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NSDC sets up 55 skill training centres for PwD

The target is to train 14,520 candidates across the country, says **Manish Kumar**, CEO, NSDC

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In a world where improving vocational training and employment for people with disability (PwD) is critical for enhancing the quality of life, the need for affirmative action is of paramount importance. Nearly 74% of PwDs are non-workers or marginal workers in India, according to Census 2011. India has 2.68 crore PwDs (56% male and 44% female); nearly 50% of the total PwD population in India (1.34 crores) are in the employable age of 15-59 years, but most of them are underutilised. "A World Bank study estimates that excluding people with disability from the economy translates into a foregone GDP of 5-7%. Consequently, the Sector Skill Council for PwDs (SCPwD) under the National Skill development Corporation (NSDC) is aligned with the PMKVY (Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana) 2016-2020 scheme, to run courses for the specially-abled," says Manish Kumar, MD and CEO, NSDC.

The courses of 3 to 4 months duration, blend theory and practical learning. They have been a part of PMKVY since 2016, however, to address the low uptake, dedicated PwD centres were sanctioned since March 2018. Presently, over 9000 PwD candidates have been trained under PMKVY, out of which 5000 have been placed. Over 55 PwD training centres have been set up with a target to train 14,520 candidates across the country.

The training is in varied job roles such as F&B steward, retail sales associate, domestic data entry operator, to name a few. "It is imperative to reduce, and ultimately remove barriers, for a more inclusive skills ecosystem," says Kumar, while referring to assistive aids such as braille and computer screen readers and sign language interpreters at many of the training centres. They are also awarded 'points' for PwD-friendly ramps, separate washrooms, lifts and wheelchairs. Over 20 states including J&K, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra

Skilling to empower

Puneet (34) from Gurugram who is hearing impaired was trained through multiple tools like ppt, videos, books and role plays in the Domestic Data Entry Operator course. He was recruited by an MNC for their retail outlet with a starting salary of Rs 9000.



Puneet's advice for aspirants is: "Turn your disability into strength, not weakness."

Alka (33) from Uttarakhand, who is presently working in Pullman Hotels is currently drawing Rs 21,000. Hearing impaired, her interest in



housekeeping landed her a job in the hospitality sector. "While training at my workplace, I found it tough to coordinate with fellow employees. But my training centre held sessions with them to make them understand basic sign language," she says.

have provisions for residential facility for PwD candidates close to their training centres.

While each job role requires minimum education qualification as entry requirement, SCPwD can be flexible with the norms since the education status of PwDs is very low," Kumar says.

For employability, the training centre's placement cell organises counselling sessions for trainees and exposure visits to employer locations. The cells are also mandated to organise placement drives/Rozgar Melas as a platform for potential employers to focus on PwD inclusion. Going forward, NSDC is empanelling specialised placement agencies to scale-up placements for PwD candidates.