sulman, 2012) and there were varieties of VTS offered for persons with disabilities including ID (Sajjad, Joubish and Khurram (2010). “These students with ID have the ability to

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work independently and have a strong work ethic” (Dixon and Reddacliffe, 1996). Therefore we can plan transition at prevocational stage for individuals with intellectual disabilities so that they can feel autonomy and be aware of their rights and no one can violate their rights. Transition planning does not only make an individual independent financially but also make aware

of certain different things like self advocacy so that if an individual placed in an employment setup may feel free to raise their voice if their rights are violated.“A further benefit of vocational training is that it offers the possibility of overcoming the problems resulting from poor qualifications in and little knowledge of modern technology, in as much as it emphasizes practical learning, corresponding to the adaptive skills available to the individuals”(Silva, 2009).Persons with Intellectual Disability faces a lot of challenges that may be due to physical barriers, attitudinal barriers, communication barriers. Some of them are behavioural problems of persons with intellectual disabilities (“Aggression towards trainers, Aggression against other trainees, significant mood variations, Poor motivation), Associated mental health and medical problems (Physical health issues, Poor attention span interfering with skill imparting), Level of education (Poor or no ability to read and to learn from text resources), Issues related to trainers (Lack of availability of experienced skill trainers to impart skill training)”(Venkatesh et al., 2023)

Aims: This review aims to analyse existing literature and identify gaps in vocational training and recommend some strategies to strengthen skill development.

Methods: This is a narrative review approach in which articles, journals, thesis, government publications published between 2015 to 2025 were searched through databases such as Scopus, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, using keywords like vocational training, skill development, prevocational skills, employment for persons with disabilities. A total of 10 relevant studies were shortlisted that were based on inclusion criteria (focus on employability of persons with disability, placement in jobs, skill-based education).

Discussion: Gomes-Machado, et al. (2016) examined “effects of vocational training on a group of people with intellectual disabilities”. The objectives of the study were (i) to characterize and examine how a vocational training program influenced the adaptive behavior of individuals with ID and (ii) to assess the social impact of employment on the lives of these workers. Forty-three individuals aged 18 to 28 with mild to moderate ID participated. Two phases—T1—pre-training and T2—post-training—were assessed using the Support Intensity Scale, and the third phase—post-employment (T3—post-inclusion)—was assessed using the Social Impact Questionnaire. Across all adaptive capacities assessed, the authors found that overall scores remained unchanged between phases T1 and T2, and the need for support decreased

by approximately 50%. One year after joining the labor market (T3), participants remained employed, and significant changes were observed in their learning, autonomy, emotional and social development, and family and community relationships. **Park, et al. (2016)** conducted a study on “Meta-analysis of the effect of job-related social skill training for secondary students with disabilities”A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials was conducted to examine the effect size (ES) of job-relevant social skills training (SST) for secondary students with developmental disabilities. Results from seven studies were evaluated by subgroups, such as instructional methods, location, outcomes, and disability type. The overall effect size (ES) was medium (.56). However, results varied by subgroup. Regarding disability, students with learning difficulties and Down syndrome did not significantly benefit from SST. Other disabilities with medium effect sizes included intellectual disabilities, emotional/behavioral disorders, and autism spectrum disorders. The effect size was largest for outcomes related to social skills. **Park, et al. (2018)** conducted a study on “Using video modeling to teach social skills for employment to youth with intellectual disability” Video modeling is a useful teaching strategy for helping people with disabilities learn a variety of skills. However, very few studies have examined the use of video modeling to teach social skills for the workplace. This study examined the effects of video modeling alone and in combination with a minimal prompting system to teach three social skills—providing support, giving responses, and free to ask anything—to three young people with intellectual disabilities. The accuracy of participants' verbal responses to scenarios was assessed using a multiple-probe design across behaviors. **Nevala, et al. (2019)** examined the “effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions on the employment and functioning of people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review” Secondary education, which includes appropriate learning strategies, personal assistance services, supported work, workplace facilities, and employer and family support, can help increase the employability of individuals with ID. These findings can be applied to rehabilitation, education, and employment advancement to enable individuals with ID to work in the open labor market and integrate into society. **Weld-Blundell, et al. (2021)** examined “Vocational Interventions to Improve Employment Participation of People with Psychosocial Disability, Autism and/or Intellectual Disability: A Systematic Review.” This research aimed to conduct a comprehensive review of interventions aimed at increasing employment participation of individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism, and psychosocial disabilities. Medline, Embase, PsycINFO, Web of Science, Scopus, CINAHL, ERIC, and ERC were searched for research articles published between 2010

and July 2020. A 10/11 study found evidence of a positive impact of individual placement and support compared to control settings. Project SEARCH and ASD support were found to have some positive effects on open employment among young individuals with autism. **Helbig, et al. (2021)** examined “Vocational Social Skills Training for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A Pilot Study.” The purpose of the current study was to assess the effects of a social skills intervention, which included self-monitoring, video modeling, and behavioral skills training, on the development of specific professional social skills in young adults with IDD. Participants included high school special education students participating in a work internship program. The effects of the bundled intervention on targeted skill accuracy were assessed using a multiple-baseline approach across skills with concurrent replication between individuals. Findings indicate that the packaged intervention successfully promoted social skill acquisition for all participants. Furthermore, during the maintenance period, significant increases in skills were observed. **Tan, et al. (2022)** conducted study on “gamified augmented reality vocational training program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities: A pilot study on acceptability and effectiveness.” The purpose of this pilot study was to examine the efficacy and acceptability of the REAP program with occupational therapy clients with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This study used a mixed-techniques approach, pre-test-posttest. The REAP program involved 15 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities receiving occupational therapy at a nonprofit organization. Their vocational trainers facilitated the program. The Neurobehavioral Cognitive Status Examination (Cognistat) and the Feasibility Evaluation Checklist (FEC) were administered during the initial phase, eight weeks into the training, and post-training. Semi-structured interviews were also used to obtain user feedback from participants and their trainers. The program significantly improved participants' occupational and cognitive skills, and these improvements persisted eight weeks into the training. **Yildiz, & Cavkaytar. (2022)** examined “Effectiveness of pre-employment independent life education program designed for young adults with intellectual disability.” The primary goal of this research was to examine the efficacy of a Pre-Employment Independent Living Education Program (PILEP) design based on the needs of informing and supporting young adults. A pre-test-posttest control group design served as the study model. The research included thirty young people with intellectual disabilities. The views of PILEP stakeholders and participants were also included within the scope of the social validity study. Personal

Care and Hygiene, Community Living Preparation, and Health and Safety are the three courses that make up PILEP. The efficacy of PILEP was tested using a mixed ANOVA (2 x 3) with two factors. The findings demonstrated that PILEP was successful in improving the knowledge and abilities of young people. A significant difference and a significant effect size were observed between the experimental group and the control group ($p < .05$; $\eta^2 = 0.94$). **Chithrangathan, C. (2022)** examined “Vocational training for livelihood and rehabilitation of persons with intellectual disabilities.” The purpose of this study is to demonstrate an action research program implemented to provide institute-based vocational training to a subgroup of BUDS Rehabilitation Institute users in Thrissur district, Kerala, India. A total of forty students were selected for this training course. A variety of vocational activities were included based on criteria such as student aptitude, sustainability, and therapeutic value. Based on the results of data analysis, themes such as camaraderie, bonding, and collectivism emerged from discussions with students, instructors, and parents. Some students demonstrated significant progress in several functional areas. **Mudde et al. (2025)** examined “Vocational training for youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities: a program evaluation of the Impact Project.” This study aimed to determine whether early vocational training improved the work experiences of children with IDD (temporary disability) in British Columbia (BC), Canada. The IMPACT Project is a community-based, person-centered vocational training program for youth with IDD (temporary disability) aged 15 to 19 years. Vocational activities and training were provided by employment specialists from these organizations, who also collected youth's work experiences through activity diaries and surveys conducted before and after the program. This IMPACT Project evaluation used a formative evaluation design to determine whether youth-centered vocational training improved employment experiences. It concluded that person-centered approaches may be beneficial to community-based policies that provide employment planning for youth with IDD (temporary disability) to prepare them for the transition from school to employment.

Conclusion

These reviews highlights that there were many factors like individual, societal, environmental that will impact education and employability of persons with intellectual disabilities and that will create a gap in vocational training and this will become a reason behind job mismatching among persons with intellectual disabilities. The research gap seen in policy making what policy makers promise and what beneficiaries experience.

Suggestions

If policy makers address barriers faced by persons with intellectual disabilities and design policies that will cater the needs of persons with Intellectual disabilities, implementation of reasonable accommodation, transition planning from prevocation to vocational.

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