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EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIFFERENTLY ABLED/ DISABLED IN INDIA



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Abstract:-India has nearly 50 million PWDs. But due to low literacy, few jobs availability and widespread social stigma makes disabled people as the most excluded in India. Children with disabilities are less likely to be in school, disabled adults are more likely to be unemployed, and families with a disabled member are often affected worse off than average.

Keywords :low literacy , Educational , Vocational Opportunities .

INTRODUCTION

Even though many disabled adults are capable for productive work but compare to the general population in employment it is very low. Assessing a person's fitness for work is very confusing. Many factors determine one's ability to work or get a job in the competitive job market.

Enhancing employment opportunities for PWDs is one of the main concerns of the disability sector in India. The Government has implemented the PWD act of 1995 for the effective and to ensure job placement to the PWDs. Also, in every five year plan, the Govt. of India is generating employment opportunities for the PWDs and to reduce the unemployment level. Still, there is a wide gap between the employment and unemployment among the PWDs. We cannot reduce the unemployment level without addressing the employment issues of PWDs, who constitute 3 to 4% of population in our country.

Educational opportunities for disabled in India-

Education provides ability and ability provides employment. Keeping it in view:-

- 1.The first school meant for the special education of deaf was established in Bombay in 1883.
- 2.The first school for blind was started at Amritsar in 1887.
- 3.The first school for blind and deaf was started at Mysore in 1901.
- 4.The first Government school 'The Emerson Institute for the blind' was started at Lahore in 1906.
- 5.The first home for mentally retarded came up at Bombay in 1941.

When India got Independence in 1947, there were 34 institutions for the deaf, 32 for the blind and 3 for mentally retarded. Country has now about 3500 special schools for the various categories of disabilities spread throughout the country.

There has been a shift in the education and rehabilitation of children with disabilities from charity to

right. It is no more the wish and choice of the giver to provide education, vocational training and rehabilitation, but the Right of the Children with disability. The inclusion of education as a fundamental right in the constitution and other legislative/legal provisions made for the disabled now has made them to claim their right for education and support.

India has now quite effective legislations for persons with disabilities:

- 1.Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 and Amendment 2000.
- 2.Persons with disability (Equal Opportunities Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.
- 3.National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999.
- 4.The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006.

In addition to the needed legal 'framework and protection, India, has developed extensive infrastructure for the development of human resources as well as working as a model of special education programmes in the different areas of disabilities in the shape of the establishments of the following seven national institutes.

- 1.National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad (Andhra Pradesh)
- 2.National Institute for the Orthopaedically Handicapped, Kolkata (West Bengal)
- 3.Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped, Mumbai (Maharashtra)
- 4.National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun (Uttarakhand)
- 5.Institute for the Physically Handicapped (New Delhi)
- 6.National Institute of Rehabilitation Training and Research, Cuttack (Orissa)
- 7.National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities, Chennai (Tamil Nadu).

A comprehensive Plan for Action for children and youth with disabilities presented by the Minister for Human Resource Development, Arjun Singh in March, 2005 has clearly advocated inclusive education by envisaging all schools “disabled friendly” by 2020. The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities, 2006 has also highlighted this need by saying that “there is a need for mainstreaming of the persons with disabilities in the general education system through inclusive education”. For making inclusive education as a success, it has emphasized (i) the development of training modules for teachers for inclusive education (ii) making schools barrier free and accessible for all types of disabilities (iii) establishing model schools of inclusive education in each state/U.T. (iv) identifying children with disabilities up to the age of 6 years and providing necessary instructions for making them join inclusive education, (v) taking steps for the schools not discouraging enrollment of students on account of their disability.

Special education in our country has been passed through the phases of exclusion, institutionalization, segregation in special schools and integration before finally accepting inclusion of the all types of the children with disabilities in the mainstream of general education. However, much has to be done for making inclusion a success for fulfilling the dreams of the disabled children and youth. Indeed, education in its any form, setting and alternative programs needs huge finances and firm determination in terms of its planning and organizing adequate education for the different categories of the disabled children. The developing country like India, with its meager sources is unable to attain the desired target without the active consciousness of its citizens towards disabilities and disabled education. We all need to have a quite positive attitude toward the education and rehabilitation of our brothers and sisters, or beloved young children who are trying their best in getting prepared themselves to live with us properly in any inclusive set-up of education and living. The role of vocational rehabilitation centre for Handicapped (VRC) in employment for differently abled.

Improved/quality training and skill development is vital for providing decent employment opportunities to the growing youth with disability. Keeping this in view the Ministry of Labour and Employment is envisage the difficulties of poor, deprived and disabled peoples of the society and due regard to create healthy environment for higher production and productivity and to develop and coordinate vocational training and employment services for them. The Directorate General of Employment and Training under the Ministry of Labour and Employment evaluates the residual capabilities of disabled people and provide them training in order to get employment.

Criteria/Eligibility to obtain the VRC services

VRC for handicapped provide services free of cost which are voluntary in nature. To obtain the services of VRC, the following categories of handicapped persons having prescribed degree of disability (i.e. 40% and above) can register themselves in their respective state centre.

Age limit 15-50 years, Persons having Locomotors Disabilities, Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired, Mentally

Retarded, Cured Leprosy

Infrastructure under the Ministry of Labour & Employment (ML&E)

There are around 947 Employment Exchanges including 43 Special Employment Exchanges for disabled people, 38 special cells for disabled persons are functioning in regular employment exchange in various states. Presently, there are 20 VRC for Handicapped functioning in the country one each at Agartala, Ahemadabad, Bangalore, Bhubaneshwar, Chennai, Delhi, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kolkata, Ludhiana, Mumbai, Patna, Puducherry, Srinagar, Thiruvananthapuram, Una and Vadodara caters to the rehabilitation needs of disabled women exclusively. In addition, 09 Rural Rehabilitation Extension Centre have been set up under five VRC located at Chennai, Kanpur, Kolkata, Ludhiana and Mumbai. Other than that there are 5465 ITI, CTI, NVTI has been setup for providing efficient training to the general as well as disabled community. The Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Handicapped focuses on identifying the opportunities for the disabled and to provide skills especially to the disabled to promote or develop high quality skill training to meet the emerging employment market needs. The Ministry has developed demand driven short term training courses based on Modular Employable Skills (MES) for skill development of the dropouts and existing workers especially in the informal sector with a close coordination among the industry and State government departments.

VRC develops the skills and functional abilities despite of their physical and intellectual impairments. The evaluation will be done through the job samples and stimulated work situations. The evaluator will observe the PWDs in the workshop about their endurance, attention, regularity, punctuality, safety conscious, involvement, interest, relationship with the co-workers for better career prospects.

The VRC is also functioning as a Central Special Employment Exchanges and efforts are being taken to place the differently abled clients in the paid jobs against the vacancies notified to VRC by various Government establishments under 3% reservation. Further the VRC is taking efforts to contact the local prospective private employers for giving opportunities to the differently abled clients and identified the suitable jobs for them. The VRC organizes job fairs in collaboration with the local companies and try to place the PWDs as per the requirements of the employers. Apart from this centre imparts non formal training to the differently abled, both illiterate and literate as a skilled workforce to meet out the emerging needs of the market demand.

VRC have been given co-sponsoring powers to sponsor eligible handicapped persons from their Live Register against the posts reserved for them. They are also provided pre-recruitment training to prepare for competitive examinations and mock drills also for facing interviews.

Employment opportunities for the disabled

There are two big sectors (i.e. Government/Public Sector Undertakings and Private Sector) which are providing

the job placements to the differently abled persons according to their educational qualifications.

Employment in Government/Public Sector Undertakings

Government departments and Public Sector undertakings are playing a vital role as an employer of disabled population. In fact the first special employment exchange was set up way back in 1959 in Mumbai. Government of India initiated the policy of 3% reservation in jobs for the disabled people more than three decades ago in 1977. However the reservation was only in the lower ranking jobs (C&D categories). In 1995, when the Persons With Disability Act passed and the reservation was extended to higher ranking jobs for A & B categories. The disability act provides for a 3% reservation in identified posts for the PWDs in all categories. i.e. 1% reservation for each category. i.e. Orthopedically Handicapped, Visually Handicapped and Hearing Handicapped. The posts have been identified soon after the Act came in to force and updated every three years.

Civil Service Posts for Disabled persons

The issue of discrimination in civil services was taken up by the NCPEDP (National Centre for promotion of Employment for Disabled People) in a major way in 2003. Out of 26 civil services only five services were identified as suitable to OH, and HH Categories.

The backlog vacancies for the PWDs are filled by the Central and State Govt. through Special recruitment drive. The public sectors like nationalized banks, BSNL, RRB and others are filling the vacancies regularly as per the reservation of PWDs act 1995. Further the Govt. of India relaxed the age limit for the PWDs up to 45 for getting job in Govt. Sectors but in normal case the age limit is 35 years.

Government Initiatives

The Government of India directed the following Ministries to include the disabled while drafting the five year plan and forecasting the job opportunities available for the disabled and promoting employment in the organized and unorganized sectors like Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Ministry of Medium & Small Scale Industries etc.

Twenty high growth sectors of industries and service sector have been identified which have the ability to provide expanded employment. Ten high growths sectors on manufacturing side for providing the job opportunities to the disabled persons: 1. Automobile, 2. Electronics and Hardware, 3. Textiles and Garments, 4. Leather and leather goods, 5. Chemicals and pharmaceuticals, 6. Gem and Jewellery, 7. Civil Construction, 8. Food processing, 9. Handlooms and Handicrafts, 10 Building hardwares and home furnishers.

On the service sector side 1. ITs or Software services, 2. IT- BPO services, 3. Tourism, Hospitality and Travels trade, 4. Transportation/ Logistics/ Warehousing and Packaging, 5. Organized Retail & Real Estate, 7. Media, Broadcasting, Animation 8. Health Care services, 9. Banking/Insurance & Finance 10. Education/Development

services.

National Handicapped Financial Development Corporation (NHFDC)

Other than the job opportunity, Self employment will promote the PWDs in the better economic status of the society. The PWDs can start their own self employment venture by availing the financial assistance through NHFDC and other Financial Institutions like, Banks etc. NHFDC is the one and only agency which provides self employment loan exclusively for the PWDs for starting their ventures.

Employment Opportunities in Private Sector

Apart from a few examples there had not been any proactive effort on the part of the private sector to employ people with disabilities for a very long time. The importance and the role of private sector in promoting employment and NCPEDP contacted the apex industrial bodies, CII, FICCI, and ASSOCHAM for including disability on their agenda.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

CII included disability as part of their social agenda in 1998. CII developed a Corporate Code on Disability for voluntary adoption by companies in order to develop a disability policy. They setup core groups in Delhi and Bangalore to work in the area of employment of PWDs. On the basis the CII conducting job fairs regularly for the disabled and placing the PWDs as per the requirements of the employer. If CII should insist the companies to incorporate the Corporate Code on disability, definitely the unemployment problem among disabled person will be reduced.

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry

The FICCI and Socio Economic Development Foundation has mentioned enhancing the employability of PWDs as one of their focus area. They launched one of the projects like JEEVIKA and provide training to the disabled for enhancing their technical skills.

National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM)

The NASSCOM foundation taking efforts on employ Persons with disabilities. They focused on training the disabilities and placed in suitable jobs. They have identified three area in which they Will work on; 1. Web Accessibility 2. Employment of Differently Abled 3. Affordability of ICT applications. Presently the NASSCOM taking efforts to place the PWDs in call centre, BPO sector and IT field if they are trained in particular skills/ area.

Some of the Private companies are taking initiation and promoting employment opportunities to the PWDs. ITC has been giving opportunities to the PWDs in hospitality and other related sectors. Emphasis, an EDS company has initiated the soft skills training programme for PWDs. Tata Consultancy Service (TCS) has initiated a programme to train visually impaired students to prepare them to work in IT Sector. It is a good sign from the private sector for providing the job opportunities to the PWDs.

NGO Initiatives

Most of the NGO's have vocational training and placement units, which train and employ the people in various jobs. Obviously the training provided by the NGO's do not match the needs of the industry and they do not having good faculty due to lack of resources. There are few organizations working exclusively in promoting employment of disabled people. But NGO's should take incessant efforts to linking the companies for placing the disabled population.

Careers opportunities for person with disabilities

The following vocations are opt for the people with disabilities for their successful career progressions and these profession are emerging as a fast growing profession in the globalized era. The emergence of the internet era has proven an amazing boon to those with physical disabilities.

Computer Career

The information sector provide the best career opportunities for PWDs. These jobs can be done with a little accommodation and they usually pay well like tele caller, BPO, DTP and IT. Training can range from vocational or career classes to associate and bachelor's degrees in computer science or related fields.

Legal Careers

Law is another field wide open to the disabilities and they can customize their career to suit according to their interest. Whether they prefer working behind the scenes or in a courtroom, from their home or in an office for shaping their career in this field.

Designing Careers

Designing is another field that does not have to be physically demanding, although they need some creative talent and a tremendous work ethic. Online degree and career training opportunities abound, degrees range from photography to graphic, interior and clothing design will opt for the PWDs.

Nursing Career

Nursing career actually provide good opportunities for those with physical challenges. And their own experience may make them better nurse. People with hearing and other disabilities manage successful nursing careers.

Management Careers

Management degree provide good opportunity and develop their inter personnel skill will move up the career ladder. If they are improve their soft skills which will enrich their talents and increase their standard of life and also help to attain the self actualization goal in their career.

Emerging Issues

The recent trend in employment opportunities for the differently abled is slightly moving upward because of the initiation taken by the Governments as well as the private sectors. VRC also playing a vital role to rehabilitate the PWDs in an effective manner. Apart from this the following

issues are reflecting in the rehabilitation process for the PWDs.

Disability Discrimination

Many of the companies are openly rejecting the disabled people for giving job opportunities under the grounds of disability reason.

Most of them openly stating that they don't want to hire people with severe disability and Mild Mental Retardation. Most of the companies are not willing to make any investment in modifying the infrastructure / policies to suit disabled people. Even the newly constructed building is not disabled friendly nature.

HR executives are not aware about the disability laws; and they are not ready to accommodate the differently abled in their organization

No sign language interpreters or trained personnel available in the companies for providing job opportunities to the HH persons.

Lack of Braille texts resulting the wasting of human resources ensuing the unproductively output for country. Lack of qualitative skills is found among the disabled people and it is quite difficult to give opportunities to the disabled in their respective organizations.

Assistive devices are great enablers; if it is provided that will open up opportunities, improve efficiency and enable the PWDs to work to their maximum potential. But in India the available devices are not sophisticated and too expensive. These kinds of devices can be provided to the PWDs the maximum productivity harvested from them.

Strategies for effective placement for the differently abled

Indian Railway is one of the big employers. There are number of employees performing different task and working in different positions. The RRB has been fulfilling the posts under 3% reservations for the PWDs as per the PWD Act, 1995.

Backlog Vacancies

All the backlog vacancies for the PWDs should be cleared in a time bound manner.

Monitoring Mechanism

There should be a monitoring/welfare committee in every department to look after the interest and issues of disabled employees.

Creation of disabled friendly environment

All Government and Private Organizations should provide disabled friendly environment and it should be mandatory.

Disability Cell in UPSC & SSC

Disability cells should be setup in UPSC and SSC to support job seekers with disability and to ensure that they get necessary information for applying job.

Employment in Private Sector

The incentive policy should be reviewed and make it more attractive for the employers.

Implementation of Provision under UNCRPD:

UNCRPD's policies and codes/guidelines should be and implemented in all private sectors and make awareness of every HR managers and help them to put in practice in their field.

Role of the Industrial Bodies

The industrial bodies like CII, CICCI, and NASSCOM should take more initiation on promoting and generating the employment opportunities for the disabled and develop corporate code for providing opportunities to the disabled. Inclusion of disabled person in the committed of the modernization/up gradation plants for new project for training institutes.

Assistive devices

Good quality assistive devices have a direct impact on work performance and the ADIP scheme should be revised according to the technology changes.

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