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On eve of World Disability Day, awards laud work for the specially abled

ANEESHA MATHUR

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 2

ON Tuesday, the eve of World Disability Day, the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCEPDP) commended the work of individuals and organisations to enhance employment and empowerment of people with disabilities.

The 10th edition of the NCEPDP - Shell Helen Keller Award was given away on Tuesday to 12 recipients in categories such as the best employers, role models and their activities which have helped in furthering the employability of the disabled.

"The understanding of accessibility for the disabled is extremely poor in our country," said a wheelchair-bound Shivani Gupta from Delhi, who received the award for her organisation, AccessAbility. The company provides consultancy services to builders and archi-

fects to make buildings accessible to specially-abled people, and has also opened an online national job portal where corporate employers can recruit qualified disabled people.

"We are encouraging people to register themselves for the portal and have 65 employers advertising online at present," says Gupta. Another initiative she has undertaken is the "inclusive travel guide" that provides information on tourist spots and facilities for the disabled in Delhi.

Amutha Shanthi S from Madurai, the managing trustee of the Thiyyagam Women's Trust, won an award in the disabled category for her work on empowering disabled rural women. The Thiyyagam self-help group encourages self-employment, and a tailoring unit has been set up in this regard to provide training and livelihood to rural



Winners of the NCEPDP-Shell Helen Keller Award at a press conference before the award ceremony at the India Habitat Centre in the Capital on Tuesday. Photo by Renuka Puri

women.

Among disabled-friendly organisations, an award went to Radhika Khanna of the SPJ Sadhana School, and Shilpi Kapoor, both from Mumbai. Kapoor, the founder of Barrierbreak Technologies, has worked in the IT sector to design technology accessible to the disabled. She said, "We don't use the term 'disability' in our programme, since we help them identify their potential abilities and work with their disabilities."

Among organisations, awards went to Mphasis Bangalore, Pepsico, Godrej & Boyce, IBM, ITC Welcome Group and the Noida Deaf Society. Each of these organisations employs a sizeable number of physically

Life with disability: children, parents speak of challenges

CHILDREN with disabilities and parents came together under the aegis of the Anchal Trust and Bal Adhikar Abhiyan, a network of NGOs, at a press meet on Tuesday to discuss various problems they face due to the hazy laws in place for the disabled. The meet was held at the Press Club on Raisina Road on the eve of World Disability Day. Sanjeev Sheel, managing secretary of the Anchal Charitable Trust, said in spite of the People with Disabilities (PWD)

Act 1995 and schemes available for the disabled, they are not able to avail any facilities. "Government departments seem to have no knowledge of these schemes," said Sheel. "I have a disability certificate but have not been able to gain admission anywhere," said 13-year-old Yousuf from Raghuvir Nagar slum, who wants admission in a shelter for visually challenged children.

"Most people, including politicians, seem to think that

a mentally-challenged child does not need any aid beyond an asylum," said a parent. Lack of understanding and aid from government organisations and the general apathy of people were highlighted. Officials from the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) were also present at the event. Bharati Sharma, chairperson of the Delhi CWC said, "We have told parents that if they face problems, they should file a complaint with the Child Welfare Committee." —ENS

and mentally disabled people and has started training programmes for them. A representative from Mpha-

sis said, "Success comes through enabling employees to achieve their full potential. We also run an outreach pro-

gramme to train the disabled in the use of IT equipment to enhance their employability in different companies."

Mphasis wins 2 Prestigious Awards

Mphasis, an EDS company, has won the prestigious National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in the category of Best Employer, and the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) - Shell Helen Keller Award 2008. These two awards recognize the ongoing efforts of Mphasis to build an inclusive workplace and are an endorsement of commitment towards providing equal work opportunities to all. At Mphasis the focus is on increasing employability through intensive partnerships with organizations working in the field.

Every year, this National Award is presented to the outstanding employers of the disabled. The total number of awards under the Employer category is 6. Out of 6 awards, one award is given as best employer and the remaining 5 awards are given as additional awards.

The Award conferred on Mphasis, cites that 1.57 percent of the total workforce at Mphasis come in the category of people with disabilities. The 327 employees are engineers, trainers, chartered accountants, people in administration, executives, call centre agents and customer support associates. Though special facilities for the physically disabled, soft ware for the blind, language interpretation facilities etc have been provided, they are all in a cross section of occupation from training, to taking calls, F&A to application development and are part of mainstream employment.

"Creating an inclusive workplace is the fulfilment of our corporate mission. Employment of people with disabilities was not incidental - it is a key business driver and a conscious decision driven by the senior leadership. These employees have distinguished themselves with their commitment to the organisation, and value they bring to our customers. With our ongoing projects, we hope to invest in training & developing more such individuals and aim to add them to our diverse workforce," said Jeya Kumar, Chief Executive Officer of Mphasis.

The prestigious National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) - Shell Helen Keller Award 2008, was given to Mphasis for being "A Company that demonstrates its belief in equal rights and gainful employment for persons with disabilities, through its policies and practices."

The N.C.P.E.D.P.-Shell Helen Keller Awards symbolize a level playing field for people with disabilities. National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People

(N.C.P.E.D.P.) instituted in 1999 is a registered Trust with a Board of Management which has representation from industry, N.G.O.s, disabled people and international agencies.

“The award represents Mphasis’ commitment to its employees”, said Elango R, Chief Human Resource Officer. “Mphasis is a company that demonstrates its belief in equal rights and gainful employment for persons with disabilities through its policies and practices. Recruiting disabled people is not a charity, but a commitment towards becoming an employer of choice for all. We are proud of the fact that all employees are part of mainstream society.”

Every year, 12 role models are selected for the N.C.P.E.D.P.-Shell Helen Keller Awards - those who have been doing exemplary work towards helping people with disabilities to find positions of equality and dignity in the workplace. These include both individuals and organizations that have the vision to look beyond the obvious. The Award consists of a trophy & a citation and will be presented by Arjun Singh, Hon'ble Minister for Human Resources Development on 2nd December 2008 - the eve of the World Disability Day.

<http://news.moneycontrol.com/india/news/pressmarket/mphasis-wins-2-prestigious-awards/19/01/368977>

MphasiS Wins Top Awards for Empowering Disabled People

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"The award represents MphasiS' commitment to its employees," said Elango R, chief human resource officer. "MphasiS is a company that demonstrates its belief in equal rights and gainful employment for persons with disabilities through its policies and practices. Recruiting

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<http://www.efytimes.com/efytimes/30425/news.htm>

WIRE PORTAL: indiaprwire.com

DATE: December 2, 2008

MphasiS wins 2 prestigious awards for the empowerment of persons with disabilities

NCPEDP-Shell Helen Keller Award - 2nd December 2008 & NATIONAL AWARD in the category of Best Employer - 3rd December 2008

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<http://www.indiaprwire.com/pressrelease/other/2008120216259.htm>

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"The award represents MphasiS' commitment to its employees," said Elango R, chief human resource officer. "MphasiS is a company that demonstrates its belief in equal rights and gainful employment for persons with disabilities through its policies and practices. Recruiting

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<http://www.bpotimes.com/efytimes/fullnewsbpo.asp?edid=30425&magid=11>

BUSINESS OF



APPLAUD

World Disability Day is on 3 December. The National Centre for the Promotion of Employment for Disabled People honours those working for equal opportunities for the disabled through the 10th NCPEDP-Shell Helen Keller Awards. This year's winners are:

Best employers: • Godrej & Boyce Mfg. Co. Ltd • IBM India Pvt. Ltd • ITC Welcom Group • Mphasis, an EDS Company • Noida Deaf Society • PepsiCo India Holdings Pvt. Ltd.

Role models: • Atul Ranjan Sahay, senior manager (improvement initiatives), Tata Steel Ltd, Jharkhand • Hari Raghava, solution specialist (banking), IBM, Mumbai • S. Amuthashanthi, managing trustee, Thiagam Women Trust, Madurai • Shivani Gupta, director, AccessAbility, Delhi • Radhika Khanna, vice principal, SPJ Sadhana School, Mumbai • Shilpi Kapoor, founder-director, BarrierBreak Technologies, Mumbai.

AWARDS

MphasiS, Bangalore, has won the National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in the category of Best Employer, and the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) - Shell Helen Keller Award 2008.

These two awards recognise the efforts of MphasiS to build an inclusive workplace and provide equal work opportunities to all.

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MphasiS wins awards for empowerment of disabled

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BANGALORE, INDIA: MphasiS, an EDS company, won the prestigious National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in the category of Best Employer, and the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) - Shell Helen Keller Award 2008.

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<http://www.ciol.com/Enterprise/EC-Services/News-Reports/MphasiS-wins-awards-for-empowerment-of-disabled/31208113335/0/>

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Enabled & Empowered

Shivani Gupta and Noida Deaf School, among the 10 recipients of the Helen Keller Award, have encouraged the differently abled every step of the way

Medha Chaturvedi | TNN

If the list of all those who received the Helen Keller Award this year is any indication, society and private organizations are increasingly becoming sensitized to the needs of the differently abled. Instituted in 1999, the Helen Keller Awards honour 10 individuals and institutions every year for their "exemplary work towards helping disabled people find positions of equality and dignity in the workplace". Times City met two of the recipients to find out the extent of the difference they are making.

A wheelchair user herself, Shivani Gupta is the co-founder and director of AccessAbility. The organization provides consultancy to corporates looking to hire people with disabilities, advises them on appropriate architecture, as well as runs a human resource portal for prospective employers and job-seekers.

With degrees in hotel management and architecture, and a PG degree in inclusive environments from UK, Gupta believes in a three-way approach: include, enable and empower. "I started Access-

Ability two years ago with my friends Vikas Sharma, who was my classmate at the inclusive environment course, and Sachin Verma. Our primary aim is to provide a one-stop place to corporates who want to include people with disabilities in their organizations. For this, we work in improving the attitude of people and resort to one-on-one approach," she said. The company's job portal is called www.employability.co.in.

AccessAbility has also started an online travel guide for tourists with disabilities and have listed over 2,000 places in Delhi which are disabled friendly. "This website's connecting link is provided on the Indian tourism department's incredible India website," she said.

Gupta received the award in the individual category on Tuesday.

The Noida Deaf School, which will be receiving the award in the category of corporates, was started in 2005 by Ruma Roka with just five students. Now, it has a strength of around 350 students who attend various courses free of cost.

"A few years ago, I felt the need for someone to teach hearing impaired peo-



MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Gupta's company provides consultancy to corporates looking to hire physically challenged people; (left) the other winners



ple to be socially acceptable. So, I learned sign language and started doing volunteer work. In 2005, I started this school to train deaf people. Our training is very specific and employment oriented," said Roka. She added that most of the instructors in her school were deaf and hence their work set a positive example for the students. The school is partly funded by a Mumbai-based organisation, DEEDS and partly by supportive friends, said Roka. On winning the Helen Keller Award, Roka said she was delighted. "It is like a validation and recognition of my work. More than anything else, it is a motivational factor for my students to work harder to become socially acceptable," she said.

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Six awardees in the individual category

Hari Raghavan | SOLUTION SPECIALIST (BANKING) BMA, MUMBAI

Visually impaired, Hari completed his B.Com (first class) from Mumbai in 1997. He is perhaps the only visually impaired MBA specialising in marketing. Always rated as an outstanding performer in his career, Hari helps raise funds for a Bangalore-based

Atul Ranjan Sahay | SENIOR MANAGER (IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVES) AT TATA STEEL, JAMSHEDPUR

Atul lost his sight in the left eye when he was 14. He graduated with honours in economics from St Anthony's College, Shillong in 1986. In 2003-04, he became the first person with visual impairment to obtain executive diploma in general

Amutha Shanthi S | MANAGING TRUSTEE, THYAGAM WOMEN TRUST, MADURAI

Shanthi was born without her left forearm. In 2005, she started the trust to empower physically challenged women from rural areas to create opportunities of self employment. In

Shilpi Kapoor | FOUNDER DIRECTOR OF BARRIERBREAK TECHNOLOGIES AND NET SYSTEMS INFORMATICS, MUMBAI

As a Microsoft certified systems engineer in web content accessibility guidelines, Shilpi specialises in teaching concepts and assisting tools for

Dr Radhika Khanna | VICE-PRINCIPAL OF SRI SACHIN SCHOOL, MUMBAI

A PhD in education, Radhika devoted 25 years of her life to the cause of empowering people with disabilities. She created the first and only five-year polytechnic course in the world that guarantees jobs for disabled and mentally challenged individuals. She

IN THE HIRING LINE IT COS TREAD CAUTIOUSLY

Mphasis to hire only 6k this year

Co says it trimmed recruitment target by 2,200 due to improvement in employee productivity

Deepshikha Monga
NEW DELHI

IT SERVICES firm Mphasis will hire 6,000 people this year, about 2,200 less than anticipated, due to improvement in employee productivity, its chief executive said.

The Bangalore-based firm, majority-owned by EDS which merged with Hewlett-Packard (HP) early this year, improved its utilisation rates by 11% to 80% in the past seven months, CEO Jeya Kumar said. Utilisation — percentage of hours spent on billable projects versus the total number of hours worked — had dipped in the past one year, as some clients postponed projects a few quarters ago.

The company claimed that building up of extra capacity was another reason for decline in productivity. Utilisation rates don't take into account employees on the bench — the buffer for new projects — and in training. IT-ITES companies usually keep their utilisation rates around 75-80%.

Mphasis has already hired 2,500 people so far and will hire another 3,500 by March 2009. It recently changed its fiscal year to November-October to align it with HP's. At the end of seven months (ended October 2008), it had about 28,795 employees.

"Our focus during the past 6-7 months has been on driving internal efficiencies and improving our geographical presence," Mr Kumar said. Mphasis is now investing in expansion in Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

Mr Kumar said the move to hire less was not linked to the slowdown. "We're not seeing any downturn yet. Customers are taking longer to decide and the process is much more complex, but projects are not getting cancelled," he said. Mphasis is targeting bigger



outsourcing deals following consolidation in the global financial services space. The company has decided to focus on fixed-price contracts, as opposed to time-and-material contracts, to boost operating margins. Expansion in domestic BPO business would largely happen in tier II and III cities.

Mphasis has also initiated discussions with HP on tapping synergies. "We have started discussions on a joint go-to-market strategy. There is no overlap between the two. Our infrastructure technology outsourcing (ITO) business, in particular, can gain a lot from the association with HP," Mr Kumar said. However, concrete plans on that front would emerge in another quarter.

Mphasis reported consolidated revenues of Rs 1,907 crore in the seven-month period ended October 2008, up 41% growth over the same period last year. During the same period, net profit stood at Rs 293 crore.

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Wipro to go ahead with hiring plans

Our Bureau
BANGALORE

INDIA'S third-biggest software exporter Wipro Technologies on Tuesday said that it will hire around 13,500 engineering graduates as planned earlier. This comes at a time when the company is coping with a slowing demand for its services in the US and European markets.

Wipro, which has offered these graduates an option of joining the company's BPO arm, said it will not change the salary package for those opting to join Wipro BPO.

As reported by ET last week, these graduates have the option of joining Wipro's BPO division. The company has come up with the option since it anticipates a slowdown in projects in its software services business. This is already happening. Pradeep Bahirwani, vice-president for talent acquisition at Wipro, said that more than 95% of the engineering graduates have already accepted the option of working in Wipro's BPO centre in Kolkata.

These fresh hires would be transitioned to the IT services segment within 12-18 months as their BPO experience would be considered relevant.

These graduates will make anywhere between Rs 2.75 lakh and Rs 3.25 lakh per annum.

Engineering graduates who are not willing to join Wipro BPO will have to wait for around two quarters before they are accommodated in the IT services business.

The company added that the nature of work for those joining BPO will be in the non-voice segment, dealing with transaction processing which requires technical expertise.



WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 03, 2008

MphasiS in Hiring Mode; Confines Attrition to 1% for Disabled Employees

MphasiS raised the number of disabled employees to 327 from a mere 56 last year. The company is recruiting persons with disabilities in tier-3 cities like Indore, where 60 disabled persons are currently employed at the MphasiS Center

Whereas HP's announcement to layoff 24,600 employees in the coming three years perturbed trade unions, MphasiS, an EDS-HP company has shown a positive picture by constraining attrition figure to less than one percent in the special category of its employees with disability in the last three quarters.

MphasiS won the National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in the category of 'Best Employer' and the National Center for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) - Shell Helen Keller Award 2008. Around 1.57 percent of its 28,254 employees are disabled.

MphasiS CEO Jeya Kumar said, "Although it was not easy for us to hire persons with disabilities a year ago when we started, but in last three months we have intensified our CSR work and raised the number of disabled employees to 327 from a mere 56 last year."

Contrary to the current trend of retrenchment, the company is in a hiring mode. Kumar said, "In the last three quarters, we have extended our coverage. Earlier we were covering more of the U.S. than any other place. Now we have started covering Europe and some parts of Asian countries. We have started diversifying our portfolio."

"We have also started building our own intellectual properties which is focused on zero marking cost under our business process management model. Over the last seven months, our

utilization grew 11 percent from 69 to 80 percent. Our BPO sector has grown 26 percent, application 29 percent and infrastructure management which is ITO 62 percent. Our overall growth is 32 percent in the last ten months. Although the deals are getting delayed, we continue to see strong growth,” he added.

The company is also recruiting persons with disabilities in tier-3 cities like Indore, where 60 disabled persons are currently employed at the MphasiS Center. All disabled employees undergo structured induction training. They are also given accommodation whenever requested with other kind of facilities.

The 327 employees are engineers, trainers, chartered accountants, people in administration, executives, call centre agents and customer support associates. Though special facilities for the physically disabled, software for the blind, language interpretation facilities etc have been provided, they are all in a cross section of occupation from training, to taking calls, F&A to application development and are part of mainstream employment.

National Center for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEPD)' recent study “Employment Practices of the Corporate Sector with Reference to People with Disabilities” suggests that over 0.40 percent employees of the Indian companies are disabled.

<http://www.globalservicesmedia.com/Content/general200812035593.asp>

National awards for the empowerment of persons with disabilities

On the eve of International Day of Disabled persons, the government of India has announced National awards for the empowerment of persons with disabilities. Individuals and organisations who have been awarded are:

Individuals:

G N Sangeetha, Bangalore, Karnataka; Gokul Prasad Pareek, Jaipur, Rajasthan; Mohammed Asif Iqbal, Kolkata, West Bengal; Hanamanth Devnoor, Gulbarga, Karnataka; Patel Manjulaben Uttambhai, Vadodara, Gujarat; Vijay Krishnamani, Bangalore, Karnataka; Sunita Thomas, Mumbai, Maharashtra; Satender Sangwan, Dehradun, Uttarakhand; Ajay Kumar Mandhyan, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand; Ira Bhatnagar, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh; G J Siddharth, Chennai, Tamil Nadu; Latha G, Bangalore, Karnataka; K Srikanth, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh; Shitur Urjit Shah, Mumbai, Maharashtra; G Sujatha, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh; P Ramalaxman, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh; Jhanna Lall Shastri, Guwahati, Assam; Bachchoo Singh, Delhi; Panchal Purushottam Jivanlal, Vadodara, Gujarat; Prosenjit Majumdar, Kolkata, West Bengal; Madhu Singhal, Bangalore, Karnataka; Muktaben Pankajkumar Dagli, Surendernagar, Gujarat; S Sunder, Chennai, Tamil Nadu; Deepak Sharan, Bangalore, Karnataka; Kishor Mohan Bhattacharyya, Guwahati, Assam; Veena Malhotra, New Delhi; Ravindra Yashwant Nandedkar, Dhule, Maharashtra; Aresh Kanta Banerjee Choudhury, Kolkata, West Bengal; Prabhakaran Vishwanathan, Chennai, Tamil Nadu; Sagadevan M, Chennai, Tamil Nadu; Kshama Kulshreshta, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh; Praveen Kumar Singh, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh; Sarita Dwivedi, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh; Master Rizwan Azimuddin Shaikh, Vadodara, Gujarat.

Organisations:

Padma Vertical Solution Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, Tamil Nadu; Mphasis – an EDS Company, Bangalore, Karnataka; Sweekaar Rehabilitation Institute for Handicapped, Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh; IBM India Pvt. LTD., Bangalore, Karnataka; Spectra Vision, Bhavnagar, Gujarat; Blind People's Association, Ahmedabad, Gujarat; National Association for the Blind, New Delhi; Devnar Foundation for the Blind, Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh; Society for the Child Development, New Delhi; Madhya Pradesh Viklang Sahayata Samiti, Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh; Recreation – a voluntary agency, Imphal, Manipur; National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad, Andhra Pradesh; Webel Mediatronics Limited, Kolkata, West Bengal; Sanjivani Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd., Tiska, Goa; Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd., New Delhi; H.P. Minorities Finance & Development Corporation, Shimla, Himachal Pradesh; Local Level Committee, District Seoni, Madhya Pradesh; District Imphal East, Manipur; District Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh.

<http://www.i4donline.net/news/news-details.asp?Title=National-awards-for-the-empowerment-of-persons-with-disabilities&catid=57&newsid=15656>

MphasiS wins awards for empowerment of disabled

BANGALORE, INDIA: MphasiS, an EDS company, won the prestigious National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in the category of Best Employer, and the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) - Shell Helen Keller Award 2008.

These two awards recognize the ongoing efforts of MphasiS to build an inclusive workplace and are an endorsement of commitment towards providing equal work opportunities to all. At MphasiS the focus is on increasing employability through intensive partnerships with organisations working in the field.

The Award conferred on MphasiS, cites that 1.57 percent of the total workforce at MphasiS come in the category of people with disabilities. The 327 employees are engineers, trainers, chartered accountants, people in administration, executives, call centre agents and customer support associates.

Though special facilities for the physically disabled, software for the blind, language interpretation facilities etc have been provided, they are all in a cross section of occupation from training, to taking calls, F&A to application development and are part of mainstream employment.

Jeya Kumar, chief executive officer of MphasiS, said: "Creating an inclusive workplace is the fulfilment of our corporate mission. Employment of people with disabilities was not incidental - it is a key business driver and a conscious decision driven by the senior leadership. These employees have distinguished themselves with their commitment to the organisation, and value they bring to our customers. With our ongoing projects, we hope to invest in training and developing more such individuals and aim to add them to our diverse workforce."

Elango R, chief human resource Officer, MphasiS, said: "**The award represents MphasiS'** commitment to its employees. MphasiS is a company that demonstrates its belief in equal rights and gainful employment for persons with disabilities through its policies and practices. Recruiting disabled people is not a charity, but a commitment towards becoming an employer of choice for all. We are proud of the fact that all employees are part of mainstream society." <http://discuss.itacumens.com/index.php?PHPSESSID=8c61379973bd425e8ffa5ae323ea6b6e&topic=41730.msg53893#msg53893>

Mphasis caps fresh hiring at 3,500 on better productivity

NOT LINKED TO SLOWDOWN

THE IT SERVICES FIRM WILL limit total hiring to 6,000 this year, about 2,200 less than anticipated

Deepshikha Monga
NEW DELHI

IT SERVICES firm Mphasis will limit its hiring to 6,000 this year, some 2,200 less than anticipated due to improvement in employee productivity, its chief executive said on Wednesday.

The Bangalore-based firm, majority-owned by EDS which merged with Hewlett-Packard early this year, improved its utilisation rates by 11% to 80% in the last seven months, CEO Jeja Kumar said. Utilisation—percentage of hours spent on billable projects versus the total number of hours worked—had slipped in the last one year, as some clients postponed projects a few quarters ago.

The firm claims building up of extra capacity was another reason for decline in productivity. Utilisation rates don't take into account employees on the bench—the buffer for new projects—and in training. IT-ITES companies usually keep their utilisation rates around the 75-80% range.

Mphasis has already hired 2,500 people so far and will hire another 3,500 by March 2009. It recently changed its fiscal year to November-October to align it with HP's. At the end of the seven months ended October 2008, it had about 28,795 employees.

"Our focus during the last six-seven months has been on driving internal efficiencies and improving our geographical presence," Mr Kumar said. Mphasis is now investing in expansion in Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

Mr Kumar said the move to hire less was not linked to the slowdown in the wake of the financial crisis. "We're not seeing any downturn yet. Customers are taking longer to decide and the process is much more complex but projects are not getting cancelled," he said. Mphasis is targeting bigger outsourcing deals following consolidation in the global financial services space.

The company has decided to focus on

IMPROVED UTILISATION

UTILISATION RATE—PERCENTAGE of hours spent on billable projects —up 11% at 80% in last 7 months



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We're not seeing any downturn yet. Customers are taking longer to decide and the process is much more complex but projects are not getting cancelled

JEJA KUMAR
CEO, MPHASIS

fixed-price contracts, as opposed to time-and-material contracts, to boost operating margins. Expansion in domestic BPO business would largely happen in tier II and III cities.

Mphasis has also initiated discussions with HP on tapping synergies. "We have started discussions on a joint go-to-market strategy. There is no overlap between the two and our infrastructure technology outsourcing (ITO) business, in particular, can gain a lot from the association with HP," Mr Kumar said. However, concrete plans on that front would emerge in another quarter.

Mphasis reported consolidated revenues of Rs 1,907 crore in the seven-month period ended October 2008, up 41% growth over the same period last year. During the same period, net profit stood at Rs 295 crore.

Disability never stops them from dreaming big



Sangeetha receives the award from Vice President Hamid Ansari in New Delhi on Wednesday.

DH News Service

NEW DELHI: "Lack of eyesight can prevent me from seeing the world as it is, but it cannot stop me from dreaming. I dream a lot and that is why I am here."

Ask Dr G N Sangeetha from Bangalore about her source of strength and his recipient of National Award for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, 2008, would say her dreams to achieve something big have taught her how to scale great heights in spite of her visual impairment.

This 36-year-old Documentation Officer in NMKV College for Women, Bangalore University, who became totally visually impaired at the age of seven due to a brain tumour on the optic nerve, is the first blind woman from Karnataka to attain a doctorate degree.

Sangeetha was one of the five national awardees from Karnataka, who received their honours from Vice President Hamid Ansari on the occasion of the World Disability Day here on Wednesday. Bangalore-based IBM India Pvt Ltd and Manipal EDS Company were also selected for the award for



Madhu Singhal

their disability-friendly employment policy.

"Helping poor and rural women to overcome their disabilities is my aim in life and my organisation has helped more than 6,000 persons with disabilities through education, training and employment," said Madhu Singhal, another awardee from Bangalore.

With a Masters Degree in Hindustani Classical vocal music, Madhu, who suffers from blindness, has been assisting and counselling differently-abled women and is also a

member of the World Blind Association.

Harmanth H Devnagar, a cured leprosy patient from Gulbarga, was also honoured as he could overcome the social stigma and start a BTP Centre which also provide training for leprosy-cured persons.

In spite of 100 per cent hearing impairment, Vijay Krishnamani from Bangalore could successfully complete his masters degree in computer application along with a diploma in network, control computing. He is employed in the Infosys BFO in Bangalore as a business analyst and effectively uses technological tools to communicate with others.

Dr Deepak Sharan, an orthopaedic surgeon from Bangalore, was honoured as he had surgically operated more than 10,000 persons with various locomotor disabilities and had invented a new surgical procedure for significant functional improvement in persons with cerebral palsy. He has performed free surgeries on over 300 children with cerebral palsy, who are economically backward, thereby enabling them to lead a near-normal life.

Mphasis wins awards for empowerment of persons with disabilities



Translation:

Headline: Mphasis wins award for empowerment of persons with disabilities

Mphasis an IT and BPO company has won two national awards in the category for the empowerment of persons with disabilities.

These two awards recognize the ongoing efforts of Mphasis to build an inclusive workplace and providing equal work opportunities to all.

The Award conferred on Mphasis, cites that 1.57 percent (327) of the total workforce at Mphasis come in the category of people with disabilities.

The employees consist of engineers, trainers, chartered accountants, people in administration, executives, call centre agents and customer support associates. Special facilities for the physically disabled, soft ware for the blind, language interpretation facilities etc have been provided.

"Creating an inclusive workplace is the fulfillment of our corporate mission", says Jeya Kumar, Chief Executive Officer , Mphasis.