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SKILL-BASED VOCATIONAL COURSE FOR THE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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ABSTRACT

Persons with disabilities require assistance and skills to engage in livelihood activities. But they face many challenges. Actually, their families and communities themselves assume that they are unable to engage in such activities. So, they keep these persons void of basic education and making them unqualified to join skills training courses. As a consequence, these disadvantages frequently result in a lack of skills, as well as low confidence, expectations and achievement. Different types of skills are needed for successful work. These are: 1) foundation skills acquired through education and family life, 2) technical and professional skills which enable a person to undertake a particular activity or task, 3) business skills required to succeed in self-employment and 4) core life skills, including attitudes, knowledge and personal attributes. Improving employment opportunities for people with disability is very significant for enhancing the quality of their life and substantial gains for the country's economy. Proper and efficient vocational training develops capabilities of PWDs and they can compete in the labour market with other persons. It is the responsibility of Indian society for making suitable and quality vocational education and training more accessible to people with disabilities. My paper "Skill Based Vocational Course for Challenged Children" is the need of the hour today. The article tries to study the efficacy of the procedure of vocational skills for Children with Special Needs and to study the effectiveness of vocational training to Children with Special Needs.

KEYWORDS: Skill Development, Vocational Course, Children with Special Needs.

INTRODUCTION

Persons with disabilities require assistance and skills to engage in livelihood activities. But they face several challenges. Actually, their families and communities themselves assume that they are unable to engage in such activities. So, they keep these persons void of basic education and making them unqualified to join skills training courses. As a consequence, these disadvantages frequently result in a lack of skills, as well as low confidence, expectations and achievement.

Different types of skills are needed for successful work. These are: 1) foundation skills acquired through education and family life, 2) technical and professional skills which enable a person to undertake a particular activity or task, 3) business skills required to succeed in self-employment and 4) core life skills, including attitudes, knowledge and personal attributes.

As it is seen that the persons with disabilities in India face difficulties and challenges in the labour market because of lagging employable skills for meaningful employment, India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD).

As per the UN convention of the rights of the persons with disabilities, Article 1 states "Person with Disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others". 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. The World Bank considers that leaving persons with disabilities, outside the economy, translates into a foregone GDP of about 5% to 7%. Improving the skill for vocational training and creating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities is a crucial endeavor for enhancing the quality of life not only for the individual with disability and their families.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the efficacy of the procedure of vocational skills for children with special needs.
- To study the effectiveness of vocational training to children with special needs.

METHODOLOGY

The paper is mainly based on an analytical review of the rich literature from books, journals, magazines, internet, etc. as primary data.

TYPES OF SKILLS

Foundation skills are those acquired through basic education and family life. They include, for example, literacy, numeracy, ability to learn, reasoning and problem-solving. These types of skills are needed for work everywhere, in all contexts and cultures, in both formal and informal economies.

Technical, vocational and professional skills are those who equip someone to undertake a particular task - how to produce or repair something, or provide some kind of service. Examples are carpentry, tailoring, weaving, metalwork, lathe operation, basket making, tinsmithing, shoemaking. More advanced technical skills, such as engineering, medicine, physiotherapy and computer technology, usually are referred to as professional skills.

Business skills (also called entrepreneurial skills) are those required to succeed in running a business activity. They include money and people management, as well as planning and organizational skills. They also include risk assessment, market analysis and information-gathering, business plan preparation, goal-setting and problem-solving. These skills usually require a basis of numeracy and literacy.

Core life skills consist of the attitudes, knowledge and personal attributes necessary to function in the world. They include: how to relate to customers, how to present oneself, learning how to learn, effective listening and communication, creative thinking and problem-solving, personal management and discipline, interpersonal and social skills, the ability to network and work in a team, and work ethics.

Ways to acquire skills

There are some ways by which people with disabilities can learn and develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to earn their livelihood. They include:

- self-effort;
- home-based skills acquisition within the family;
- basic education;
- vocational training in schools;
- community-based training, including formal or informal apprenticeships with individuals in the community;
- training in mainstream vocational training centres or vocational rehabilitation centres;
- on-the-job training or apprenticeship;
- training courses at college and university;

- participation in small-enterprise development programmes that include basic business skills training, business development services and mentoring;
- training by employers.

The choice of the most appropriate method of skills development depends upon the interests, capabilities and resources of the individual, as well as the opportunities and support available in his/her community.

The existing 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 organisations like National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC), National Trust etc.
- Ministry of Labour and Employment are supervising more than 20 Vocational Rehabilitation Centres for Handicapped (VRCHs), 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.
- Private sector training organizations: Under the CSR initiative, many organizations have done exemplary work.
- Public Sector Undertakings have also contributed substantially to vocational training of persons with disabilities.
- 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.

The Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy has said that the Government endeavours to ensure that skilling needs of differently-abled persons are taken care of through various skill development programmes. In order to provide employable skills to Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), the following measures have been taken: -

- Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) run by various training organisations under the scheme of Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS).
- Skill Training programme is being conducted by National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC), a Public Sector Undertaking and seven National Institutes under the administrative control of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- 21 Vocational Rehabilitation Centres (VRCs) under the administrative control of Ministry of Labour and Employment located at various parts of the country.
- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities have entered into a partnership by signing an MoU for skilling in PwD sector.
- The Pradhan, MantriKaushalVikasYojana targets to train 50,000 Persons with Disabilities.
- A Sector Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities has been set up to develop standards for job roles for Persons with Disabilities and their training, assessment and certification. The Council has identified 6 Qualification Packs based on the suitability of 19 disabilities.

Employment is a vital element of independent living for disabled people. Access of persons with disabilities to decent work are essential both as a critical right and in terms of the economic advantages it brings (ILO, 2015). The report says that developing countries lose up to 7% of their gross domestic product due to the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the labour market. Persons with disabilities are among the poorest in the population. If they are not getting employment, their condition

will become much worse. According to World Bank Report (2011), there is evidence in key areas like employment that disabled people are falling further behind the rest of the population, risking and deepening their already significant poverty and social marginalization. Also, it becomes more critical for India, as its demographic dividend can only be realized with the rapid creation of employment and opportunities to them. Thus, improving employment opportunities for people with disability is very significant for enhancing the quality of their life and substantial gains for the country's economy.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING TO DIFFERENTLY-ABLED CHILDREN

High-quality skill development is one of the pathways that lead to decent work for differently-abled children and it makes them independent living in their future life. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities guarantees the right of people with disabilities to mainstream vocational training, employment and social protection. The vocational training is an essential tool for integrating the special people in society and making them productive member of community (Adeela Razzak, 2012). Mainstream vocational training is acknowledged in the literature as one of the strategies to enable human capabilities development of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) (Josephine Kaserera, 2012, WHO 2011). These people need to be provided with training to develop their unique capabilities to facilitate access to work and participate in the wider society.

According to UNDP report (2012), people with disabilities require improved access to basic education, vocational training relevant to labour market needs and jobs suited to their skills, interests and abilities. Any vocational training is not suited to them; rather, it may create much more problems for their rehabilitation - they need skill training based on their capabilities. A disabled person can function well as anybody else provided he/she is given appropriate training, alternative techniques and assistive devices (M. Subhash, 2015).

Proper and efficient vocational training develops capabilities of PWDs and they can compete in the labour market with other persons. The National Skills Mission has been set up by the Government of India and aims to help the country reap the demographic dividend of becoming the youngest nation by 2020. It becomes more critical for India, as its demographic dividend can only be realised with the rapid creation of employment and opportunities for generating income. So, it is the responsibility of Indian society for making suitable and quality vocational education and training more accessible to people with disabilities.

RELATED REVIEWS AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Government of India ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in October 2007 requests ratifying states to set out a policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons in the open labour market. Persons with Disability (PWD) act 1995 attempts to ensure equal opportunities for the people with disabilities and their full participation in nation-building. For the first time in India, a separate law was formulated which talked about the multiple needs of disabled people. This Act provides for education, employment, creation of barrier-free environment, social security, etc. Endeavour should be made to equip the special schools for children with disabilities with vocational training facilities and a provision to be made for the removal of architectural barriers from schools, colleges or other institution, imparting vocational and professional training.

Across the world, these people have lesser economic participation and higher rate of poverty than people without disabilities. This is because many people with disabilities do not have equal access to health, education and employment opportunities (WHO,2011). When persons with disabilities have access to decent work, it brings considerable economic advantages (ILO, 2015). The ILO report promotes inclusive mainstream skills and entrepreneurship development to make sure persons with disabilities are well trained when entering the world of work. According to the World Bank report, better educated (those with postgraduate education or vocational training) have relatively better prospects of employment when related to other disabled people. Training ensures capability development and makes PWDs (Persons with Disabilities) more eligible for productive employment

which is also secure and protected. Excluding them from educational and employment opportunities has high social and economic costs. Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities gives direction to enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training. In their report, A. R. Muhammad Zahid Khaki, 2015 pointed out that different vocational models/programs implemented in different countries emphasized that proper vocational training is the most important requirement in the process of rehabilitation of PWD world-wide. According to NCERT, Students with SEN at the secondary and senior secondary level of schooling can be properly guided for a particular vocation in accordance with their abilities, aptitudes, and interest. Adeela Razzak, Muhammad Zahid Khaki, 2015 recommends that the Vocational training model on various jobs for specific disabilities may be developed. It was found out that the model should have been proposed disability-wise. Their report suggests disability suitable and market-oriented vocational training, job-related training, job placement or self-employment opportunity and reasonable accommodation in the workplace is very much successful package in the world which has really supported to enhance the economic life of PWDs' in many places.

SUGGESTIONS

- There should be proper vocational guidance to these children. They should be exposed to various pre-vocational skills early in the secondary school itself and then be directed to particular skill according to their interest and industry need.
- The selection procedure of VHSE for these children should be changed to a more scientific way. Separate medical camp for students having the same disability in each district is better than the present one.
- A Four-member assessment team, comprising a doctor, a psychologist, vocational teacher and a special educator will be formed for the selection of students in VHSE.
- Adapted Curriculum should be formed. Action research in this field is very urgent.
- Vocational training model on various jobs for specific disabilities may be developed.
- ICT implementation in vocational training of PWDs is considered remarkably beneficial and the department should take necessary steps towards this.
- These children should provide learning support in their vocational practical classes and vocational practical examination.
- Make the special training a mandatory at least in special schools. The training of general teachers at pre-service and in-service levels should address the issue of education of children with disabilities so that teachers are better equipped to work in an inclusive environment. Some of the issues in training that need to be addressed include the methodology to be adopted for identifying children with disabilities; classroom management; use of appropriate teaching methodologies; skills for adapting the curriculum; development of teaching-learning materials that are multisensory in nature; evaluation of learning; etc.
- Resource rooms with an appropriate and wide range of teaching and learning materials and therapy equipment should be provided in all schools. This includes therapy equipment, cause & effect toys, play & activity-based- learning materials, etc. Inclusive education will be a failure if there are not enough supporting systems in all schools.
- Frequent Parent training should be conducted and it empowers parents through sharing knowledge in a range of topics relevant to vocational rehabilitation, disability management and inclusion.
- Identify specific services, type of support and assistive devices required for the individual child and should take the necessary steps to provide them.
- Basic training of educational administrators would also be necessary in order to ensure that teachers are encouraged to use their disability-specific skills.
- Good research should be conducted in the area of skill assessment for differently-abled children.
- Ensure that enough support is getting to these children during their OJT (On-the-Job Training).

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