

# Comparative study of vocational rehabilitation among governmental and private sectors on employment of disabled persons

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## Abstract

**Objectives:** The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of vocational rehabilitation of the governmental sector (Welfare Organization of Rasht, Iran) in the year 2000 relative to that of the private sector in 2014 for employment of persons with disabilities.

**Methods:** In this study, a total of 154 disabled persons who were trained and skilled under the vocational training program of the private sector in 2014 were compared with 140 disabled persons who were trained and skilled under the vocational training program of the governmental sector in 2000. In this study, we used an interview method with managers of training centers and corrected the obtained data based on available data from the Welfare Organization of Rasht Rasht, Iran as well as Nazari (2000).

**Results:** Results indicated that 24 trained/skilled individuals among 140 disabled persons who were trained/skilled under the vocational training program of the governmental sector were employed (17.14%). Conversely, 7 trained/skilled individuals among 154 disabled persons who were trained/skilled under the vocational training program of the governmental sector were employed (4.54%).

**Conclusion:** Based on those results, it is concluded that the performance and efficiency of the private sector in 2014 was lower than that of the governmental sector in 2000. Hence, it is necessary to evaluate, grade and improve the performance of the private sector.

**Key words:** rehabilitation, employment, disabled person, skill, training

## Introduction

Importance of employment in disabled persons is more significant than for normal persons in society, both socially and economically, because disabled persons feel more threatened than normal persons when unemployed. Conversely, job/employment restrictions based on their disabilities decreases job selection opportunities for these disabled persons and they therefore become costly and consumers (Zarneshan, 2008).

Having a job is one of many important aspects of culture and identity for each person. Most people organize their life based on job/employment. Unemployed persons are set aside for important activities and social roles (Obermann, 1980).

Employment as one factor affecting human life is supported by international and national rules. It is recognized as a right and is one of the human rights. Disabled persons, due to their physical situation, need appropriate public support and social cooperation to obtain employment (Zarneshan, 2008).

Technical and Vocational Training Organization (TVTO) could train many Iranian youth. Education is one way to improve human resources and capital. Education should act as a lead to employment. In fact, education should include the principal skills required for job capacities and achievement. Technical and vocational training of disabled persons should be organized based on their individual properties. Training should emphasize practical skills and programs and should be adjusted based on degree of disability and the specificity of the situation (Amiri, 2010).

Based on the International Labour Organization (ILO) definition, vocational rehabilitation is an on-going process including coordinated services. Vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons includes vocational guidance, vocational education, job seeking, and employment so as to provide appropriate jobs for disabled persons. Vocational rehabilitation starts with the identification of a disabled person until he/she is leading a normal social life and career (Asad-Alavi and Roshd-Caboli, 1994).

Employment of each person leads to his/her economical independence. Employment leads to improvement of social dignity and identity and hence employed persons have increased self confidence. Unfortunately, many disabled persons cannot access appropriate jobs despite the fact that they are educated as well as skilled (Habooti, 2014).

Until recently, many people believed that disabled persons could work and be employed. For example, before the vocational rehabilitation program of 1973 in the USA, disabled persons could not participate in employment tests (Blanck, 2001).

Negative attitude of people, especially private employers, toward disabled persons leads to less attention given to their capabilities. People, even highly educated people, do not recognize the potential and acquired capacities of disabled persons. These people think disabled people cannot work and need continuous help (Fleih and Vazooji, 2003). The United Nations (2009) reported that 1.3-3.4% world people are disabled. Italy has the most disabled people among European countries. India and China have the most disabled people among Asian countries. Based on Italian rules, disabled people have services similar to those as remnants of war (Italy had the most disabled people due to the 2nd world war), and 9% of job opportunities in industries and social services belonged to disabled individuals. Meanwhile, if a job opportunity for a disabled person was occupied by a normal person, the same wage was paid to the disabled person (Koucharian, 2014). In as much as all valid data are not available about the recruitment of disabled persons, available data shows there is lower recruitment of disabled individuals compared to normal persons (International Disability Rights Monitor, 2004).

There are at a minimum 650 million disabled individuals worldwide. Approximately 15-20% of people have disability. In developing countries, 80-90% of disabled people do not have a job (Zarocostas, 2005). In developed countries, 50-70% of disabled individuals do not have a job, which at a minimum is twice the rate of normal people. There are 370 million disabled individuals in Asia; of those 238 million seek employment. In Asian countries, 80% of disabled people do not have a job, which is at a minimum twice the rate of normal people (Perry, 2002). In European countries, 43-54% disabled people do not have employment, which is 2-3 times the rate for normal people (International Disability Rights Monitor, 2004). In Latin American countries, 80-90% disabled people do not have a job, and also disabled careers are associated with low income (World Bank, 2004). A total of 0.03% of gross non-net income in the USA is used to support disability institutes. In addition, 0.02% of the total state budget is used for social services to create employment for disabled individuals. Examples from different countries: handicraft produced by disabled persons in India, monitoring of traffic performed by disabled persons in China, traffic light control by disabled persons in France. In addition, 3 disabled individuals work in the navigation and control

tower of the Charles de Gaulle airport in Paris. There were approximately 1 million disabled individuals in 2006 in Iran, and that number increases annually by about 25,000-30,000 persons due to congenital diseases, road accidents, occupational accidents, biological and medical failure, and natural disasters. Hence, there were about 1,120,000 disabled individuals in 2012 in Iran. Nevertheless, there are no valid statistics concerning the number of employed disabled persons in Iran (Koucharian, 2014).

In spite of the ratification of the Disability Rights Protection Act in 2004, there are no real and valid data about their occupation. Hosseinpour (2008) reported that only 600 disabled individuals worked in the public sector. Based on the Disability Rights Protection Act, 60% of operators should select workers among disabled persons, nonetheless they are not employed.

Different countries can create employment for disabled persons in the private sector by means of various actions and politics. For example, governments can use incentive quota, occupation of disabled persons for special jobs, loan or grants for occupation of disabled persons, exclusive contracts, giving priority of production, tax rebates, technical support for companies which employ disabled persons, etc. Countries should support initiatives for providing facilities required by disabled persons.

There are some resources for occupation of disabled persons in Iran. For example, self-employment loans based on the annual budget law, loan and facility available in the Mehr-Imam-Reza Fund, facilities available for quick small business and entrepreneurship, grants available based on law article 17, allocation of as much as 3% of total employment for disabled persons, occupation of disabled persons by the private sector, construction of cooperatives for employment of disabled persons, payment of premium employer's share by the government, issuing work permits for charities to employ disabled persons, providing loans available through national banks for the employment of disabled persons, etc. (Amiri, 2010).

Previous studies reported that disabled persons usually work in low level jobs and income. There is discrimination for occupation between disabled and normal individuals. Although the government should allocate as much as 3% of total employment for disabled persons, the reality shows that this rule is not well implemented. Therefore, disabled persons' lives are difficult (Habooti, 2014).

In the present study, we will compare vocational rehabilitation among governmental (2000) and private sectors (2014) on the employment of disabled persons. Other studies focused only on one type of disability or one time period. In the study herein, however, we studied and compared two methods (governmental and private sectors) for vocational rehabilitation. As no report exists for investigating the performance and efficiency of the private sector, this research was conducted to monitor their performance concerning the employment of disabled persons.

## Materials and Methods

This research was conducted based on a descriptive-analytical approach. Samples were selected among all vocational rehabilitation centers at Rasht city, Iran. Samples were all disabled persons who trained and were skilled in these centers at Rasht city, Iran.

Firstly, all available statistics (address and telephone number) of vocational training centers (private and governmental sectors) of Rasht city, Iran were collected in 2014 from the Welfare Organization of Rasht, Iran. Then, all available statistics (address and telephone number) of vocational training centers (private and governmental sectors) and also from all occupied disabled persons in the year 2000 were collected from Welfare Organization of Rasht, Iran.

We collected data via managers of all vocational training centers by verbal or telephone interviews. The number of skilled and occupied disabled persons collected were based on the type of disability and sex. Then, collected data were validated, based on data available in the Welfare Organization of Rasht, Iran, and incorrect data removed.

## Results and Discussion

Results are summarized in Tables 1 and 2. Based on obtained results, there were four vocational training centers in Rasht city, Iran in 2000:

1-Rofeideh supportive workhouse for mentally retarded and deaf persons. This center included 50 disabled persons (27 males and 23 females).

2- Fayazbakhsh center for blind and mobility impairment persons. This center included 8 disabled persons (5 males and 3 females).

3- Koosesh center for mentally retarded persons. This center included 50 male disabled persons.

4- Tavana center for mentally retarded persons. This center included 32 female disabled persons.

Therefore, there were 140 trained/skilled disabled persons in the four above centers. A total of 24 disabled persons were able to find a job among the 140 above disabled persons (17.14%) in 2000.

**Table 1. Summary of data obtained for 2000**

Institute	Disability type	Sex		Type of education	Number	Number of employed persons	Sex of employed person	
		Male	Female				Male	Female
Rofeideh	Mentally retarded and deaf person	+	+	Carpentry, tailoring, broom making, mat weaving, nylon making, artificial flowers	50	17	14	3
Koosesh	Mentally retarded person	+	-	Sweep making, mat weaving, nylon making, doll making	50	-	-	+
Tavana	Mentally retarded person	-	+	Knitting yarns, artificial flowers, crocheting, embroidered Gobelins	32	5	-	5
Fayazbakhsh	Deaf person	+	+	Telephone operator, Sweep making, mat weaving	8	2	1	1
<b>Total</b>		+	+	-	140	24	15	9

**Table 2. Summary of data obtained for 2014**

Institute	Disability type	Sex		Type of education	Number	Number of employed persons	Sex of employed person	
		Male	Female				Male	Female
Center for mentally retarded person above 14 years	Mentally retarded and semi-deaf person	+	+	-	52	3	3	0
Center for mentally retarded person above 14 years	Mentally retarded and semi-deaf person	-	+	-	40	0	0	0
Blind society	Blind person	+	+	Computer, life skills, hymns	10	1	0	1
Dasthaye-Shokoofa	Blind person	+	+	Telephone operator, theatre, computer	52	3	3	0
<b>Total</b>		+	+	-	154	7	6	1

There were some vocational training centers in Rasht city, Iran in 2014:

- 1- A private supportive workhouse for mentally retarded males above 14 years of age.
- 2- A private supportive workhouse for mentally retarded females above 14 years of age.
- 3- and 4- Two private supportive workhouses for mixed mentally retarded persons under 14 years.
- 5- A private supportive workhouse for mixed mobility impairment persons above 14 years of age.
- 6- A private supportive workhouse (blind society) for blind persons. This center included 10 disabled persons.
- 7- A private supportive workhouse (Dasthaye-Shokoofa) for blind persons. This center included 52 disabled persons.

There were 154 trained/skilled disabled persons in the five above centers in 2014. A total of 7 disabled persons could find employment among the 154 above disabled persons (4.54%) in 2014.

Comparison of results obtained from governmental (2000) and private (2014) sectors showed that the private sector was not successful in creating employment for disabled persons, and there was a decline in job creation relative to the governmental sector. Hence, there are some questions:

- 1- Was the privatization of government agencies executed properly?
- 2- Does the private sector with respect to the objectives of the Welfare Organization of Rasht perform their tasks properly?
- 3- If the budget paid as subsidies to the private centers for the disabled was transferred to governmental sector to pay for their training and vocational rehabilitation, would the outcome not be better?
- 4- It is recommended that the Welfare Organization be careful and have an appropriate target concerning the assignment of governmental centers to the private sector.
- 5- Private centers should be monitored periodically.

6- The level of education of disabled persons should be evaluated periodically in the private sector.

7- The employment rate of disabled persons should be selected as one of the important items to be considered in grading these centers.

8- Type of education should be organized based on community and labor market needs.

9- Follow-up and evaluation of employers' satisfaction should be scheduled periodically.

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