

1

NATIONAL JOB DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

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REFERENCE

NATIONAL JOB DEVELOPMENT CENTRE - A SOCIAL COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

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The National Job Development Centre (NJDC) was a result of a concept developed by the Spastics Society of India (SSI), Ministry of Welfare and National Institute of Disability, Research and Rehabilitation (NIDRR), Washington to evolve a research-cum-employment model for people with disabilities. The centre was set up in 1989 as a tripartite arrangement between the Government of India, NIDRR and SSI. It is now an autonomous project maintained by SSI. International experiences in vocational rehabilitation, ILO guidelines, world action programmes concerning the disabled are reflected in the spirit, philosophy and thinking behind NJDC. A new direction distinct from the rather unilateral, charitable approach to the disabled has been substituted by professionalism. It is envisaged that this philosophy could open a new way to a future in which people with disabilities may participate in society as citizens with full rights.

The fundamental goal of NJDC is to provide appropriate training facilities, vocational guidance and counselling, selective employment and post-placement follow-ups. This would, we hope, promote national-level activities and increase public awareness about disability issues.



OBJECTIVES

SSI is aware that the issue of disability is given a low priority in the country and that action programmes for the disabled are neither fully understood nor utilised. This is especially so with vocational rehab and employment aspects. We have therefore worked out the following objectives for the NJDC.

- To formalise **assessment** strategies for the disabled.
- To develop environment-specific models of vocational **training** that can be adapted at the urban, slum and national levels.
- To develop and evaluate successful **placement** and post-placement strategies.
- To **research** into various aspects that affect the vocational rehabilitation process of persons with disabilities.

Developmental work cannot be done in isolation. It requires a wider base and close interaction with different groups. Keeping in mind the diverse cultural, socio-economic and religious fabric of India, a close linkage with the existing network of health, education, commerce, industry and human resources is required. This is impossible without mobilising public opinion and involving the public in disability issues, enacting legislation, facilitating access, transport and communication. Easy access to information, developing the dormant talent and potential of people with disabilities and

upgrading their skills is done through a series of programmes. This includes:

- *Awareness campaigns on various aspects of disability.*
- *Documentation and dissemination of information.*
- *Networking with professionals.*
- *Developing models for training personnel to work with the disabled and*
- *Changing policy to bring in legislation that will have a beneficial effect on employment at a macro level.*

THE DISABLED PEOPLE WE WORK WITH

Persons with physical disabilities such as polio, brittle bones, arthropgryphosis, people with multiple disorders such as cerebral palsy and other brain dysfunctions. Psychological and medical conditions, profound and partial hearing loss and visual impairment, people with learning disabilities, behavioral difficulties, communication and speech difficulties and mild intellectual retardation.

ADMISSION PROCEDURE

For admission, clients with any of these disabilities require assessment and evaluation, appreciation of their environmental and architectural barriers, awareness of

health and safety issues, development of aids and adaptation at the job-site, individually-crafted training programmes which are employment-oriented, so that the client can learn at his or her own pace.

DEPARTMENTS OF NJDC

To achieve the objectives of NJDC the following departments have been set up:

- *Assessment, evaluation (including psychological assessment) and further education*
- *An Adult Literacy Programme and Youth Training Scheme*
- *Placement*
- *Research*
- *Personnel training*
- *Advocacy and awareness*

SKILLS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AT NJDC

The NJDC has, at present, the following skill-training departments:

● **Computer Applications Centre**

- *Computer fundamentals*
- *Word processing/data entry*
- *Programming*
- *Desk Top Publishing (DTP)*

● **Printing**

- *Letter-press printing*
- *Offset printing*
- *Screen printing*
- *Book-binding*
- *File-making*

● **Tailoring**

- *Garment making*
- *Embroidery*
- *Stuffed toys*
- *Linen, towels etc.*
- *Speciality items like aprons, gloves, boiler suits, uniforms, etc.*

● **Catering and food processing**

- *Meals preparation*
- *Food preservation - Jams, pickles, sauces, spices*
- *Baking*
- *Snacks*

● **Light Engineering**

- Turner-Fitter,
- Welding
- Drilling

● **Office skills**

- Xeroxing, stencilling, despatching, messenger's job
- Manual and electronic typing
- Simple accounting

● **Horticulture**

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

Personnel, finance and accounts, welfare, general administrative services, maintenance and staff welfare departments are a part of the organisation.

ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS

One of the objectives of the NJDC is to demystify our work with the differently able, to reach out and help other organisations, to collaborate instead of competing.

To achieve this, a series of seminars were organised to bring together professionals, bureaucrats, policy-makers, representatives from the Government, private and public sector organisations, parents and the differently able.

The first in the series of seminars was organised at the NJDC in December 1990. Models of vocational training and problems of employment were discussed.

A group of employed differently able commuters discussed the problems of access and transport. They demanded reservation of seats on buses, a special compartment on suburban trains and uniform policies on travel concessions. Simultaneously, a series of research studies were mounted to analyse issues of access and transport. People with different disabilities were interviewed to focus on these issues. Their problems, suggestions and recommendations for improving access and transport were documented. The seminar findings along with this research data was presented to the local public transport authorities i.e. the suburban railway and bus undertaking.

We are happy that now at least a few seats are reserved for the differently able on buses. They were granted other related concessions like entrance from the front door of the bus. On 26th. January 1993, another milestone was reached when a small compartment was reserved for the differently able on certain Western Railway suburban trains.

NATIONAL NETWORK SEMINARS

*From March to November 1992, in continuation of our objectives to increase awareness and to network, the SSI organised three major **seminars** in the metropolitan cities of Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta. These were entitled the **National Network Seminars of Marginalised groups**. For the*

first time, the definition of disability was extended to include other socially disadvantaged groups, viz. destitute women, drug dependents leprosy and cancer affected and the differently able. The role of government, private and public sector and the trade unions in promoting employment, international perspectives, parental expectations, achievers reflections and role of the media were discussed. The proceedings of the seminars and recommendations on key issues have been published.

The conclusion from the seminar was that the concept of equality cannot be successfully translated into action without a close collaboration and direct involvement of all policy/decision makers, trade unions, professionals, the disabled themselves and their families, as well as the organisations working for and with them. Help and involvement of local authorities is essential for localised action, but for global policy changes collaboration with state and central governments, large business houses and chambers of commerce is necessary.

In a poor country like India, an oft-asked question is whether it is appropriate to create facilities for a small number of disabled citizens when there are more pressing needs of hunger, poverty, general unemployment and social discrimination, with the mass of normal people, which demand immediate attention?

A global perspective and an idea about the dimension of the problem of disability is necessary to answer this question.

SOCIAL COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The disabled 85 million of India's 850 million population, have until now received no uniform, systematic and standardised rehabilitation services in the area of employment.

Presently, in India, the vocational training scene for the disabled is very discouraging. Neglect of the handicapped is a very tangible reality.

*It is the Ministry of Welfare which is entrusted to take care of the disabled. The ministry provides manpower training, research, arranges workshops/seminars, conferences, disseminates information and has schemes for provision of aids and appliances for the disabled. It is the private sector that provides voluntary services in the areas of employment. Private organisations, however, are not able **single-handedly to expand** on a macro level. The lack of services has resulted in very high unemployment among this segment of the population. Intensive research had been mounted in the area of employment of the differently able people. Some of the surveys showed that the disabled are remaining unemployed because of **lack of proper training**.*

*Research also indicates that the disabled are **not able to sustain their jobs** because of mis-matching; they are trained in one area but placed in a totally different type of job, usually only in the 'C' and 'D' category and of a menial nature. Consequently, there is a heavy drop-out rate, due to frustration and this **lack of sustainability** results in an*

employer's rejection of disabled people, creating a vicious circle.

The success of a disabled person in open employment frequently depends not only on his work skills, but also on a mature, confident and responsible attitude to work. Training programmes should aim not only at work training in various skills but also must instill a sense of discipline and correct work ethics in a trainee.

The NJDC, through its training programmes, awareness campaigns, research and placement of the disabled in various models of employment, will attempt to change the community's negative thinking about the disabled. A step taken in this direction has been a well-researched film on employment entitled 'Towards Independence' has already been made by Radhika Roy and is available for viewing.

We find that the socio-economic aspects of Indian life in which NJDC will be beneficial are the following:

- *The individual - the growth from an individual's state of helplessness and dependence towards one of independence and contribution.*
- *The family - the Indian joint family has disintegrated in urban areas. The small nuclear family requires every member to supplement the family income. A non-earning disabled member of the family is an unwelcome burden in a country where economic conditions are poor and where the state has no provisions for social services for the disabled.*

Vocational rehabilitation centres play a vital role in providing employment to disabled adolescents and adults, thus enhancing their status in their family, the community and, most importantly, in their own eyes.

- *The community readily accepts a contributing member who adds to their resources and who gives to and takes of the community facilities equally. Every earning member of the India community adds to the overall strength of the community and society generally. Curiosity, pity, indifference, oversolicitousness, mild embarrassment, etc. - misconceptions such as these have contributed to society's attitudes, to looking down upon the disabled as **unwanted segments of society**. Therefore, socially today, due to faulty perceptions, they are considered drop-outs, rejects, liabilities to the community and an economic drain on society. This will surely change over the years as the community observes trained and employed, disabled people among them.*
- *The nation - the project will introduce an organised economic segment to society, where previously nothing existed. Substantial research in Western countries has shown that the disabled can contribute to the wealth of a nation and should be trained not merely for humanitarian reasons but sound economic ones, too.*

To conclude, vocational rehabilitation in other countries like USA, UK, Europe etc. is a very professional and specialised field where with skilled vocational guidance and training, disabled people are placed in carefully selected jobs, ensuring that they are able to sustain these.

Training of personnel, changing community's attitudes towards the disabled, educating future employers about the abilities of disabled people, introducing laws and legislation that make it mandatory to employ disabled people - with these goals at NJDC, we hope to mainstream differently able people back into society.

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