Relevant Vocational Trainings for the Persons with Disabilities in Nepal.

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-Vocational training has been observed one of the important strategies for reducing poverty. It is very popular in developing and underdeveloped countries basically to enhance the economic status of marginalized and disadvantage community. Among the disadvantaged communities Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) are known as most marginalized, covered around 10% part of total world's population and 20% of the total number of poorest people. Nearly 82% of the total number of PWDs are living in below poverty and the unemployment rate of PWDs is double than the general unemployment rate.

PWDs are often denied in work and economic activities due to a kind of negative preconceive notion about their capacity and productivity. The unfriendly systems, policy and physical infrastructures are other key barriers to hinder their access in such opportunities. This exclusion has been adding a big loss in the total GDP of the world (between US$ 1.37 and US$ 1.94 trillion.) annually. This paper highlights some important issues regarding the vocational training for PWDs including popular models being practiced in the world, some conventional vocational training in Nepal and some new possible areas.

Background

United Nation has estimated around 10% of the total population of this globe has some forms of disabilities although the definition and classification of disability varies according to the country context. 80% part of the total population of the persons with disabilities (PWDs) is in developing and underdeveloped countries and majority of them (82%) are forced to live in below poverty line. This justifies the close relationship between poverty and disabilities. Poverty is both causes and consequences of disability. Poverty is a cause of disability since the poor often lack resources to prevent malnutrition, and do not have proper access to adequate health services which may lead them to disability. Poverty is a consequence of disability since PWDs often lack access to education, health services and income-generating activities; they are often denied their human, social and economic rights which ultimately threw them to vicious cycle of poverty.

The exclusion of PWDs from economic activities has given big losses not only in their personal life but also to the state and society. According to World Bank (Metts) the total annual value of total Global GDP lost in relation to disability lies between UD$ 1.37 and US$1.94 trillion and particularly the developing countries have been bearing the major part
of this losses. A study carried out by ILO has concluded, disabling environmental conditions and deliberately exclusion of PWDs from labor market as the key responsible reasons for this low participation in economic activities and this big loss. Based on the latest review of implementation status of millennium development goals UN has declared that any goals cannot be achieved without including disability issues and particularly the goal of poverty reduction is most essential to revise from disability perspective.

National and international legislations regarding to the economic empowerment of PWDs
Many legislative instruments have been made and promulgated in national and international level regarding the economic empowerment of PWDs. Have a short view in some important provisions;

a) **UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, (Article 27):** "States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps, including through legislation;"

b) **Article 27(d):** " Enable persons with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programs, placement services and vocational and continuing training;"

c) **ILO convention 159:** The ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention No. 159 requires member States, in accordance with national conditions, practice and possibilities, to formulate, implement and periodically review a national policy on vocational rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons.

d) **ILO code of practice :** The ILO Code of Practice on Managing Disability in the Workplace (ILO 2002) was brought up to provide guidance to employers on practical means of implementing the types of measures to be taken while making the workplace disability friendly according the provisions contained in international instruments.

e) **Disabled protection and Welfare Act- 2039:** Point 8 of this act has provisioned about the job, self employment and related training for PWDs. This points has stated the provision of vocational trainings, micro credit for small business, access to PWDs in mainstream training system, access of PWDs in corporate sectors’ employment and rural employment etc.

f) **National policy and Plan of Action on Disability 2063 :** Training and Employment is 5th priority area of national policy and plan of action on disability. This policy has ensured 5% quota reservation for PWDs in the mainstream vocational training institutions. The 5th strategy of this priority area has emphasized on the capacity building of existing mainstream vocational training Center and developing disability friendly environment in the training centers.
Vocational Trainings for PWDs

Vocational training is the preparation for jobs that call for extensive practical experience and training. Disability-suitable and market oriented vocational training, job related training, job placement or self employment opportunity and reasonable accommodation in work place is very much successful package in the world which has really supported to enhance the economic life of PWDs' in many places. Providing vocational training to PWDs is a bit different and complicated than other people since their functional limitations and essential supports needed varies according to disability category and level of severity. So the suitability of training, management of essential environment and appropriate training delivery method or approach are the key factors to be considered while providing vocational or job related training to PWDs. The model and approaches of vocational training also varies as per the country, culture, need and resource; however there are some very commonly practiced approaches or model of trainings as described below.

a) **Mainstream model:** Government, Private sectors or NGO run vocational training centers to provide training for any interested or needy people. These training centers provide very quality training and certified trainees as able to work the relevant job or business. For mainstreaming disability, the physical infrastructures, rules and regulations, systems, curriculum and evaluation processes of such training centers are made disability friendly. The resource persons (trainers) are also fully oriented about disability issues and capacity of PWDs. Since being inclusive in nature this model is very demanding and effective. Most of the PWDs want to be trained through such types of model.

b) **Community Based Model:** Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program is experienced the best strategies for the overall development, rehabilitation and empowerment of PWDs in the world. Economic empowerment is one of the key components of CBR which support to enhance the economic participation of PWDs by mobilizing the local resource and community's cooperation in their own community. Under this approach PWDs are given different types of vocational training based on the need of local market and they are supported technically and financially to start the self employment or get relevant job in the local labor market. In CBR model the needy people are also facilitated to include in the locally run mainstream vocational training center.

c) **Apprenticeship model:** This is a way to gain skill in a particular subject by working with experienced and skilled persons in his/her workshop or workplace. Learning with experienced crafts and trades people is a very longstanding and widespread means of developing skills. This model is very good to engage in informal economy and even it is cost effective. Sometime such types of trainings are very much useful for people with disabilities who face many barriers in accessing formal sectors and centre based training.

d) **Peer Training:** Peer training is a process where successful business people teach their skills to others. In this model the trainers and trainees are from same background, living condition or same disability category in the case of PWDs. In peer training the relationship between trainers and trainees is very close like friendship. They both have a very good spirit of teaching and learning. The trainee also feels a kind of deep ownership in the training. In Cambodia such model is very effective to enhance the economic status of PWDs.

e) **Group training model:** This is a model where a person learns skills within the group of people having same training needs. This model is known effective for saving time and resources. We can find many groups having same interest and involved in same job. The
very good example of such model is saving credit group. One case study of Cambodia is replicable in our context. Some PWDs having same training needs formed a group and started to learn Khmer music (which is old but popular music in Cambodia). After a time interval they were able to perform the music and started their performance for tourist and wedding. They earn US$ 700 per month.

f) **Sheltered Model:** This is a traditional model where PWDs are kept in specially designed structures and provided different types of vocational training. The trained human resource are given work in the same shelter and paid for their work. The produced goods are also marketed by the shelter. This type of model is highly expensive and cannot cover the wider population of PWDs. This model is not so popular in developing and underdeveloped countries.

**Relevant vocational trainings for PWDs**

PWDs are not homogenous group. Like general people, their identities, personal situations and needs are determined by gender, age, personality, location, education, ethnicity, color, class, family, religion and sexual orientation. Disability is simply a component of human diversity, and itself is diverse in nature. Sensory disabilities, physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities are the main category of disability and each includes other different sub categories. A part from the very common needs and requirements as human being they have very special needs and requirements due to their disability which vary according to the types of disability and level of severity. Similarly the training needs may be different and should be shaped according to the types of disability and by their own decisions. So the active and intensive participation of PWDs is essential while assessing the training needs of PWDs. However there are lots of trainings that PWDs are given from formal and informal sectors. We cannot say how far these trainings have brought positive impact in the economic life of PWDs since there is no any detail study regarding this. But many of them are found effective in general observation.

In Nepal Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare has been providing vocational trainings to PWDs with residential facilities since 2058. But the coverage of this training by geography, number and disability categories is very small. Since the government have no any comprehensive national program to provide vocational training for PWDs they are depend on the trainings provided by non-government sectors which doesn't cover the wider population. These are limited within very small areas and numbers. So there need a national initiation to develop a national curriculum of vocational training for PWDs by organizing and including all the replicable practices and exploring new training areas with the intensive participation of PWDs. Some name of common trainings that PWDs are given in Nepal is mentioned here;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name of Training</th>
<th>Types of PWDs involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chalk making, candle making, sewing, cutting, waiter/waitress,</td>
<td>Physical, Deaf, speech, intellectual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bamboo craft, handicraft, goods packaging, music, white can making,</td>
<td>Physical, Deaf, speech, blind, intellectual, multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Painting,</td>
<td>multiple, deaf, physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>House keeping, vegetable farming, livestock , bee keeping, flower farming</td>
<td>physical, deaf, speech,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Radio, TV, watch, cycle and motorcycle repair and maintenance | Physical, Deaf, speech, multiple
Wood craft | physical, deaf, speech, multiple
Liquid Soap making | Blind

### Table: Some other possible area of trainings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Name of Training</th>
<th>Types of PWDs can be involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Computer software operation skill (Basically office package), computer maintenance (Hardware and Software),</td>
<td>physical, blind, deaf, speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mobile repair and maintenance</td>
<td>physical, deaf,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secretarial service and reception handling</td>
<td>Blind, physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Graphic designing, cyber operation, computer networking</td>
<td>physical, deaf, speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Offset Printing, Thanka Painting</td>
<td>Physical, Deaf, Speech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But this list has been prepared only on the basis of general observation and experiences. So there may be lots of other areas of training needs which needs to be explored through participatory need assessment.

### Factors to be considered while providing vocational training to PWDs

The following factors are very essential to keep in mind while deciding about the vocational training for PWDs.

a) **What the PWDs say is important:** The needs should come from the PWDs themselves. The institution, trainers group or expert cannot impose any training to them. It comes from an intensive discussion among expert of vocational training, PWDs, organizations of PWDs, parents of PWDs, disability resource centers, and training providing expert.

b) **Appropriate model and Methods:** Appropriate training model should be chosen but this depends on the interest and condition of PWDs, availability of resource and nature of training etc. The training methodology should also be disability friendly. For example access of sign language, more visual presentation and practical way is essential to train deaf persons.

c) **Reasonable Accommodation:** In the case vocational training, simply this is a modification of physical infrastructures of training centre, curriculum, methodology according to the need of WPDs and fulfillment of additional support and requirements that support to ensure their full and equal access in the training course. According to the UNCRPD "Reasonable accommodation means 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"

d) **Friendly examination System:** Sometime the examination system doesn't consider the need and limitation of PWDs so that their skills and capacity are undervalued. So that special evaluation and examination system should be adopted according to the
need of PWDs. Particularly different evaluation or examination system may essential in the case of persons with visual, hearing and intellectual disability.

**Conclusion:**

Nothing is very special and much complicated for the vocational rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. Only the positive attitudes, study based information and some additional efforts are needed. Generally people explain PWDs from what they cannot do. Now this explanation need to be changed and we should start from what they can do. We should not forget the environmental barriers while describing disability because disabling environmental factors and knowingly and unknowingly exclusion from labor market are the key elements to keep PWDs far away from economic opportunities.

So the primary focus of government, NGOs and corporate sectors should go on removing such types of barriers. Research based training and flexible training modality is another important aspect to be considered particularly to provide suitable training according to the disability category and its severity.

Finally, there is nothing to be undervalued in the capacity and productivity of PWDs. Accessing PWDs in employment sectors and labor market with reasonable accommodation is not a burden or extra expenditure for employers and government. It is an investment which certainly provides good returns to the investors and ultimately contributes in the common goal of poverty reduction. But not employing PWDs is of course a big economic and social loss that really hinders for meting that goal. Let’s hope this may happen.

*(Note: Author himself is a person with physical disability and contributing in disability rights movement for 11 years – Editor)*

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