



A Study on Identification of Barriers and Associated Factors towards Employment of Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the present condition of employment access for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD) in India, a demographic frequently neglected in conventional workforce development programs. The research aims to identify the primary obstacles faced by individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD) in employment, recognizing it as essential for social inclusion and economic independence, and to evaluate the supportive interventions available to enhance their labor market involvement. Data were acquired through a survey-based methodology from two main stakeholders: individuals with ASD and their caregivers, in addition to employers and special educators. The research utilized structured questionnaires to collect quantitative and qualitative data regarding employment accessibility, workplace accommodations, awareness levels, and social attitudes.

Research reveals that, notwithstanding numerous governmental initiatives and policies, a considerable disparity exists between policy objectives and their execution. Significant obstacles comprise the absence of inclusive recruitment methods, insufficient vocational training programs designed for neurodiverse individuals, and pervasive

stigma and misconceptions regarding ASD among employers. Moreover, PwASD frequently have obstacles in communication and social interaction, which further impedes their capacity to obtain and maintain employment.

The study underscores an urgent requirement for awareness initiatives, improved regulatory implementation, and workplace education programs. It also advocates for enhanced collaboration among governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, and private sector businesses to establish inclusive employment ecosystems. Recommendations encompass establishing additional inclusive skill development centres, enhancing workplace accommodations, and incorporating neurodiversity training into company procedures. The study emphasizes the necessity of implementing a rights-based framework for disability employment and fostering inclusive workplaces that acknowledge the distinct abilities of individuals with ASD. The results enhance the ongoing dialogue on disability-inclusive development and provide actionable recommendations for closing the job gap for PwASD in India.

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Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects a person's ability to communicate, relate to others, and understand relationships. It's typically characterized by unusual or stereotypical behaviours or rituals and usually appears in the first three years of life (The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental condition that significantly impacts communication, behaviour, and social interactions. As a lifelong disorder, ASD influences various facets of an individual's life, including their ability to engage in education, social activities, and, importantly, employment. ASD encompasses a broad range of conditions, which are often classified into different types based on the severity of symptoms and specific challenges faced by individuals.



Core Characteristics of Persons with ASD

Although every individual with ASD is unique, there are common characteristics that define the condition. These characteristics vary in intensity and manifestation depending on the individual's classification within the spectrum.

- **Social Communication and Interaction Challenges** PWASD often struggle with understanding social cues, maintaining conversations, and forming relationships. These difficulties can range from mild challenges in making friends to severe deficits in social understanding and reciprocal interactions.
- **Restricted, Repetitive Behaviours and Interests** Repetitive behaviours are a hallmark of ASD, which may include repetitive movements (such as hand-flapping or rocking), strict adherence to routines, and intense focus on specific topics or interests.
- **Sensory Processing Differences** Many individuals with ASD experience atypical sensory processing, which can result in either hypersensitivity (over-responsiveness) or hyposensitivity (under-responsiveness) to sensory stimuli. These differences affect how PWASD perceive and respond to their environment.
- **Cognitive and Learning Differences** Cognitive abilities in individuals with ASD vary widely, ranging from individuals with intellectual disabilities to those with above-average intelligence. However, cognitive processing styles are often different, and individuals may face challenges in specific areas such as executive functioning, problem-solving, or abstract thinking.
- **Emotional Regulation and Anxiety** Individuals with ASD frequently experience difficulties in managing emotions, which can result in heightened anxiety, frustration, or mood swings. Changes in routine, sensory overload, or social interactions may exacerbate these emotional challenges, leading to behavioral outbursts or withdrawal.

Types of ASD: It includes -

- **Autistic Disorder (Classic Autism):** This type is characterized by significant language delays, social and communication challenges, and unusual behaviours or interests. Many individuals with classic autism also have intellectual disabilities.
- **Asperger's Syndrome:** Individuals with Asperger's Syndrome generally have milder symptoms of autism. They might experience difficulties in social interactions and display restricted interests and behaviours but often have average or above-average intelligence and typically do not have significant language delays.



- **Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS):** Sometimes referred to as atypical autism, PDD-NOS is diagnosed when individuals exhibit some, but not all, of the symptoms of autism or Asperger's syndrome. The symptoms can be less severe or only present in specific areas.
- **Childhood Disintegrative Disorder (CDD):** A rare type of ASD, CDD involves late onset (after age 2) of developmental delays, typically after a period of normal development. Individuals with CDD lose previously acquired skills in communication, social interactions, and motor abilities.
- **Rett Syndrome:** Though no longer classified strictly under ASD in the DSM-5, Rett syndrome shares some similar features. It is a genetic neurological disorder that mainly affects females, leading to a progressive loss of motor skills, speech, and social engagement after an initial period of normal development.

Employment for Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PWASD)

Employment is a critical aspect of adult life, providing financial independence, a sense of purpose, and opportunities for social interaction. For Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PWASD), employment can significantly improve quality of life by fostering social inclusion, self-esteem, and community engagement. However, despite these potential benefits, the employment rate for PWASD remains significantly lower than that of the general population. This disparity highlights the unique challenges PWASD face when seeking and maintaining employment, as well as the need for more inclusive and supportive employment practices.

Several key factors contribute to the difficulties PWASD encounter in the workforce:

- **Social Interaction Challenges:** Many jobs require regular communication and collaboration with colleagues, supervisors, and customers. PWASD may struggle with the social demands of these interactions, leading to misunderstandings or discomfort in the workplace.
- **Sensory Sensitivities:** Bright lights, loud noises, and crowded environments commonly found in many workplaces can overwhelm individuals with ASD, impacting their ability to focus and perform tasks effectively.
- **Rigidity and Routine:** Many individuals with ASD prefer structured routines and may find it challenging to adapt to changes or unexpected situations in the workplace. This can limit their ability to work in environments that require flexibility.
- **Stigma and Misconceptions:** There is still a lack of awareness and understanding among employers about the capabilities of individuals with ASD. Many PWASD are seen through the



lens of their challenges rather than their strengths, leading to biases during hiring and promotion processes.

- **Importance of Employment for PWASD** - Employment plays a crucial role in the lives of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), contributing not only to their financial independence but also to their overall sense of purpose, social inclusion, and quality of life. For (PWASD), meaningful employment offers numerous benefits that extend beyond economic gains. It provides a structured environment in which they can apply their unique skills, develop a sense of accomplishment, and build self-esteem.

Barriers to Employment

Despite advances in understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and increasing awareness of the need for inclusivity, individuals with ASD continue to face significant barriers to gaining and maintaining employment. Employment is a critical factor in achieving independence, financial security, and social inclusion.

The barriers to employment for PWASD can be categorized into several key areas:

- Social and Communication Barriers
- Cognitive and Behavioural Challenges
- Lack of Employer Awareness and Understanding
- Inadequate Support Systems and Transition Programs
- Discrimination and Stigmatization
- Inaccessibility of Workplace Accommodations
- Economic Barriers

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Griffiths et al. (2024) conducted a study in which they explored the transition requirements and experiences of young adults who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as they are getting ready to enter the workforce. The objective is to have an understanding of the obstacles and support opportunities that are necessary for successful work transitions. Assessment of career objectives, preparation for employment, job experiences, and transition impediments are all components of the technique. The findings point to substantial obstacles, such as having career objectives that are not attainable, not having a good grasp of the criteria for those jobs, and not having enough support services available after high school.



Masahat et al. (2022) in their study evaluated the job market participation of adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in Germany. The purpose is to examine their integration in terms of education, employment, and vocation types. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey, data were obtained from 196 clinically confirmed people with ASD across four academic outpatient clinics. The methodology includes a postal questionnaire based on the Client Service Receipt Inventory (CSRI), which gathered information on work status, education levels, and vocational training. The findings demonstrate that despite higher-than-average educational attainment, persons with ASD have severe career hurdles, with only 17.5% being employed in the conventional job market. The study shows the need for specific vocational assistance strategies to facilitate job market integration for persons with ASD in Germany.

Guo (2022) in their study evaluated the employment status of young people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in China, focusing on persons aged 16 and over. The purpose is to understand the vocational support needs and employment results for this group of people. The research used a nationwide survey, collecting data from 317 parents of autistic children across 30 regions. The study underlines the need for increased vocational education and specialized job support to enhance the career chances of young individuals with ASD in China.

Khayat zadeh-Mahani et al. (2020) intends to identify, examine, and prioritize impediments to employment for individuals with developmental impairments, as well as viable policy solutions to alleviate these hurdles. The research adopts a two-phase qualitative approach, employing the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) to obtain perspectives from multiple stakeholders, including persons with developmental impairments, employers, and policy makers. The study underlines the significance of addressing employer attitudes and understanding, boosting vocational training, and eliminating stigma to enhance job prospects for this demographic.

Dreaver et al. (2019) explored the success variables permitting work for individuals on the autism spectrum from the perspective of employers in Australia and Sweden. The research adopts an inductive qualitative technique, including semi-structured interviews with 20 participants, including line managers and directors from disability employment assistance groups. The findings show that employer awareness and comprehension of ASD greatly affect workplace relationships and job performance. The study underlines the need for a holistic approach to job support, highlighting the need of training and understanding among employers and co-workers to promote inclusive workplaces for persons with ASD.

Frank et al. (2018) in their study investigated the work situation and educational achievement of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in Germany. The purpose is to understand their



engagement in the labor market, concentrating on employment rates, types of jobs, and the appropriateness of work related to their skills. Utilizing a cross-sectional survey, data were obtained from 185 clinically late-diagnosed persons with ASD through a postal questionnaire. The process involves measuring job status, occupational skill levels, and educational degrees. The study underlines the need for targeted job assistance programs to enhance labor market outcomes for persons with ASD in Germany.

Harmuth et al. (2018) did a scoping assessment to evaluate the variety of constraints that restrict career chances for persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Systemic hurdles included poorly planned job recruitment processes, lack of employer understanding, and limited access to inclusive vocational training. The study showed that even highly talented individuals with ASD often remain unemployed or underemployed due to the absence of formal support and workplace adjustments. They found that eliminating these hurdles required multi-level interventions, including enhanced policy frameworks, employer education, specialized job placements, and social inclusion programs.

Scott et al. (2018) conducted a comprehensive scoping review titled "Factors Impacting Employment for People with Autism Spectrum Disorder: A Scoping Review," which aims to synthesize existing literature on employment outcomes for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Their research conducted extensive database searches, including Medline, CINAHL, PsychINFO, Scopus, ERIC, Web of Science, and EMBASE, to discover relevant papers. Focusing on persons with ASD employed in various settings—competitive, assisted, or sheltered employment—they analyzed 134 research, major predictors of job involvement, and the study, applying the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) Core Sets, underlined the significance of contextual interventions to enhance employment outcomes for adults with ASD.

Hedley et al. (2017) in their study examined employment programs and therapies for adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Recognizing the increasing number of individuals with ASD transitioning into adulthood, the authors assessed the effectiveness of several vocational assistance programs and employment initiatives. Their analysis included peer-reviewed studies on employment outcomes, job retention, work preparation, and psychosocial assistance. The analysis concluded that adults with ASD encounter a particular set of problems while joining the employment. The study concluded by urging for further longitudinal and methodologically robust research to measure long-term employment outcomes. It also advocated for inclusive employment policies and employer training.

Ohl et al. (2017) wanted to discover the important factors that influence whether adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are likely to achieve and keep work. The study employed a quantitative



methodology to analyze how criteria such as education, functional skills, cognitive capacity, and social competence connect to work results. The findings demonstrated that those with higher functional daily living abilities and better social communication were considerably more likely to be employed. The availability of family support and community services also played a key effect in good career outcomes. **Nord et al. (2016)** performed thorough research analysing the job outcomes for persons with and without autism spectrum disorder (ASD) across the intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) support systems throughout 19 U.S. states. The major purpose of this research was to compare community employment rates and to discover the factors influencing employment among these two groups. The findings found that persons with ASD faced considerably lower community employment rates compared to their non-ASD peers. Ultimately, the study underlines the need of tailored solutions and policy modifications aimed at boosting career possibilities for persons with ASD.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To identify barriers towards employment of Persons with ASD.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the barriers towards employment of Persons with ASD?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has used survey method in current study. This study focused on employed individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) as the targeted population. A purposive sampling method was used to choose participants, and data was gathered using a self-developed, structured questionnaire designed exclusively for individuals with ASD. The questionnaire includes 10 participants, primarily aged 18 to 30 years, with a majority being male (9 out of 10). Academically, the majority had finished secondary or senior secondary school, and professionally, nine possessed certifications, while one held a batchelors degree. All participants were employed in full-time skilled positions, primarily within the private sector, and none occupied part-time or unskilled roles. The work experience distribution includes four individuals with 0–3 years, two with 3–5 years, and four with 5–10 years of experience. Salaries varied significantly, from under Rs. 5000 to over Rs. 20000 per month. Eligibility conditions mandated that participants be over 18 years old and diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The research tool was created in collaboration with a research supervisor and went through several drafting phases. Part A of the questionnaire gathered demographic data, whereas Part B concentrated on employment obstacles, training, and recommendations. The tool, originally consisting of 30 questions, was streamlined to 25 pertinent questions following expert evaluation and validation by 12 specialists from the Amity Institute

of Rehabilitation Science. Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to—participants granted informed consent, and confidentiality was preserved. Data collection involved finding organizations that employ individuals with ASD, securing requisite approvals, distributing surveys with explicit instructions, and analyzing the data to better understand workplace inclusion policies and obstacles encountered by individuals with ASD.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data was analyzed using percentage-based analysis to understand participants' thoughts and experiences of the respondents. Statement wise percentage-based analysis these statements was done as per the description given below.

Statement 1: The Figure 1 unequivocally demonstrates that 100% of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD) have participated in vocational training or skill development programs. This signifies robust engagement in initiatives designed to improve employable skills among PwASD. The widespread participation indicates that vocational training is regarded as an essential measure for securing work and enhancing job preparedness for individuals with ASD.

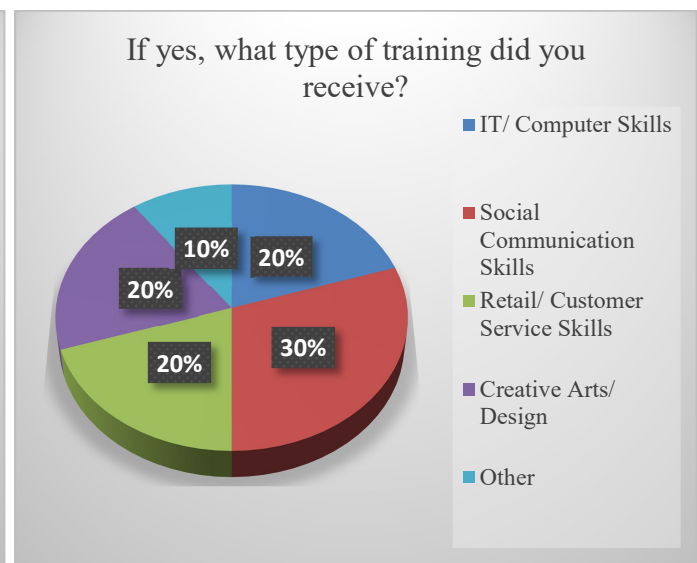


Fig. 1 Participation in Voc. Training Programs **Fig. 2** Types of Voc. Training Received by PwASD

Statement 2: The Figure 2 clearly revealed that among those who attended vocational training, the largest share (30%) had received social communication skills training. Training in IT/Computer Skills and Retail/Customer Service Skills each accounted for 20% respectively, while Financial Literacy training represented 10%. An additional 20% reported receiving other types of training not specifically categorized.

This distribution suggests that vocational training programs tend to prioritize essential interpersonal skills and technical competencies, both crucial for successful employment outcomes among PwASD.

Statement 3: The Figure 3 shows that 100% of PwASD (Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder) felt the training beneficial in preparing for job. This uniform favorable answer shows that vocational training programs give PwASD the skills and confidence to enter the workforce.

The consensus among responders implies that the training programs are well-designed and meet PwASD demands. Practical skills, job preparation training, and assistance from these programs may help ASD individuals find work. The efficiency of these training programs shows their value in helping PwASD find jobs.



Fig. 3 Effectiveness Of Training For Employment

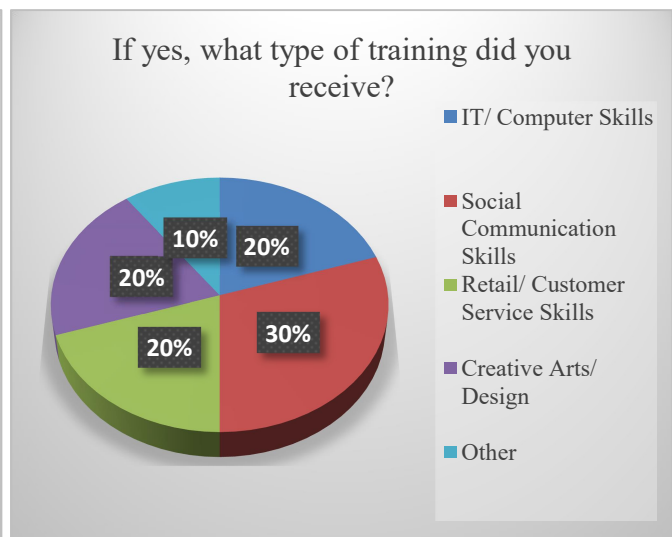


Fig. 4 Source Of Job Acquisition

Statement 4: The Figure 4 distinctly illustrates that nearly 60% of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD) obtained job via support organizations, 10% through familial or social connections, 10% via a career fair, and 20% through other avenues. No participant indicated securing jobs using job portals. This indicates that disability-centric organizations are essential in closing the employment gap, whereas conventional job portals are predominantly unavailable or underutilized by persons with Autism spectrum disorders.

Statement 5: The Figure 5 distinctly shown that 70% of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD) reported obtaining external support for job placement, while 30% indicated a lack of such aid. This indicates that external support mechanisms are crucial in enhancing work chances for PwASD, highlighting the significance of supporting interventions throughout the job-seeking process.

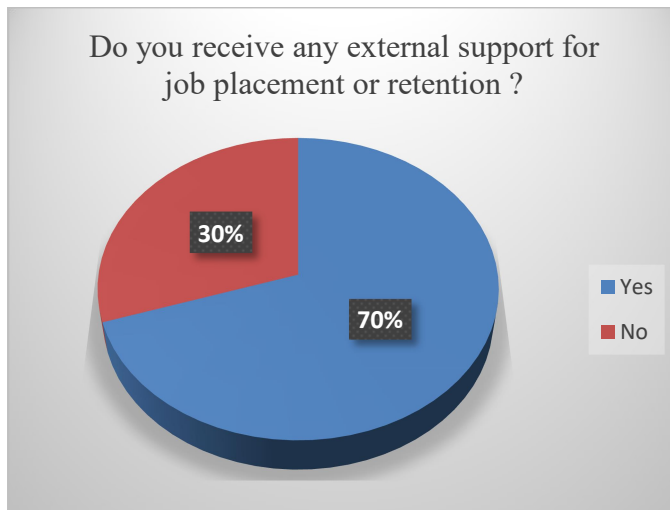


Fig. 5 External Support Received for Job

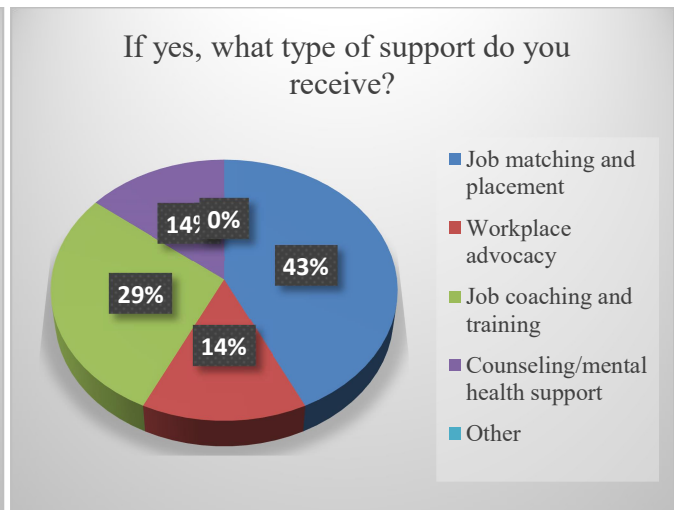


Fig. 6 Types of Support Received by PwASD

Statement 6: The Figure 6 clearly demonstrates that 43% of PwASD obtained job matching and placement assistance, whereas 29% availed themselves of career coaching and training. Fourteen percent of respondents received workplace advocacy, while an equal percentage received counseling or mental health support. No individuals reported obtaining alternative forms of support. These findings underscore those direct job-related supports, including placement services and skill coaching, are the principal interventions that facilitate effective employment outcomes for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD).

Statement 7: The Figure 7 distinctly demonstrates that 30% of the PwASD obtained job immediately following training, 10% within three months, 40% within four to six months, and 20% after seven months or longer. This indicates that although immediate placement is feasible for certain individuals, delays are prevalent, probably attributable to systemic obstacles and restricted chances for PwASDs.

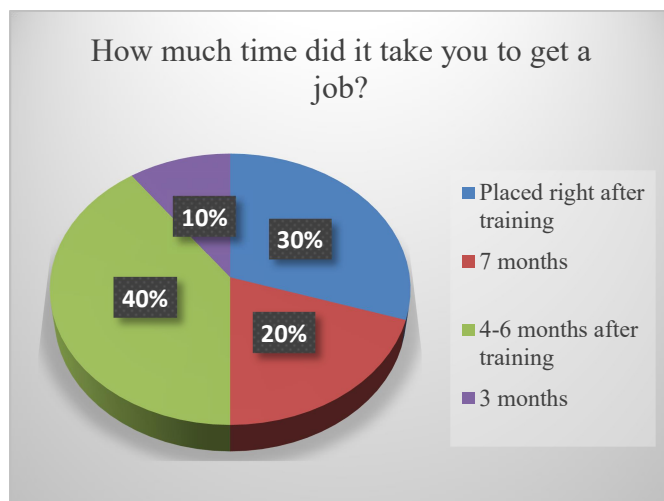


Fig. 7 Time Taken to Obtain Job Post-Training

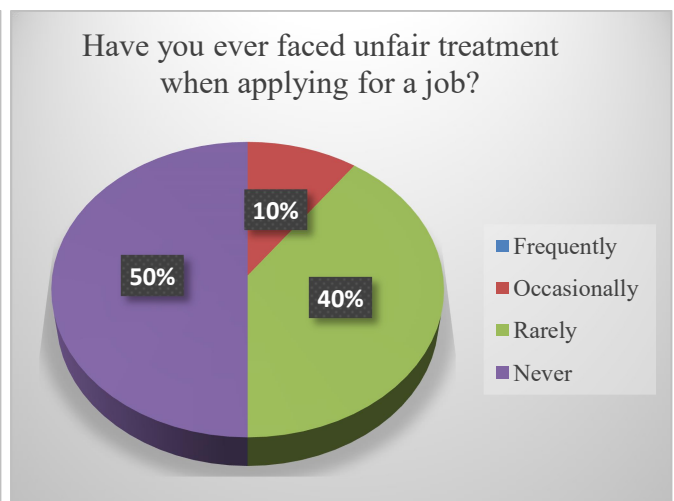


Fig. 8 Experience of Unfair Treatment

Statement 8: The Figure 8 distinctly demonstrated that 50% of the PwASD experienced no unfair treatment during job applications, 40% encountered it infrequently, and 10% faced it occasionally. This suggests that although unfair treatment is not prevalent, it still impacts a considerable minority of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (PwASD). The existence of any discriminatory practices highlights the necessity for enhanced awareness and inclusivity in recruitment procedures to guarantee that PwASD receive fair and equitable treatment throughout the job application process.

Statement 9: The Figure 9 distinctly demonstrated that 50% of individuals with PwASD would gain from flexible work hours and tranquil or sensory-friendly environments, 40% from career coaching or mentorship along with clearly defined employment roles /tasks, and 20% from training for colleagues regarding ASD. This indicates that an accommodating work environment for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder encompasses both structural adjustments and interpersonal assistance. Implementing these supportive strategies can enhance the performance of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD) and foster a greater sense of comfort and inclusion in the workplace.

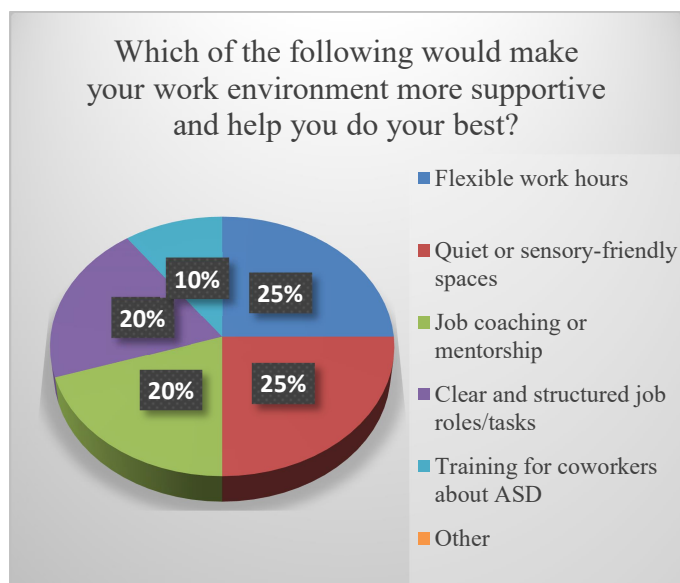


Fig. 9 Supportive Work Environment Factors



Fig. 10 Ease of Getting around

Statement 10: The Figure 10 vividly demonstrates that 80% of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD) perceive commuting to work or navigating the workplace as very easy, whereas 20% consider it easy. This indicates that many individuals with autism spectrum disorder do not encounter substantial mobility difficulties in the workplace. The simplicity of mobility suggests that physical accessibility is typically not a significant obstacle for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the workplace, enabling them to concentrate on other facets of their job performance.

Statement 11: The Figure 11 distinctly demonstrates that 30% of PwASD benefit from flexible work hours and explicit instructions and expectations, 20% from ergonomic tools or equipment, and 10% from quiet spaces. This signifies that both physical provisions and explicit communication are essential for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD). Offering these supports can enhance the comfort and confidence of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in their workplace, resulting in improved job satisfaction and performance.

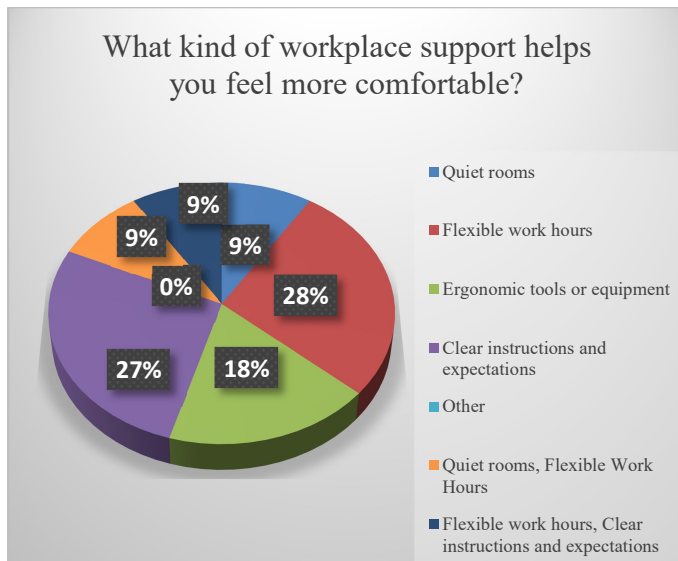


Fig. 11. Workplace Support That Helps PwASD



Fig. 12. Frequency of Challenges at Work

Statement 12: The Figure 12 vividly shows that 50% of PwASD occasionally encounter difficulties with communicating or expressing their views at work, 40% infrequently experience this issue, and 10% consistently confront it. This indicates that communication continues to be a considerable although inconsistent difficulty for those with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the workplace. Implementing communication aids and training can assist individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in surmounting these obstacles and enhancing their capacity to articulate ideas and communicate with colleagues.

Statement 13: The Figure 13 emphatically illustrates that 50% of PwASD consider visual aids beneficial for efficient workplace communication, 40% derive advantages from assistance provided by a colleague or mentor, and 10% utilize communication applications. This signifies that visual and interpersonal aids are essential for efficient communication for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD). Equipping PwASD with these skills and resources can enhance their communication efficacy and confidence in the workplace.

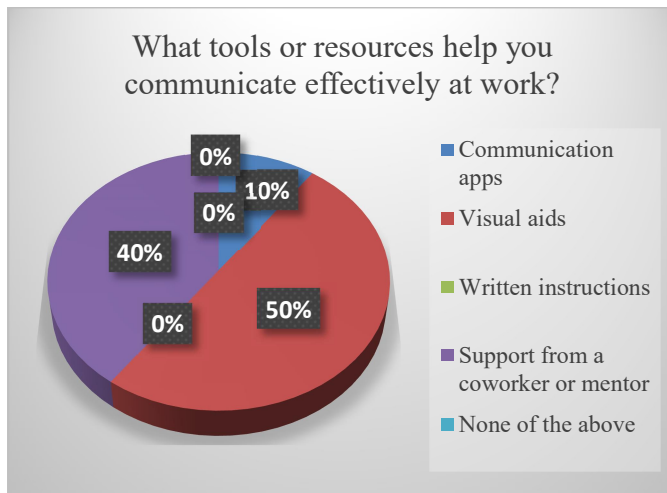


Fig. 13. *Tools or Resources Helping at Work*

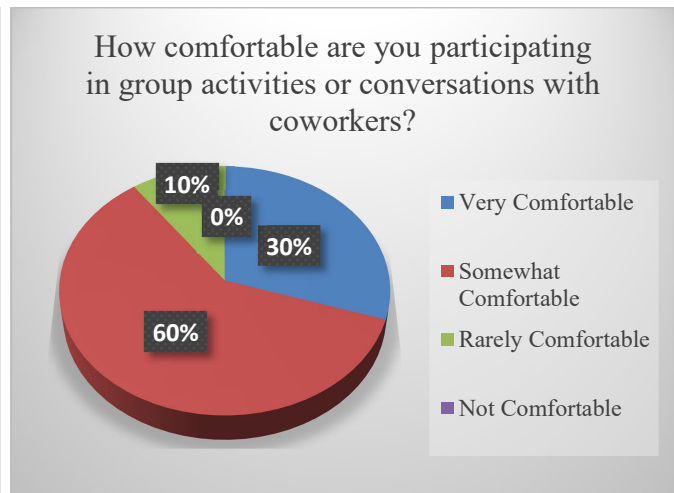


Fig. 14 *Comfort in Participating in Conversations*

Statement 14: The Figure 14 clearly shows that 60% of PwASD exhibit a moderate level of comfort in engaging in group activities or discussions with colleagues, 30% display a high level of comfort, and 10% are infrequently comfortable. This indicates that although the majority of PwASD are generally at ease in social environments, there remains a necessity for supporting interventions. Fostering an inclusive and supportive atmosphere for group activities can enhance the comfort and engagement of individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the workplace.

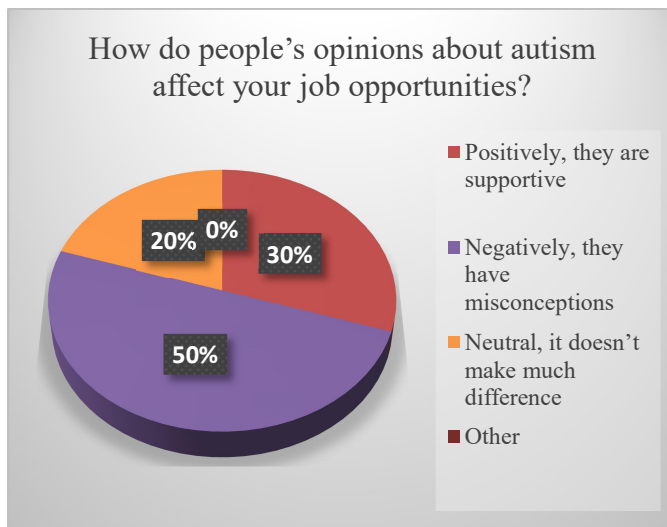


Fig. 15 *Impact of People's Opinions*

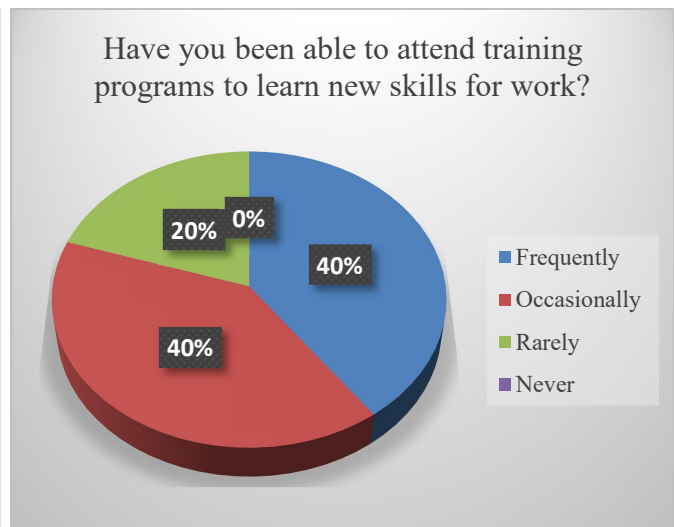


Fig. 16 *Attendance of Training Programs*

Statement 15: The Figure 15 clearly illustrates that 50% of PwASD perceive that societal misconceptions regarding autism adversely influence their employment prospects, 30% believe that supportive viewpoints yield a beneficial effect, and 20% contend that such ideas are largely inconsequential. This suggests that cultural perceptions of autism can profoundly affect employment results for those with autism spectrum disorder.

Statement 16: The Figure 16 shows that 40% of PwASD (Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder) attend work training programs frequently, 40% occasionally, and 20% infrequently. PwASD appear to be very engaged in continuous learning. The frequent and occasional attendance shows that many PwASD want to improve their abilities and keep up with industry advances. Continuous learning is essential for responding to job requirements and improving employability. PwASD actively seeks personal and professional progress through training programs.

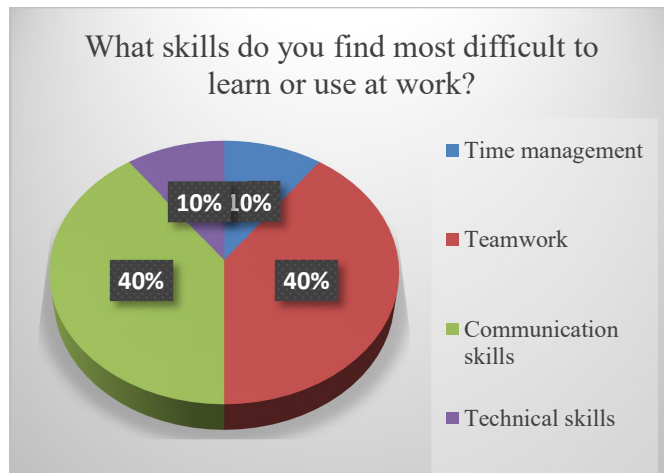


Fig. 17 *Most Difficult Skills to Use at Work*

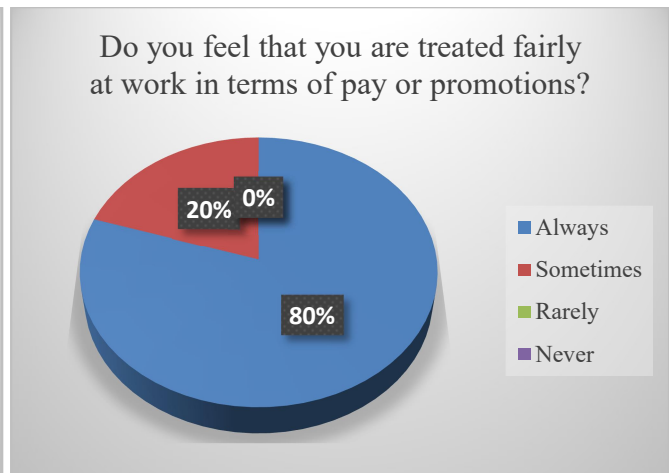


Fig. 18 *Fair Treatment in Terms of Pay*

Statement 17: The Figure 17 indicates that 40% of PwASD find teamwork and communication skills hardest to learn and employ at work, whereas 10% struggle with time management and technical skills. Developing these vital talents requires tailored support. PwASD may struggle with teamwork and communication, which are essential for business effectiveness. Specialized training and support in these abilities can help PwASD improve teamwork and colleague relations. Addressing time management and technical skills issues can boost job performance and career opportunities.

Statement 18: The Figure 18 shows that 80% of PwASD feel they are always treated fairly at work in terms of compensation or promotions, whereas 20% feel they are sometimes treated fairly. This implies that most PwASD believe they are treated fairly at work. Job satisfaction and motivation depend on fair compensation and promotions. The significant number of PwASD who feel treated properly shows that many workplaces are promoting equity and fairness. However, the 20% who feel they are only sometimes treated properly underline the need for continued efforts to remove inequities and ensure consistent fair treatment for all employees.

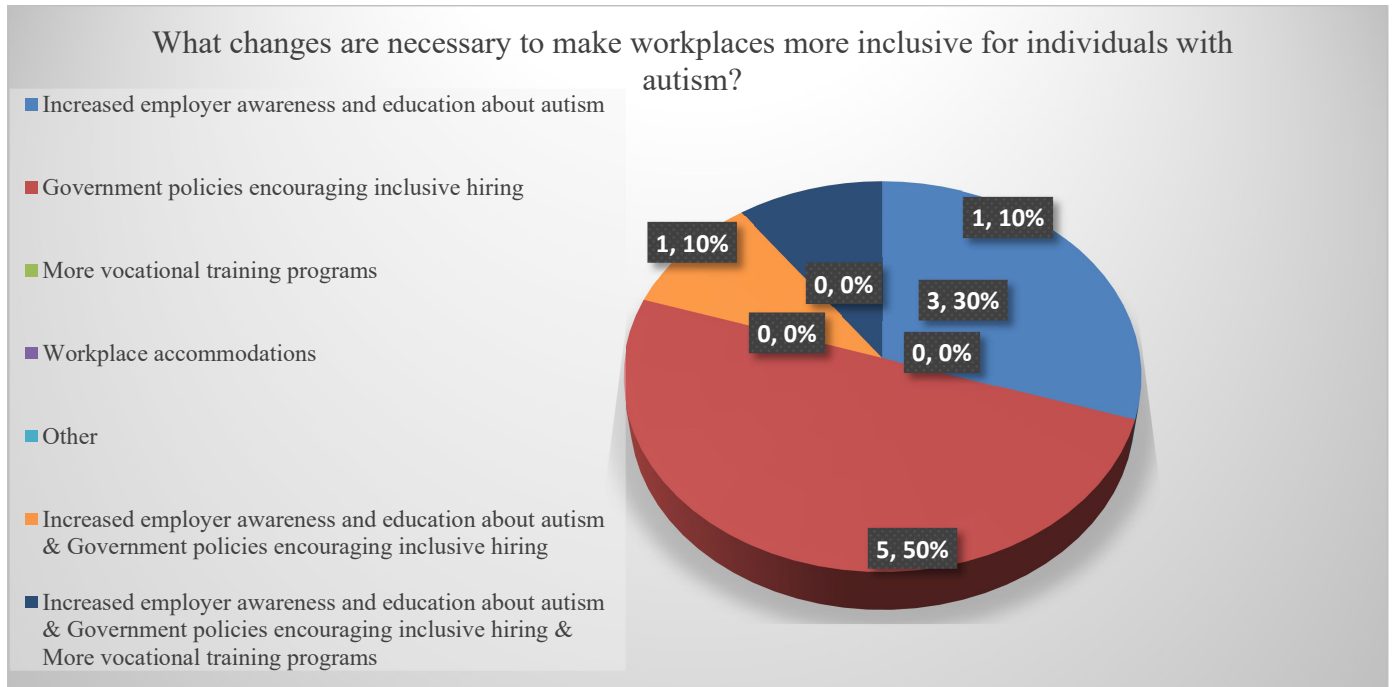


Fig. 19 *Necessary Changes for Inclusivity*

Statement 19: The Figure 19 indicates that 50% of PwASD think government policies encouraging inclusive employment are needed to make workplaces more inclusive, 30% think employer autism awareness and education are needed, and 10% suggest alternative improvements. This stresses the need for inclusive policies and education. Government policies can support inclusive hiring and encourage firms to adopt them. Employer autism awareness and education can improve workplace understanding and support. Other modifications may include workplace accommodations and PwASD-specific support.

Statement 20: The Figure 20 illustrates that 30% of PwASD think inclusive hiring policies are needed to improve employment opportunities, 20% want more vocational training programs, 10% want workplace accommodations, and 10% want other changes. It appears that PwASD employment chances are being improved in multiple ways. Government initiatives can help PwASD find more jobs through inclusive hiring. PwASD can learn job skills through vocational training. PwASD can work more comfortably and productively with workplace accommodations. Other modifications may include PwASD awareness and stigma reduction campaigns.

What changes do you think are necessary to improve employment opportunities for individuals with ASD?

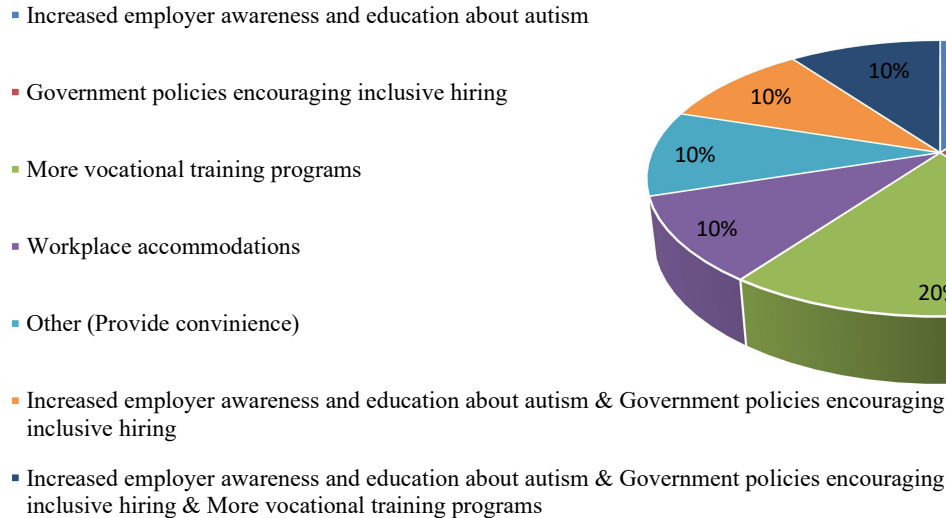


Fig. 20 Necessary Changes to Improve Employment Opportunities for PwASD

Statement 21: Figure 21 states 50% of PwASD cited a lack of employer awareness regarding ASD as a major challenge, 30% reported difficulty with the application and interview processes, 30% mentioned a lack of job opportunities specifically designed for people with ASD, 20% reported stigma or discrimination, and 20% reported difficulty commuting to work. This demonstrates the various obstacles PwASD encounter when trying to get work. A comprehensive strategy that involves raising employer knowledge, enhancing the application process, developing more specialized work opportunities, lowering stigma, and offering transportation assistance is needed to address these issues.

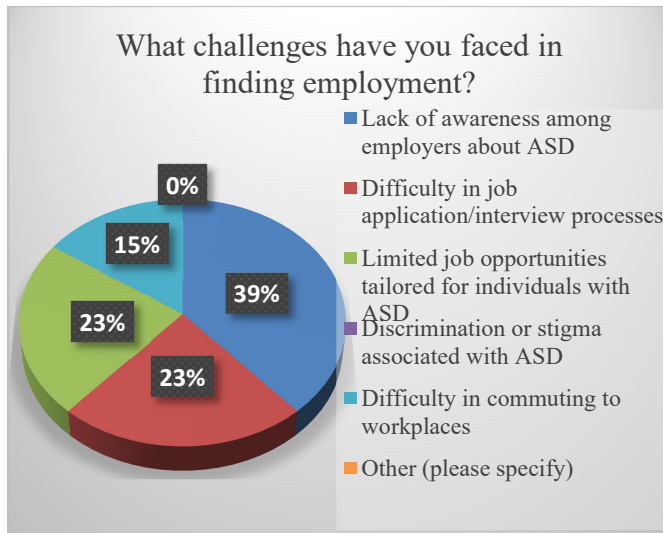


Fig. 21 Challenges Faced in Finding Employment

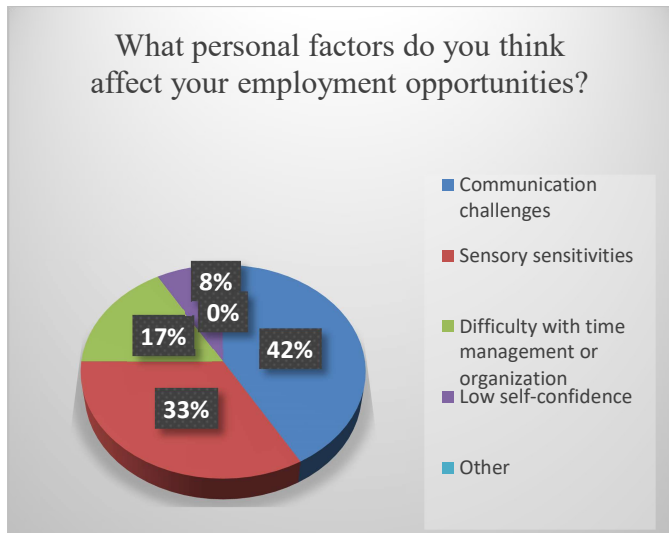


Fig. 22 Personal Factors Affecting Employment

Statement 22: Figure 22 distinctly indicated that 50% of the PwASD recognized communication obstacles as a personal factor influencing their work prospects, 40% reported sensory sensitivity, 20% experienced difficulties with time management or organization, and 10% exhibited low self-confidence. This emphasizes the necessity for tailored assistance to tackle these specific difficulties. Implementing tailored treatments and accommodations can assist individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder in surmounting personal obstacles and enhancing their work prospects.

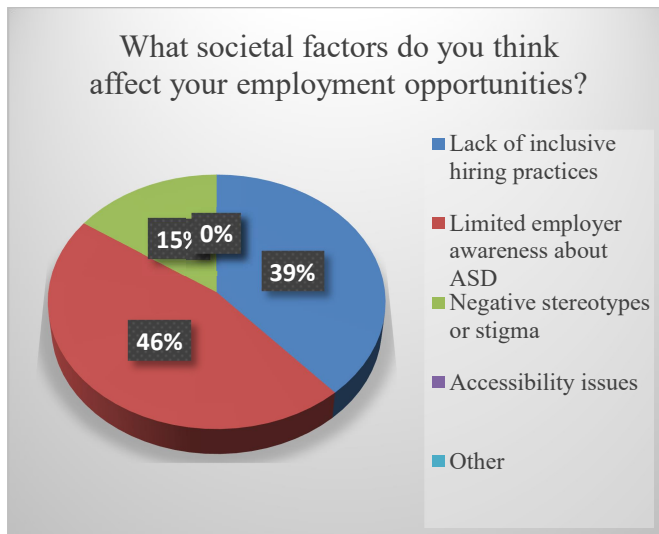


Fig. 23 *Societal Factors Affecting Employment*



Fig. 24 *Factors Making the Workplace Hard*

Statement 23: Figure 23 clearly indicated that 60% of the PwASD recognized inadequate employer understanding of ASD as a societal element influencing their work prospects, 50% referenced a deficiency in inclusive hiring practices, and 20% noted unfavourable stereotypes or stigma. This suggests that cultural views and behaviour's profoundly influence the career opportunities of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD). Enhancing employer understanding, advocating for inclusive hiring practices, and mitigating stigma are crucial for enhancing job prospects for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD).

Statement 24: Figure 24 clearly illustrates that 28% of those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (PwASD) perceive noise, among them 27% find bright or harsh lighting, and 27% says insufficient guidance or instructions as elements contributing to an uncomfortable or challenging workplace, whilst 18% identify crowded environments as problematic. This underscores the necessity for sensory-sensitive and well-organized workspaces. Mitigating these environmental issues can foster a more conducive and supportive workplace for those with Autism Spectrum Disorder, hence enhancing their performance.

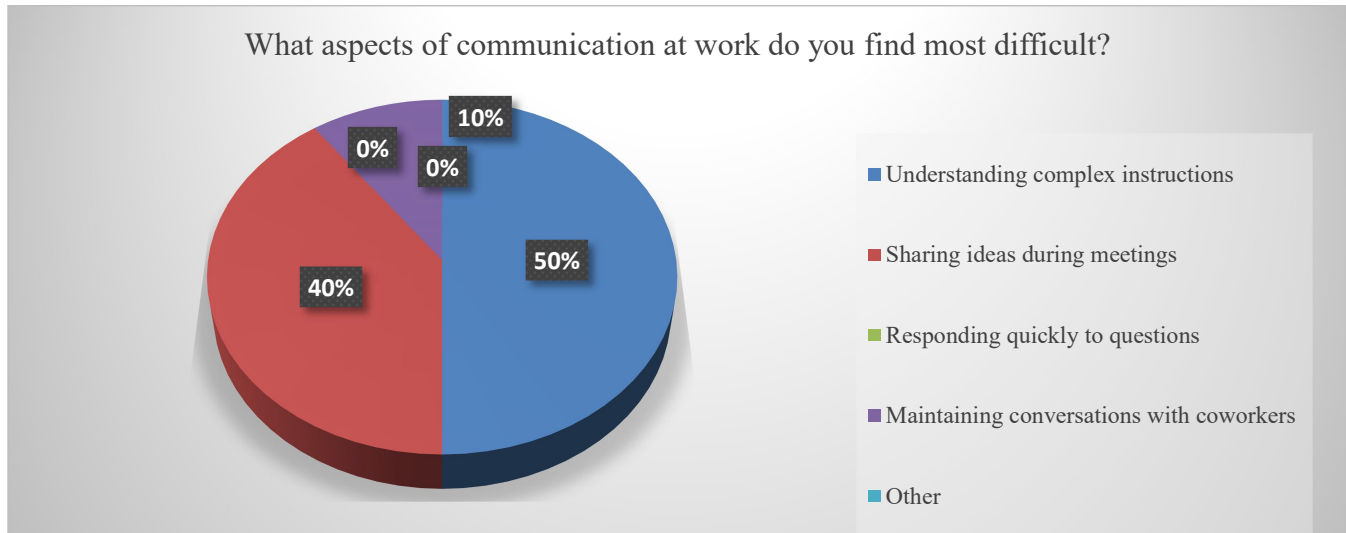


Fig. 25 *Difficult Aspects of Communication at Work*

Statement 25: Figure 25 clearly demonstrates that 50% of PwASD perceive comprehending intricate instructions as the most challenging facet of workplace communication, 40% encounter difficulties in articulating ideas during meetings, and 10% experience challenges in sustaining interactions with colleagues. This underscores the necessity for transparent and straightforward communication in the workplace. Delivering explicit and succinct instructions, with fostering an inclusive atmosphere for idea exchange, can assist PwASD in surmounting these communication obstacles.

MAJOR FINDINGS

- 100% of PwASD attended vocational training and found it helpful for employment readiness.
- 60% secured employment through support organisations, not mainstream job channels.
- 70% received external job support (e.g., job matching, coaching, mental health services).
- Key employment barriers identified:
 - Communication difficulties
 - Societal stigma
 - Inadequate employer awareness
 - Non-inclusive workplace practices
- Environmental challenges affected workplace comfort:
 - Noise and lighting sensitivity
 - Unclear instructions
- Supportive tools like visual aids and mentoring were highly effective.



- 80% reported fair treatment in pay and promotion, while 20% experienced inconsistencies.
- Flexible work conditions and clearly defined roles were commonly requested.
- Participants emphasised the need for:
 - Inclusive government policies
 - Increased employer awareness and training

CONCLUSION

The findings clearly demonstrate that while vocational training equips PwASD with the necessary skills for employment, substantial barriers persist in accessing and sustaining work. These include limited access to inclusive hiring practices, inadequate employer awareness, environmental challenges, and communication difficulties. Systemic reforms—especially inclusive policy development, employer sensitization, and expansion of support services—are essential to creating a truly inclusive work environment for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Addressing these multilayered barriers can significantly improve employment outcomes and workplace experiences for PwASD.

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