

The Difficulties Witnessed by People with Intellectual Disability in Transition to Work in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract : The transition of a student with a disability from school to work is the most crucial phase while moving from the stage of adolescence into early adulthood. In this process, young individuals face various difficulties and challenges in order to accomplish the next venture of life successfully. In this respect, this paper aims to examine the challenges encountered by the individuals with intellectual disabilities in transition to work in Saudi Arabia. For this purpose, this study has undertaken a qualitative research-based methodology; wherein interpretivist philosophy has been followed along with inductive approach and exploratory research design. The data for the research has been gathered with the help of semi-structured interviews, whose findings are analysed with the help of thematic analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents of persons with intellectual disabilities, officials, supervisors and specialists of two vocational rehabilitation centres providing training to intellectually disabled students, in addition to that, directors of companies and websites in hiring those individuals. The total number of respondents for the interview was 15. The purposive sampling method was used to select the respondents for the interview. This sampling method is a non-probability sampling method which draws respondents from a known population and allows flexibility and suitability in selecting the participants for the study. The findings gathered from the interview revealed that the lack of awareness among their parents regarding the rights of their children who are intellectually disabled; the lack of adequate communication and coordination between various entities; concerns regarding their training and subsequent employment are the key difficulties experienced by the individuals with intellectual disabilities. Training in programmes such as bookbinding, carpentry, computing, agriculture, electricity and telephone exchange operations were involved as key training programmes. The findings of this study also revealed that information technology and media were playing a significant role in smoothing the transition to employment of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Furthermore, religious and cultural attitudes have been identified to be restricted for people with such disabilities in seeking advantages from job opportunities. On the basis of these findings, it can be implied that the information gathered through this study will serve to be highly beneficial for Saudi Arabian schools/ rehabilitation centres for individuals with intellectual disability to facilitate them in overcoming the problems they encounter during the transition to work.

Keywords : intellectual disability, transition services, rehabilitation centre, employment

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