

National Action Plan for Skill Training of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) – Need for Winning Leaps

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, has launched the National Action Plan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship on 21st March 2015. The said National Action Plan is given below:

A. Background

Persons with disability in India face many challenges when looking to develop employable skills and in gaining meaningful employment. While India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with disability (UNCRPD), persons with disability continue to face many difficulties in the labour market.

According to census 2011, there are 2.68 Crore Persons with Disability (PwDs) in India (1.50 crore male and 1.18 crore female PwDs). Even though, disabled people constitute a significant percentage of the population of India, their need for meaningful employment largely remains unmet, in spite of implementation of “The Persons with Disability Act, 1995”. According to the Census, 68% of India lives in rural areas. Therefore, in the overall population, the number of disabled is proportionately higher in rural areas, accentuated by general poverty considerations and poor access to health services. The rural disabled are significantly disconnected from skills and markets.

While, there should be an economic safety net for those who need it, many people with disability have a strong desire to work and achieve economic independence and share in the wealth of India.

Improving vocational training and employment opportunities for people with disability is a critical element for enhancing the quality of life for individual with disability, their families, but there are also substantial gains for the broader economy. There are substantial costs to individuals and to society associated with these poor employment outcomes for people with disability. The World Bank considers that leaving people with disability, outside the economy, translates into a foregone GDP of about 5% to 7%. In addition to the individual and family benefits, there is also a strong economic imperative to increased labour force participation which will help to address country's shortage of skilled labour force, while at the same time reducing fiscal pressures associated with welfare dependency.

It was decided in the discussions held during the presentation made by the Department of Persons with Disabilities to Hon'ble Prime Minister on 24.10.2014 that the Department will collaborate with Skill Development Mission to work out new skill development initiatives for people with disability.

B. What we already have : The Skill Training Landscape for PwDs

- National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
- Vocational training courses offered by National Institutes of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and its affiliate bodies like National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC), National Trust etc.
- Ministry of Labour and Employment supervising more than 20 Vocational Rehabilitation Centres (VRCs) for handicapped, more than 10,000 ITIs and more than 1000 Employment Exchanges.
- Technical and Vocational courses, being offered through Community colleges, IITs and Universities, affiliated with Ministry of Human Resources Development.
- NGOs focusing on vocational training and skill development. Many of them have done excellent work.
- Private sector training organizations: Under the CSR initiative, many organizations have done exemplary work.
- Public Sector Undertakings like NTPC, BPCL, BEL, HAL etc. have also contributed substantially to vocational training of persons with disability.
- National Rural Livelihood Mission of Ministry of Rural Development.
- National Urban Livelihood Mission of Ministry of Urban Development.
- Vocational training / livelihood programs of other Central Govt. Ministries and State Governments.

C. The Big Gap

- About 1.34 crores persons with disabilities are in the employable age of 15 to 59 years. About 99 lakh persons with disabilities in the employable age group are non-workers or are marginal workers.
- Persons with disabilities are among the poorest in the population.
- Urgent need to scale up the skill training infrastructure in view of the huge demand- supply gap.
- The training, being offered through various institutions / mechanisms is non-homogenous, lacks quality and is very low on employability.
- Very low access of the present training infrastructure to the PwDs in rural areas.
- Low level of involvement of private sector in the skill training of PwDs
- The skill training offered by various ministries/departments to the PwDs is fragmented or overlapping

There is an imminent need for:

- Quality Vocational Training with high employability.
- Homogenous training curriculum & methodology
- Use of latest technology in training, content generation and monitoring of training.
- Synergistic participation of the Private Sector and NGOs in the training and placement process.
- Targeted optimal use of CSR funds.

D. Proposal for Winning Leaps for Skill Training of PwDs :

There is a need to launch a National Action Plan for Skilling the Persons with Disabilities by bring all the main stakeholders like various Central Government ministries, State Governments, NGOs, PSUs and the Private Sector on one platform.

(Model of the proposed training architecture is enclosed, as Annexure).

- (i) A Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) to be set up in the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities with the help of NSDC. The PMU would have the following components :

- Training need assessment unit
- Content Generation unit
- Training monitoring and Certification unit
- Employer Connect unit
- IT Unit to provide support for creation of E-learning modules, monitoring of training, E-certification and training centres / creation and maintenance of a job portal.

- (ii) The vocational / skill training would be provided by a network of skill training providers led by NGOs and VRCs. The vocational training would be provided by a cluster of training providers scattered over the country, having an established track record of providing excellent training in the past with high employability ratio. These NGOs / VRCs would be provided outcome based financial support by Deptt. of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) / National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). Synergistic support would be provided to these training providers by the National Institutes of DEPwD, training institutions of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, other Central Ministries and State Governments.
- (iii) A separate cross cutting Sector Skill Council for PwDs need to be created in collaboration with Ministry of Skill Development and the private sector. Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), in consultation with the Sector skill council and various National Institutes of the DePWD would help generate a homogenous course curriculum and certification mechanism for the training providers.
- (iv) For every such training cluster, a number of private sector organizations and PSUs would be mapped, who would provide them CSR funds, training support and employer connect.
- (v) DEPwD along with NSDC would help these training providers by connecting them with various private sector organizations and PSUs for providing employment connect as well as for obtaining CSR support.
- (vi) State Governments would support proactively by offering infrastructure and resource support to these clusters of Vocational Training Providers.

E. Outcomes Sought

- The DEPwD, in collaboration with NSDC, proposes to set **an ambitious target of skilling 5 lakh persons with disability in next 3 years (1 lakh in first year, 1.5 lakh in second year and 2.5 lakh in third year). After achieving the target for three years, we would have achieved a momentum and would have created a robust online-skill training platform enabling us to skill 5 lakh PwDs every year, thus skilling 2 Million more PwDs during 2018-2022. Thus, till the year 2022, the National Action Plan will lead to skilling of 2.5 Million PwDs (with 70% target employment). This would be a significant contribution to the achievement of targets for the National Skill Development Mission.**
- The training providers would be a network of about 100 clusters of trainers, thus setting a target of skilling about 1000 PwDs in the first year for each of the cluster. The lead NGO may empower and take the help of small NGOs in the rural areas for the skill training but every such training centre will be monitored by the PMU. The network of training providers and capacity thereof will keep increasing every year.

F. Funds Required:

Estimated funds required for the first year (with a target of skilling 1 lakh PwDs), taking an assumption of Rs. 15,000 per trainee per skill training course, would be about Rs. 150 Crores, which can broadly come from the following sources:

1. Funds from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disability. Presently the department is funding National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation for training of PwDs with an average funding of Rs. 12, 000 per trainee per skilling course.
2. Funds to the tune of Rs. 50 Crores may be provided by Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (on the lines of STAR scheme)
3. Funds may be mobilized from CSR funds of PSUs and private sector. Innovative funding options like “Skill Training vouchers/cards for PwDs” will be used to mobilize CSR funds and funds from philanthropic organizations.

G. Action Plan

The action points for the proposed National Action Plan along with tentative deadlines are given below:

Sl. No.	Activity	Deadline	Responsible Organisation
1.	Launching the National Action Plan in a National Level Workshop for all the stakeholders	14/15.03.2015	DEPwD and Ministry of Skill Development
3.	Signing of MOU between DEPwD and NSDC for setting up the PMU and providing outcome based financial support for the vocational training / employer connect activities	25.02.2015	DEPwD and NSDC
	Signing of MOUs with Ministry of Labour, Ministry of MSME and Ministry of HRD	15.03.2015	DEPwD / MSME / Labour / HRD
4.	Setting up of PMU	01.04.2015	DEPwD and NSDC
5	Setting up Sector Skill Council for PwDs	01.04.2015	DEPwD and NSDC
6.	Five Regional Level Workshops / Stakeholder Action Groups for the clusters of training providers	15.03.2015 25.03.2015 05.04.2015 15.04.2015 25.04.2015	DEPwD / NSDC / State Govts. / Ministry of Labour / Ministry of HRD
7.	Second level National Workshop for all the stakeholders for finalizing the structure	15.05.2015	All the stakeholders
8.	Launch of the Training modules	01.06.2015	All the stakeholders
