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LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

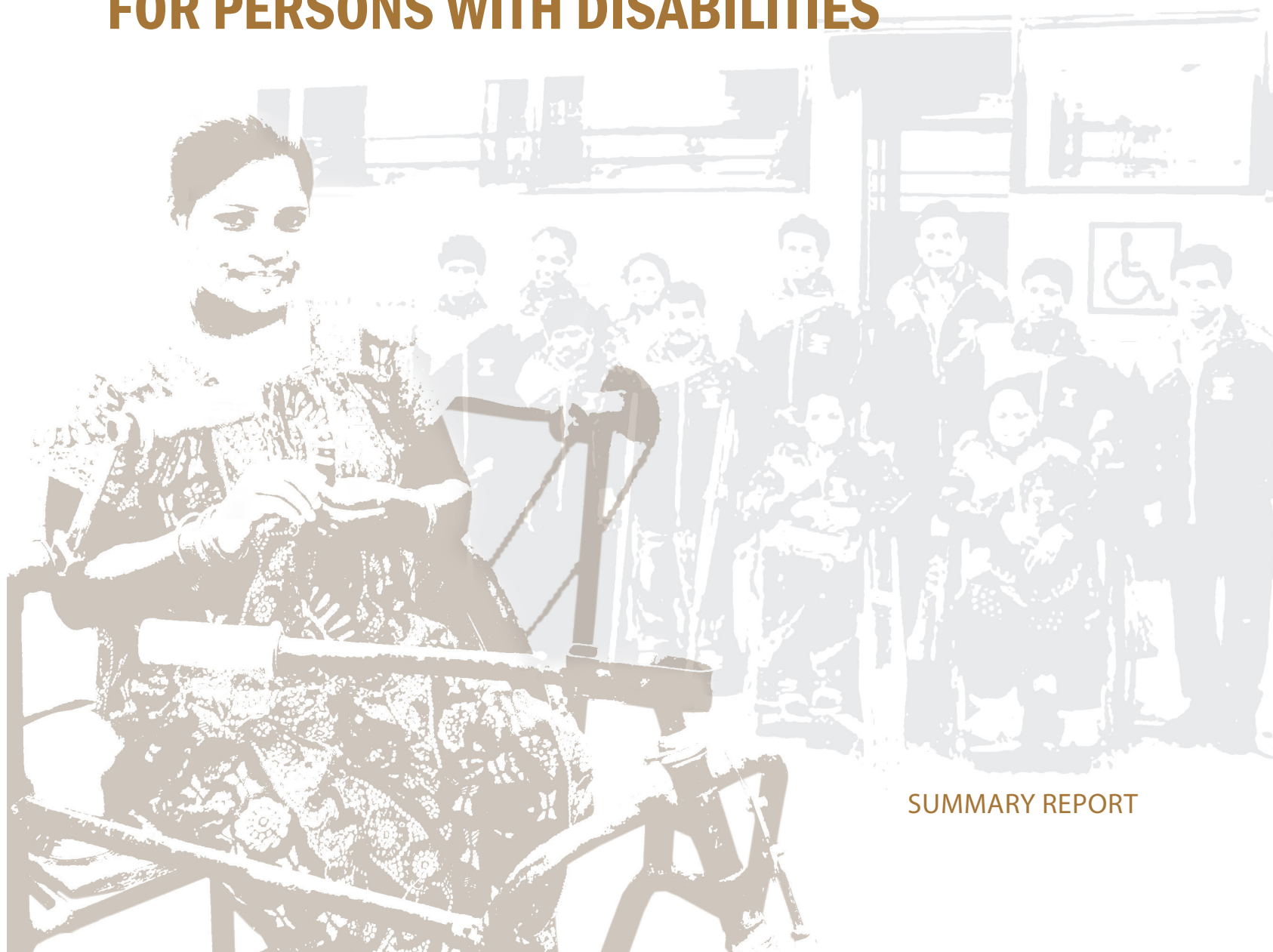


SUMMARY REPORT




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"Development can only be sustainable when it is equitable, inclusive and accessible for all. Persons with disabilities need therefore to be included at all stages of development processes, from inception to monitoring and evaluation. Addressing negative attitudes, the lack of services or ready access to them, and other harmful social, economic and cultural barriers will benefit all of society.

On this International Day of Persons with Disabilities, I call on governments, civil society and the global community to work for and alongside persons with disabilities to achieve inclusive, sustainable and equitable development worldwide".

**Ban Ki-moon,
Secretary-General, United Nations,
3rd December 2011**



An Overview

The 11th Five Year Plan (FYP) places strong emphasis on inclusive and rapid poverty reduction and among the key strategies proposed by it, is the accelerated support to decentralized and outcome based planning. It expects to improve the effectiveness of development programmes and to facilitate inclusive growth, the latter by ensuring equitable participation and benefit sharing by disadvantaged social groups.

In 2008, UNDP, India in partnership with the Planning Commission launched the Livelihood Promotion Strategies Project in the country focused on seven states. The project recognizes that the seven UN focus States (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh) have relatively higher concentration of poor and disadvantaged groups than other States. These disadvantaged women and men have limited livelihood options and are highly dependent on agriculture and the informal economy.

All women and men with disabilities can and want to be productive members of society. In both developed and developing countries, promoting more inclusive societies and employment opportunities for people with disabilities requires improved access to basic education, vocational training relevant to labour market needs and jobs suited to their skills, interests and abilities, with adaptations as needed. Many societies are also recognizing the need to dismantle other barriers, making the physical environment more accessible, and providing information in a variety of formats, and challenging attitudes and mistaken assumptions about Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

It is in this context that the UNDP, New Delhi and the Indian Planning Commission, carried out a review and research study in 2010, which documented the status and consolidated the existing experiences and innovations of various government and non-government initiatives that are taking forward programmes and processes of creating livelihood opportunities for PwDs. The knowledge and practical understanding gained from this review exercise has given valuable insights into the possible ways and means of livelihood improvement for PwDs, which are being formulated into a set of recommendations to be shared with the relevant policy makers and agencies both at the national and state government level in their progress towards social inclusion and poverty reduction. The report will also feed into the XIIth FYP on measures for inclusion and livelihood improvement of Persons with Disabilities.



How is ‘Disability’ defined in India?

In 1995, the Government of India passed the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act (PwD Act). As per Section 2 (I) of the Act, **Disability** is defined as:¹

- i. Blindness;
- ii. Low vision;
- iii. Leprosy-cured;
- iv. Hearing impairment;
- v. Loco motor disability;
- vi. Mental retardation;
- vii. Mental illness;

¹ For the purpose of this study, we have taken the PwD Act, 1995 as the base for definitions for categories of disability.

As per Sec 2(t) of the Act, **‘persons with disability’** means a person suffering from not less than forty percent of any disability as certified by a medical authority.

In addition, there are other frameworks being presently used as reference points for describing and defining Disability in India.

The **National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999** deals with the following conditions:

- i. Autism,
- ii. Cerebral Palsy,
- iii. Mental Retardation, and
- iv. Multiple Disabilities, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Government of India ratified the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)** in October 2007. Article (1) of the Convention states that, “Persons with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

Disability is therefore not defined as a standalone medical condition, but rather as the product of the interaction between the environment broadly defined and the health condition of particular persons.”

According to the Census 2001² there were approximately 22 million persons with disabilities in India who constituted 2.13 percent of the total population. This includes persons with visual, hearing, speech, loco motor and mental disabilities. However, according to the World Bank Report 2009, approximately 6 percent of the Indian population has some form of disability. To top it up, the World Health Organization figure is stated at 10 percent of the total population. Disability is a complex phenomenon and thereby accurately measuring its prevalence through a national level survey presents many challenges. Given these complexities, the lack of agreement about optimal measures of disability is not surprising, hence resulting in varying figures.

² Census 2011 has included revised questions about disability, and there has been a reasonable amount of publicity so that the information reaches the relevant people. The results of Census 2011 are expected to provide much more authentic numbers considering the spadework that is being done. For this study, though, we have to rely on the figures emerging from the earlier Census, 2001.



Value Proposition of Including PwDs in the Economic Work Force

Poverty is a cause of disability since the poor often lack resources to prevent malnutrition, and do not have access to adequate health services that may prevent some disabilities. Poverty is a consequence of disability since persons with disabilities often lack access to education, health services and income- generating activities: they are often denied their human, social and economic rights.³

³ Leymat, Anne et al, 2006, 'Good Practices for the Economic Inclusion of People with Disabilities in Developing Countries Funding Mechanisms for Self-Employment', Handicap International.

While PwDs constitute a huge population, they are rarely seen as productive human capital of the Nation state. The direct correlation between disability and poverty is largely ignored by National states, while it creates a vicious circle as the opportunity for persons with disabilities to earn is much less and their expenses are more, resulting in people with disabilities and their families being poorer than the others.

Research reveals that a majority of PwDs are unable to earn any livelihood for a variety of reasons, such as the lack of adequate education or training. Only one to two percent of PwDs in developing countries receive an education. (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 1998). Also, the employers, family members and/or sometimes the PwDs themselves have preconceived ideas regarding their capabilities, accessibility issues and so on. Compared to their able-bodied peers unemployment among PwDs is usually high. The situation of women with disabilities is even worse, with more discrimination and fewer opportunities. As a result, PwDs are mostly considered burdens, live in poverty and lack access to basic services such as education, health care, vocational training, employment, etc. As a result, *'Poor people are disproportionately disabled...and people with disabilities are disproportionately poor.'* Holzmann, World Bank.



There are an estimated 650 million people with disabilities in the world (maybe 12 percent of the global population) and 80 percent of these (520 million) are concentrated in developing countries. Furthermore 80-90 percent of the persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed compared to 50-70 percent in industrialized countries.⁴ "The World Bank considers that leaving people with disabilities outside the economy translates into a foregone GDP of about 5-7 percent".⁵

Studies prove that the costs of economic exclusion outweigh the costs of full economic citizenship of PwDs. Henceforth, it is valuable to invest in the disabled people.⁶ The remedy for this is to understand the condition of PwDs and work towards providing support for their livelihood options to ensure a life of dignity for them. Many developed nations have already begun work in this direction and it is evident from a range of experiences available from across the world, which highlight the reduction in poverty and increase in economic participation by the PwDs.

In India, the PwDs talent, skills and potential mostly remain untapped, under-utilised or under-developed. Further, the education and employment rates for persons with disabilities are far lower than the non-disabled persons. The opportunities for PwDs, to earn is less and their expenses more, resulting in them being one of the more impoverished communities in India.

Even though India is clocking an average annual GDP Growth rate of 8.45 percent (2004-2011) and employment opportunities have increased in the last two decades, the employment percentage of persons with disabilities actually fell from 43 percent in 1991 to 38 percent in 2002 despite the galloping economic growth.⁷

According to the employment projections given in the Eleventh Plan, an estimated 116 million employment opportunities would be created in the XIth and XIIth Plan periods. The unemployment rate at the end of the XIIth

⁴ Drawn from UN Enable Statistics. Please see <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=255>

⁵ Cited in 'A new Financial Access Frontier: People with Disabilities', Centre for Financial Inclusion at ACCION International

⁶ Kleinitz, Pauline, 'Including People with Disabilities in Poverty Alleviation: why do it, and how: CBM-Nossal Partnership for Disability Inclusive Development)

⁷ World Bank Report, 'People with Disabilities in India From Commitments to Outcomes, 2007, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INDIAEXTN/Resources/295583-1171456325808/Chapter05.pdf>

plan period is projected to fall a little over 1 percent.⁸ Further, a Skill Development Mission was launched in the XIth – Five Year plan, which envisions creating 500 million skilled workers by 2022.

The Analysis and Assessment of the findings and review of the ground realities has given a good understanding with respect to the barriers and opportunities vis a vis existing livelihood programmes and policies. Some of the major challenges concerning the inclusion of the Disabled that came to the forefront were:

- » An **inadequate and inefficient Management Information System** proved to be a handicap, as most of the departments particularly in the State governments had not filed compliance reports with the respective Commissioner of Disabilities. In cases, where data was available, it was in the form of a data dump without any segregation either gender wise, age or any category wise. Only the total figure of PwDs was made available. Category-wise (VH, HH and OH) segregated data could be found only for the three percent Government job reservation provision. However, department wise single source availability of the data on three percent compliance was also not found. Only the Department of Social Justice, Government of Chhattisgarh has a system of keeping department wise and category wise status of compliance on job reservation of PwDs.
- » **Lack of a common definition to understanding Disability** across various government agencies and departments was also a big hindrance. There is no uniform terminology being used by the departments. While the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) uses 'Persons with Disabilities', most other departments continued to use the term 'Physically Handicapped'.
- » **Lack of a detailed and centralized reporting system.** No single source data is available with the State government on all schemes related to disabilities. For example, the MoSJE, is the nodal ministry for PwDs, but it only collects data related to their schemes which is also not category specific. They have no provisions for keeping comprehensive centralized data on disability. As far as beneficiary data is concerned, the department has data related to scholarships and pensions being directly disbursed by the department. The programmes implemented by NGOs through the Government grant-in-aid schemes have no centralized data of beneficiaries, though the department receives the list of beneficiaries from the NGOs.

⁸ Report of the 'Sub Group on Economic Empowerment of persons with Disabilities', August 2011. Under the Working Group on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for formulation of XII Five Year Plan (2012-2017)

- ▶▶ **Lack of transparency and information sharing** affects the availability of data and performance. Except for MGNREGA website, where the data is available across the nation (only total figures), websites for all the other livelihood schemes do not provide data pertaining to PwD beneficiaries. It is observed that less than one third (28.03%) of the PwDs actually registered have benefited under MGNREGA with 19.48 as the average number of days worked.
- ▶▶ There was **an under-utilization of the quota for PwDs in schemes including job reservations**, which were falling short by 66 percent of the mandated reservation.
- ▶▶ **No action has ever been initiated for the non-compliance of the stipulated reservation** by the various departments by the Commissioner of Disability.
- ▶▶ The **PMEGP data was available for only three States** namely, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha. The average for individual PwD Swarozgaris assisted under SGSY was found to be 1.98 percent as against the three percent reservation. The average for States under study shows 1.64 percent, with Andhra Pradesh at 3.24 percent and Madhya Pradesh at 3.03 percent, the only two States to have met the target of three percent reservation.
- ▶▶ The **impact of gender on disability is also manifold** as urban men with physical impairments most often represent the Disabled people's organizations (DPOs) and Women, especially those with learning difficulties, sensory impairments or mental illness and multiple disabilities rarely get equal access, resulting in a limited or minimal representation of their needs and interests in the larger arena of policy changes.



- ▶▶ The move from sheltered employment schemes to facilitating the entry of disabled people into mainstream employment is progressive. However, market based mechanisms will not lift the disabled out of poverty as long as **prejudice remains deeply embedded in social, political and economic institutions**. Although a high proportion of those living in most extreme poverty (e.g. street children) are disabled, they are often also excluded from assistance programmes as disability is seen as a specialist issue, for others to deal with.

As per the World Bank reports, more than fifteen years after the reforms, disabled people have about 60 percent lower employment rates than the general population, a gap that has been increasing, which is a cause of major concern. In order to ensure that Persons with Disabilities are able to earn a livelihood and lead a life of dignity, contribute to the economy of the country and become respected citizens, it is imperative that a right-based approach is adopted while framing policies and developing programmes. Disproportionate level of poverty among disabled people and the widespread exclusion they experience⁹ therefore calls for a twin-track approach wherein disabled people should be included in all areas of work; at the same time there should be specific initiatives for working with disabled people. Governments, donors and NGOs need to recognize that if disability inclusion is to be achieved, active measures are needed to combat the discrimination that currently exists. This will be possible if donors, governments and agencies work with, and not just on behalf of, disabled people.

⁹ DFID's Issues Paper, Disability, Poverty and Development (DFID 2000)



Moving Ahead: The Way Forward

General Recommendations¹⁰

- » **T**he **terminology and definitions** used for defining Disability should be standardized and uniform across departments, CSO's and policies. In addition, the discrepancy that exists wherein the terms 'handicapped' and 'Person with Disability' are used interchangeably needs to be discontinued with the elimination of the word 'handicapped' from all policy documents, schemes and legislations. The Indian government has ratified the UNCRPD three years ago, and it is expected to harmonize the varying definitions of disability as contained in different legislations to one uniform definition of Disability as described in the UNCRPD.¹¹

¹⁰ Drawn from the Report of the Sub Group on Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities – Under the Working Group of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for formulations of XII Five year Plan (2012-17), August 2011.

¹¹ 'Disability is not defined as a standalone medical condition, but rather as the product of the interaction between the environment broadly defined and the health condition of particular persons.'

- » Incorporate the **principle of Reasonable Accommodation¹² /adjustment** as articulated in the UNCRPD. With the ratification of the UNCRPD, the Indian government is obliged to review all policies, legislations and programmes in the light and spirit of the UNCRPD. Non-discrimination, equal opportunity and reasonable accommodation for PwDs need to be inherently included in every department/ office of the government.
- » **An adequate Management Information System** needs to be established, one, which will ensure that the reporting formats of all the government schemes capture the category wise disaggregated data on PwDs. This data generation will facilitate the strategizing and taking of appropriate measures in avoiding any gender or category wise discriminations and reach out uniformly.
- » The MoSJE, which is the nodal ministry, must ensure a **centralized and detailed database** for all States (similar to MGNREGA) pertaining to programmatic target achievements for the PwDs. At the MoSJE, particularly the Chief Commissioner Disability and State Commissioner Disability's office needs to be strengthened with a strong statistical support to capture all programme data that directly or indirectly benefits the PwDs.
- » The **Websites of Central and State livelihood schemes** should be updated to facilitate proper monitoring of the schemes and reporting.
- » A **system for accountability and procedures for handling non-compliance need to be defined** and capacities for effective implementation need to be put in place.
- » All **Government Ministries** (for instance animal husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries, Petroleum, Railways, Telecom etc), which have income generation programmes including the potential for outsourcing/offering franchise etc, **could ensure that at least 3 percent of their beneficiaries are persons with disabilities.**

Recommendations for the Private Sector

The PwD Act 1995 provides for the Government to offer incentives to the private and public sector to promote employment for the disabled. Despite the passing of an incentive scheme,¹³ the results have been poor.

¹² Reasonable Accommodation implies necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with Disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

¹³ Under the Incentive scheme the Government makes payment of the employers contributions to the Employees Provident Fund and Employees State Insurance for the first three years as an incentive, in return of employment of persons with disabilities with a monthly wage up to Rs 25,000/per month.

- ▶▶ To **review existing/devise new incentive** schemes that will promote employment of the disabled in the private sector. The involvement of the private sector, particularly the corporate world needs much more innovation and needs to go beyond mere incentives on Provident Fund contributions, tax benefits etc. For example, a grant scheme for employers could be initiated to support changes and accommodations at work place, which will make it supportive and conducive for the disabled to work like creating accessibility at the work place, providing assistive technologies, devices, personal attendants etc.
- ▶▶ Grants are required for **promoting disability employment, for conducting awareness/ sensitization programmes, campaigns, studies etc** to educate and inform the relevant stakeholders into the features of the UNCRPD. It is equally pertinent to involve the corporate sector in the planning and execution of awareness campaigns to showcase livelihood options. This will support the confidence building of PwDs and also help in creating a positive attitude in the community at large.
- ▶▶ To have **redress mechanisms** in place to address concerns of discrimination/**harassment faced by the PwDs in the private sector regarding employability**. The redress team should comprise of representatives from the DPO network and relevant industries.
- ▶▶ To have exclusive **consultations with selected industrial houses and corporate associations** with the participation of a decision maker to dialogue on the role they can play in enhancing livelihoods for PwDs. Prepare a composite livelihood plan on a pilot basis with an independent committee comprising appropriate representation by PwDs, corporate houses, Government and civil society to monitor it.

Recommendations for the Government/Public Sector

- ▶▶ *Undertake Skills Development Programmes* - Active collaboration with the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) must be encouraged and as a start, efforts to integrate innovative projects within the Government and private set up for the skill enhancement of PwDs could be implemented in a few selected States.
- ▶▶ *Identification of jobs* continues to be a big hurdle, as many jobs remain 'unidentified' for PwDs, debarring a large segment of qualified people with disabilities from working in the Government. The PwD Act 1995, mandates that a regular review of the list of jobs be undertaken at least once in three years but this has not happened on a regular basis. It is therefore proposed that instead of identifying specific

jobs, it would be beneficial to open up all jobs for PwDs. And incase any Department wants an exemption for a particular job it should apply for the same. An expert committee comprising of representatives from Disabled Peoples Organization (DPOs) could be formed to examine such applications.¹⁴

» A concerted effort should be made to *address the backlog of the vacancies in all the Ministries, Departments and PSUs at the Centre and State/ UT levels for PwDs from 1996 onwards.*¹⁵ A special recruitment drive could be organized to fill the backlog vacancies.

» All the *Employment Exchanges (EE) in the country (regular, professional and special) should be made inclusive and barrier free for persons with disabilities.* The efficiency of the EE with respect to people with disabilities needs to be enhanced to cater to public and private sectors. Instituting disability audits, accessible infrastructure, information, improved coordination etc can possibly do this. All exchanges are expected to register people with any kinds of disability as mentioned in the Disability Act.¹⁶



¹⁴ Report of the Sub Group on Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities – Under the Working Group of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for formulations of XII Five year Plan (2012-17), August 2011.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Drawn from the Report of the Sub Group on Economic Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities – Under the Working Group of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities for formulations of XII Five year Plan (2012-17), August 2011.



Recommendations for Entrepreneurship Development, Self Employment & Urban Livelihoods

Inclusion of persons with disabilities in all the schemes under the Entrepreneurship and Skill development programs of the Ministry of MSME ¹⁷ including short and long term courses and fulfillment of 3 percent reservation in all the programmes. The Ministry of MSME could also consider promoting an exclusive scheme for PwDs, which will allow and support PwDs to get support while initiating and setting up their own new enterprises.

- ▶ **Strengthen and improve the delivery mechanism of National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC).** It is recommended to include a grant component in addition to the loan support offered to the PwDs. In addition, collaborative synergies need to build up between NHFDC and regional rural and public sector banks that could lend directly to PwDs and get refinanced by the NHFDC.
- ▶ **Introduce new mechanisms and schemes for setting up Micro Enterprises** of Persons with Disabilities with a particular focus on people with high support needs.
- ▶ Incorporate interests and needs of the disabled as a vulnerable group as **part of new/ existing poverty alleviation schemes to promote livelihood opportunities (wage and self employment)** for those living in urban areas especially slums and from lower socio economic background.

¹⁷ Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

- » **Formulate incentive policies (sales tax, VAT, excise duty, service tax exemptions etc** for entrepreneurs with disabilities, for enterprises employing over 50 percent persons with disabilities and enterprises involved in manufacturing assistive devices/technologies for persons with disabilities.
- » The proposed **Urban Livelihood Mission** has included PwDs among the most vulnerable groups and they could be supported by special projects for wage and self-employment. The social mobilization and institutional development strategies could ensure that needs of and opportunities for PwDs are part of the planning processes. The training and capacity building of delivery institutions also will need to be sensitized to working with and involving PwDs in urban livelihood promotion.

Recommendations for Rural Livelihoods

- » **Disability specific sub programmes could be initiated under flagship government programmes, especially under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA),¹⁸ which already has provisions for PwDs.** In order to ensure the efficacy of the scheme for the disabled community, regular disability audits should be carried out. These will reveal the gaps and help in identifying strategies needed for ironing the creases. There could also be drives undertaken to inform and spread awareness about the rights of the disabled under the scheme.
- » To ensure that the **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)** is inclusive with a provision of reasonable accommodation/ adjustments, there should also be an additional focus on vulnerable groups like women with disabilities etc, ensuring that 3 percent of the target population benefiting from the scheme are PwDs and a periodic review undertaken to ascertain the impact of the programme on the livelihood patterns of PwDs.
- » **Initiate a focused livelihoods enhancing programme for persons with disabilities** on similar lines as the Indira Kranti Patham (IKP) in Andhra Pradesh. The focus would be to facilitate, improve capacities, access to availing various entitlements and services offered by the government. In addition, the federations formulated under the IKP in Andhra Pradesh could take up value added entrepreneurship beyond the realms of savings and credits as demonstrated by AKASA, Sri Lanka.¹⁹

¹⁸ An important legislation ensuring livelihood security through guaranteed 100 days wage employment for a rural household. As per MGNREGA operational guidelines, work is to be provided to a disabled person to suit his /her ability and qualification.

¹⁹ More details on IKP, Andhra Pradesh and AKASA, Sri Lanka available in the main report.

- » **To provide land to landless persons with disabilities** under the Centre and State land allocation programmes as preferred target population. This should be supplemented with trainings and capacity-building programmes related to agriculture and farm based activities to ensure sustainable livelihoods.

Various governmental as well as non-governmental initiatives in India demonstrate the challenges faced in the area of creating livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities. Ensuring appropriate policy changes, peer training, public-private partnerships, creating barrier free environment, providing adaptations of technology in rural areas; to name a few are ways of beating the existing challenges regarding the PwDs.

In addition, to the recommendations above, the case studies documented as part of this report offer valuable lessons and insights on working with and on issues of PwDs. Some recommendations based on these learnings are encapsulated below.

Recommendations based on International and Domestic Experiences

- » Learning's from both the Jharkhand (NBJK) and Cambodian experience reveal that one of the viable, economic and easy to implement models seems to be the **local one-to-one teaching method**. This could be included as a constituent in the training component of existing livelihood schemes such as PMEGP, SGSY, and SJSRY. All trained personnel could become individual and /or group Swarozgaries.
- » While surveillance and ensuring the smooth implementation of the Act is the prime responsibility of the Chief Commissioner Disability (CCD), some amount of service responsibility could be entrusted to the Chief Commissioner Disability's office as a mechanism for the effective implementation of the Act. Employer interface and employer counseling on a continuous basis could be one such area.
- » The Japanese experience showcases that it is not only for the Government to sharpen its policies and laws for the strict implementation of the reserved quota, but also for various CSOs who require to work at a similar interface and create employer awareness.
- » There is almost nil access to technology and modernization in the field of rehabilitation of PwDs in India. Several technological advancements have taken place all over the world that range from assistive devices to worksite adaptations. **The transfer of technology as well as emphasis on new innovations** by way of

research and development should be made a priority to carry forward the disability sector into the new era. They also need to cover all spectrums i.e. the farm and non-farm sector in the rural areas and manufacturing to the services sector in the urban and peri-urban areas.

- » Taking a sectoral approach, **Job Analysis** needs to be done and a handbook prepared as a ready to use guide that can serve the purpose of cross matching types and extent of functional loss of an individual with the trades. This will also allow fulfilling the clause of reasonable accommodation by an employer.
- » Being primarily an agricultural country and with the majority of PwDs in India living in rural areas, the methodology used by Goodwill industry – especially the AgrAbility project is well worth replicating. The National Rural Livelihood Mission and National Skill Development Corporation could together undertake a pilot project based on similar lines in selected States.



Moving Forward

While the above listed recommendations would be a step in the right direction, it further calls on all decision makers and donors to ensure that:

- ▶ Policies on Disability are designed and implemented with the participation of disabled people.
- ▶ Disabled persons are identified within any target group so that a provision, and where necessary, affirmative action can be built into development plans.
- ▶ Opportunities for knowledge sharing and awareness trainings on 'Disability' are provided to both members of the government and the citizenry.
- ▶ Affirmative action is considered to reserve white-collar government jobs in order to assist and motivate the disabled to use their intellectual skills and capacities.
- ▶ Tax concessions and trainings are promoted to encourage and help the disabled people start up their own enterprises in the Information Technology sector.
- ▶ Guidelines on approach to livelihood programmes for disabled groups are developed and disseminated to all government, commercial and civil society partners.
- ▶ Specific access requirements of disabled people are met in order to ensure their full participation. This may involve financial commitments on part of the government.
- ▶ Provision of credit, vocational training and other services are offered by mainstream organizations to disabled persons who need to be treated as equal citizens and as both potential consumers and producers.

It is evident there is no single solution to the challenge at hand for enhancing livelihoods of Persons with Disabilities. Various modalities such as skills development, placements, entrepreneurship, sheltered employment; microfinance, reservations and so on and so forth could prove to be useful. This also depends on the resource availability and related aspects as long as these all promise better access and none or minimal barriers coupled with non-discriminatory and positive attitudes leading towards the creation of an inclusive society that will benefit not only the PwDs but society at large.



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