

[Main Title]

[Subtitle]

[AUTHOR NAME IN FULL CAPS]

Text Copyright © [Author name here]

All rights reserved. No part of this guide may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

Legal & Disclaimer

The information contained in this book and its contents is not designed to replace or take the place of any form of medical or professional advice; and is not meant to replace the need for independent medical, financial, legal or other professional advice or services, as may be required. The content and information in this book has been provided for educational and entertainment purposes only.

The content and information contained in this book has been compiled from sources deemed reliable, and it is accurate to the best of the Author's knowledge, information and belief. However, the Author cannot guarantee its accuracy and validity and cannot be held liable for any errors and/or omissions. Further, changes are periodically made to this book as and when needed. Where appropriate and/or necessary, you must consult a professional (including but not limited to your doctor, attorney, financial advisor or such other professional advisor) before using any of the suggested remedies, techniques, or information in this book.

Upon using the contents and information contained in this book, you agree to hold harmless the Author from and against any damages, costs, and expenses, including any legal fees potentially resulting from the application of any of the information provided by this book. This disclaimer applies to any loss, damages or injury caused by the use and application, whether directly or indirectly, of any advice or information presented, whether for breach of contract, tort, negligence, personal injury, criminal intent, or under any other cause of action.

You agree to accept all risks of using the information presented inside this book.

You agree that by continuing to read this book, where appropriate and/or necessary, you shall consult a professional (including but not limited to your doctor, attorney, or financial advisor or such other advisor as needed) before using any of the suggested remedies, techniques, or information in this book.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Chapter 1: A Look at US' Disabled Community	7
1.1 Percentage of people with disabilities in different age groups	7
1.2 Are the disabled living in poverty?	8
1.3 Disability and health care access	9
Chapter 2: Deeply Entrenched Discrimination and How Disabled Community is Valiantly Fighting Back	10
2.1 Low Rate of Employment among the Disabled.....	10
2.2 One Slogan: Equal Pay for Equal Work	11
2.3 Role of Schools in Eliminating Discrimination against the Disabled at Schools and Colleges.....	11
Chapter 3: Role of government and advocacy bodies - Are they doing enough?.....	13
3.1 The Disability Rights Movement and the Passing of the American Disability Act (ADA) ...	13
3.2 Landmark Decision by US Supreme Court in Favor of US' Disabled	14
3.3 Policy Actions Taken by US Government	15
3.4 Growing Recognition of Special Needs and Acknowledgment of Diversity	16
Chapter 4: Light at the end of the tunnel - Stories of some adamant entrepreneurs who are providing employment opportunities to the disabled.	17
4.1 How entrepreneurship offers hope to America's disabled community.....	17
4.2 Valerie Jensen's The Prospector Theater.....	17
4.3 How did Valerie materialize her dream?	18
4.4 Michael and Jennifer Myers' Canterbury Café.....	19
4.5 Bitty & Beau's Coffee	20
4.6 How hiring People with Disabilities is beneficial for businesses?	22
Chapter 5: Inspiring stories of US' differently-abled entrepreneurs	23
5.1 Sharon Gardner's online store for health supplements.....	23
5.2 Kirk Keating	24
5.2 Greg Prater	24

Chapter 6: Hope for America’s disabled.....26
6.1. Chicagoland Entrepreneurship Education for People with Disabilities26
6.2. U.S Business Leadership Network27
6.3. “What Can You Do?” – The Campaign for disabled entrepreneurs27

Chapter 7: Steps needed to economically empower the disabled in US..... 28
6.2. Bridging the Technological Divide27
6.2. Using Assistive Technologies in Workplace27
6.2. Public-Private Partnerships to Provide Grants and Training to Disabled Individuals27

Conclusion..... 28

Introduction

They say life is not a bed of roses. Turmoil, setbacks, challenges, and heartbreaks are very much a part of life just like happiness, success, accomplishments and joy. However, life is extraordinarily challenging for some people. While we often crib about petty problems in our life, some people have no choice but to deal with extraordinary challenges every day of their life. Ever wondered how people born with disabilities cope with what seems to us like an unsurmountable challenge?

The truth is that it's not easy to live with a disability. The sinking feeling that you depend on someone else for little things such as walking, eating, dressing up, brushing your hair, or taking a shower makes life thorny and bleak. Moreover, societal biases, institutionalized discrimination, exclusion from political arena, social and economic marginalization make matters worse for the disabled. But, instead of surrendering to the strenuous circumstances, the disabled community in United States has made significant strides in all walks of life. They are not afraid of living life to the fullest and never shy away from seizing the right opportunity to achieve their dreams.

Despite their indomitable will, the disabled community continues to fight the status quo. The deeply entrenched discrimination in the social, political, and economic sectors continues to haunt them. Although, advocacy bodies do exist that advance the cause of the disabled, the implementation of friendly policies for the physically and mentally challenged remains an enigma.

Empowering the disabled economically is of paramount importance. Adequate access to economic opportunities is crucial to ensure their wellbeing and economic empowerment. Research has proved that excluding the disabled from mainstream economy has detrimental impact on global economy.

That being said, there are some inspirational differently-abled Americans who took it in their stride and changed their destiny. Their faith, determination and perseverance helped them break the shackles of disability and dependence. This e-book introduces you to some inspirational differently-abled Americans who have found hope in the most desperate of times and set up their own successful entrepreneurial ventures.

The struggle and accomplishments of the America's differently-abled community remains unacknowledged. Despite mounting challenges and deeply entrenched discrimination, America's courageous disabled community has startled naysayers with their contribution to economy. Their business ventures are a welcome contribution to America's vibrant economy.

Of course, the road to this success hasn't been easy. While the hard work and determination of the disabled persons cannot be overlooked, the sacrifices made by their

parents remain unappreciated. Parenting is a tough job, but bringing up a differently-abled child is tougher. This e-book also shares stories of parents who sailed through difficult times, but kept their spirits high in order to nurture their child with special love and attention.

But, the disabled also need the attention of government. The establishments of entrepreneurial centers, business networks, and mentorship facilities for the disabled are some of the commendable initiatives taken by the government and civil society organizations to empower the physically and mentally challenged community. However, there is still a long way to go before the disabled are given the same economic, political, financial and legal rights as the non-disabled persons.

This e-book serves as a powerful reminder that the disabled community in our society does not need our sympathy, but empathy. They do not need our words, but action. We have to ensure that this talented and passionate segment of society is not marginalized. It is the responsibility of government to design disability-specific programs so that the disabled may break the barriers existing in their way to careers and gaining employment.

Moreover, this e-book also aims to give a message of hope. Despite daunting challenges in their way, America's disabled community has carved out a niche for itself. Their story is one of hope, resilience, and determination. All of us can derive courage from the inspiring stories of America's 'differently-abled entrepreneurs' whose stories are a living example of the proverb; where there is a will, there is a way!

Chapter 1: A Look at US' Disabled Community

US' disabled community is often termed as the 'largest minority' within the country. The Census Bureau of the United States is responsible for keeping a stock of the types and prevalence of disabilities existing in American society as well as counting the number of the disabled. This information is imperative to making important policies for the disabled community – from allocating funds to promoting the inclusion of the disabled in different fields of life – the census data is an important tool for the US government to ascertain the percentage of disabled, analyze provision of basic facilities to this community and remove all forms of institutionalized discrimination against them.

1.1 Percentage of People with Disabilities in Different Age Groups

In 2016, approximately 40 million people had some kind of disability in the US. This means that 12.8% citizens form the total non-institutionalized population in the United States of America. These figures also point toward the fact that the percentage of the disabled increased from 11.9% in 2010 to 12.8% in 2016. However, the percentage of people suffering from disability varies across different age groups, gender, race and ethnicity.¹

A study conducted by the American Community Survey revealed some startling fact about America's disabled community. It was found that the older people in the US are more vulnerable to disabilities than young people.

Almost half of the people in America aged between seventy-five and above were reported to live in disability in 2016. On the other hand, only 6% of people aged between 18 to 34 battles some kind of disability while 13% of people who fall in within the age bracket of 35 and 64 suffer from various disability diseases.²

As far as gender is considered, there is little difference between men and women in terms of disability. 12.7% women have a certain disability as compared to 12.5% men. Notwithstanding, the likelihood of the occurrence of disability varies greatly among various ethnicities residing in America.

American Indians are a more vulnerable ethnicity when it comes to disabilities as compared to other ethnicities. 17.7% American Indians are reported to have been living with a disability. On the other hand, 6.9% Asians suffer from a disability, followed by 8.8% Hispanics (8.8%). Similarly, 13.9% of white Americans live with a disability as compared to 14.1% black Americans.³

¹ https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2017_AnnualReport_2017_FINAL.pdf

² <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/07/27/7-facts-about-americans-with-disabilities/>

³ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/07/27/7-facts-about-americans-with-disabilities/>

Most Americans struggle to walk. This snatches away the liberty to live an independent life. In 2015, more than 20 million people aged 18 and above face serious problem walking. In other words, America's 7.1% of the civilian non-institutionalized population struggle to walk.⁴

Similarly, the statistics pertaining to the number of people facing difficulty in doing small chores alone paint a bleak picture. Around 14 million people who are aged 18 and above depend on others for doing tasks as small as going on shopping or visiting a doctor. Physical, mental and emotional problems are contributing factors that renders Americans disabled.

Moreover, serious cognitive problems have left thirteen million Americans disabled. America's eleven million citizens live with some kind of hearing difficulty while seven million fight various vision problems. Despite these unfortunate figures, research reveals that the percentage of disabled people increased only slightly from 2008 to 2016.

These statistics raise some serious questions and provide food for thought. They give a chance to eliminate inequalities prevailing in the health sector and why only the privilege gains access to quality medical care. Moreover, America's ageing population need to be accorded special attention as they are the one battling the harsh realities of life in the form of disability.

1.2 Are The Disabled Living In Poverty?

There is little doubt about the commitment of the US government towards promoting the well-being of the disabled community. The US government equates disability rights with human rights. It calls for complete inclusion and participation of US' 'differently-abled' community in all areas of life. The government has always encouraged advocacy bodies and non-governmental organizations to increase their commitment and capacity to protect the rights of the disabled.

Despite all this, several research studies have shown that poverty very much prevails in the houses of America's disabled community. During 2009 and 2012, poverty among people with disabilities increased from 21.6% to 23.0%. While it did drop to 20.9% in 2016, the socio-economic status of the US disabled community is dismal.⁵

One of the biggest reasons why the disabled live in poverty is gross income inequality. In a report published by the Census Bureau in 2017, it was revealed that the median income of a disabled individual in the US is 70% less than a person without a disability.

⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/07/27/7-facts-about-americans-with-disabilities/>

⁵ https://disabilitycompendium.org/sites/default/files/user-uploads/2017_AnnualReport_2017_FINAL.pdf

In fact, there is a strong poverty-disability nexus that bars the disabled person from getting access to social, economic, political and legal opportunities.

To add insult to injury, limited economic opportunities prevents upward social mobility, leading to poverty and dejection. Critics argue that provision of quality education to disabled individuals is necessary to equip them with the right skills and knowledge so that they can become not only productive citizens but also land coveted jobs in the public and private sector.

In this regard, the government need to give special attention to certain states where the poverty gap between the disabled and non-disabled persons is embarrassingly wider. A study conducted by the University of New Hampshire made staggering revelations. It was found that the poverty gap between individuals with or without a disability is high in states around the Great Lakes, South Dakota Kentucky, Missouri, and Northeast US. Hence, there is a need to bridge this divide before it widens too much. The US government has taken some commendable steps to empower the disabled, which would be discussed in the proceeding sections of this e-book.

1.3 Disability and Health Care Access

Providing healthcare access to the disabled is a real challenge. There is a need to emphasize on routine check-ups so that the ‘differently-abled’ can live their life to the fullest. According to the National Council of Disability, ensuring adequate health care services to the disabled will prevent them from chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular ailments.

Research by the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention revealed that 38.2% Americans with disabilities suffer from obesity as compared to 26.2% non-disabled persons. Similarly, 11.8% individuals with a disability battle some kind of cardiovascular diseases during the course of their life as compared to the 3.8% person people without a disability.⁶

Henceforth, healthcare access in the form of insurance coverage and availability of a usual healthcare provider is imperative to make the disabled productive members of society. It is safe to say that the America government as successfully designed inclusive health programs to improve the quality of life of the disabled.

The government has invested substantial financial and human resources to monitor and record public health data and reduce healthcare disparities.

This is one of the reasons why the disabled community in the US has been able to play a responsible role in society and defeat all odds.

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html>

Chapter 2: The Deeply Entrenched Discrimination and How the Disabled Community is Valiantly Fighting Back

Promises to grant equal employment opportunities to the disabled and a fair workplace has been hard to keep. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has been putting in reasonable efforts to promote fair play when it comes to putting an end to discrimination at the workplace. However, despite the passing of laws to protect the rights of the disabled, statistics show that Americans with disabilities still face numerous challenges to land a decent job.

2.1 Low Rate of Employment among the Disabled

If we look at the statistics, we see that it paints a bleak picture. A report by Brookings Institution revealed that only four out of ten adults with disabilities are employed in America. Further, only 40 percent of disabled adults succeed to find a job during their prime working years (ages 25-54).⁷

The stigma associated with the disabilities has a lot to do when it comes to denying employment opportunities to the disabled. There is a general perception among recruiters that the disabled lack the necessary ‘employability skills’ and hence are less incapable. The biases against the disabled persist across the job market. There is a flawed belief that the disabled are incapable. Less intelligent, less adaptable to rapidly changing the organizational environment.

The hiring of disabled candidates is often considered to be a ‘good deed’ and act of charity. Attitudinal barriers existing in the labor market hinders career growth of the disabled as most employers tend to give little importance to the resumes and cover letters of the disabled candidates, even when they are equally qualified as candidates without disabilities.

This displays the utter disregard for the exceptional capabilities of America’s extraordinarily brave and competent disabled community who have already proven their mettle by setting up their own innovative entrepreneurial ventures.

Disability rights activists suggest that employers require training on recruiting the disabled and must be familiarized with the laws that guarantee equal rights to the differently-abled segment of society. Employers are generally unaware of the SOPs employed to hire, train and appraise the disabled in their companies and create the disability-friendly workplace.

⁷ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/07/25/only-four-out-of-ten-working-age-adults-with-disabilities-are-employed/>

2.2 One Slogan: Equal Pay for Equal Work

Disabled people deserve equal pay. On the contrary, numerous researches have revealed that disabled Americans earn less than those without a disability. This pay gap needs to be closed for numerous reasons.

One, the US economy would earn an additional \$141 billion if workers with disabilities receive the same pay as those without a disability.⁸ Second, their inclusion in the formal US economy will also open ways to end all other institutionalized barriers and help to fight the biased ideologies that wrongly describe America's talented disabled community.

However, tables are likely to be turned soon. As America's disabled took the reins of fate in their control, the chances are that more and more disabled people would fight the status quo and find viable solutions to ending all forms of discrimination. There is a rising trend in America among the disabled to set up their own entrepreneurial ventures. Hence, more disabled individuals are becoming job-givers rather than job-seekers. These young, creative and intelligent 'differently-abled entrepreneurs' seek to create better opportunities for other disabled individuals.

2.3 Role of Schools in Eliminating Discrimination against the Disabled at Schools and Colleges

There is little doubt that America's disabled community is accorded the rights granted by the country's constitution. Things changed for good after various human rights activist and non-governmental organizations became the torchbearer of disability rights. The passing of the historic Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) also proved to be a turning point in the struggle for rights of America's disabled. Today, the disabled can access public transport. They can shop in supermarkets that are built with wide aisles to facilitate the disabled.

At the same time, what remains a matter of concern is that parents have to go through an ordeal to get their 'differently-abled' kids into school. While schools and colleges are built with ramps to accommodate the disabled, issues like stereotyping of the disabled and bullying remains a challenge.

In a moving story shared with CNN, Jordan Gallacher, a computer expert who is blind by birth, lamented about discrimination faced by the disabled in America's schools. Gallacher, who has a bachelor's degree in management and entrepreneurship from

⁸ <https://www.air.org/resource/air-index-pay-gap-workers-disabilities>

Louisiana Tech University, told CNN that three teachers in his high school refused to accommodate for his disability in their classes.⁹

The bitterly traumatizing childhood experience left a wound in his hearts that remain unhealed. Later, he faced discrimination at his college as well that forced him to quit and got transferred to Louisiana Tech. One of the biggest reasons why the literacy rate among the disabled is low is due to discrimination at school which results in their exclusion not only from schools, but society at large.

However, as more and more schools are adopting a rigid stance against discrimination, hopes are high that the disabled will get more inclusive learning spaces in America. Many American schools now provide wheelchair accessible desks, visual and hearing devices to the disabled students. What is fascinating is that many American schools provide books in Braille to help blind students read along with the rest of the class.

Similarly, universities and colleges are built with powered accessible doors, wheelchair ramps and elevators to facilitate the disabled students. Many high schools and universities also provide free accommodation to the disabled. In fact, these are the schools and colleges that are building tomorrow's 'differently-abled' leaders and pulling them from the abyss of dejection.

⁹ <https://money.cnn.com/2015/07/26/news/economy/americans-with-disabilities-act-problems-remain/>

Chapter 3: Role of Government And Advocacy Bodies - Are They Doing Enough?

Michael Winter, Former Director of the Center for Independent Living, Hawaii and Berkeley, once said,

“...I felt that it was necessary to show the country what kinds of things people with disabilities have to face on a day-to-day basis. We had to be willing to fight for what we believed in.”

This pretty much sums up the reason why America’s disabled community began a movement to gain their social, legal, and economic rights. The struggle to grant rights to America’s disabled began as early as the 1900s. Just as the civil rights movement was a struggle to give recognition to African-Americans, the movement to end discrimination against the disabled won wide-spread support of the physically challenged in American society who wanted equal opportunities in all walks of life.

3.1 The Disability Rights Movement and the Passing of the American Disability Act (ADA)

The advent of the Disability Rights Movement marked the beginning of a momentous journey which led to the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The disabled demanded access to physical environments, buildings and transportation. They also raised their voice to gain equal opportunities in employment and education.

One of the central focus of the movement was to raise awareness on the abuse, neglect and violence faced by the disabled in American society and ensure freedom from all forms of discrimination. This historic movement built up the momentum for the passing of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 and subsequent amendments in the Act in 2008.

ADA was signed into law by the then-President George W. Bush in 1990. He asserted that,

“This act is powerful in its simplicity. It will ensure that people with disabilities are given the basic guarantees for which they have worked so long and so hard: independence, freedom of choice, control of their lives, the opportunity to blend fully and equally into the rich mosaic of the American mainstream.”

After the passing of ADA, the disabled community in America was granted a new-found sense of equality and independence. ADA gave the disabled Americans the courage and freedom to control their lives, access to legal aid and economic opportunities and offered a chance to be a part of the rich kaleidoscope of American society.

Today, the disabled community of the United States of America enjoys all the basic civil rights and protection from all forms of abuse and discrimination.

3.2 Landmark Decision by US Supreme Court in Favor of US' Disabled

The US Supreme Court has, on a number of occasions, given rulings to protect the constitutional and legal rights of the disabled. Supreme Court's commitment to the protection of the rights of America's disabled has had extremely positive implications for students and employees with disabilities.

In 2017, parents of Andrew F. pulled their boy out of a district public school because they felt that the school did not provide adequate facilities to disabled children. Andrew was suffering from autism and attention deficit disorder. The parents enrolled their son in a private school. Later, they filed a lawsuit in US Supreme Court insisting that the State of Colorado must reimburse "free appropriate public education" to their son as per the 1975 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.¹⁰

The case caught the attention of media and policymakers alike. While the school district authorities maintained that they fulfilled the minimum standard outlined by deferral law to provide special education to disabled, the Chief Justice was not convinced with the argument. Chief Justice wrote John Roberts announced a landmark verdict, declaring that it is the responsibility of states to "enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances."

The decision was hailed by disability rights activists. Newspaper headlines were dominated by Chief Justice Roberts' decision in favor of a special education student. The decision was considered instrumental in reinforcing the belief that the disabled community is very much a part of American society. The Chief Justice further reiterated that it is the responsibility of states to set the bar high for disabled students' education and well-being.

If we delve deep into the proceedings of this case, we would realize that Supreme Court's decision is a reflection of the fact that unless equal educational, economic, legal and political opportunities are granted to the disabled, establishment of an inclusive and

¹⁰ <https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/03/22/521094752/the-supreme-court-rules-in-favor-of-a-special-education-student>

diverse American society cannot take place. Equality of opportunity is what American society requires to build a society that takes care of its disabled.

3.3 Policy Actions Taken by US Government

The disabled in the U.S. have faced barriers to participation in almost all field of life. They face discrimination at the time of job recruitment and are hired for very low wages. Despite federal laws written in black and white, many disabled employees do not get the employee benefits and offered little or no opportunity for advancement.

In order to overcome the stigma attached with the disabled, the U.S government formulated policy actions to give a loud and clear message that the disabled are very much a part of mainstream American society.

The federal as well as the state governments are bound by law to provide affordable public housing to the disabled. In the same way, the law entitles disabled to seek rental housing without being asked discriminatory questions. The landlord cannot enquire about the nature of disability nor can he seek the medical record.

Similarly, the US department of Education is responsible for ensuring that adequate facilities are provided by public as well as private schools to fulfill the special education needs of the disabled. The disabled students must receive equal opportunity at par with other individuals who do not have any disability. The disabled students also have a share in financial assistance given by the federal government to public school s for specific programs and activities.¹¹

On economic front, the US government adopted a defiant stance by opening job vacancies for the disabled. In this regard the U.S Department of Labor made policies to ensure that the disabled get equal employment opportunities and pay. The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) continue to various initiatives to encourage companies to hire individuals with disabilities.

It initiated a free, nationwide service known as the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN). Members of this program work in close cooperation with the corporate sector and train employers on how to recruit and retain disabled employees. In this way, the government is playing a positive role in inculcating a sense of responsibility among employers for continued commitment to disability inclusion.¹²

¹¹ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

¹² <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/hiring>

Moreover, the U.S federal government has also initiated a program known as Job Accommodation Network to provide expert guidance to corporate sector on how to provide accommodation to disabled employees within the company's budget. The corporate sector is continuously encouraged by the government to start 'inclusive internship' programs and provide internship opportunities to America's dynamic and talented disabled individuals.

3.4 Growing Recognition of Special Needs and Acknowledgment of Diversity

Sustained efforts by government, rigorous awareness campaigns by media and zealous activism by disability rights activists seems to have borne fruits as United States of America is a proud country to have the most wheelchair accessible cities so that the disabled have freedom of movement and are not restricted by their disability. Washington, Seattle, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Portland, Orlando, Chicago, San Francisco, and Denver are believed to have the best public transport services, roads and parks that can be easily accessed by the disabled.

Be it college professors, media anchors, civil rights activists, ordinary citizens and politicians, all are playing their due role as advocates of the disabled in American society. Angel Miles, a doctoral candidate at University of Maryland is striving to end discrimination against the disabled. She wants Americans to celebrate diversity rather than be hostile to it. In an interview, she said, "My liberation is dependent on the eradication of injustice."¹³

Today, more disabled students are part of American classrooms than yesterday when their percentage in the class was almost non-existent. Similarly, disabled adults are in a better position to land a good job than the previous generations that had to battle bitter biases. In short, there is more acceptance and acknowledgement of the disabled in American society than ever before.

The courage of America's disabled community has reduced institutional barriers in their way to achieve their dreams. Be it America's Supreme Court or district courts, federal government or state government; all have recognized the need to accommodate the special needs of the disabled in every sector. As said by Martina Navratilova,

"Disability is a matter of perception."

Hence, what we need is radical shift in the perceptions of people about the disabled in our society. They are not a liability, but a blessing in disguise whose untapped potential needs to be explored.

¹³ https://www.huffpost.com/entry/disability-america_b_1542839

Chapter 4: Light at the End of the Tunnel - Stories of Some Adamant Entrepreneurs Who Are Providing Employment Opportunities to the Disabled.

While it may take some time to change the bias attitudes of society against the disabled and ensure fair practices in corporate sector, some restless 'differently-abled' Americans have set out to carve their own destiny. America's vibrant disabled community is slowly and gradually eradicating the flawed belief that the disabled are a worthless creature.

4.1 How Entrepreneurship Offers Hope to America's Disabled Community

Entrepreneurship is a risky affair. It requires discipline and determination, patience and perseverance, creativity and consistency. As an entrepreneur, you will fall hundreds of times and encounter failure before coming up with a sustainable idea to launch your business venture. It is a treacherous path; one that is filled with disappointments and setbacks. But, who knows how to defeat disappointments and overcome setbacks better than those who have been fighting extraordinary circumstances with their iron will.

America's disabled entrepreneurs have proved their mettle by setting up successful entrepreneurial ventures. Their success is a befitting reply to the naysayers who denied them their natural rights. The success stories of these entrepreneurs are a loud message to the world that human beings are able to defeat adverse circumstances come what may. It is also an opportunity for the society at large to reflect on their biased views and stop stereotyping the disabled community.

Moreover, in order to support the disabled entrepreneurs, some talented minds have decided to play their role in making life easy for the disabled by setting up entrepreneurial ventures that mostly employ disabled people. It would not be wrong to say that America's young lot – those with a disability and without it- have joined hands to take on the challenge of ending discrimination against disabled head-on.

4.2 Valerie Jensen's The Prospector Theater

Valerie Jensen grew up in a closely-knitted family. Her parents worked hard to ensure that their children receive decent education and get every opportunity to thrive in a competitive society. She and her sisters would help their mother in kitchen and play together. She had a very special bond with her baby sister, Hope Jensen. However, one thing that always made her upset was the fact that Hope never accompanied her to school. Hope would also manifest signs of decreased self-confidence, irritation and anger.

As a young, sensitive child, Valerie had little idea that her sister was suffering from a disability – Down’s syndrome. Hope Jensen was looked down upon by friends and family alike who thought the disabled child had no future. The response of people towards her disabled sister was heart-breaking. They would express sympathy, offer consolation and feel sorry. This hit Valerie hard. Valerie would wonder why? Is being disabled a curse? Does it make her sister and other people with disabilities less of a human?

Valerie always saw a spark in Hope who displayed extraordinary courage and a desire to live life to the fullest. Hope is witty, smart, thoughtful, and caring. She loves to dance. However, Valerie realized that societal biases prevented her sister from getting a job. Hope would be left alone at home after all her sisters leave for work. She too desired to be at least financially independent. She loved the idea of working at an office and getting paid, but that seemed too far-fetched a dream for people with Down’s syndrome.¹⁴

The day she witnessed the biased attitude of people towards her disabled sister, she realized she has a bigger responsibility; that of helping the disabled live a respectful and an independent life.

Valerie’s mission to help the disabled live a dignified life came to fruition when she finally decided to channelize her passion for films and cinema for a worthy cause. Hence, the idea of The Prospector Theater was born.

4.3 How Did Valerie Materialize Her Dream?

An idea can change a life. This sounds true when applied in the case of Valerie Jensen’s entrepreneurial venture that seeks to employ disabled people. Valerie vowed to play her role in employing the disabled in society. She was working as the executive director of a recreational non-profit company. Her stint in that company made her realize how difficult it is for people with disabilities to land a respectful job and earn.

She quit her job to set up The Prospector Theatre. The idea was to give employment to people with disabilities. Valerie wanted to give her friends with disabilities a chance to transform their passions into professions. She once said, "My friends are so talented, so I was shocked to see how few of them had a job. And those who did were often put into menial roles that seriously undervalued their skills and capabilities."

It wasn’t easy for Valerie to materialize her dream. She had to find a place where a large theatre could be opened up that can employ a good number of disabled people. One day when she was passing through the old Ridgefield Playhouse which was the town’s oldest

¹⁴ https://www.prospectortheater.org/blog/hopeforhope?fbclid=IwAR308dsNvbLLY5FSQUhxWb8F12-u3mcYj03kEYgQFjGwWtOB1s_1erxcZh8

and first-ever movie theatre. She got to know that the authorities were thinking of demolishing this old building. She knew it was a chance to seize the opportunity.

Valerie began working on the planning, designing, construction, and operationalizing of the theatre. It was no less than a dream to witness her entrepreneurial idea come to life on November 20th, 2014.

Today, 70% of the staff at The Prospector Theatre identifies itself as disabled. They are employed to perform creative and fun tasks; make popcorn, greet customers, create advertisements and promotional videos which are screened before the show. Mike Santini, Director of Development at the Prospector Theatre said:

“It’s not just going to the movies. We’ve built a community here...the movie theater is our vehicle to do that. It brings people into the doors, but in turn they have the opportunity to interact and engage with our prospects and see the talent, the passion and hard work and shatter those expectations of what it means to have a disability.” The goal of this non-profit theatre is to integrate the disabled community into the community and workforce. Valerie Jensen believes that it is the responsibility of American society to prevent the marginalization of the disabled.

4.4 Michael and Jennifer Myers’ Canterbury Café

Michael and Jennifer Myer had vowed to take every possible step to ensure that their autistic son get every opportunity in life and live the life of own choosing. Sam Myer suffered from Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). While he was still in his high school, Jennifer Myer would discuss with her husband about the prospective career choices that their son had so that his unique talents and capabilities can be exploited.

Jennifer firmly believed that Sam had all the right to live an independent life just like any other person without a disability. Soon, Mr. and Mrs. Myers realized that their son can excel in hospitality industry. Hence, they came up with a novel idea of opening up a café where not only Sam, but other people with ASD can work too. As soon as Sam graduated from high school, the Myers worked hard to make a viable business plan for the café.¹⁵

In the February of 2016, Sam’s Canterbury café was created in the Tuscany-Canterbury neighborhood. Sam Myer was ecstatic. He was given the opportunity to show the world that the disabled are a valuable asset of society. As part of the café’s vision to employ autistic people, thirteen more people were hired by the Myers who got a chance to earn and live an independent life.

¹⁵ <https://www.jmoreliving.com/2018/01/22/sams-canterbury-cafe-creates-professional-opportunities-adults-autism/>

The cafe also provides training to their autistic employees. They are taught how to handle the knife, cut chicken and cook. Some of them are shy when it comes to meeting with the customers. Eleese Taylor, who is responsible for managing the staff members is confident that their 'differently-abled' employees would soon overcome this fear and develop a sense of confidence.

Jennifer Myer is proud of Sam. Sam's father is happy the he is able to execute his mission of providing meaningful employment to adults with autism. He is equally happy with the fact that Sam enjoys his work. "It's a great place for Sam to work," said Michael Myers.

4.5 Bitty & Beau's Coffee

For Ben Wright, it was a difficult decision. He was living his dream; a coveted job in America's corporate sector, bright chances of career growth and even better future prospects. But, something was clearly wrong that kept him restive. He was blessed with a wonderful wife and four beautiful kids, two of whom suffered from Down's syndrome. An unknown fear kept Ben and his wife Amy Wright worried. They knew life wouldn't be easy for their two disabled kids. What they witnessed was lack of opportunities and discrimination against the disabled in society. Amy Wright wanted equal educational and career opportunities for son Beau, 13, and daughter Bitty, 8, who were born with Down's syndrome.

Amy insisted she and her husband should step up and deal with this challenge. They wanted to do something worthwhile for the disabled in society. Further, Ben was blown away by the fact that 70% of American adults with disabilities were unemployed. The situation was dire. Hence, Ben wright decided to embrace the challenge so that he can give a sense of purpose to his kids. He took a giant leap and left his job at the Wall Street firm to set up Bitty & Beau's Coffee.

The idea of Bitty & Beau's Coffee was materialized in January 2016. The small coffee shop was opened in North Carolina with the sole mission to employ people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD). The vision behind this entrepreneurial venture was to help the disabled earn a living and live an independent life. Ben and Amy began a full-fledged fundraiser and also used their savings to turn their dream into a reality.

By the end of 2015, the succeeded in opening up a 500-square-foot shop. They quickly turned to their mission and began an intensive recruitment drive to hire the disabled. Betty and Beau's Coffee hired employees with Down syndrome, autism and cerebral palsy who otherwise find it a Herculean task to land a job. The response to Ben and

Amy's mission was overwhelming. In Amy's own words, "We grew into a 5,000-square-foot space within six months."¹⁶

Beau and Betty are very much a part of the coffee shop's operations. Betty loves to put on her apron and talk to customers. Beau is learning how to take orders on iPad. Recognizing the impact of their entrepreneurial venture, the couple was awarded the CNN Hero of the Year award in 2017. While receiving the award, an emotional Amy Wright told the audience, "I am bringing this home to the 40 employees who work at Bitty & Beau's because they are my heroes. And most of all to my two youngest children, Bitty and Beau, who are my inspirations,"¹⁷

Warrior Bridge Program

Before high school graduation, Tim lived a carefree life at Southmont, North Carolina. But as soon as he graduated high school, he wanted to save money for college. This, however, was not very easy. With hopes of acquiring generous government funds, Tim joined the U.S. Navy, excited to see the world. Destiny yet planned something else for him, as he put it,

"But shortly into my first tour on USS Carl Vinson, I knew that I could make this a career,"

For 24 years, Tim provided religious counseling to hundreds of men, including sailors, soldiers, airmen, and Marines. It was indeed a glorious life journey, but when he retired as a Chief Petty Officer in 2013, he wanted to do something even nobler. So he decided to expand his mentorship experience and his degree in human services, he enrolled in Eggleston Services as an Intern.

Eggleston is a non-profit organization which provides life necessities and opportunities to disabled individuals. With passing time, Tim proved to be an asset for the organization and took over the Warrior Bridge Program.

The Hampton Roads is one of the most popular communities in the country from where people join Arm forces. Every year, month, hundreds of servicemen and women join the military. Eggleston Warrior Bridge supports ex-soldier with disabilities by referring them to vital sources, services, and employment opportunities. The Warrior Bridge program approaches a more personal system to support self- sufficiency by providing satisfactory employment. Warrior Bridge utilizes its primary position to give immediate employment opportunities to veterans by operating through the multi-business network of Eggleston's

¹⁶ <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/meet-2017s-hero-of-the-year-whose-coffee-shop-helps-people-with-disabilities-earn-a-living-2017-12-18>

¹⁷ <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/12/17/world/amy-wright-2017-cnn-hero-of-the-year/index.html>

Tim has expanded the program with amazing mentorship skills and management expertise. Ironically, there is no prior motive involved except for providing the best for the handicapped individuals. As he says, *“What I do isn’t hard work, its heart work.”*

Tim puts his hundred percent effort to provide injured and disabled veterans the support to find the best jobs in the market through training, development and placement systems. *“We focus on the individual well-being of our veterans – the whole person aspect,”* says Tim. He makes sure that every veteran associated the facility gets the very best attention and support to achieve their life goals with respect and equality.

4.5 How Hiring People with Disabilities is Beneficial for Businesses?

Make no mistake. United States of America has an able and talented pool of 56 million disabled people, majority of whose potential remains untapped. Businesses need to carve out a strategy to build an inclusive and accessible workplace. The statistics shared by the U.S Department of Labor shows that businesses who hire disabled employees report increased profits and high employee productivity.

According to the U.S Department of Labor, 28% of businesses that hire disabled report increased profitability. Businesses that hire disabled employees also reported a 72% increase in employee productivity and 90% increase in retention of its most valuable employees. Microsoft, Bank of America and CVS design a talent strategy to recruit the disable and their success is no hidden fact. ¹⁸

An interesting statistic revealed by The Accenture shows that recruiting just 1% of the total disabled Americans can boost the G.D.P. by an estimated \$25 billion.¹⁹ This shows that U.S entrepreneurs must prioritize hiring the disabled to build a diverse work force so that the U.S companies can compete in the global marketplace.

¹⁸ <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/321984>

¹⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/27/opinion/disability-rights-employment.html>

<https://www.sourceamerica.org/sourceamerica-honors-award-winners-2019-national-conference>

Chapter 5: Inspiring Stories of US' Differently-Abled Entrepreneurs

The desire to build an inclusive American society drove responsible and ambitious Americans to set up businesses that give a chance to the disabled to prove their mettle. However, some rebellious disabled Americans possessed indomitable fortitude and will to find a way to their own problems. For them, it was too much to ask for 'assistance'. They possessed a fierce desire to stand on their own feet and shun societal biases. So, they decided to stun the world by showing that they are equally talented as people without a disability. In fact, America's 'differently-abled entrepreneurs' are a reason why hope against odds is still alive.

5.1 Sharon Gardner's Online Store for Health Supplements

Sharon was a confident child and an intelligent student. She not only excelled in her studies, but also earned praise for her participation in extracurricular activities. Little did she know that life would take a dramatic turn during her early teens.

Sharon was just 13 when she became disabled. Not even in her wildest dreams she ever thought that she would get paralyzed. Sharon was busy rehearsing for the role of an angel in a Christmas play at her school when all of a sudden she fell from the scaffolding. The life-changing incident rendered her paralyzed for the rest of her life, but did not stop her from achieving her dreams. She had vowed that she would not let the disability define her.

Today, almost 52 years later, Gardner is the CEO of an online store for health supplements. Known as Healthy Life and Times, this online store sells health supplements to customers across the world. She is a living example of turning obstacles into opportunities.

It was in the year 2004 that she discovered she had a penchant for entrepreneurship. Sharon suffered from pressure sores which got worse due to delayed diagnosis. She tried everything, but the condition did not subside. As a last ditch attempt to cure her painful sores, Sharon bought a herbal spray known as Miracle Mist Spray. The spray miraculously cured her sores and made her realize the potential of herbal medicines to cure infectious diseases

She started working for the store from where she had bought the spray and eventually bought it to start her own business. When asked about the challenges that come with being a disabled entrepreneur, she confessed, "It takes me a long time to get ready in the morning. By the time I get ready for work, I've already put in several hours of work."

However, challenges do not deter her from achieving her dreams. She says, “Remember that everyone can do something.”²⁰

5.2 Kirk Keating

Kirk Keating was sporty. And why wouldn't he be? With a 10 feet tall young, athletic figure, he was into all types of sports, but loved riding the motorcycle more. Then one day, his life took a bitter turn when he met a terrible accident while riding motorcycle. He was only 25.

For Kirk, the meaning of life was lost. He battled fatal injuries in hospital for six months only to be told that he could not walk again. Life became gloomy as pain and despair made their way into his life. However, he quickly realized that he cannot allow hopelessness to take control over his life. He had two choices; either to give up or accept the reality and move on with greater vigor. He chose the latter.

Kirk said, “I remember being in rehab with a lot of 20-somethings and it seemed clear to me that a portion of us would end up going home and sitting on the couch drinking beer and a portion of us would get back into our lives and move on. I wanted to be one of the ones to move on.”²¹

Kirk worked for an IT company for almost 20 years. Then, a wonderful opportunity knocked at his door which he decided to seize immediately. A company known as Game Truck was looking for franchisers. The company arrange children's parties in motor coaches that were equipped with video games. Kirk loved the idea so he signed a contract with the company as franchisee. Kirk employed four facilitators to arrange for the parties and an education leader. He believes that disability is not a barrier to achieving one's goals.

Kirk might be confined to a wheelchair, but his dreams and ideas are not. He is passionate about the work that he does and wish to bring further innovations. However, he does complain that many places are still not accessible for wheelchair-bound people as they don't have ramps. He said, ““Sometimes it is difficult if a building doesn't have a ramp or has too many stairs. But, otherwise, I'm really used to it.”

5.3 Greg Prater

Greg Prater is a cheerful soul. He suffered a brain injury due to a terrible auto accident that affected his cognitive and physical functions. Since then, he displayed aversion to the idea of living a dependent life and was in search of a business idea that he could work on to support himself financially. He then bought a vending machine to run a sole

²⁰ <https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/dealing-with-a-disability-two-entrepreneurs-inspiring-stories/>

²¹ <https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/dealing-with-a-disability-two-entrepreneurs-inspiring-stories/>

proprietorship also own a state award for helping other disabled people initiate their business.

This shows that a seemingly small business start-up can actually sustain if run with a proper plan. Before that, Mr. Prater worked at workshops doing packaging and labeling goods. Mr. Prater also got a state grant in 2003 to buy three more vending machines.²² Mr. Prater says that he loves “to make money”. Because, this is something that makes him feel confident, happy and above all, financially independent.

²² <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/13/business/13sbiz.html>

Chapter 6: Hope for America's disabled

Hope is a beautiful thing. It keeps the will to live, laugh, and to love alive. The lives of America's disabled entrepreneurs and empowering the disabled is an epitome of courage, determination, faith, and selflessness. When we say that we have to build an inclusive and diverse American society we need to ensure that we display unanimous commitment and unflinching support to the cause of empowering people with disabilities.

The U.S government and non-governments organizations have taken a number of initiatives to support the disabled entrepreneurs. These initiatives are a testimony to US government's continued efforts to mainstream the disabled in American society.

6.1 Chicagoland Entrepreneurship Education for People with Disabilities

The Chicagoland Entrepreneurship Education for People with Disabilities has been set by a private, independent grant making organization, Coleman Foundation. The foundation was established in 1951 to support educational activities, facilitate the disabled as well as cancer hospitals by providing funding and develop strategies to sustain their operations.

The Chicagoland Entrepreneurship Education for People with Disabilities (CEED) provide support to disable individuals who have a spark for entrepreneurship. It is a proven fact that people with disabilities are more inclined towards setting up their own businesses and being their own boss. It is run by three passionate people who seek to provide opportunities to the disabled so that they can become a useful member of society.

Clinical assistant professor. Dr. Katherine Caldwell, Dr. Sarah Parker Harris, an associate professor in the department of disability and human development, and Dr. Maija Renko, an associate professor in the department of managerial studies are striving to remove the barriers to entrepreneurship prevailing in the path of America's disabled community. Disabled entrepreneurs face problems such as barriers to entry and lack of resources to expand their start-ups. Dr. Caldwell said, "What does it look like, what are the main barriers that they're running into, and what sort of facilitators would help them out?"²³

At CEED, disabled entrepreneurs are taught how to set up sustainable business ventures and employ people with disabilities. Moreover, mentorship is provided to disabled entrepreneurs so that they can come up with out-of-the-box ideas. In fact, Dr. Caldwell believes that the success rate of entrepreneurship ventures established by disabled

²³ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/samanthaharrington/2018/01/31/women-with-disabilities-face-high-barriers-to-entrepreneurship-how-to-change-that/#3c09a6a219dc>

entrepreneurs is extremely impressive. He said, “When people with disabilities are supported in self-employment and entrepreneurship they actually have like a 65 percent success rate of their business.”

CEED is actively working to improve the representation of disabled entrepreneurs. It is particularly working to encourage disabled women and minorities to tread this path. Dr. Caldwell believes that disabled people should come together to share their experience, ideas, knowledge and skills to solve the most pressing problems plaguing the world today. In this way, CEED is playing its role in building an inclusive business community in America.

6.2 U.S Business Leadership Network

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) and the US Business Leadership Network (USBLN) signed a strategic partnership to jointly work together to improve and expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. USBLN work closely with the corporate sector to recruit the disabled and provide them training.

USBLN represents 50 Business Leadership Network affiliates from America. In a way, it represents. Around 5,000 businesses. USBLN provides opportunities to the business members to network with other businesses and share meaningful ideas on disability inclusion. Both, NCIL and USBLN promotes fair practices in the corporate sector to ensure that the disabled are recruited, retained and given career advancement opportunities.

This is a much-needed initiative as it would force companies to design strategic policies that provide the disabled access to employment, resources and mentorship. In fact, companies have now realized that in order to gain a competitive edge over their rivals, they must have a diverse workforce to create innovative products which can cater to diverse customer needs.

6.3 “What Can You Do?” – The Campaign for Disabled Entrepreneurs

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy came up with a novel idea of designing a campaign known as “What Can You Do”. The campaign features media products and public service announcements that encourage the corporate sector to take advantage of the untapped potential of the disabled employees.

Under the shadow of this campaign, a lot of worthwhile steps have been taken to solve the issues of disabled employees such as workplace accommodation, training, disability employment policies and development of accessible workplace.

While it may take some time to radically transform organizational culture, there is hope that efforts are being made to prevent marginalization and exclusion of disabled from the world of business.

Chapter 7: Steps needed to economically empower the disabled in US

7.1 Bridging the Technological Divide

Technology can have a transformative impact on the way the disabled manage their business. In fact, technology can make it easy for the disabled to run home-based businesses as seen in the case of Sharon Gardener. However, the technological divide in America between people with disabilities and those without a disability is large. There is a need to bridge this technological divide and to increase the rate of technology adoption among the disabled.

A study conducted by PEW Research made some startling revelations. Disabled adults in America are less likely to have a technological gadget that could enable them to connect with the world and virtually open doors to splendid opportunities. 67% of disabled Americans aged between 18 and 65 own a PC or laptop as compared to 84% of Americans without a disability.²⁴

Consequently, disabled individuals demonstrate lack of confidence when it comes to using technological devices. Only 39% of disabled individuals show signs of confidence when it comes to using technology for gaining access to information as compared to 65% of individuals without a disability.

If we want to build a more inclusive diverse workforce, we have to improve the rate of technology adoption among the disabled. In this regard, the first thing that needs to be done is to design website and mobile applications that incorporate disability features so that the disabled can have easy access to information and communication technology (ICT).

Secondly, tech education should be made part of special education. This can help in shrinking the digital divide existing between people with disabilities and those without it.

7.2 Using Assistive Technology in Workplace

America's corporate sector must adopt assistive technology which can pave way for hiring of a larger number of disabled employees. In this regard, the government should work in close alliance with the corporate sector and provide them the funds to buy assistive technologies so that the disabled can work with ease.

Assistive technology such as virtual keyboards, screen readers and assistive listening devices can help increase the productivity of disabled employees at workplace. For instance, deaf employees can use software like Dragon Dictation and ASL Dictionary

²⁴ <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/07/disabled-americans-are-less-likely-to-use-technology/>

which helps in translating English into American sign language so that the need for an interpret is virtually eradicated.

Organizations like Dell, Microsoft and IBM have long been using assistive technologies to build a more diverse workplace. While many companies may find it an expensive investment, the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) require employers to provide “reasonable accommodations “ to disabled employees so that their full potential can be realized.

7.3 Public-private partnership to provide grants and training to disabled individuals

There are many non-profit organizations that seek to provide grants and funds to disabled entrepreneurs in America. Running an entrepreneurial venture requires substantial sources of funding, market awareness and training. Both the government and private sector can work together to provide entrepreneurial education to the disabled so that they are better equipped with the right knowledge and strategies to efficiently run their businesses.

The Small Business Self-Employment Services (SBSES) by US Federal government is one such program that offers resources to disabled entrepreneurs to help them realize their full potential. Similarly, the Job Accomodation Network (JAN) provide guidance on self-employment, business planning and home-based business options to disabled individuals so that they can achieve economic independence. Such initiatives can go a long way in empowering the disabled individuals and helping them to achieve financial independence.

Conclusion

The mesmerizing account of America's trailblazing disabled community is a testimony to the fact that physical and mental disability is not a barrier to realizing your full potential. There remains one challenge to mainstreaming the disabled; that of changing the mindset. Stigmatizing the disabled community is not an option. In order to eradicate the biased perception about the disabled community, they must be given the voice, the opportunity, and the resources to prove themselves.

The U.S government should continue to lend its support to the private sector which is working to build an inclusive and diverse workplace. The need for fostering a healthy entrepreneurial culture among the disabled community cannot be stressed enough. In this regard, the government may turn to the private sector to develop a strategic alliance to provide requisite education, training and funds to the potential disabled entrepreneurs so that they can establish their own innovative entrepreneurial ventures.

The success stories of America's disabled entrepreneurs calls for greater attention towards the cause of mainstreaming the country's talented and ambitious disabled community. The humble efforts of Americans who are creating employment opportunities for the disabled also need to be acknowledged. They are setting a spectacular example for others to follow. In the end, we must realize that collective efforts are required to build an American society where diversity is embraced, differences are celebrated and disability is not looked down upon. The United States of America is bound to attain great new height if its disabled community is given every chance to work for national development.