

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE TO EXPLORE
THE EMPLOYMENT NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN
ASSAM**

A STUDY OF KAMRUP AND KAMRUP (METRO) DISTRICTS

RESEARCH REPORT

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DECLARATION

We, the Research Team, hereby declare that the study entitled “**Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile to Explore the Employment Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Assam: A Study of Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) Districts**” is the original work undertaken by the Research Team of **Shishu Sarothi**, Centre for Rehabilitation and Training For Multiple Disabilities, Guwahati, Assam under the **Central Sector Scheme** on Research on Disability Related Technology, Products and Issues, sponsored by the **Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India**. The result of the research presented in this report has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree nor it has submitted anywhere for publication.

6th June 2017

Dr. Raile Rocky Ziipao

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FORWARD

Unemployment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) remains the biggest impediment towards inclusive development. The challenge is that we still have to do job mapping on the basis of types of disability and disability per se. The labour force from North East India migrating to Metropolitan cities is increasing year after year. This is mainly due to limited market spaces availability in the region. However, PwDs are left behind in this emerging market space due to the absence of barrier free environment. Despite the Government's efforts and initiative for inclusive development for all, implementation in respective states remains biggest hurdles. This research study finds its relevance towards the Government's commitments and efforts to make India a skill Capital of the World. The study attempts to pave ways for inclusive skill development by mapping skills and capabilities of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in two districts of Assam.

I would like to comment and appreciate my research team of Shishu Sarothi for bringing out this in-depth study on the socio-economic and demographic profile to explore the employment needs of persons with disabilities in Assam. I would encourage and appeal to the Government to further engage in-depth action research. I hope the research report would benefit to all the stakeholders and streamline their strategy for inclusive development.

Arman Ali

Executive Director

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Dr. Raile Rocky Ziipao

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) living in the geographical distant like Northeastern states occupy a 'periphery within the periphery'. Their issues ranging from accessibilities to employment are often undermined by the so called mainstream society and are excluded from public discourse. Employment and financial inclusion are imperative for economic empowerment of society in general and more so for persons with disabilities in particular. The widespread discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation that persons with disabilities face globally have been acknowledged by the United Nations resulting in the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006. Although, India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as early as 1st October, 2007 its implementation in the country is far from satisfactory. This study attempts to identify/map skills and capabilities of person with disabilities and explore their employment needs in the state of Assam. The study adopts an exploratory approach and includes both qualitative and quantitative data generated from primary as well as secondary sources.

Contextualising and Conceptualising Disabilities

Disability being an evolving concept, it is extremely challenging to precisely conceptualise it without taking into account time, space, and site of enquiry. The concepts and types of disabilities vary depending upon the location/geography as well as the changing socio-politico-economic dimension. However, the common phenomena cutting across societies are the socially constructed barriers. These barriers are in varied forms and include both physical as well as psychological. The Government of India has enacted five major legislations concerning persons with disabilities in India. They are as follows:-

1. The Mental Health Act, 1987
2. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992
3. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.

4. The National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999
5. Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

There are various theoretical frameworks or models to understand disability across the globe. The dominant and in-fact the oldest model being the **medical/clinical approach** to disability. This model is strongly driven by ‘normalising’ tendency i.e. to make persons with disability undifferentiated, it emphasises on medical interventions to; ‘treat’ or ‘cure’ disabilities. The **social model or approach** of disability was developed as a critique to the medical model. This model draws on the idea that it is the society that disables people, through designing built-environment to meet the needs of the majority. There is recognition within the social model that there is a great deal that society can do to reduce the barriers which are socially constructed. The **psychological approach** of disability on the other hand emphasis and attributes disability in terms of certain psychological disturbances, emanating from the onset of disability. However, after ratifying the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, the **rights-based approach** or simply the **human rights approach** to disability gained popularity. The protagonists of this approach hold the view that individuals with disability are first and foremost human beings; with the same basic human needs as the rest of humanity. Theoretically, this study locates within the framework of human rights approach and it is an exploratory research.

Social Reality of Disabilities in India vis-a-vis Assam

According to UNDP (2012), there are about 650 million persons with disabilities in the World which constitutes 12 per cent of the total population and 80 per cent of these live in developing countries. In India there are approximately 26 million persons with disabilities constituting 2.21 per cent of the total population (Census 2011). However, the World Bank Report (2009) shows the figure of PwDs in India to be 6 per cent of its total population. The literacy rate of persons with disabilities in India is 55 per cent which is way below the national average of 74.04 per cent. The World Bank Report (2009) shows that the employment rate of persons with

disabilities in India actually fell from 42.7 per cent in 1991 to 37.6 per cent in 2002, a period when the employment rate of the general population rose. Assam, one of the North Eastern states in India has a total population of 31,169,272 of which 4,80,065 (1.54 %) are persons with disabilities. It accounts for 1.75 per cent of the total population of persons with disabilities in India. Literacy rate of persons with disability in Assam is low compared to all India average and also to other Northeastern states. The total literacy rate of Assam stood at 73.18 per cent whereas the literacy rate of persons with disability is just 48.25 per cent. The employment status of persons with disabilities in Assam gives a disturbing figure. About 66 per cent of persons with disabilities in Assam are unemployed. Only 33.91% of the population of persons with disability in Assam are 'workers' as per the Census 2011 figures.

Methodology

The study was conducted in two districts of Assam namely Kamrup and Kamrup Metro. The main objectives of the study are

- To study the **socio-economic and demographic profile** of persons with disability in Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) districts.
- To identify/map skills and capabilities of persons with disabilities in a local context.
- To survey literature on various training programmes conducted by training institutes in Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) Districts for persons with disability.
- To analyse the gap between education, training, placement and employment needs of persons with disability.
- To explore the government and private employers attitude towards employing people with disability.
- To understand the various problems/challenges faced by persons with disability with regards to employment and suggest measures accordingly towards catering to employment needs of persons with disability.

In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives a mixed method i.e. both qualitative and quantitative methods of enquiry was used for the study. For enriching and validating data, methodological triangulation was followed. Institutional visits,

survey with the help of interview schedules, in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, case studies, focus group discussions, and listening to voices of discontent as a techniques were adopted for this study. In this study a random sampling technique was followed covering all types of disabilities to meet with a confidence level of 95 percent. A total of 592 respondents were interview using interview schedule covering both the districts comprising of rural and urban population.

Major Findings

- The data reveals that 461 (77.9 %) of the total respondents are from Kamrup Rural district whereas 131 (22.1 %) are from Kamrup Metro district.
- The total male respondents is 381 (64.4 %) whereas female respondents are 211 (35.6 %).
- The highest number of persons with disabilities in the present study is in the age group 21 to 30 years (30.4 %).
- Majority of the persons with disabilities in this study belong to the Hindu faith, i.e. 65.3 per cent. This is followed by Muslims with 32.9 percent. However, those belonging to Christian, Sikh and any other faith are minimal with 1.2 per cent and 0.3 per cent each respectively.
- In terms of social category of respondents as shown in table 4.4, persons with disabilities who are from general category comprise 380 (64.2 %) respondents. This is followed by Scheduled Caste with 89 (15 %) respondents, Scheduled Tribe with 71 (12 %) and OBC with 52 (8.8%) respondents respectively.
- Persons with disabilities who are single/unmarried constitute 58.8 percent whereas those who are married constitute 40.9 per cent.
- 40 per cent of the respondents are illiterate. Among those literate, only 0.5 per cent are post-graduate and above, 0.8 per cent are Post Graduates, and 9 per cent are Graduates.
- Of the total 592 respondents, only 15 per cent are employed and the rest 85 per cent are unemployed. Out of the total 15 per cent employed from the sample size, 70.2 per cent are self-employed, 19.1 per cent work in a private sector, 7.4 per cent employed in government sector and 3.2 per cent in any other.

- Persons with disabilities are mostly in the low income group or below the poverty line.
- Types of disability:- Locomotor disability constitutes 39.4 per cent, speech impairment 10.5 per cent, hearing impairment 15.40 per cent, mental illness 8.10 per cent, visual impairment 5.90 per cent, low vision 5.70 per cent, multiple disabilities 14 per cent, and developmental disability 1 per cent respectively.
- The study revealed that 67.70 per cent are disabled at birth. However, 32.30 per cent were disabled due to either by accident or by sickness.
- 95.1 per cent of the respondents had not received any financial assistance or availed any schemes of assistance from government. 50.5 per cent of the total sample does not know about any vocational training institute which imparts skill training.
- More than 60 per cent of the total respondent population does not know or is not aware of job reservation in public sector for persons with disabilities.
- Nearly 50 per cent of the total sample size did not have disability certificates.
- More than 50 per cent of respondents experience discrimination.
- 64 per cent says that there is a stigma association with disability by the society
- 50 per cent of the total respondents feel that lack of awareness and illiteracy is the major issue.

Skill Mapping of Persons with Disabilities in Assam

Skills mapping has been done as per the local context and economic opportunities available in the two districts of Kamrup and Kamrup Metro covered in this study. It was extremely challenging to identify the skills as the study also indicated that most of the PwDs in these districts are unemployed and illiterate, limiting us mostly to blue collar jobs. Very few persons with disabilities are actually working for their livelihood either in organised or unorganised sectors. As the study also shows that majority of the disabled population in the districts are unemployed and illiterate, it became more challenging to identify trade of skills and limit itself to identify mostly in blue collar job. Very less number of persons with disabilities are actually working for their livelihood either in organised or unorganised sectors. However, there are a few sectors where persons with disabilities can be trained for skill development and find employment. This is presented in the map below:-

Skill Mapping of Persons With Disabilities



MARKET
SPACES
AVAILAB



a) Agriculture and Allied Activities

1. Organic farming
2. Mushroom cultivation
3. Fisheries
4. Nursery farming
5. Floriculture
6. Tea
7. Dairy Farming
8. Horticulture

b) Manufacturing

9. Agarbatti making
10. Candle making
11. Metal cutting
12. Paper mill
13. Tea packaging
14. Toys making
15. Files and folder making
16. Paper bags

c) Food Processing

17. Jam and pickles making
18. Jelly making
19. Meat pickles
20. Supply chain
21. Marketing

d) Hospitality

22. Store manager
23. Help Desk Executive
24. Inventory management
25. Laundry boy
26. Stacking supply
27. Accountant

e) Information Technology

28. BPO
29. Data entry operator
30. DTP
31. Printing Operator
32. Web Designing and Programming
33. CCTV monitoring

f) Entrepreneurship/Self Employment

g) Handloom and Handicraft

34. Cultivation of silkworm food plants
35. Silkworm rearing
36. Silk reeling
37. Post-cocoon processes such as twisting, dyeing

38. Fashion illustration

39. Pattern making
40. Garment construction
41. Product development
42. Design process
43. Card punching and lacing
44. Crafting
45. Weaving
46. Muga spinning
47. Cane and Bamboo craft
48. Jute craft
49. Banana fibre craft
50. Water hyacinth-based craft

h) Others

51. Welding
52. Plumbing
53. Electrician
54. House wiring and repairing
55. Security Guards
56. Office assistant
57. Telecaller
58. Mobile repairing
59. Carpentry.



SKILL/
TRAINING
NEED



- Knowledge on organic farming
- Knowledge of latest preservation and processing technologies
- Knowledge of tea cultivation and packaging
- Processing bamboo into paper
- Strong negotiation skills
- Packaging, selling and marketing skills
- Value addition to end product
- Training on quality control
- Soft skills Training
- Computer training and application

- Skills on: fashion illustration, pattern making, garment construction, product development, design process, card punching and lacing, crafting, weaving, Muga spinning
- Market linkage and value addition training
- ITI/Polytechnics to impart training
- On job training
- Entrepreneurship development workshop and training
- Skilling and skill upgradation on weaving
- Skilling Handicraft and indigenous art

Recommendations

The present study on Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile to Explore the Employment Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Assam has the following recommendations for promotion of inclusive employment and skill development. They are as follows:-

1. The State government should ensure that the new law i.e. The Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 is follow in letter and spirit.
2. The State should ensure a barrier free infrastructure. Every public institutions buildings be make disabled friendly in Assam as per the law within the span of five years
3. The state should ensure for free public transportation to persons with disabilities and one care giver/assistant. This would ease the burden of financial cost and would facilitate to get disability certificate on time
4. Early detections and intervention are key to effectively address the disabilities issues in the State. Hence the State Government should establish Early Intervention Units in every cluster of villages, say one unit in every 10 villages.
5. In every local governance body there should be a representation from persons with disabilities.
6. Perspective of persons with disabilities should also reorient because they still look for unemployment allowances which is merely self sufficient for livelihood and look after the government jobs. To this end, the role of organisations working with PwDs have a huge role to play.
7. Skill development is not one way process. Hence every stakeholders i.e. Institutions imparting training, NGOs working with PwDs, State government, employers and most importantly those who seek skill development should take active part.
8. Skill development cannot be only skills but it has to go along with attitudinal change.
9. Vocational Training Institutes should updates their courses offer as per the marker spaces available as an avenue for work. Hence before the commencement of any skill development, they should conduct a basic research on placement/sectors where PwDs could find an employment.

10. The employment rate of persons with disabilities in private sector in Assam is minimum. Hence, it is require to sensitise the employers about employing PwDs. The State should ensure for funding to Civil Societies/NGOs on awareness creation especially those organisation who are working with persons with disabilities.
11. The state should develop a mechanism to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in poverty alleviation and other schemes for inclusive development.
12. In order to encourage self-employment, the state should provide subsidies to any product make by persons with disabilities. This would help in a way to cut the cost of materials and also generate more employment in the state.
13. Every training/skill development programmes aims at persons with disabilities be methodologically inclusive. This would promote methodological inclusion of PwDs.
14. Assistive technology support scheme should reach to every block in the state.
15. Awareness on NHFDC programme be conducted in every block to spread different opportunities/schemes.
16. Credit facilities be make more accessible
17. Handholding/apprenticeship post the vocational training be supported by the state. To this end, the state should earmarked a budgetary provision.
18. Specific vulnerable disabled population as identified in this study be given special focus on information dissemination and awareness programme.

Chapter One

Laying the Context and Framework of Research

Introduction

The widespread discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation that persons with disabilities face globally have been acknowledged by the United Nations resulting in the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2006. This led to a paradigm shift from welfarism to a rights based approach on disability. It recognised disability as an ‘evolving concept’ and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others¹. Although, India has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as early as 1st October, 2007 its implementation in the country is far from satisfactory. The three major types of discrimination persons with disabilities face are: attitudinal, environmental, and institutional. People with disabilities may be socially excluded by attitudes of fear and ignorance on the part of non-disabled people, who may use negative and pejorative language about them; or they may be excluded from society because of generally low expectations of what disabled people with disabilities can achieve. Environmental discrimination occurs where public services, building, and transport are not accessible to persons with disabilities.. Institutional discrimination occurs where the law discriminates (explicitly or by omission) against the rights of people with disabilities, making them in some way second-class citizens- without the right to vote, to own land, to attend school, to health, etc. (Enfidd, 2003, p.11).

Major discrimination

- attitudinal,
- environmental, and
- institutional.

Within the Indian society, for decades there has been institutionalised oppression, exclusion, discrimination and denials of rights in various forms against the ‘periphery’. The periphery here comprises broadly of Tribals, Denotified tribes, Women, Religious

¹ Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRPD/Pages/ConventionRightsPersonsWithDisabilities.aspx>. Accessed on 7th March 2017.

minorities, Ethnic minorities, Sexual minorities and Persons with Disabilities (Ziipao and Kamei 2016). However from within this expansive categorisation of what is acknowledged as the periphery, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) living in the geographical distant Northeastern states occupy a 'periphery within the periphery'. Their evolving issues ranging from accessibilities to employment are often undermined by the so called mainstream society and are excluded from public discourse. Employment and financial inclusion are imperative for economic empowerment of society in general and persons with disabilities in particular. Skill enhancement and development are recognised as the prime factors for employability. The Honourable Prime Minister of India Shri. Narendra Modi in his statement "I call upon the nation to take a pledge to make India the skill capital of the World"² envisaged India as an inclusive skilled workforce for development of the nation. An inclusive skilled workforce, calls for special attention to the development of skills among persons with disabilities. A strategy for employment generation of persons with disabilities involves reducing the barriers and providing for equal opportunity to its workforce. This study attempts to identify/map skills and capabilities of person with disabilities and explore their employment needs in the state of Assam. The study adopts an exploratory approach and includes both qualitative and quantitative data generated from primary as well as secondary sources.

Conceptualising and Contextualising Disability

Disability being an evolving concept, it is extremely challenging to precisely conceptualise it without taking into account time, space, and site of enquiry. The concepts and types of disabilities vary depending upon the location/geography as well as the changing socio-politico-economic dimension. In a similar fashion, the approach and intervention measures in dealing with the issues faced by persons with disabilities also vary. However, the common phenomena cutting across societies are the socially constructed barriers. These barriers are in varied forms and include both physical as well as psychological. Inaccessibility to basic services, absence of barrier free infrastructure, public spaces and so forth due to existing built environment and structural design form the

² Retrieved from <http://www.nsda.gov.in>. Accessed on 7th March 2017.

physical barriers for persons with disability. The psychological barriers include insensitive attitudes (of peers, communities, employers), lack of employment, stigma associated with disabilities, stereotypes created by society, denial of rights, indifference of government officials, etc. Karna (2008) posits that disability cannot be explained and understood simply in terms of an individual's impairment but, rather, in terms of social arrangements.

Physical Barriers

- Inaccessibility to basic services,
- Lack of barrier free infrastructure,
- Public space, etc. due to existing built environment and structural designed

Stated in simple terms, it is not the individuals and their alleged incapacities that explain the limited opportunities of the persons with impairments; society is partly to blame as well.

Psychological Barriers

- Insensitive attitudes
- Stigma attached
- Inferiority complex created by society,
- Denial of rights,
- Indifference attitude

Disability has several dimensions and the fact that disability is an evolving issue makes it an important arena for the changing and dynamic society cutting across state, regions and countries. The International classification of Functioning, Health

and Disability (WHO, 1980) defined disability as any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for human being. In India, The Persons with Disabilities Act (PWD Act, 1995) categorised only seven types of disability– low vision, blindness, locomotor impairment, hearing impairment, leprosy cured, mental retardation and mental illness – with 40 per cent or more disability as certified by medical authorities. More recently The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007, defines people with disability to “include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. Albrecht (2001) unravelled the multi-dimensional and complex issues of persons with disabilities in the following:-

There are multiple ontologies of disabilities. These ontologies exist in the bio-medically constructed body, in the person's relationship with the “lived body”, between the person and the people with whom he or she comes into contact, and between the historically formed society

(encompassing political economy, social welfare, culture and ideology and the person as a member of that society) (2001: 129).

Post-independent India conferred the right of citizenship on its peoples. *Persons with disabilities* as citizens of free India are extended the same civil political and social rights as those given to others. Beside these, India has also extended certain special rights to *persons with disabilities* (Xaxa, 2016 *emphasis added*). The Government of India has enacted five major legislations concerning persons with disabilities in India. They are as follows:-

1. The Mental Health Act, 1987
2. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992
3. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.
4. The National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999
5. Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016

The Mental Health Act, 1987 which replaced the Indian Lunacy Act 1912, provides for treatment and care as well as better provisions for the affairs of ‘mentally ill’ persons, and regulates psychiatric care facilities. The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992 was enacted to set up a statutory body for regulation and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 is by far the most comprehensive Act concerning persons with disabilities in India. It spells out and assigns responsibility to the State towards persons with disabilities- encompassing prevention of disabilities, protection of rights, provision of medical care, education, training, employment and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. The salient features of the Act are on prevention and early detection of disabilities; enabling access to education and employment; affirmative action; non-discrimination and social security. The most significant feature of this Act was the provision of 3 per cent reservation in employment opportunities in government sector and in all poverty alleviation schemes for the benefits of persons with disabilities. The National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999 was set up to enable and empower persons with these specifica

disabilities to live as independently and as fully as possible within and as close the community to which they belong; strengthen facilities for them to live at home; extend support to registered organisations providing services to families; promote care and protection in the event of death of parents/guardians; evolve procedures for appointing guardians/trustees; facilitate realisation of equal opportunities to persons with these disabilities.

The latest disability related legislation in India is *the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016* has evolved from a review of existing laws in the wake of the ratification of the UNCRPD. This Act which replaces the PwD Act 1995, widens the definitions, categories and provisions for persons with disability. In keeping with the evolving and dynamic concept of the UNCRPD, it defines persons with disabilities to “include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”. The new law defines benchmark disabilities and categorises them into six types of disabilities. They are as follows:-

1. **Physical Disability:** Leprosy cured persons, Cerebral Palsy, Dwarfism, Muscular dystrophy, Acid attack victims;
2. **Intellectual Disability:** Specific learning disability and Autism disorder;
3. **Mental Disability:** Mental illness;
4. **Disability caused due to Chronic neurological conditions and Blood disorder:** Multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Haemophilia, Thalassemia, Sickle Cell disease;
5. **Multiple disability;**
6. **Others.**

Clearly, the evolution of these laws ably demonstrates that disability in India is also an evolving issue and its concept and meaning changes with time and space and also with the socio-politico economic scenario of the country. Apart from legal definitions of disability, there are numerous studies on the concept of disability. Disability is widely recognised as an outcome of certain principles, which make it a social phenomenon. This

implies that disability is socially constructed and culturally exacerbated (Karna, 2001). The roots of disability as per the social constructionist version can be traced back to the disability movement in the United States. Goffman (1963) set forth the interaction of stigmatised and normal people in social situations. People with disabilities (and others) have an unexpected differentness which causes “normal” people to stigmatise them and to construct their identities based in that differentness (as cited in Pfeiffer, 2001, p.32). His conception of the term ‘normal’ referring to non-disabled and ‘others’ as persons with disabilities is highly contentious. The conception of normal and others in itself is a problematic construction. It gives out the binary or demarcation between persons with disabilities and non-disabled communities. This concept is not longer endorsed today in disability studies. In the United Kingdom the social model of disability has a component of Marxian perspective where one could see the expression of persons with disabilities as the oppressed class. The problem is society’s failure to provide appropriate services and adequately ensure that the needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its social organisation (Oliver, 1995 as cited in Pfeiffer 2001).

The common perception of disabilities in the context of Indian society finds its relevance in what Pfeiffer (2001) posited in the form of disabilities as discrimination. He argued that many people with disabilities live their daily lives not acting as if they are disabled. It is only when they encounter acts of discrimination based upon artificial barriers that they feel disabled. It could be discrimination based on a lack of architectural access or based on sensory, attitudinal, cognitive, and economic barriers. They are not being treated fairly and not being treated as other, non-disabled people (p.41). Disability has been defined from various perspectives, one such is the socio-political perspective. This perspective posits that a disabled individual could be perceived as an individual, who experiences social oppression in addition to his/her specific physical, sensory and mental impairment (Karna, 2001).

According to World Health Organisation, “disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by

an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations". Disability is thus not just a health problem. It is a complex phenomenon, reflecting the interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives. Overcoming the difficulties faced by the people with disabilities requires intervention to remove environmental and social barriers. This study locates the notion of disability within the social constructionist model and from the perspective of discrimination. It is the society which creates barriers for persons with disabilities. Thus, disability may be viewed as a phenomenon arising due to the socially constructed barriers which encompass both physical as well as psychological barriers.

Theoretical Framework/Approaches to Disability

There are various theoretical frameworks or models to understand disability across the globe. The dominant and in-fact the oldest model being the **medical/clinical approach** to disability. This model postulates that the problems and difficulties experienced by disabled persons are directly related to their individual physical, sensory or intellectual impairments (Karna 2001). Lang (1988) unravelled that in the medical model, disability is defined basically as a disease state and is located absolutely within a clinical framework. Essentially a problem focusing on the individual, disability is viewed as a deviation from the norm. So, the role of the medical and paramedical professionals is to cure or ameliorate this problem in order to enable them to be as normal as possible (as cited in Karna, 2001, p. 38). This model is strongly driven by 'normalising' tendency i.e. to make persons with disability undifferentiated, it emphasises on medical interventions to; 'treat' or 'cure' disabilities (Sapra 2012).

The medical model of understanding disability was strongly critiqued by various scholars for its location of problem within the individual without considering the social environment which creates more disability in the form of barriers. Oliver (1990) argues that the medical approach takes the environment to be granted, though the handicapping situation can no longer be extrapolated within the individual alone. The problem with this approach is that it tends to perceive all difficulties solely from the perspective of proposed

treatment for a patient, irrespective of the fact that the individual has to assess whether the treatment fits into the overall economy of their life (p.5). Pfeiffer (2001) makes a similar argument that the fundamental problem with the medical model is that it locates the problem within the person and comes to blame the “victim”. If a person has a permanent impairment which results in using a wheelchair to move around, that person will never get “well”. To get “well” the person must not longer need the wheelchair, but since that person will need the wheelchair he/she thus remains in the “sick role” forever and is always viewed as dependent (p.31). Sapra (2012) posits that while this model is rejected theoretically, it continue to dominate disability actions and interventions. In India, for example, disability needs to be certified by medical practitioners. However, disability in India is overwhelmingly an outcome of preventable causes (Singal 2008 as cited in Sapra 2012).

The **social model or approach** of disability was developed as a critique to the medical model. Developed in the 1960s and 70s as a part of the movement in the UK, the model sees disability not as an individual attribute but as a social construct created by the way society is organised that disables certain individuals by isolation and exclusion (Oliver 1996 as cited in Sapra 2012, p. 42). The social model of disability postulates that the problem is “society’s failure to provide appropriate services and adequately ensure (that) the needs of disabled people are fully taken into account in its social organisation” (Oliver 1995: 32 as cited in Pfeiffer 2001). This model draws on the idea that it is the society that disables people, through designing built-environment to meet the needs of the majority. There is recognition within the social model that there is a great deal that society can do to reduce the barriers which are socially constructed. Table 1.1 presents the overview of medical and social models of disability.

Table 1.1. Interpretations of the medical and social models

| | Interpretation | Understanding of disability |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Medical models | 1. full-essentialist individual deficiency interpretation (FEID) | Disability is caused by fixed medical characteristics that inevitably prelude a life of deficiency and abnormality. |
| | 2. part-essentialist individual deficiency interpretation (PEID) | Whilst disability is caused by the above medical characteristics, these can be partially alleviated by changes in the social environment, so as to enable some degree of normal living. |
| Social model | 3. politics of disablement interpretation (POP) | Disability is caused by social practices that systematically exclude impaired people from the activities of normal citizenship. |
| | 3. social construction of disablement interpretation (SCOD) | Disability is caused by the way impairments are defined and associated with characteristics that are necessarily assumed to have a negative impact on personal identity, development and fulfilment. |

Source: Steven R. Smith, 2009.

The Social model of disability emerges as an alternative to the medical model of understanding disability. However, advocates of social model of disability thus pointed out that no model, including the social model, can totally explain disability. As it is not a social theory, but only a model, which explains , why people with disabilities are disadvantaged (Pfeiffer 2001). The **psychological approach** of disability on the other hand emphasis and attributes disability in terms of certain psychological disturbances, emanating from the onset of disability. They reinforced the idea that individuals with disability are not merely persons with lost limbs or sensory organs but persons gifted with tremendous potentialities and contemplative mind (Karna 2001).

In the context of India, the government approach on addressing the issues of disabilities has the elements of the **economic vocational approach**. This approach suggests that the employment problems of people with disability stem from faulty economic systems and deficiencies on the part of such disadvantaged individuals (Hahn, 1982 as cited in Karna 2001). Thus to empower persons with disabilities economically,

various vocational or income maintenance programmes are prescribed as the principal solution to the problems faced by them. These policies play a role in condemning the men and women with disability to a life of perpetual dependency or to a secondary labour market, thus providing low pay, mundane work and limited opportunities for all-around development (Karna 2001, p. 45). Various schemes and rehabilitation programmes for persons with disabilities such as the Scheme for Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995; various schemes under the National Trust like Gharaunda, Sahyogi, Niramaya, Uddyam Prabha, etc.; the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Schemes; the unemployment allowances to persons with disabilities etc. are pointers in this direction. Skill development and training of persons with disabilities in India is gaining limelight with the establishment of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The thrust area of the government in this aspect is to impart vocational training to persons with disabilities to generate employment.

Welfarism approach of disabilities continues to dominate in framing policies for persons with disabilities in India. Drawing from the philosophy that PwD are different from others and are incapable of coping with the so called mainstream society, accordingly special schools, sheltered homes, separate transportation etc. were set up for the welfare of the PwD rather than creating a barrier free environment. However, after ratifying the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, the **rights-based approach** or simply the **human rights approach** to disability gained popularity. The protagonists of this approach hold the view that individuals with disability are first and foremost human beings; with the same basic human needs as the rest of humanity (...) They require support and understanding from fellow human beings- something which is rarely attainable. What is, therefore, utmost necessary is attitudinal change, which involves the question of their human rights and dignity (Karna 1999; 2001). The human rights approach strongly advocates for, among other things, the formulation and implementation of legislation in order to provide leverage to such disadvantaged individuals and thereby promote their mainstreaming (Ibid.). The pointer in this direction is the enactment of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, and the new law on Rights of the

Persons with Disabilities 2016. However, the lacuna and impediments as usual in the context of India is the implementation process. Thus ensuring equal rights and opportunities became challenging tasks. Theoretically, this study locates within the framework of human rights approach and it is an exploratory research.

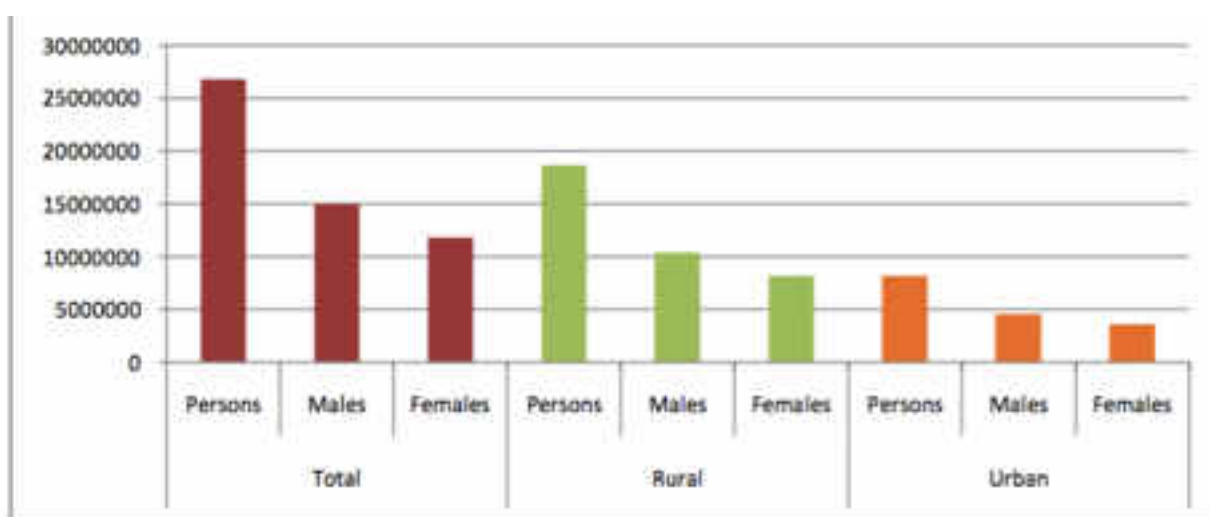
Social Reality of Disability in India vis-a-vis Assam

The inadequacy of basic barrier free infrastructure limits the persons with disabilities from access to public spaces. Even basic infrastructure such as primary health care centres, primary schools, and potable drinking water remains inaccessible for persons with disabilities in most of the rural areas in the country. Assam is not exception from this phenomenon. This shows the lackadaisical approach of the state in addressing the problems of persons with disabilities. Thus, due to poor implementation of laws the notion of equal opportunities, protection of rights and full participation as guarantee in the Persons with Disability Act, 1995 remains a far cry from reality, Persons with disabilities continue to remain the most marginalised, which find its expression socially, economically and politically. Socially, they are stigmatised, stereotypes and discriminated by the society. Economically, they are excluded from the market and employment for livelihood. And politically, they are hardly part of the decision making body nor they represent in local governance.

According to UNDP (2012), there are about 650 million persons with disabilities in the World which constitutes 12 per cent of the total population and 80 per cent of these live in developing countries. In India there are approximately 26 million persons with disabilities constituting 2.21 per cent of the total population (Census 2011). However, the World Bank Report (2009) shows the figure of PwDs in India to be 6 per cent of its total population. A myriad of reasons ranging from social stigma to proper sensitisation of enumerators as well as lack of awareness of common man on the importance of sharing accurate information are key factors as to why disability data of the Census of India as well as the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) does not reflect the actual disability status.

Mehrotra (2012) stated that very few persons with disabilities have access to higher education. Following the PwD Act, the numbers of PwD joining higher education have increased in the last decades (:5). Singh (2014) has pointed out that people from lower caste are more vulnerable to disability than the people belonging to higher castes. Disability census of India 2011 shows Scheduled Caste people have the highest percentage of disability at 2.45 percent. Types of work and work conditions play an important part in acquiring disability (:68). Figure 1.1. presents the population of persons with disability in India according to typology of disability.

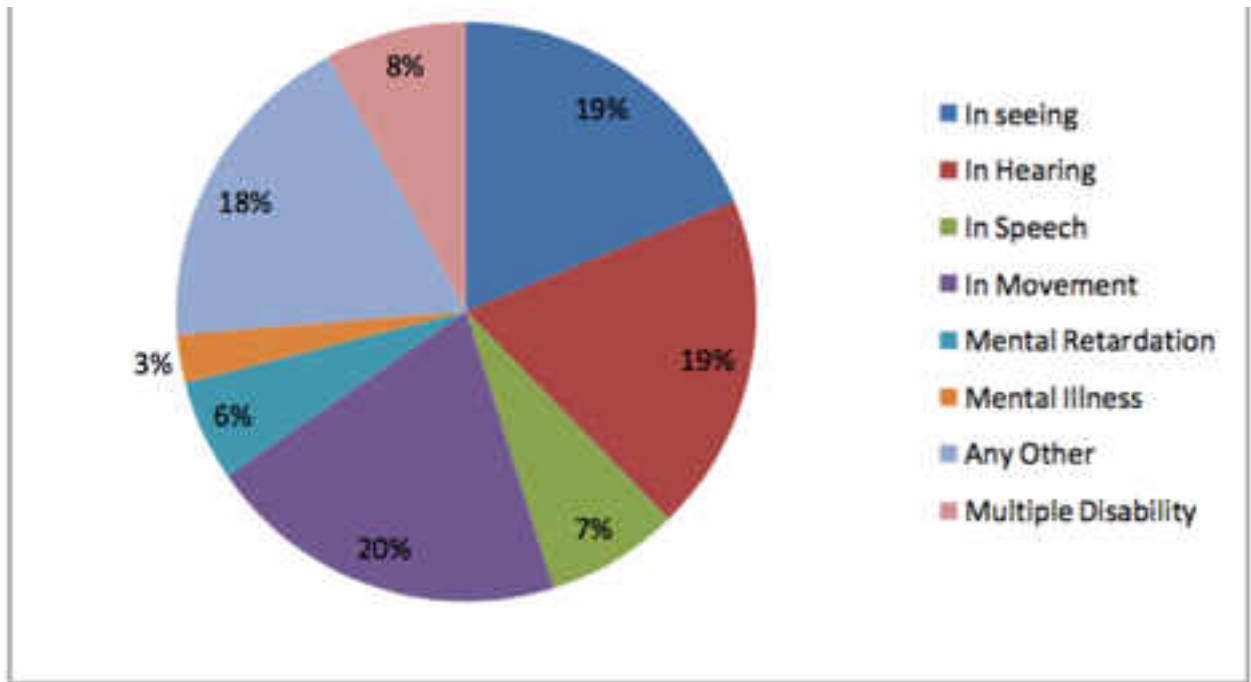
Figure 1.1. Population of Persons with Disabilities in India- Census 2011



Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, GoI, 2016.

The Census, 2011 also gives data pertaining to types of disabilities in India. Accordingly, disabilities are categorised into eight types i.e. in seeing, in hearing, in speech, in movement, mental retardation, mental illness, any other and multiple disabilities. Figure 1.2 gives the types of disabilities in India as per the Census, 2011. Persons having disability in movement constitutes 20 per cent of the total disabled population. Persons with visual and hearing impairment comprises of 19 per cent each. 3 per cent of the population of people with disabilities have mental illness and whereas 8 per cent have multiple disability.

Figure 1.2. Population of Persons with Disability by Types



Source: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, GoI, 2016.

The literacy rate of persons with disabilities in India is 55 per cent³ which is way below the national average of 74.04 per cent. There is a wide variation of literacy rate between male and female of persons with disabilities in India. The male literacy stood at 62 per cent whereas female is only 45 per cent. In terms of employment status of people with disabilities, only 36 per cent of the total populations are workers wherein 47 per cent working are male and only 23 per cent female. In urban India only 16 per cent of the female persons with disabilities are working corresponding to 25 per cent in rural India. The World Bank Report (2009) shows that the employment rate of persons with disabilities in India actually fell from 42.7 per cent in 1991 to 37.6 per cent in 2002, a period when the employment rate of the general population rose.

Assam, one of the North Eastern states in India has a total population of 31,169,272 of which 4,80,065 (1.54 %) are persons with disabilities. It accounts for

³ Data pertaining to disability is of Census, 2011 unless mentioned otherwise.

1.75 per cent of the total population of persons with disabilities in India. Table 1.2 gives the details of persons with disability in Assam according to the types of disability.

Table 1.2. Total Population of Persons with Disabilities in Assam as per the 2011 Census

| State | Disabled population | Seeing | Hearing | Speech | Movement | Mental Retardation | Mental Illness | Any other | Multiple Disability |
|-------|---------------------|--------|---------|--------|----------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------------|
| Assam | 480065 | 80553 | 101577 | 39750 | 76007 | 26374 | 18819 | 87461 | 49524 |

Source: Census, 2011.

Table 1.2 ably demonstrates that persons with hearing impairment constitute the maximum population of persons with disabilities in Assam with 101577 individuals i.e. 21.15 per cent. This is followed by persons with visually impairment with 16.7 per cent, 18.2 per cent fall in the ‘any other’ category, 15.8 per cent constitute persons with movement/locomotor disability, while persons with multiple disability account for 10.3 per cent, persons with mental retardation are 5.5 per cent, and those mental illness are 3.9 per cent of that population. Literacy rate of persons with disability in Assam is low compared to all India average and also to other Northeastern states. The total literacy rate of Assam stood at 73.18 per cent whereas the literacy rate of persons with disability is just 48.25 per cent. Table 1.3 gives the overview of educational level of persons with disability in the state.

Table 1.3. Educational level of Persons with Disabilities in Assam

| State | Educational level | Total disabled population | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|---------|
| | | Persons | Males | Females |
| Assam | Total | 480065 | 257385 | 222680 |
| | Illiterate | 248422 | 112627 | 135795 |
| | Literate | 231643 | 144758 | 86885 |
| | Literate but below primary | 61472 | 37404 | 24068 |
| | Primary but below middle | 52785 | 32598 | 20187 |
| | Middle but below matric/secondary | 47093 | 29050 | 18043 |

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Matric/Secondary but below graduate | 43112 | 28092 | 15020 |
| | Graduate and above | 10821 | 7474 | 3347 |

Source: Census, 2011

The employment status of persons with disabilities in Assam gives a disturbing figure. About 66 per cent of persons with disabilities in Assam are unemployed. Only 33.91% of the population of persons with disability in Assam are ‘workers’ as per the Census 2011 figures. This is below the all India average of 36.34 per cent. Table 1.4 gives the details of employment status according to the types of work.

Table. 1.4. Work Status of Persons with Disabilities in Assam - Census, 2011

| State | Worker | | | | | Non-Worker | Total Disabled |
|--------------|--------|------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | Total | CL | AL | HHI | Others | | |
| Assam | 162785 | 56262 (34.5%) | 27834 (17%) | 8157 (5%) | 70532 (43.3%) | 317280 (66 %) | 480065 |

Source: Census, 2011

Note: **CL:** Cultivator, **AL:** Agricultural Labour, **HHI:** Working in Household industries.

Table 1.4, shows that persons with disabilities working as a cultivator constitutes 34. 5 per cent, and those working as agricultural labourer are 17 per cent, and those working in household industries comprise 5 per cent only whereas 43.3 per cent are employed in others. Despite provision of 3 per cent reservation in Govt jobs under the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, the employment scenario of persons with disability in Assam is rather dismal.. It is clear that persons with disabilities continue to be discriminated against in every sphere of daily life and receive relatively little attention, especially in North East India. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, GoI in its Schemes for Implementation of Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995 has pointed out the following:

- According to the Census 2011, about 1.34 crore persons with disabilities are in the employable age of 15 to 59 years. About 99 lakh persons with

disabilities in the employment age group were non-workers or are marginal workers.

- Persons with disabilities are among the poorest in the population.
- Urgent need to scale up the skill training infrastructure in view of the huge demand-supply gap
- The training, being offered through various institutions/mechanisms is non-homogenous, lacks quality and is low on employability.
- Very low access of the present training infrastructure for the PwDs in rural areas.
- Low level of involvement of private sector in the skill training of PwDs
- The skill training offered by various ministries/departments to the PwDs is fragmented or overlapping (2016:.5).

Chapter Two

Disability and Employment

This chapter gives a brief overview of the employment status of persons with disabilities in India. It is primarily based on the existing literature and various reports on disability and employment. In today's world employment is considered as a boon, as it enhances quality of life, determines financial security, build self esteem (Delsen, 1989) and achieves a sense of satisfaction of contributing to society. Employment motivates persons with disabilities greatly in gaining independence and achieving social inclusions (Hart, 1999 as cited in TISS and Shishu Sarothi Report, 2012). Employment is defined not only as means for earning livelihood but also it is a symbol of status in society. It is a source of income for fulfillments of human needs, source of empowerment and agent for change in the status of individual (Singh, 2014). Employment is indeed the most crucial factor for economic empowerment of individual and more so persons with disabilities. Even in the most developed nations of the world employment for people with disability is very low. In India special provisions are made for employing people with disability, but they are not followed in the right spirit. Mehrotra (2013) argued that people with disability have marginal space in Indian economy because economists have not been considering their invisible contribution. There are lacunae in the economy which leads to inequality such as lack of equal opportunities, huge gap in wages, and exploitation at work and spaces.

The World Health Organisation has estimated that nearly 15 per cent of the global population has a disability. Person with disabilities account for nearly one-fifth of the global poor, and are often among the poorest of the poor (Elwan, 1999 as cited in Sonpal and Kumar, 2012, p.72). The World Bank Report (2009) is perhaps the most comprehensive report on disability in India. It covers various indicators ranging from socio-economic profile of persons with disabilities, attitudes towards disability, health, education, employment, social protection, policies and institutions, access for persons with disabilities. In terms of employment, the report (2009) stated that people with

disability have significantly lower employment rates than average, and this gap has been increasing over the past 15 years. The large majority of PwD in India are capable of productive work. Despite this fact, the employment rate of the population of people with disability is lower (about 60 percent on average) than the general population, with the gap widening in the 1990s. Pointing out empirical data emerging from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the report shows that controlling other factors, having disability reduces the probability of being employed by over 30 percent for males in rural UP and TN, though the effect is lower for women. The report also stated that those in rural areas and the better educated have relatively better prospects of employment relative to other people with disabilities (World Bank, 2009). Sapra (2012) asserted that this phenomenon of those in rural areas better employed is not because of more option for work but that agriculture, despite being physically demanding, absorbs PWDs given the collective nature of work involved. Also, the economic pressures in many of the rural areas force individual to engage in some economics activities (:26).

In India, disability is framed by the dominant cultural conceptions of normality and deviation, as retribution for the sins of one's past lives and stigma on the one hand, and questions of survival framed through issues of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and complicated by the social vectors of gender, caste, rural or urban residence on the other hand (Ghai 2002; Mehrotra 2011 as cited in Sonpal and Kumar, 2012, p.73). Hariss-White (1996) ably demonstrated that though employment is a major issue for persons with disabilities market provisions are inadequate to understand the needs of persons with disabilities , because market only responds to selling and purchasing capacity to increase assets. In a similar vein Hiranadani (2010) posited that economic opportunities are mostly confined to highly skilled and educated persons with disabilities whereas, majority of the persons with disabilities have been left out from the Indian economy.

Mitra and Sambamoorthi (2006) analyse the employment of persons with disabilities using National Sample Survey (NSS) data and concluded that only 37.6 per cent are employed in 2002 compared to 62.5 per cent for the all-India population in

1999-2000. They found that type of disability also affects the probability of employment. Persons with mental disabilities are disproportionately out of the labour force when compared to persons with other types of disability. They posited that poverty can be the consequence of disability through the loss of employment or the reduction in work earnings following the onset of disability for the individual and household. Therefore, employment is a key to understand and deal with the economic challenges of households with PwDs.

Persons with disabilities who are involved in paid work, have to do equal work as non-disabled people do but get lesser salary or wages than non-disabled because persons with disabilities have been considered as non-efficient and non-productive. Besides, they are discriminated at in the work place on the basis of their disability. In case of women with disabilities payment would be doubly less as compared to men with disability or non-disabled women (Mehrotra 2013; Mitra and Sambamoorthi 2006 as cited in Singh, 2014). Mitra and Sambamoorthi (2006) draws a conclusion that low employment rate of PwDs compared to the all-India population could be the constraint placed by the disability on the amount and type of work a person can do, societal attitudes including low expectations for PwDs or discrimination and finally an unfavourable policy environment with respect to the employment of PwDs.

Despite the implementation of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, Census 2001 shows that only 34 per cent is employed indicating that even government organisations have not managed to meet the 3 per cent job reservation for PwDs. A 1999 survey by the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People in 100 major companies found that the average employment rate of persons with disabilities in the public sector was only 0.54 per cent whereas in private sector it was only 0.28 per cent and a mere 0.05 per cent in multinational companies (Dawn, 2012). This shows the dismal attitude of private companies in employing persons with disabilities.

Klasing (2012) study on livelihood and poverty in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh states shows that 62 per cent of villagers with disabilities and over 18 years are altogether without work in Rajasthan. In Andhra Pradesh 51 per cent of the people with disabilities were unemployed. She argued in a similar line to that of the NSSO data that unemployment rates vary by types of disability. For instance, persons with mental retardation are the most disadvantaged group, in that 94 per cent of them do not earn a living in Rajasthan. The situation of people with multiple disabilities is equally bad. Visually impaired people are much more fortunate - they have the highest work participation rates among people with disabilities, followed by the speech and hearing impairment and persons with locomotor disabilities (p. 131), thereby reaffirming the NSSO data which shows that only 6 per cent of persons with mental retardation were employed in rural India.

The design of the government policies and rural development schemes also attributes to low employment rate of persons with disabilities in India. Seeley (2001) observed that most of the rural development schemes are oriented to wage labour like road building, construction of bunds, cleaning and building irrigation channels etc. Such an approach excludes PwDs though they constitute a significant section of the poor. In the process, not only are they deprived of the opportunity to work they remain excluded from planning or decision-making processes even if the schemes impacts them (Seeley 2011 as cited in Sapra 2012).

The NCPEDP Baseline Report on People with Disabilities in Rural India (2009)⁴ has ably demonstrated how rural development flagship programmes/schemes in India fails to take account of persons with disabilities. Thus creating a barrier for inclusion of PWDs in employment. The report stated as follows:

- The Government of India flagship programme which guarantees employment to all unemployed rural population for 100 days under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) shows that only 0.90 per cent (upto December 2007) given employment are persons with disabilities.

⁴ Retrieved from https://www.dnis.org/People_with_disabilities.pdf access on 12th March 2017.

- Under the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) that provides wage employment in rural areas along with food security, creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure etc. only 0.17 per cent completed works were reported to have benefited people with disabilities
- In Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) which aims to assists poor families and bring them above the poverty line, only 1.81 per cent comprises of persons with disabilities. The schemes which otherwise has a guideline stating that persons with disabilities will account for at least 3 per cent of the total beneficiaries.
- Under the Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), 3 per cent of the scheme is earmarked for persons with disabilities. However, the implementation shows that merely 1.76 per cent of the total dwelling units were allotted in the name of persons with disabilities (pp.8-14).

In yet another report by NCPEDP (2009), it says that the total numbers of jobs i.e. 2698762 in all the Ministries and department, Government of India, only 9975 (0.37 per cent) are filled by persons with disabilities. It has identified 281398 jobs for PWDs, out of which only 3.54 per cent are filled. Similarly in public sector, there are 4527293 jobs available, out of which only 20053 are filled by persons with disabilities even though it has identified 460,396 jobs for PWDs (: 11 -12).

There is hardly any serious engagement on disability in a specific political context, social composition and people at the micro level. Klasing (2007) pointed out in this direction that the invisibility of disability in everyday life, in policy, politics, development interventions and research we know little about the lives of people who live with disabilities, the majority of whom reside in rural areas. Scholars and activists alike pay less attention to research on disability in the North Eastern states. The study conducted by TISS in collaboration with Shishu Sarothi (2012) on disability in Assam and Meghalaya states is one of the few scientific studies. It pointed out many dimensions of disability issues in the region. One among them is lack of employment. The reports shows

- Of the total respondents, 83 per cent are unemployed.
- Employment ratio is higher among male than female as found that out of 17 per cent employed respondents, 13 per cent are male and remaining 4 per cent are female employees.
- The majority (46.9 per cent) of the respondents belong to Scheduled Tribe which is the combination of unemployed respondents (36.4 per cent) and employed respondents (10.9 per cent).
- Only 4.3 per cent respondents who are currently working and using different types of aids and appliances.
- The majority of the participants (5.4 per cent) who fall under the locomotor category are currently working followed by persons with speech and hearing impairment (5 per cent) and vision impairment (4.3 per cent).
- 66 per cent of the working respondents have got a job through word of mouth. 9.5 per cent of the respondents have got the jobs through job fair and through references.
- 13.6 per cent of the respondents are satisfied with their jobs, 10 per cent of the employees are satisfied with the working hours in their current jobs.
- 8 per cent of the employees are satisfied with their current salary whereas 6 per cent of the respondents feel that the salary is inadequate.
- 13.6 per cent of the respondents would like to change their current jobs and 2 per cent are fully satisfied and do not like to change their jobs.
- 9.3 per cent of the respondents stated that their wages are on par with non-disabled employees.
- 2.7 per cent of the participants feel that the work is physically exhausting in terms of communication, transportation and inaccessible spaces and information while 12 per cent respondents feel that the work is convenient and they do not feel that the work is physical stress.
- Only 3 per cent of the employees are able to state their problem to their employers whereas 7 per cent respondents never dare to convey and discuss their problems with their boss.

- 1.2 per cent of the employees get the accommodation in their workplace and 0.4 per cent of them have been helped by employers whenever they had difficulties.
- Out of the working employees only 5 per cent of them are using the computer for their office related work (pp. 30-31).

The above report clearly indicates that the employment status of persons with disabilities in the region is a bleak picture. Many studies have pointed out that the single biggest factor which cause disability in India is poverty. It is argued that persons with disabilities are more likely to suffer from malnutrition, live in crowded and unsanitary conditions (increasing risk of infectious disease), have limited access to medical care, are poorly educated, do not immunise their children, lack adequate care during pregnancy and birth and have multiple pregnancies (Parker et al 1994; Melzer et al 2000; Rautio et al 2001 as cited in PARIVAAR, 2012). The two processes of disability being both a cause and a consequence of poverty interlinked to form a “vicious cycle” of poverty and disability wherein one exacerbates the other. Disability adds to the risk of poverty and the conditions of poverty in turn increase the risk of becoming disabled (Klasing, 2012, p. 138).

Chapter Three

Study Areas, Objectives and Methodology

Kamrup District

The study was conducted in two districts of Assam namely Kamrup and Kamrup Metro. The present Assam was referred to as Kamrup in many of the ancient Indian literature. The district is situated between 25.46 and 26.49 North Latitude and between 90.48 and 91.50 East Longitude. Kamrup District comprises two sub-divisions namely, Guwahati and Rangia. Below this level, there are 8 Revenue Circles under Guwahati sub-division and 3 Revenue Circles under Rangia sub-division. Furthermore, from a developmental standpoint, the district is divided into 14 Development Blocks. Below the block level set-up, there are 139 Gaon Panchayats, each comprising of a number of villages and governed by local-self bodies.

| Kamrup District | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| State/Country | : Assam/India |
| Region | : Lower Assam |
| Headquarter | : Amingaon |
| Area | : 5481.48 Sq.Km |
| Population | : 1,517,542 (2011) |
| PWDs Population | : 24291 |
| Revenue Circle | : 11 Nos. |
| No. of Villages | : 1024 Nos. |

According to Census 2011, the district has a total population of 1,517,542 with a sex ratio of 914 females for every 1000 males. It has a population of 24291 persons with disabilities. The literacy rate of the district stood at 70.95 per cent which is lower than the national average of 74.04 per cent and state average of 73.18 per cent. There are 22 reserved forests in the district. Sualkuchi - the silk village of Assam is in Kamrup district.

Kamrup Metro District

The erstwhile Kamrup district was bifurcated into Kamrup and Kamrup Metro on 3rd February, 2003. The Kamrup Metro district covers an area equivalent to the area under the jurisdiction of the Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority area, due to which the district is sometimes alternatively referred to as 'Guwahati Metropolitan' or 'Guwahati Sub-district'. The district falls under the Lower Assam Region. Dispur, Guwahati is the district headquarter. Guwahati is indeed not only commercial hub of Assam but the entire North Eastern States. Guwahati is the gateway of North East India

The district has one sub-division i.e the Kamrup Metropolitan Sadar Sub-Division. Administratively, the district has divided into 5(Five) Revenue Circles (RC) namely Sonapur RC, Guwahati RC, Azara RC, Chandrapur RC, and Dispur RC. There are a total of 3(three) Development Blocks in Kamrup Metropolitan district, i.e Chandrapur, Dimoria, and Rani Development Block. It has 31 Municipal wards within Guwahati city.

| Kamrup Metro District | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| State/Country | : Assam/India |
| Region | : Lower Assam |
| Headquarter | : Dispur, Guwahati |
| Area | : 1, 527.84 Sq.Km |
| Population | : 1,260,419 (2011) |
| PWDs Population | : 20256 |
| Revenue Circle | : 5 Nos. |
| No. of Villages | : 316 Nos. |

According to 2011 Census, the district has a population of 1,269, 419 with a sex ratio of 922 females for every 1000 males. The literacy rate of the district is above the national average and stood at 88.66 per cent. It has total population of 20256 persons with disability.

The main objectives of the study are

- To study the **socio-economic and demographic profile** of persons with disability in Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) districts.
- To identify/map skills and capabilities of persons with disabilities in a local context.
- To survey literature on various training programmes conducted by training institutes in Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) Districts for persons with disability.
- To analyse the gap between education, training, placement and employment needs of persons with disability.
- To explore the government and private employers attitude towards employing people with disability.
- To understand the various problems/challenges faced by persons with disability with regards to employment and suggest measures accordingly towards catering to employment needs of persons with disability.

Methodology

The component of socio economic and demographic profile follows the descriptive approach whereas mapping of skills follows an exploratory approach of research. In order to achieve the above mentioned objectives a mixed method i.e. both qualitative and quantitative methods of enquiry was used for the study. For enriching and validating data, methodological triangulation was followed. Institutional visits, survey with the help of interview schedules, in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, case studies, focus group discussions, and listening to voices of discontent as a techniques were adopted for this study. The Survey was conducted in Kamrup and Kamrup Metro with the help of interview schedules following a random sampling method. The interview schedule has both open and closed ended questions. This survey was designed to capture the socio-economic and demographic profile of persons with disabilities in two districts. In-depth interviews of parents of persons with disabilities, trainers, government employees, private employers, bank manager, NGOs working on disabilities sector, institutions imparting skill development, activists, and persons with disabilities were held (details of stakeholders interviewed in this project is given in fig. 3.1).

Sampling Technique

The discrepancies of data on persons with disabilities is a major challenge to systematically estimate the total population. The Census data, the World Bank study report, the NSSO round, the WHO study, various NGOs survey gives different data on persons with disabilities in India and Assam as well.. As per the Census 2011, Kamrup district has a total population of 24291 PwDs whereas Kamrup Metro has 20256. In this study a random sampling technique was followed covering all types of disabilities to meet with a confidence level of 95 percent.

Sample Size

A total of 592 respondents were interview using interview schedules covering both the districts comprising of rural and urban population. This interview schedule was

limited to persons with disabilities. However, in case of in-depth interview, there was not pre-determined sample size as the data collection ends when it reached the saturation level.

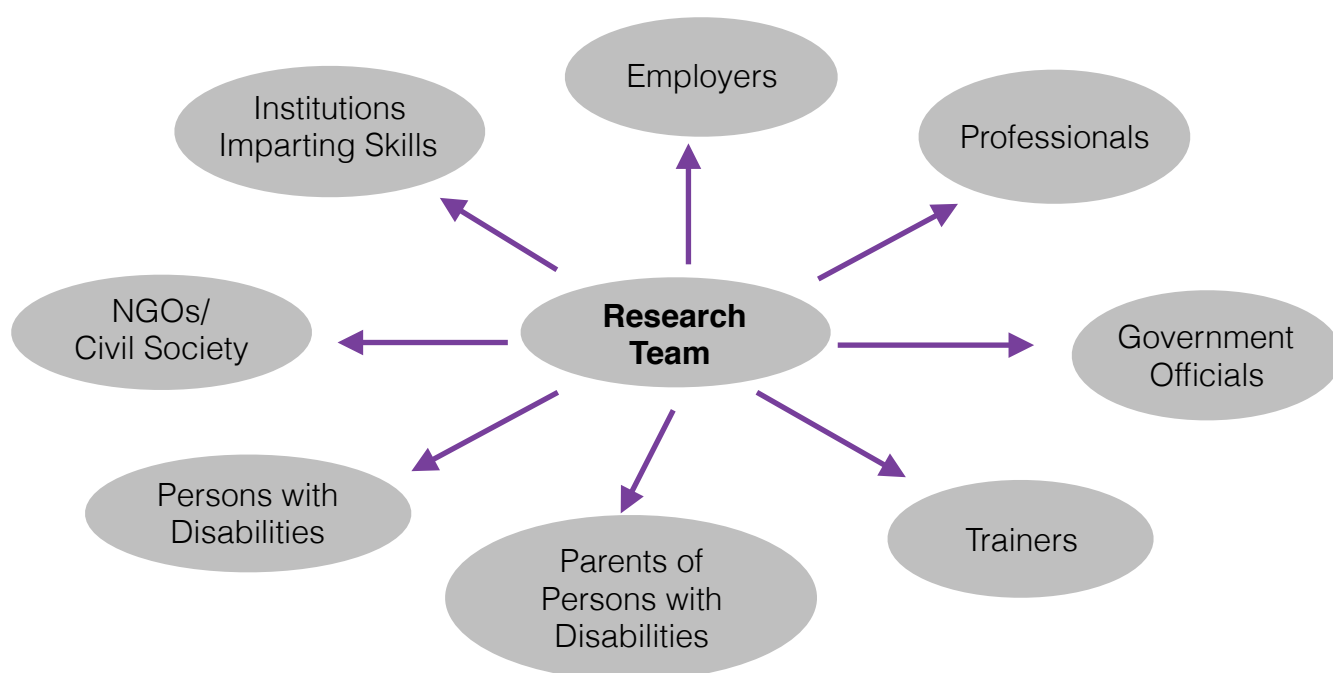
Processes of Fieldwork

The strategies and processes of fieldwork vary from objective to objective. Prior to the commencement of fieldwork/data collection process, the research team undertook a detailed literature review pertaining to theoretical understanding of disabilities across the globe and within the country. Having been exposed to the latest debate on persons with disabilities and methodological challenges, we took up a detailed review of empirical studies on disabilities. There is poverty of literature pertaining to persons with disabilities especially in the context of specific geo-political locations such as North East India. Apart from few reports, there is no serious engagement on disabilities by social scientists as well as activists in the region. This shows that issues of persons with disabilities is not at the forefront and not taken seriously both by the government as well as scholars and activists alike. Thus, perpetuating the marginalisation of persons with disabilities.

One of the major objectives of the study is to understand the socio-economic and demographic profile of persons with disabilities. This data was unraveled using interview schedules. The interview schedules was designed and pilot testing was done before finalising. The tool was improved with inputs and issues emanating from the field. The research team made institutional visits to get first hand information and take stock of the prevailing institutions/organisations working with and for the persons with disabilities in Assam. Apart from visiting, the research team also had an in-depth discussion with the staff of the organisations/institutes. The observations and voices emanating from the field were incorporated in this report. In order to capture the attitude of the employers i.e. government and private organisations on employing persons with disabilities, the research team conducted an in-depth interviews based on the broad themes of the study. We also interviewed parents of persons with disabilities, medical professional working on the issues, NGOs staffs who are directly working with the

PWDs, etc. In regard to skill mapping of persons with disabilities, we visited different entrepreneurs/self employment units set up and runs by PWDs and conducted detail case studies, interviewing them and also finding the feasibility of replicating in other parts of the state. Apart from this, we also interviewed faculty of Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, skill trainers, Vocational Rehabilitation Centre, Composite Regional Centre, and conducted in-depth interview with persons with disabilities who got skill training and who are working in an industrial sectors as well as persons who don't get any skill training but work at their local areas for livelihood. Based on all these inputs and data, we prepared a list of skills required in the context of Assam and also identified gaps.

Figure 3.1: Stakeholders Interviewed



Data Analysis

We followed two ways of data analysis. Data generated from interview schedules and in-depth interviews, observations from the field were analysed separately. Quantitative data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) method. A descriptive analysis was followed to generate the pattern of socioeconomic and demographic profile. Each of the variables were analysed separately and we also ran

cross-tabs to see the correlation. This gives different trends vis-a-vis persons with disabilities and the employment patterns and their needs. For qualitative data, we first transcribed the in-depth interviews. This was followed by thematic analysis. We also quoted verbatim many respondents from the field. In this manner, we gave the lived experiences of persons with disabilities vis-a-vis their parents and organisations working with them.

Working Definitions

This study takes into account the following disabilities listed in the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and their definitions as per this Act unless mentioned otherwise.

Locomotor Disability

This category refers to a person's inability to execute distinctive activities associated with movement of self and objects resulting affliction of musculoskeletal or nervous systems or both, including a) leprosy cured persons, b) cerebral palsy, c) dwarfism, d) muscular dystrophy, and e) acid attack victims.

Visual Impairment

Visual impairment includes (a) "blindness" means a condition where a person has any of the following condition, after best correction- (i) total absence of sight; or (ii) visual acuity less than 3/60 or less than 10/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with best possible correction; or (iii) limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of less than 10 degree; (b) "low vision" means a condition where a person has any of the following conditions, namely- (i) visual acuity not exceeding 6/18 or less than 20/60 up to 3/60 or up to 10/200 (Snellen) in the better eye with best possible corrections; or (ii) limitation of the field of vision subtending an angle of less than 40 degree up to 10 degree.

Hearing Impairment

The Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 categorise two types of hearing impairment: a) “deaf” means persons having 70 DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears; b) “hard of hearing” means persons having 60 DB to 70 DB hearing loss in speech frequencies in both ears.

Mental Illness

Mental illness refers to persons with substantial disorder of thinking, mood, perception, orientation or memory that grossly impairs judgement, behaviour, capacity to recognise reality or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life, but does not include retardation which is a condition of arrested or incomplete development of mind of a persons, specially characterised by subnormality of intelligence.

Intellectual Disability

Intellectual disability is defined as a condition characterised by significant limitation both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem solving) and in adaptive behaviour which covers a range of everyday, social and practical skills, including— a) “specific learning disabilities” means a heterogeneous group of conditions wherein there is a deficit in processing language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself as a difficult to comprehend, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations and includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia and developmental asphasia; b) “autism spectrum disorder” means a neuro-developmental condition typically appearing in the first three years of life that significantly affects a person’s ability to communicate, understand relationships and relate to others, and is frequently associated with unusual or stereotypical ritual or behaviours.

Speech and Language Disability

A permanent disability arising out of condition such as laryngectomy or aphasia affecting one or more components of speech and language due to organic or neurological causes.

Multiple Disabilities

Multiple disabilities refer to persons who have more than one type of disability including deaf blindness which means a condition in which a person may have combination of hearing and visual impairment causing severe communication, developmental and educational problems⁵.

⁵ As per the definition of the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

Chapter Four

Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile of PwDs

This chapter gives the descriptive analysis of the socio-economic and demographic profile of respondents from Kamrup Rural and Kamrup Metro districts. It unravels a range of variables covered in the present study. Data in this chapter is drawn from the interview schedule of persons with disabilities unless mentioned otherwise. It covers eight types of disabilities. The total sample size is 592. Table 4.1 gives the total respondents from the two districts.

Table 4.1. District-wise Respondent

| Name of District | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Kamrup | 461 | 77.9 |
| Kamrup Metro | 131 | 22.1 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

Table 4.1 shows that 461 (77.9 %) of the total respondents are from Kamrup Rural district whereas 131 (22.1 %) are from Kamrup Metro district. The wide variation of respondents representing the districts is due to the fact that Kamrup Rural is far larger in geographical area as well as population (including people with disabilities) compared to Kamrup Metro. The total geographical area of Kamrup is 5481.48 Sq. km whereas that of Kamrup Metro is 1527.84 Sq. Km. Similarly the population of persons with disabilities is 24, 291 for Kamrup and 20, 256 for Kamrup Metro.

Table 4.2. Sex of Respondent

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 381 | 64.4 |
| Female | 211 | 35.6 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

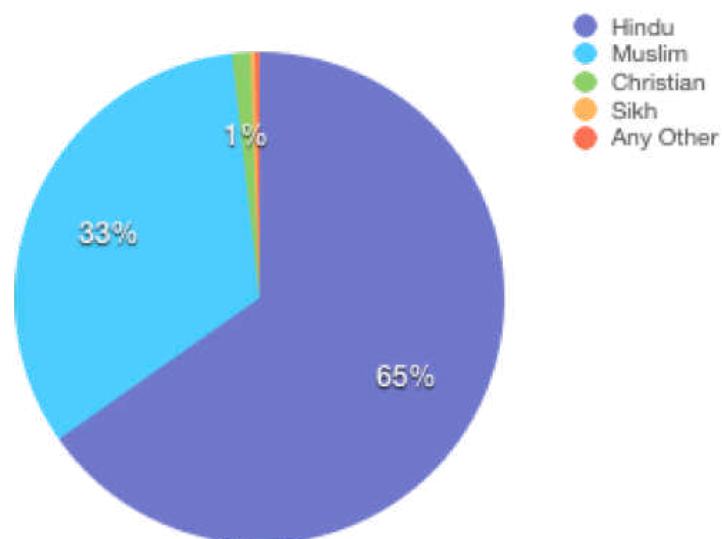
Table 4.2 shows that the total male respondents is 381 (64.4 %) whereas female respondents are 211 (35.6 %).

Table 4.2. Age Group of Respondent

| Age Group | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 to 10 years | 14 | 2.4 |
| 11 to 20 years | 77 | 13.0 |
| 21 to 30 years | 180 | 30.4 |
| 31 to 40 years | 132 | 22.3 |
| 41 to 50 years | 104 | 17.6 |
| 51 to 60 years | 58 | 9.8 |
| 61 and above | 27 | 4.6 |
| Tota; | 592 | 100 |

Table 4.3 gives the age group of respondents. The highest number of persons with disabilities in the present study is in the age group 21 to 30 years (30.4 %). This is followed by the age group from 31 to 40 (22.3 %), 41 to 50 years (17.6 %), 11 to 20 years (13 %), 51 to 60 years (9.8 %), 61 years and above (4.6 %), and 1 to 10 years (2.4 %).

Chart 4.1. Religion of Respondent



Pie chart 4.1 gives the religious affiliation of total respondents. Majority of the persons with disabilities in this study belong to the Hindu faith, i.e. 65.3 per cent. This is followed by Muslims with 32.9 percent. However, those belonging to Christian, Sikh and any other faith are minimal with 1.2 per cent and 0.3 per cent each respectively.

Table 4.4 Social Category of Respondent

| Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Scheduled Tribe | 71 | 12.0 |
| Scheduled Caste | 89 | 15.0 |
| OBC | 52 | 8.8 |
| General | 380 | 64.2 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

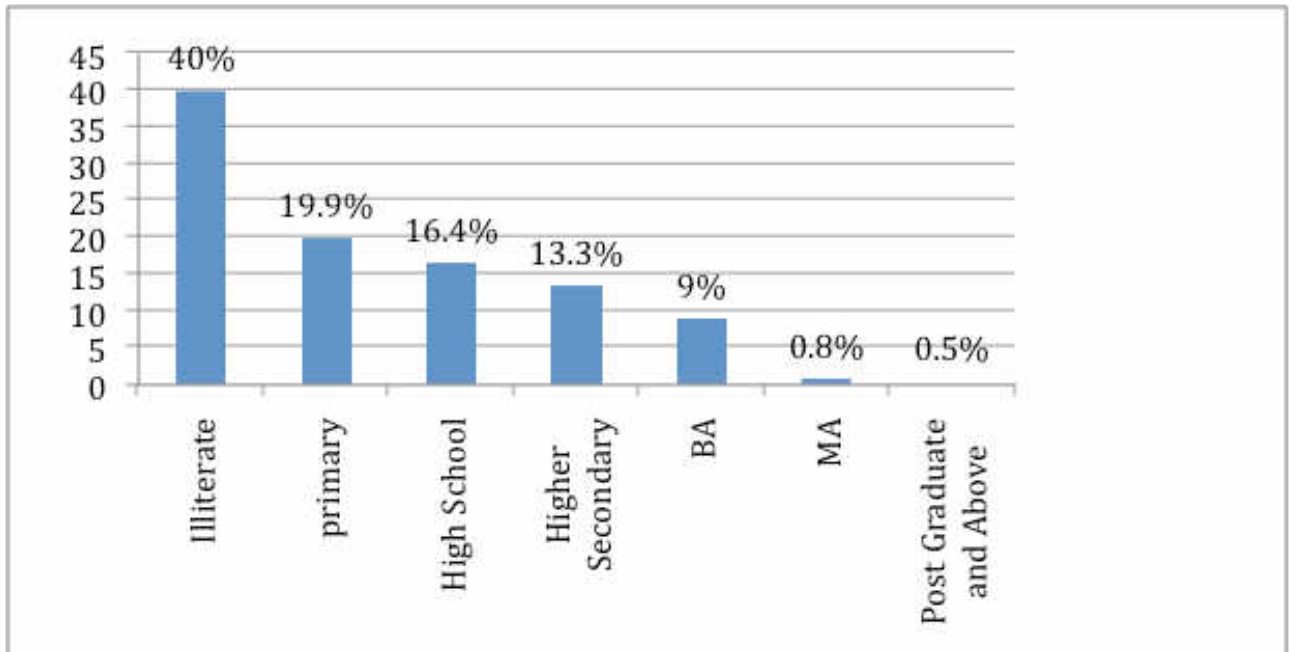
In terms of social category of respondents as shown in table 4.4, persons with disabilities who are from general category comprise 380 (64.2 %) respondents. This is followed by Scheduled Caste with 89 (15 %) respondents, Scheduled Tribe with 71 (12 %) and OBC with 52 (8.8%) respondents respectively.

Table 4.5. Marital Status

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Married | 242 | 40.9 |
| Single | 348 | 58.8 |
| Divorce | 1 | 0.2 |
| Separated | 1 | 0.2 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

It is interesting to note as demonstrated in table 4.5 that there was only one case each of divorce and separation among the respondents. Persons with disabilities who are single/unmarried constitute 58.8 percent whereas those who are married constitute 40.9 per cent.

Figure 4.1. Educational Status of PwDs



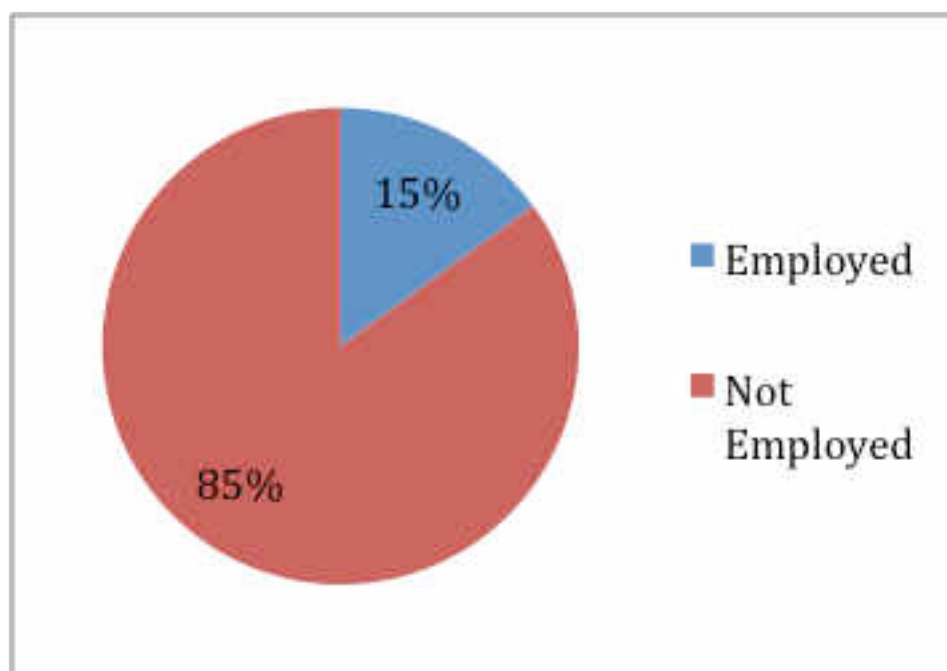
In terms of educational qualification of the respondents, figure 4.1 shows that 40 per cent of the total respondents are illiterate which means that they have not gone to any educational institution nor had access to home-based education facilities. Among those literate, only 0.5 per cent are post-graduate and above, 0.8 per cent are Post Graduates, and 9 per cent are Graduates. This implies that persons with disabilities access to higher education are very low i.e. merely 10 per cent. Among others, 19.9 per cent have the educational level of primary school, 16.4 per cent reached the level of high school and 13.3 per cent to higher secondary level.

Table 4.6. Types of School

| Type | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Regular | 309 | 52.2 |
| Special School | 38 | 6.4 |
| Open School | 10 | 1.7 |
| Home Education/Tution | 7 | 1.2 |
| None | 228 | 38.5 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

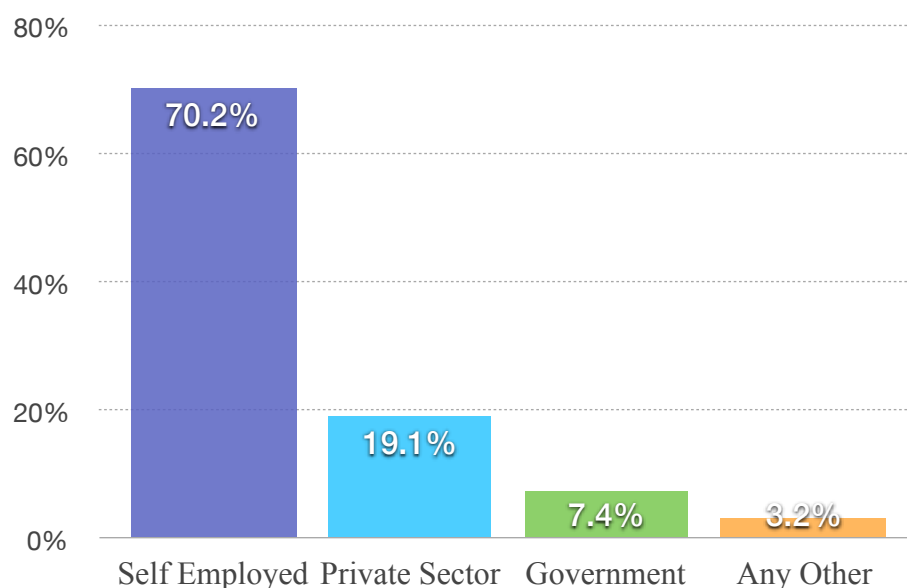
Table 4.6 shows that among those who are literate, 52.2 per cent went to regular school, 6.4 per cent went to special school, 1.7 to open school, 1.2 per cent opted for home education/tuition and 38.5 per cent did not go to any type of school/formal education system.

Chart 4.2. Employment Status



Of the total 592 respondents, only 15 per cent are employed and the rest 85 per cent are unemployed as shown in pie chart 4.2.

Figure 4.2. Types of Employment



Out of the total 15 per cent employed from the sample size, 70.2 per cent are self-employed, 19.1 per cent work in a private sector, 7.4 per cent employed in government sector and 3.2 per cent in any other. This is ably demonstrated in figure 4.2.

Table 4.7. Income Per Month

| Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---------|---------|--------|----------------|
| 500 | 40000 | 4839.6 | 6220.7 |

The income per month of persons with disabilities as shown in table 4.7 depict that the highest monthly income is Rs. 40000 whereas the lowest is merely Rs. 500. The average income is just Rs. 4839 per month. This shows that persons with disabilities are mostly in the low income group or below the poverty line.

Table 4.8. Parents Annual Income

| Minimum | Maximum | Mean |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 5000 | 500000 | 51274.9 |

More than half of the respondents either do not know their parents' annual incomes or they don't want to disclose it. As demonstrated in table 4.8 out of the 251 respondents who give their parents' income, the highest family earnings is Rs. 5,00,000

per annum whereas the lowest is Rs. 5000. The average annual income is however only Rs. 51274 only. There is a wide variation in terms of their parents' annual income.

Chart 4.3. Typology of Disability

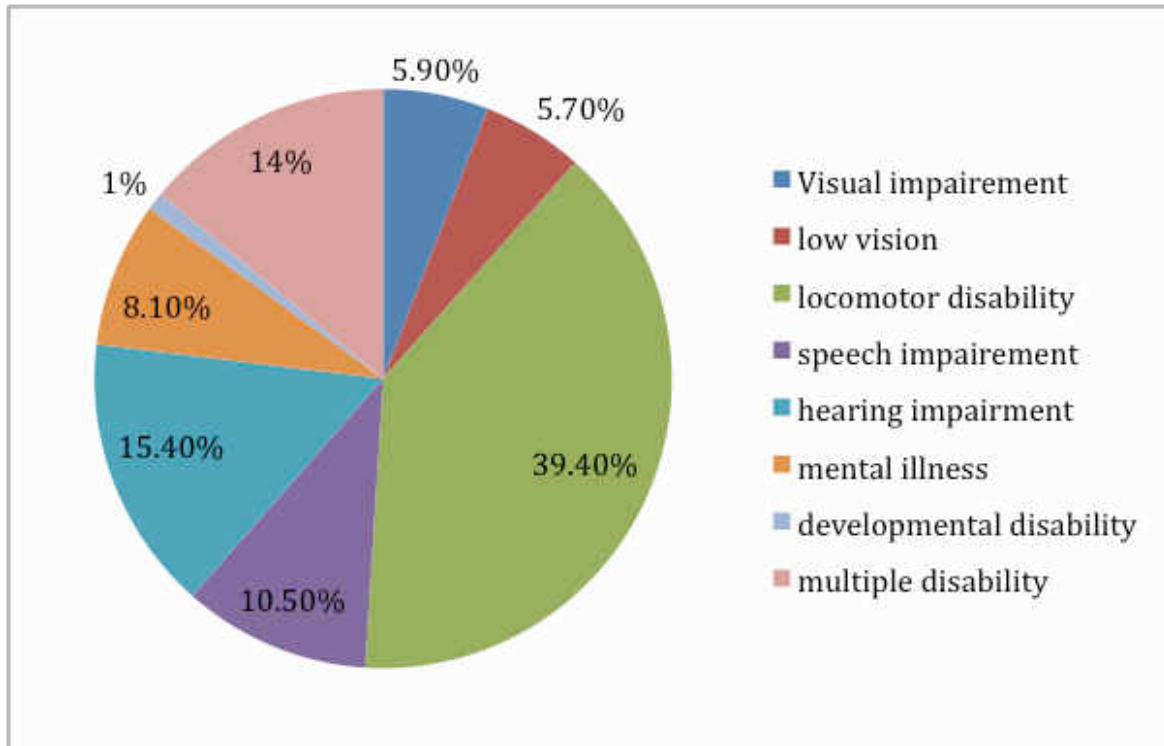


Chart 4.3 gives the types of disability. Locomotor disability constitutes 39.4 per cent, speech impairment 10.5 per cent, hearing impairment 15.40 per cent, mental illness 8.10 per cent, visual impairment 5.90 per cent, low vision 5.70 per cent, multiple disabilities 14 per cent, and developmental disability 1 per cent respectively.

Chart 4.4. Onset of Disability

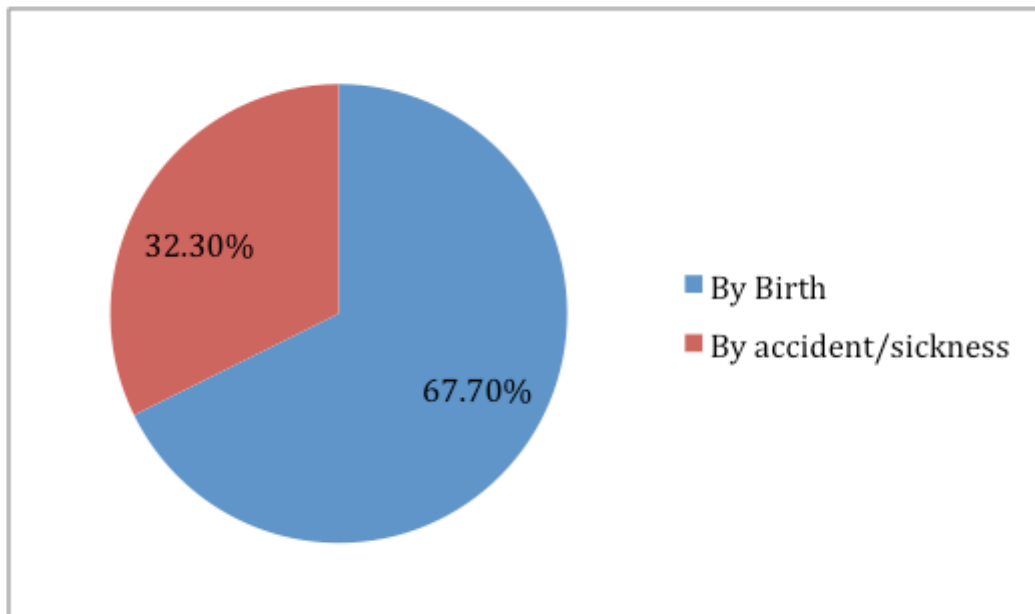


Chart 4.4 shows the onset of disability. It revealed that 67.70 per cent are disabled at birth. However, 32.30 per cent were disabled due to either by accident or by sickness. This phenomenon shows that more than 30 per cent of the disabilities are preventable.

Table 4.9. Any Family Member Disabled?

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 32 | 5.4 |
| No | 560 | 94.6 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

Among the disabled population in this study, 5.4 per cent of the respondents have other family members with disability. This is shown in table 4.9.

Table 4.10 Financial Assistant/Scheme Availed from Government

| Marital Status | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 29 | 4.9 |
| No | 563 | 95.1 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

Table 4.10 shows that 95.1 per cent of the respondents had not received any financial assistance or availed any schemes of assistance from government. Out of the total 592 respondents, only 29 persons i.e. 4.9 per cent had availed either financial assistance or government schemes of assistance. This gives an impression that persons with disabilities are either not aware of government schemes of unemployment allowances or credit facilities such as micro finance or the processes on availing such facilities are not disabled friendly.

Table 4.11. Awareness of Vocational Training Institute

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 293 | 49.5 |
| No | 299 | 50.5 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

Table 4.12. Ever Approach Vocational Training Institutes

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 134 | 22.6 |
| No | 458 | 77.4 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

Table 4.11 shows that 50.5 per cent of the total sample does not know about any vocational training institute which imparts skill training whereas 49.5 per cent knows that there are vocational training opportunities in their districts. However as

given in table 4.12, only 22.6 per cent ever approach the vocational training institute in Assam.

Table 4.13. Awareness about Reservation for PwDs

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 232 | 39.2 |
| No | 360 | 60.8 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

As shown in table 4.13, more than 60 per cent of the total respondent population does not know or is not aware of job reservation in public sector for persons with disabilities. Only 39 per cent know about job reservation. This is probably one of the reasons that employment in government sector of persons with disabilities is very low.

Table 4.14. Voted in Last Election

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 477 | 80.6 |
| No | 115 | 19.4 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

Table 4.14 gives the percentage of persons with disabilities who voted in the last election conducted in the state. It is overwhelming to see that above 80 per cent voted in the last election conducted in Assam. This figure is more than the general average election turn out. This implies that political rights/awareness is very high in the state of Assam among the population of persons with disabilities. The respondent who did not vote, were either under age or did not have voter identity cards.

Table 4.15. Disability Certificate

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 304 | 51.4 |
| No | 288 | 48.6 |
| Total | 592 | 100 |

Persons with disabilities without Disability Certificates cannot avail any provisions under the government schemes/programme/job reservation. Disability certificates issued by the Directorate of Health in Assam is the only valid certificate. As presented in table 4.15, nearly 50 per cent of the total sample size did not have disability certificates even though their degree of disability is equal to or above 40 per cent. This implies that half of the population of people with disabilities do not have the formal certification entitling them to avail of any government provisions for persons with disability and therefore do not come under the purview of the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

It is interesting to note two different and divergent perspectives of getting Disability Certificate in the context of Assam. One was that of the persons with disabilities from Kamrup Rural district and the other was that of the Government officials working in the Department of Social Welfare. On the one hand persons with disabilities expressed their helplessness in procuring t disability certificates for which they have to run from pillar to post. They shared that they have to follow so many procedures, right from getting the forms, filling it up, getting the certification from medical officers working in government hospitals etc. They faced numerous problems in the process of procuring disability certificate such as long distance travels to government offices for getting both forms and medical certification that are not accessible or disabled friendly, had to deal with insensitive government officials are insensitive towards the issues face etc. These add to their burden and some even give up in the process. Apart from the disability certification camps organised by some

NGOs, government officials hardly make any efforts to reach them in whatsoever manner.⁶ On the other hand the government official from the Social Welfare Department says that getting disability certificate is very easy. People have to come here and collect the form. After filling up the form, we guide them to the doctors to approach for getting their degree of disability certificate. Anganwadi workers create awareness and issue forms to the people with disabilities, and give them directions to the doctors to approach. Then the filled up forms are sent to the Joint Director of Health who issues the certificates within a day. People can personally follow this procedure to issue themselves the certificates when camps are not being organised⁷.

⁶ Extracted from FGD conducted on 12th May, 2017.

⁷ Extracted from personal interview with Districts Social Welfare Officer, Kamrup on 17th May, 2017.

Chapter Five

Socio-Politico-Economic Challenges of PwDs

Introduction

This chapter captures the voices from the field. It reveals the employers' attitudes of employing persons with disabilities. This has been substantiated by data from the primary source i.e. from interview schedules. It also examines the parents perspective of their children with disabilities. This chapter brings forth few case studies of those who 'took the road less travelled' for their livelihood. The chapter concludes by analysing issues faced by specific vulnerable groups within the population of persons with disabilities, such as women with disabilities, persons from low income groups, tea tribes, religious minorities, and scheduled caste people who are disabled.

Employers' Attitudes and Perspective Towards Employing PwDs

Disability being a cross-cutting issue, its repercussions may vary based on different combination of factors like employment, religion, caste, sex, gender, poverty etc, but, nevertheless, there always remain some commonalities that transcend and shape the lives of people with disabilities in India. One among them is economic. For independent living, employment is very critical. In many instances it has been proved that people with disabilities are as productive as other people and are working in various government and private organisations. Often the challenge to persons with disabilities, even though they have adequate educational qualifications and required skills for employment, stems from the negative attitudes of prospective employers. The insensitive attitude of prospective employers remains the biggest barrier for persons with disabilities to get employment. The awareness and sensitivity level of employers is rather low. Employers still have a charity perspective while employing persons with disabilities. They miss out the dimension of equal rights and capabilities of PwDs. One of the private companies HR opined that

Employing persons with disability is a source of marketing tools.

Corporate sector is driven by the motive of profit making and usually looks for long term benefits. Employing Persons with Disabilities is often overlooked in

view of the big challenges involved. On the other hand employing persons with disabilities also helps to create a better public image. We advertise that we are equal opportunity employers and that we recruit PwDs. When we recruited two PwDs in our company, the higher authorities were impressed and happy⁸.

She further stated that *“mental strength is little lesser with persons with disabilities”*.⁹ The employer has a strong sense of stigma attached to persons with disabilities and sees them just as a tool for promoting their image, and showing in their reports an apparently humane side, rather than providing equal opportunity as stipulated by laws.

Another HR¹⁰ officials of a company based in Guwahati opined that to get employment in his company/manufacturing unit, one must possess certain skills and basic educational qualifications. A prospective employee must have knowledge of computer applications, good communication skills apart from good writing skills and willingness to explore new horizons and excel. He stated that PwDs are not recruited in his company due to risk and safety issues, as the job requires handling machines. Instead he suggested that they (PwDs) can be employed as CCTV monitors, clerical workers, office assistants, telephone operators, tea vending machine or photo copy machine operators etc¹¹. He felt that persons with disabilities perform better when compared to others in the same kind of job at his company¹². This gives an impression that his outlook/attitudes towards PwDs is such that they cannot occupy/perform the white collar jobs as he identified only the grade IV jobs for them. Echoing this, one of the faculty members at Vocational Rehabilitation Centre (VRC), Guwahati stated as follows

Attitude of the recruiters when they come to Institute are extremely good and polite. They show sympathetic attitude towards persons with disabilities. However, when it comes to final recruitment, persons with disabilities remain shortlisted forever without offering final placement¹³

⁸ Extracted from personal interview with Miss Junmoni (Name changed and only pseudo name is used in this report unless mentioned otherwise due to the sensitivity of the issue and out of respect for the respondent) on 8th March, 2017.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Head of HR department at the Company's manufacturing unit in Guwahati.

¹¹ Extracted from personal interview with Mr. Saikia on 9th March, 2017.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Extracted from personal interview with Mr. Das (Name changed) on 27th February, 2017.

The experience of the vocational training institute in bridging the gap between the employers and persons with disabilities particularly those who got trained is worth quoting here in verbatim

We are working for them. Students trained from our Institute has a good job prospects. We conduct Job and Loan Mela exclusively for persons with disabilities. However, most of them struggle to find jobs. Our duty as an institute is to disseminate information and also conduct pre-recruitment training. For those students with motivation and determination, getting a job is not difficult at all. However, it is extremely difficult for students who came just for the sake of certificate from government institute. There are also cases where some students came for vocational course just to avail scholarship from government. As per our experience, people with orthopaedic disabilities are relatively better off in getting jobs than other disabilities. It is also very challenging to place student in corporate sector as their motive is purely driven for profits¹⁴

The approaches of such institutions are still deeply rooted within the paradigms of welfarism. Crusaders of employment for persons with disabilities such as the respondent cited above still have the perspective and notion that they work ‘for’ PwDs rather than ‘with’ them to economically empower them.. The statement ‘*we are working for them*’ points in this direction. The role of NGOs/civil society in bridging the gap between the employers and employee is thus significant. NGOs working with PwDs are usually far more sensitive and have better understanding of emerging issues. They have the capacity to negotiate based on their rights-based practices, with the private companies for placement/employment of persons with disabilities. For instance, Shishu Sarothi, Centre for Rehabilitation & Training for Multiple Disabilities has a Disability Employment Initiative on. They impart skill training based on industry and market specific needs. Post the skill training programme, they contact private companies for possible employment of PwDs. Till date they managed to successfully place those who trained at their organisation in various factory outlets in Assam as Office Assistants, CCTV operators, receptionists, also extending support in setting up small enterprises, such as beauty parlours, organic farms, self help groups, local handicraft production,

¹⁴Ibid.

etc¹⁵. Despite all odds, there are many cases where persons with disabilities have excelled in their work.

Case study of Mr. Nagender Shah

Nagender Shah is a 37 year old married man residing in the city of Guwahati (Kamrup Metro district). As a result of a domestic accident when he was barely one year old, Nagender Shah suffered serious injuries and he lost almost all functionality of his left leg. Determined not to let his disability become an obstacle in his life, Nagender Shah sought admission in various schools in and around the city and after some struggle was admitted into Guru Nanak National High School from where he completed his higher secondary exams in the year 1997. Eager to pursue further advanced studies, Shah joined Gauhati Commerce College to graduate with a Commerce in 2002.

It was around this time that Shah became aware of institutions like Vocational Rehabilitation Centre (VRC) which offers various courses and vocational training to persons with disabilities. With support from his family and especially his father, Nagender Shah began pursuing a course in computer basics from the local VRC. At the same time he also took up a job as a teacher in a local Primary school in order to pay the institutional and course fees as well as to provide financial aid to his family.

After he completed his course at VRC, Nagender Shah heard from his colleagues about an NGO named Shishu Sarothi which actively works with persons with disability. and got in touch with the authorities there who assured him assistance in finding a suitable , job for him. He appeared for interviews for various companies that came to Shishu Sarothi seeking prospective employees.

Today, Nagender Shah is a successful man, working as a full time employee at SC Johnson, an industrial firm. Besides this, he also helps out in his father's tea stall. He owes much to Shishu Sarothi, for helping him get the job, and also attributes his family's constant support as an important factor in his success. He says that he never allowed his disability to become a hindrance to his self growth and development and believes that his hard work and perseverance paid off. Individuals like Shah set a shining example for people everywhere- disabled or otherwise.

¹⁵ Based on interaction with the staff of Disability Employment Initiatives of Shishu Sarothi on 6th March, 2017.

Case Study of Mr. Raju Tumung (Entrepreneur)

32 year old Raju Tumung, a lives in Sonapur, not far from Guwahati city. Raju was born with severe (80 per cent) physical disability, that restricts his mobility, and cannot walk. Despite his disability coupled with poor economic condition of his family, his zeal for education made him go to evening school, travelling long distances to reach the school every evening since there was no school in his village.. Sadly, he eventually had to drop out, as it was extremely difficult for him to travel to the school and there was no accessible infrastructure or formal support from the authorities .. e started learning the art of cane and bamboo crafts at an early age. Learning on his own from elder craftsmen in the village, with no support from the State , he would practice using scrap and waste materials lying around. Over the years with patience, dedication, hard work and perseverance he became a master craftsman.

Today he along with two co-workers set up their own enterprise of handicrafts at his village. They make different cane and bamboo furniture and craft items such as tables, chairs, beds, dining chairs, arm chairs of different types, etc.. To deepen his skills he underwent a workshop cum training organised by an NGO. Now his products sell at the International Trade Fair in Delhi. With the money, he earns from the business, he built his own house in the village and lives with his wife and two children. Today he is a master craftsman and does not depend from anyone for his livelihood and his children education. Till today, Raju has neither taken any loans nor availed government scheme. Instead he is an employer of two non-disabled persons in his business.

The above two case studies gives the real life situation of persons with disabilities and how they succeeded despite their disability and discrimination of society. Mr. Shah's real life story shows that despite many odds and obstacles, he overcame them through his dedication and struggle. Raju ably demonstrates how despite being disabled he leads a successful and respectable life through his own innovation and hard work. He has proven wrong the public perception that persons with disability needs only welfare and charity, by becoming an employer of non-disabled persons in his business.

Credit Facilities

The National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation (NHFDC) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India implements various schemes for economic empowerment of persons with disabilities in the country. The schemes include financial assistance to promote economic empowerment, through self employment, vocational training, skill upgradation, assist in marketing of products etc. It has special scheme for women with disabilities and associations of parents of persons with intellectual disabilities. In both Kamrup and Kamrup Metro there are various designated nationalised banks which implement financial assistance (micro finance and loans) to persons with disability Assam Cooperative bank is the lead bank for credit facilities for persons with disabilities.

The banks give loans to persons with disabilities as per the directives of NHFDC at minimum interest rates. and is the most comprehensive credit facility extended to persons with disabilities to either start their own small business or enterprises. And yet, not many persons with disability are availing this facility. During the process of fieldwork, the researchers have come across many instances where persons with disabilities were either not aware of such facilities or not trained in any vocational skill to avail the credit facility. Initiate or at times the officials employed at the rural banks attitudes stope from approaching. This can be further substantiated from the data emerging from the field as presented in table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Any Financial Assistance/Loan/Scheme from Government

| | Frequency | Percentage of PwDs |
|-------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Yes | 29 | 4.9 |
| No | 563 | 95.1 |
| Total | 592 | 100.0 |

Source: Data from fieldwork/primary data

Table 5.1 shows that less than 5 per cent of the total respondents availed any financial assistance/loan/scheme from government. This clearly indicates that government schemes are not percolating down to the people, especially in rural areas, and one can safely conclude that specific government programme/schemes/loan did not achieve their objective of economic empowerment of persons with disabilities.

The Managing Director of Assam Cooperative Bank *while admitting loopholes and challenges especially at the rural branches where some of his staff are not sensitive to the issues of persons with disabilities, pointed out that other pertinent issues such as non-repayment of loan by PwDs which discourage them from disbursing further loans. The recovery rate is very low and there are many cases of wilful defaulters. He said there are around 25-30 cases of good clients and loan recovery from them was very positive, so they extend all possible help. The mindset of the people should change especially the notion that government money, doesn't have to be paid back*¹⁶.

He further suggests the following way forward for financial inclusion of persons with disabilities in Assam a) every organisation should impress upon all stakeholders for special treatment of persons with disabilities, b) all financial institutions should accommodate more PwDs, c) development of self-employment should be a priority and banks should facilitate credit facilities in a more disabled friendly manner d) there should be some portion of subsidy of the loan (this scheme is the only social scheme where there is no subsidy)¹⁷.

According to Mr. Rajesh Das¹⁸, he opines that they are willing to recruit persons with disabilities in their established organisation but not on grounds of sympathy. Das who has brought together both national and international participants and also organised trade fairs in Guwahati, Nogaon, Shillong and Bangkok emphasises on recruiting the disabled based on their capabilities and willingness. He recalled a couple of disabled

¹⁶ Extracted from personal interview with the Managing Director on 10th April, 2017.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Vice President, Industries and Trade Fair Association of Assam (ITFAA), N.E.Region

people being engaged in manual work at the Shillong edition of the trade fair since many years now and they are being paid by the participants. Informal labor market can be an interesting option to look at for the unemployed disabled people¹⁹.

Lacuna in Skill Training/Vocational Institute

The Government of India has initiated various vocational training institutes for persons with disabilities. However, these institutes are mostly located in urban areas and thus excluding a huge population of people with disabilities living in rural areas, from availing vocational training opportunities. The Planning Commission has also noted that “the available programmes cater largely to the needs of the organised sector in urban areas” and that rural areas are completely neglected in the provision of vocational training for disabled people (Planning Commission, 2001, p. 28). In addition to VRCs specifically intended for persons with disabilities, the government also reserves 3 per cent of vacancies in its craftsmen training programme for disabled people (Ibid.), which are carried out by the government-run Industrial Training Institutes (ITI). Like the VRCs, these institutes are concentrated in the cities and therefore inaccessible for the majority of disabled people in rural India (Klasing, 2012). The case of Assam state is no less in this matter. Both the CRC and VRC are located in Guwahati. Thus PwDs from rural areas of the state find it difficult to avail such training for skill development and find employment. Not only are the government institutes located in urban areas but NGOs working with the persons with disabilities are mostly located in urban areas too.

Another major drawback of these institutions is that the existing skill training programmes are not market driven. They impart training without updating with evolving market demands. For instance, the VRC located at Guwahati trains persons with disabilities in five skills i.e. a) Computer application, b) Secretarial practice, c) Metal cutting, d) Radio and TV repairing and e) Tailoring. Radio repairing, is slowly becoming obsolete and there are hardly any employment opportunities in this skill.. Similarly in the case of TV repairing as home-based service becomes the norm, people hardly take their TV sets to repairing centres.

¹⁹ Extracted from personal interview with Mr. Rajast Das on 1st June 2017.

Ideally vocational training should begin at the school level, particularly in the case of persons with disabilities. Assessment of their aptitude ability levels (this can differ from child to child) can help in prescribing contextual skill training programmes. The challenge is that vocational training/skill development has an urban bias, and there are far more PwDs in rural areas, with scarcely any facilities for prevocational training.

The table 4.11 and 4.12 of the previous chapter also shows that less than 50 per cent of the total population of persons with disability are not even aware of any vocational training institutions in the state. Among those who are aware, only 22.6 per cent ever approach such institutes for skill development. Inaccessible infrastructure and absence of barrier free environment discourages them. Table 5.2 shows that more than 80 per cent persons with disabilities wish to get skill training.

Table 5.2. Skill Training Required?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 478 | 80.7 |
| No | 114 | 19.3 |
| Total | 592 | 100.0 |

Discrimination and Stigma Towards PwDs

Social discrimination towards persons with disabilities is by far the most disempowering phenomenon. As discussed earlier, discrimination is not only physical but also psychological. Table 5.3 presents the respondents experience of any form of discrimination. It shows that more than 50 per cent of respondents experience discrimination. However, 41.2 per cent says that they don't feel any form of discrimination nor experience it whereas 4.7 per cent feel that they not not sure or "can't say".

Table 5.3. Experience any form of Discrimination?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 320 | 54.1 |
| No | 244 | 41.2 |
| Cant Say | 28 | 4.7 |
| Total | 592 | 100.0 |

The different nature of discrimination experienced is presented in table 5.4. Those who experience discrimination due to attitude of teachers comprised 7.5 per cent. 11 per cent of the respondents face discrimination due to attitudes of their peers. Discrimination in the form of accessibility comprises 42.8 per cent whereas discrimination in the form of infrastructural aspect constitutes 38.7 per cent.

Table 5.4. Nature of Discrimination

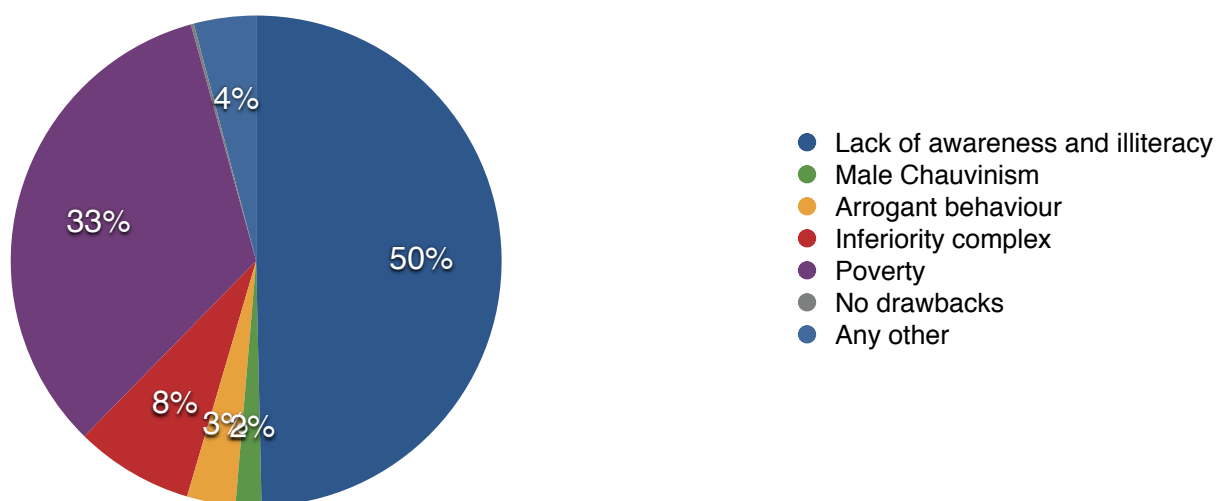
| | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Attitude of Teachers | 13 | 7.5 |
| Attitude of Peers | 19 | 11 |
| Accessibility | 74 | 42.8 |
| Infrastructure | 67 | 38.7 |

In terms of stigma attached to persons with disabilities, 64 per cent says that there is a stigma association with disability by the society. 19.8 per cent of the respondent says that there is no stigma attached to their disability and 16.2 per cent neither affirmed nor denied about stigma association with disabilities. This is presented in table 5.5

Table 5.5. Stigma Attached with Disability

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 379 | 64.0 |
| No | 117 | 19.8 |
| Can't Say | 96 | 16.2 |
| Total | 592 | 100.0 |

Chart 5.1. Challenges for Socio-Economic Empowerment



For those who are employed from the sample size, 64.3 per cent says that there is no wage discrimination and they are paid the same as other employees who are in the same rank or post whereas 35.7 per cent says that they are paid less than others even when they perform the same kind of work. This is presented in table 5.6 below.

Table 5.6. Wage Discrimination

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 18 | 64.3 |
| No | 10 | 35.7 |
| Total | 28 | 100.0 |

One of the pertinent question was to capture the major challenges for socio-economic empowerment of persons with disabilities in the study area. This is shown in chart 5.1. The chart demonstrates the following challenges: 50 per cent of the total respondents feel that lack of awareness and illiteracy is the major issue. This is followed by poverty i.e. 33 per cent, inferiority complex 7.8, any other 4.1, arrogant nature 3.2, male chauvinism constitutes 1.7 per cent and whereas 0.2 per cent says that there are no drawbacks or challenges.

Specifically Vulnerable Groups of PwDs

Within the populations of persons with disabilities, there are certain categories who are more vulnerable than the others. This study has identified five such categories. They are women with disabilities, persons with disabilities from religious minorities, PwDs from low income groups, PwDs from tea tribes, and PwDs from scheduled caste groups. They constitute the minority within the minority and face multiple marginalisation. The nature of their needs and issues are far more complex than other persons with disabilities. A woman with disability undergoes double discrimination.. One, on being a woman and the other, on being a person with disability. They are more vulnerable to sexual assault and other forms of violence and harassment. Often associated with denial of rights and other privileges persons with disabilities belonging to religious minorities experience social discrimination, low level of awareness, etc. Such is also the case of persons with disabilities belonging to low income groups, tea tribes and scheduled castes. This section examines issues concerning their socio-economic condition, infrastructure availability, distance and family. Based on these categories, it identifies training cum infrastructural needs of this specifically vulnerable groups of PwDs. This is detailed in table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Specifically Vulnerable Groups PwDs in Assam

| Specifically Vulnerable Groups | Socio-Economic Condition | Village/Distance | Family |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Women with disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of confidence and over dependence on family • Lack of education • Poor reproductive health and lack of sexual education • Lack of awareness on entitlement • Poverty • Communication gap. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of sanitation • Accessibility issues relating to materials like sanitary napkins • Lack of school and health centre • Stigma attached to women with disabilities • Issues of being minority within minorities • Issues of safety with open defecation. Poor infrastructure creating communication problems • Need for constant company for her/them • Geographical isolation • Long distance with bad connectivity leading to dropping out from schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over protective family • Under exploration of one's capabilities due to over dependence upon family • Existing patriarchal stigmas related to women's marriage |
| Low Income Group | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social discrimination • Low level of awareness • Lack of health related intervention • Low levels of education • Dependence on government sponsored social schemes • Lack of nutrition for pregnant women creating vulnerability towards giving birth to malnourished children or children with disability. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues of accessibility to health and education facilities <p>Beyond the reach of transportation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End up being baggage • Low social capital • No family planning • Child labour |
| Religious Minority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low income group Issues of minority identity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low awareness level • Vulnerabilities of people at char areas <p>Poor land and water connectivity in interior areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long distance travel to school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displaced population • Marriage within closed communities (consanguinity) |

| | | | |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SC/ST | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low income group • No access to basic education • Social exclusion • Poor access to credit facilities • Lack of awareness on various government schemes and programmes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulation by NGOs • No external intervention • Absence of barrier free infrastructure Geographical isolation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of belonging and inclusion • More supportive community feeling • Without any care giver • Exclusion from social grouping. |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Table 5.8. Infrastructural and Training Needs of Specifically Vulnerable Groups

| Specific Vulnerable Population | Socio-Economic Condition | Village/Distance | Family |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better awareness of the Acts and imparting training to all stakeholders • Proper implementation of the existing Acts with strict penalties • Follow up with the various agencies working on disabilities • Early introduction of disability as part of school curriculum • Awareness on the different types of disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better communication and road connectivity • Accessibility to reading materials • Making ICT disabled friendly for education facilities • Early intervention unit • Removing barriers in public transport • More incentives • Political representation PwDs at local level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free transportation • Mobile clinics or ambulance facilities specially designed for persons with disabilities • Making ICT disabled friendly for speedy communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and training of parents of the PwDs • Peer counsellors • Disabled friendly representation in media • Collaboration of Government and media for public awareness at households • Programme for reverse inclusion. |

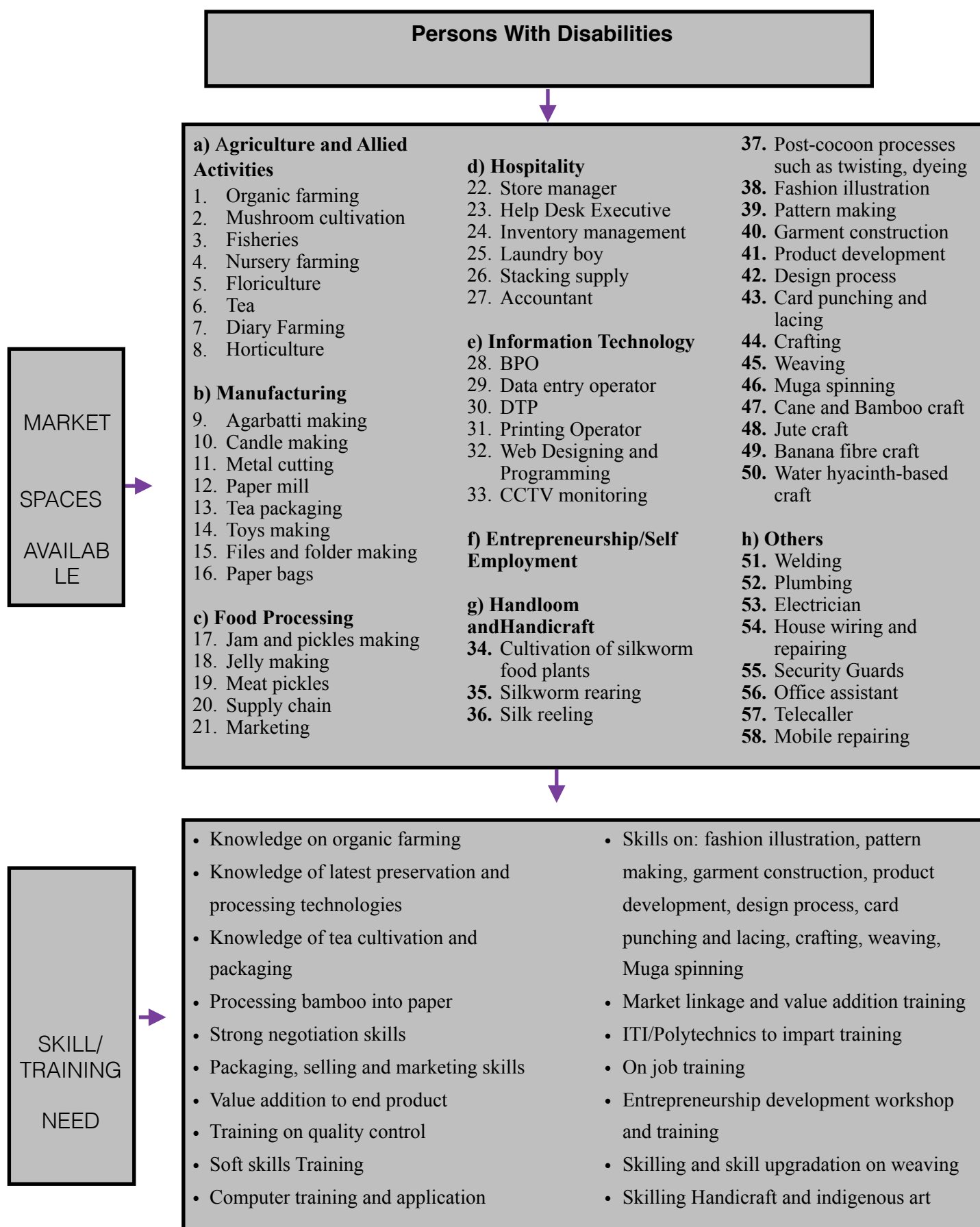
Chapter Six

Skill Mapping of Persons with Disabilities

This chapter critically examines the skill gaps of persons with disability in the local context. It identifies the market spaces, economic opportunities and avenues of work available in Kamrup and Kamrup Metro Districts. Based on which it identifies the areas of skilling and skill upgradation needed for persons with disability. However, it is beyond the scope of this research to identify different types of skills and capabilities based on the extent and severity of disability. This would require another research project.

The North Eastern states falls under the category of ‘industrial deficit’ region. Assam is relatively more developed in terms of industrial development than other states of the region. Other sectors such as retail, hospitality, and information technology (IT) are not well developed yet in the region. A mapping of skills has been done as per the local context and economic opportunities available in the two districts of Kamrup and Kamrup Metro covered in this study. It was extremely challenging to identify the skills as the study also indicated that most of the PwDs in these districts are unemployed and illiterate, limiting us mostly to blue collar jobs. Very few persons with disabilities are actually working for their livelihood either in organised or unorganised sectors (for details see chapter Four). However, there are a few sectors where persons with disabilities can be trained for skill development and find employment. and this section explores the said districts based on the flexibility of persons with disabilities. Map 5.1 gives details market spaces available and the skill needs of persons with disabilities in Kamrup and Kamrup Metro.

Map 5.1. Skill Mapping of Persons With Disability in Kamrup and Kamrup Metro Districts



Agriculture and Its Allied Activities

More than 70 per cent of the total population depends their livelihood from agriculture and its allied activities in the State. This is the single largest sector where it employed maximum population. There are a range of avenue where persons with disabilities can work for their livelihood in this sector

| Agriculture and Allied Activities | |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Organic farming | • Nursery farming |
| • Mushroom cultivation | • Floriculture |
| • Fisheries | • Tea |
| | • Diary Farming |
| | • Horticulture |

provided they are trained both in upgrading their skill and imparting new skills. Bujarbaruah (2015) has pointed out that Assam state has an opportunity to attract and retain youths in agriculture through a paradigm shift from traditional back breaking mode of agricultural practices to technology driven farming and agriculture related non-farming options. Some of the areas where persons with disabilities can be engaged are as follows: organic farming; mushroom cultivation; fisheries; floriculture, tea growing ; horticulture.

a) Organic Farming

There is an increasing trend of shifting back to organic products in a market. Given the local expertise in organic farming, persons with disabilities are not less capable in engaging in this area. Hence they can explore for their livelihood by engaging in organic farming. This is more appropriate in the context of Kamrup rural district as compared to Metro district due to the nature of its agrarian economy. However, they need to be trained in the process of organic farming. This training can be done by inviting resource persons at the local level who are already into organic farming. It requires institutional support in terms of organising training processes for persons with disabilities.

b) Mushroom Cultivation

Mushroom cultivation is cost effective and highly valued in the market. The climatic condition of the state is also favourable for such cultivation. In addition to it, the demand for mushroom in the market is very high. It can be grown in short span of

time with minimum capital. Thus, engaging in mushroom cultivation could be an alternative livelihood for persons with disabilities. The initiative of the Mushroom Development Foundation, Assam is drawing attention to the small and marginal farmers for self-employment. With basic training on mushroom cultivation, persons with disabilities can be equally productive within their local area/village. They can be integrated within the cluster of local mushroom farmers.

c) Fishery

Assam is endowed with vast fishery resources in the form of rivers, ponds water bodies and beels covering about 2.85 lakh ha. in addition to the two major river systems viz. the Brahmaputra and the Barak with their tributaries. Fish occupies an important place in the food and lives of the people of the state and fish farming has been one of the common activities in the rural areas. Thus the fishery sector is considered as an important economic activity in the socio-economic context in the state of Assam²⁰. The Department of Fisheries of the Government of Assam Fishery is implementing number of schemes in the State. They are:- Fish & Fish Seed Farming which provide assistance for construction of new pond- SHG/Community- Mukhya Mantrir Matsya Biksah Achoni (Aamar Pukhuri); Reclamation of Derelict water bodies-SHG/Community- Mukhya Mantrir Swaniyojan Achoni; Fishery Extension Service; Aquaculture Development under Fish Farmers Development Agency (FFDA) etc. Persons with Disabilities can avail of the benefits of these schemes and the government should earmark a provision for the same for inclusive development and to promote livelihoods.

d) Nursery Farming

Nursery farming is another sector where persons with disabilities could be integrated. This can be practiced as a home based activity where they don't have to travel for long distances for employment. With support from the family members and basic skill training, persons with disabilities can venture into nursery farming as an avenue of work.

²⁰ Retrieved from <http://fishassam.gov.in> accessed on 19th May, 2017.

e) Floriculture

Assam has an immense potential for floriculture. It can generate employment opportunities in this sector as it is still unexplored commercially. Cultivation of marigold is traditional in Hajo areas of Kamrup district. Apart from marigold, the state has the potential to grow tuberose, gladiolus, gerbera, orchids, anthurium, and chrysanthemum for commercial exploitation. Efforts have been made to commercialise floriculture in the state through Technological Mission Project, Government of India (Bhattachayya and Talukdar 2015). To this end, the Assam Agricultural University is providing required technical support by means of technology demonstration and training in different flower growing and potential areas. As part of this initiative, the University can provide training and support technical inputs to persons with disabilities for venturing in this sector and also encourage them to promote floriculture in the state. There are multiple roles persons with disabilities can do in this sector. They can either work as cultivator, or in the supply chain of flowers, directly sell in a market, or do garland making etc. for their livelihood which otherwise is considered only as an avenue of work for non-disabled population.

f) Tea

Tea is a major agricultural produce of the state. Assam tea is well recognised across the globe for its quality and aromatic taste. The state accounts for more than 50 per cent of tea produced in India and the tea industry provides employment to about 17 per cent of the total work force in the state²¹. Most of the labourers in tea gardens are from tea tribes. Persons with disabilities can be integrated as a labour force in tea industry. They can also work in tea packaging with necessary training and skill development.

g) Dairy Farming

Livestock sector plays a key role in rural economy of Assam. The milk production during the year 2009-10 in Assam was 7,56,000 tonnes. The majority of milk

²¹ Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/tea-industry-assam-analysis-c-eng-fipe-mie-miie> accessed on 22nd May, 2017.

is produced by rural small holders using indigenous cattle and buffalo. About 97 per cent of the milk produced in the state is marketed through traditional and informal channels. Assam displays strong production potential and inadequate milk supply, which gives space for opportunities to grow the dairy sector and enhance livelihood of rural economy (Das, 2015). This is a viable option particularly in Kamrup Rural district. The Government of Assam has initiated a scheme known as 'milk village' to enhance the milk production and creation of self-employment amongst the SC/ST and economically backward classes. In this endeavour, the state should also include persons with disabilities for employment generation and promote livelihoods. Persons with disabilities can be trained and imparted skills on raw milk handling, milk processing, packaging, and value added products (desserts, puddings, custards, sauces, mousse, stirred yoghurt, nectars and sherbets.)

h) Horticulture

Assam offers favourable soil and climatic conditions for cultivation of various horticultural crops such as banana, pineapple, citrus, jackfruit, guava, litchi etc. Coconuts and arecanut are predominant plantation crops in the state. The total cropped area of the state is 37.07 lakh hectares of which horticultural crops spread across an area of 6.26 lakh hectares with annual production of 59.71 lakhs tonnes (Bhattacharyya and Talukdar, 2015). Despite its immense potential of horticultural crops for commercialisation in the state, low productivity remains the main concern. Persons with disabilities can be trained for skill development in this sector particularly on awareness of high yielding varieties, production of quality seed and planting materials of various crops, new production technology etc. Above all they need institutional support and marketing infrastructure.

Manufacturing

As compared to other North Eastern States, Assam boasts of an impressive industrial infrastructure (NSDC, na). The Government of Assam has set up several industrial parks to facilitate the growth and generate employment in the state such as software technology park, food processing park, agri-export zone, border trade centres

etc. There are a number of manufacturing units that contribute significantly to employment in Assam. It has over 3,900 units that gives employment to over 137,000 people. Assam is also the state with the maximum number of small scale industries (SSIs). Cumulatively, as of 2009-2010, Assam had 32, 984 SSIs, with an employment of 167, 216 persons. Over

Manufacturing

- Agarbatti making
- Candle making
- Metal cutting
- Paper mill
- Tea packaging
- Toys making
- Files and folder making
- Paper bags.

50 per cent of these SSIs are involved in engineering and textile industries alone. Majority of these SSIs are concentrated in the Kamrup district (Ibid.). The potential area for skilling and upgradation of skills of persons with disabilities in Kamrup and Kamrup Metro to work in manufacturing units are computer training and application, soft skill training, skill up-gradation of labourer, office management, public relation, technical skills, training on processing bamboo into paper, packaging and transportation, etc. Persons with disabilities can explore for employment in manufacturing units in the state both in organised and unorganised sector in the following areas:-

- 1) Agarbatti making
- 2) Candle making
- 3) Metal cutting
- 4) Paper mill
- 5) Tea packaging
- 6) Toys making
- 7) File and folders making
- 8) Paper bags.

Food Processing

Food processing is an emerging sector in the state of Assam. With infrastructural support from the state as well as rich horticultural produce, there is a opportunity to engage in this sector. Areas like Kamrup, Sonitpur, Nalbari and Darrang has well developed food processing industry in the field of bakeries. One could venture out in producing jams, jelly, pickles,

Food Processing

- Jam and pickles making
- Jelly making
- Meat pickles
- Supply chain
- Marketing

supply chain, marketing etc. However, it need skilling of human resource and upgradation of skill in processing of fruits and vegetables for value addition, knowledge of latest preservation and processing technologies, ability to adapt to newer storage technologies, packaging, selling and marketing skills (NSDC, na).

Hospitality

Hotels, lodges, restaurant, eating joints etc. are the primary components of hospitality industry. Hospitality sector in the state is gaining its momentum with the increase in tourists visiting the state. However, above 90 per cent of the tourists in the state are domestic. The hotel industry in Guwahati city is

Hospitality

- Store manager
- Help Desk
- Inventory management
- Services
- Accountant

growing due to its location which acts as a gateway to North East India and also the commercial hub of the region. There are good numbers of hotels and resorts runs by the Assam State Tourism Department. The State should follow the provision of 3 per cent reservation for persons with disabilities and they can be integrated into the work force the in hotel industry. In this way it can promote tourism as well as boast an inclusive work force like the model promoted by the Lemon Tree Hotel group across the country. For instance, The Sukreswar Temple in Guwahati employed persons with disabilities. It has been observed and also based on interaction with the head Priest of the temple, the following observation is pertinent:- The halls located inside the temple premises can host over 500 guests at a time and are mostly engaged in organizing weddings. A lot of disabled people particularly with hearing and speech disorder are being recruited as waiters within the catering services. However, what has been interesting to see is that these waiters are neither regularly assured an income nor are they registered with the catering services. Perhaps, what emerged from the interview was that at times of shortage of manpower, disabled homeless people in and around the temple premises are being offered money to fill in the dearth of labor. It ensures the possibilities of recruiting the disabled people in hospitality services as well²².

²² Extracted from personal interaction with the Head Priest on 1st June 2017.

Hotels in the State hardly employ persons with disabilities due to the stigma attached, insensitive attitudes of employers, absence of barrier free infrastructure, lack of awareness etc. With work place adjustment, assistive technology, on job training and awareness, persons with disabilities can be employed as

- 1) Store manager
- 2) Help desk executive
- 3) Inventory manager
- 4) Laundry boy
- 5) Assistant in garments checking, fabric types, stain/tear/damage
- 6) Stacking supply
- 7) Cleaning
- 8) Accountant

There are cases where persons with disabilities are employed in beautician and wellness. The case of Miss. Mili Barooah (who runs a beauty parlor cum training centre named “Angaraag Beauty Parlour”) is worth an example for a livelihood. She has both hearing and speech impairment. She has been trained under “Woman’s World International Beauty Institute”. She has employed 3 other women at her parlor where she instructs and teaches through the use of simple sign language. Mili also sells handicraft items and hand woven mekhela-chadars and even runs an art school situated near Latasil where she teaches on Sundays²³.

5.5. Information Technology

The Government of Assam has set up a Software Technology Park at Guwahati. With infrastructural support from the state, there is an avenue to explore jobs in this sector as we move along in the age of technology. However, this requires skilling and upgradation of IT skills. To this end, the Government of Assam has implemented various schemes and programmes such as

- a) **Mukhya Mantri Tathya Prajukti Prashikshan Aru Niyog Achoni**

²³ Extracted from interaction with Miss. Barooah on 2nd June 2017.

Under this scheme, the government is providing training to the unemployed educated youths of the state on IT skill development in call centers, BPOs, multimedia/animation, networking, Tally, Linus etc.

b) Rural BPO Centres

The Government has proposed setting up a BPO cum Training Hub in the rural areas. The training centre would have state-of-the-art IT infrastructure and would be run on PPP mode in association with reputed industry partners of the country who would bring their expertise in building manpower in rural areas for the IT sector. This scheme is expected to bring BPO business and create employment opportunities in the rural areas of the State.

c) IT Skill Development of Women

The IT Department plans to empower women in rural areas by imparting training in Digital Literacy. As per the Government data, 2000 women between the age group of 14-60 years of age were trained through the Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLE) of the Common Service Centres in basic computer skills during 2014-15. It proposed to impart training on Digital Literacy to 10000 rural women in coming years.

d) IT Skill Development of Socially and Economically Weaker sections²⁴

Under this scheme, the IT Department proposes to implement Digital Literacy for Socially and Economically Weaker Section of the State. It specifically targets 30000 educated unemployed youths of the SC/ST/OBC/Minority Communities and BPL category.

In these endeavours, the state should integrate persons with disabilities in IT skill development. Training on domain/technical knowledge, use of latest equipment technology, communication/soft skill and language should be part of the IT skill development rather than just imparting training on digital literacy. This would enable them to find suitable jobs in

1. BPOs
2. Data entry operation
3. DTP

²⁴ Retrieved from <http://it.assam.gov.in/itportal/pages/achievement.xhtml> accessed on 22nd May, 2017.

4. Printing Operating
5. Web Designing and Programming
6. CCTV monitoring

The Government of Assam envisage to setting up 100 BPOs in the State. In order to attract BPO firms in Assam, the Hon'ble Finance Minister during his Budget Speech for 2017-18 has announced triple incentives for promotion of BPOs/IT/ITES industry. It announced that the State Government will provide upto 90% of one time expenditure incurred on capital support without any upper ceiling. It also announced that state government will provide 100 % reimbursement of stamp duty/transfer duty and registration fees paid by BPO²⁵. This would open up an avenue for work especially educated youth. In this endeavour, the state should ensure that persons with disabilities be mandatory included in this sector as a labour force and provide in-house training for the same.

Entrepreneurship/Self Employment

The number of job seekers in the state is disproportionate to the availability of jobs and this trend has prevailed for decades with numbers increasing over the years resulting in high unemployment rates. Kamrup and Kamrup Metro districts alone registered 77 persons with disabilities for the year 2016-17 at the employment exchange²⁶. It is beyond the State government to employ all job seekers in the public sector. To address this issue, entrepreneurship development is an alternative to create jobs. However, the State should take proactive role in imparting training especially to persons with disabilities. The State government can engage training institutions such as Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship, Guwahati, National Institute of Rural Development, State Institute of Rural Development, Assam etc. for training on entrepreneurship development. Klasing (2012) argued that the most straightforward way of bringing people with disabilities into occupations that are suitable to them is to promote self-employment. When setting up their own enterprises, they automatically

²⁵ Government of Assam, 2017. Budget Speech of Finance Minister 2017-18. Assam Government Press: Guwahati.

²⁶ Data as per the Live Register, District Employment Exchange, Guwahati.

choose an area in which they can best use their abilities and are able to compete with others (p. 149). To start every enterprise one needs capital. This can be streamlined with the help of NHFDC loans as that facility is already in place. However, the procedure of availing loan can be simplified and made more accessible to persons with disabilities. According to Mr. Sood (who employed persons with disability) runs a cane and craft allied industries has recently employed a person with disability who suffers from locomotor disability. It has been around 10 days that he had hired him because of his ability to make cane and bamboo products. On being questioned about the person's quality of work and if it is at par with the rest of the workers Mr Sood replied that it is too soon to tell however he is doing just fine²⁷. As a small scale enterprise, persons with disabilities can collaborate with others/co-workers in their venture and explore in the area of

1. Cane and bamboo enterprise
2. Handicraft
3. Broom making
4. Pickle making
5. Food processing
6. Waste management
7. Mushroom cultivation
8. Medicinal plant cultivation

Handloom and Handicrafts

Handloom and handicrafts are part of Assam's culture. The rich traditional/indigenous knowledge and skill in this sector is an added advantage for the state which generates employment to a large extent.

a) Handloom

Handloom sector is a major employment provider next to agriculture sector in the State. Assam has the highest number of looms in India, at over 13 lakh (46 per cent of India's total). In 2009-10, the state produced 174 million metres of handloom fabric. About 33 per cent of the state's weaver population is covered by the co-operatives (NSDC, na). Sericulture is an agro based industry in all its phases of the production

²⁷ Extracted from interaction with Mr. Sood on 1st June 2017.

chain viz. cultivation of silkworm food plants, silkworm rearing, silk reeling, and other post-cocoon processes such as twisting, dyeing, weaving, printing and finishing. Sericulture in Assam is a traditional and age-old cottage industry rooted in the life and culture of Assam. The state has got favourable climate and environment to practice sericulture and has unique distinction in the country producing four varieties of natural silk namely mulberry, eri, muga and oak-tassar. It is practiced in over 10532 villages in Assam providing employment to 2.6 lakh families. The State of Assam has the highest number of handlooms in India. Sualkuchi in Kamrup district is a name that stands out in terms of silk weaving. The hand-woven silk fabric of Sualkuchi on muga and mulberry occupies a place of eminence in preserving the Assamese heritage and contributes to rural economy. There are about 17,000 Silk looms presently working in Sualkuchi to produce a range of silk products like Mekhela, Chaddar, Riha (Assamese Women's Apparels), Sarees, Dhara (Khasi women's apparel), Dara chaddar, Gamocha etc. (Dutta, 2015). The Government of Assam is implementing numbers of schemes for strengthening silkworm seed production, construction of rearing houses and crop insurance, support to silkworm rearers for raising of nurseries and maintenance of food plantations of silkworm, providing services to master reelers, weavers, dyers, providing weavers with quality yarn modernisation of looms, extension of training facilities, etc. The state should ensure that persons with disabilities are made an integral part in all these scheme/programmes. There are number of job roles in this sector such as

1. Cultivation of silkworm food plants
2. Silkworm rearing,
3. Silk reeling
4. Post-cocoon processes such as twisting, dyeing
5. Fashion illustration
6. Pattern making
7. Garment construction
8. Product development
9. Design process
10. Card punching and lacing
11. Crafting

12. Weaving

13. Muga spinning

b) Handicraft

The state is endowed with rich natural resources. Handicraft in the State is an age old practice and this knowledge has been passing from generation to generation. Some of the possible areas for work in this sector post the skilling and up-gradation of skills of persons with disabilities are as follows:-

1. **Cane and bamboo craft:** There are range of product popularly make from cane and bamboo in the state such as easy chair, arm chair, rocking chairs, dining chair, tables of different types, central tables and basket wares etc.
2. **Jute Craft:** Products from jute craft made in Assam are home furnishing, belts, shoes, table and floor mate, etc.
3. **Banana fibre craft:**
4. **Water hyacinth-based craft:-**This is a new and innovative craft initiated by North Eastern Development Finance Corporation (NEDFi) and now supported by NEC in Assam. NEDFI has branded the product under the name of “Aqua Weaves”. Producing eco-friendly products like hats, mats, bags, lamp shades and even furniture from the dried stems of water hyacinth, the craft offers flexible working hours for the artisans. The raw materials are easily available in abundance in the water bodies that can be procured by the villagers. Deputy General Manager of NEDFI who have led the project since its inception stated that, “Anyone having partial knowledge of the looms or bamboo/cane work can easily pick up the skill provided their hands are physically fit to get trained. Raw materials are procured between the months of June-September and the dried steps are stored properly in gunny bags for use throughout the year as most of the exhibitions are being organized in winter. Mostly people from rural areas have showed their keep interest into this skill and most of them have ended up earning a proper livelihood. During one such workshop at Khetri, two differently-able persons were also part of the training programme. However, disabled people particularly were not our target population as for that the institution has to be disable-friendly in all ways. Our idea was to

target the general population towards skill development for a decent and sustainable livelihood. However, I also came across one such story where a woman suffering from cancer had lost business in her small tea stall as people were reluctant to have tea from her owing to the stigmas attached to her disease. Later, she underwent training in water-hyacinth and now she is earning Rs.2000 per month with the handicrafts she sells at her village.”²⁸

Others

Apart from the specific sectors discussed above, there are other range of trades which persons with disabilities can be trained for skilling and find employment in Kamrup and Kamrup Metro districts. Industrial training institutes such as ITI and Polytechnics should have a provision for persons with disabilities apart from Vocational Rehabilitation Centre in Assam. Some of the trade of skills are as follows:-

1. Welding
2. Plumbing
3. Electrician
4. House wiring and repairing
5. Security Guards
6. Office assistant
7. Telecaller
8. Mobile repairing
9. Carpentry.

The major challenge for skill development and job mapping of persons with disabilities in a region like North East India is due to limited market spaces for both skilled and unskilled labourer. The labour force from North East India migrating to Metropolitan cities is increasing year after year. This is mainly due to limited market spaces availability in the region. The numbers of young labour force from the region working in call centres, parlour, retails, hospitality, etc. has increase threefold in those cities. This trends gives an telescopic overview that job market in the region is limited. However, persons with disabilities are left behind in this emerging market space in metropolitan cities due to long distance and involves migration. As public sector cannot

²⁸ Extracted from Personal interview with Shri. Ashim Kumar Das, Deputy General Manager of NEDFI on 25th May 2017.

absorbed all job seekers in the state and the limited private sector and manufacturing units hardly employed persons with disabilities. This remains biggest challenge in job market. Hence, the alternative is to provide skill development/training in a sector which could both generate and employed job seekers. To this end entrepreneurship development or self-employment emerge as an alternative. However, the state should support and ensure subsidies for any products make/manufactured by persons with disabilities. This would encourage to start own enterprises pr small business in their local areas.

Chapter Seven

Recommendations

The present study on Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile to Explore the Employment Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Assam has the following recommendations for promotion of inclusive employment and skill development. They are as follows:-

1. The State government should ensure that the new law i.e. The Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 is followed in letter and spirit.
2. The State should ensure a barrier free infrastructure. Every public institutions buildings be made disabled friendly in Assam as per the law within the span of five years
3. The state should ensure for free public transportation to persons with disabilities and one care giver/assistant. This would ease the burden of financial cost and would facilitate to get disability certificate on time
4. Early detections and intervention are key to effectively address the disabilities issues in the State. Hence the State Government should establish Early Intervention Units in every cluster of villages, say one unit in every 10 villages.
5. In every local governance body there should be a representation from persons with disabilities.
6. The State should initiate for introduction of disability budget allocation apart from the existing reservation.
7. Perspective of persons with disabilities should also reorient because they still look for unemployment allowances which is merely self sufficient for livelihood and look after the government jobs. To this end, the role of organisations working with PwDs have a huge role to play.
8. With limited private sector or manufacturing units in the state even those coming into the state does not consider disabled persons as a talent pool/man-power. In adherence to the new law whichever manufacturing units employing more than 20 employees cannot deny employment to PwDs. The state should ensure that this gets implemented and formulate appropriate and suitable measures.

9. Skill development is not one way process. Hence every stakeholders i.e. Institutions imparting training, NGOs working with PwDs, State government, employers and most importantly those who seek skill development should take active part.
10. Skill development cannot be only skills but it has to go along with attitudinal change.
11. Vocational training and skill development programme should be market driven. This study found that cases whereby PwDs are given skill training but could not find any job either in public nor in private sectors as the kind of skill training did not have any relevance in job market spaces.
12. Vocational Training Institutes should update their courses offer as per the market spaces available as an avenue for work. Hence before the commencement of any skill development, they should conduct a basic research on placement/sectors where PwDs could find an employment.
13. Hon'ble Finance Minister Dr. Himanta Biswas Sarma during his Budget speech, 2017-18 has announced to set up 33 Skill Development Centres and created a Skill Development, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department. The government should provide an adequate measure to include persons with disabilities in this venture.
14. Be trained together and explore as an avenue for work in all sectors as identified in this study. All resorts/hotels/restaurants run by the department of tourism should employ persons with disabilities. The Government initiative to boost tourism should not leave PwDs behind.
15. The employment rate of persons with disabilities in private sector in Assam is minimum. Hence, it is required to sensitise the employers about employing PwDs. The State should ensure funding to Civil Societies/NGOs on awareness creation especially those organisations who are working with persons with disabilities.
16. The state should develop a mechanism to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in poverty alleviation and other schemes for inclusive development.
17. In order to encourage self-employment, the state should provide subsidies to any product made by persons with disabilities. This would help in a way to cut the cost of materials and also generate more employment in the state.
18. Awareness campaign/training/sensitisation programme for private companies on issues of disabilities and employment should be organised on a regular interval. Special

programmes to educate HRs/employers on various provisions under the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities, Act, 2016 and other related laws.

19. Every training/skill development programmes aims at persons with disabilities be methodologically inclusive. This would promote methodological inclusion of PwDs.
20. The state should ensure that no new construction such as mall/restaurant/real estate/market place/stadium/footpaths or anything to do with public get clearance certificate from the government if it is not disabled/barrier free environment.
21. The footpaths especially in Kamrup Metro should be renovated to make accessible for all. As of today all the footpath in Guwahati city are not disabled friendly nor it is walkable.
22. Assistive technology support scheme should reach to every block in the state.
23. Awareness on NHFDC programme be conducted in every block to spread different opportunities/schemes.
24. Credit facilities be make more accessible
25. Handholding/apprenticeship post the vocational training be supported by the state. To this end, the state should earmarked a budgetary provision.
26. Specific vulnerable disabled population as identified in this study be given special focus on information dissemination and awareness programme.

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Appendix I

| | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|
| Interview Schedule No. | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|

Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile to Explore the Employment Needs of Persons with Disabilities in Assam: A Study of Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) Districts

**Under Central Sector Scheme, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment,
Government of India**

Interview Schedule (For Persons with Disability)

I: Socio-Economic and Demographic Profile

1. Can you please tell me your name : _____

2. Name of your District : 1. Kamrup; 2. Kamrup Metro

3. How old are you? : _____

4. Sex : 1. Male; 2 Female

5. Religion : 1 Hindu; 2 Muslim; 3 Christian; 4 Sikh; 5 Any other

6. Caste/tribe : _____

7. Social Status : 1 Schedule Tribe; 2 Schedule Caste; 3 OBC; 4 General

8. Marital Status : 1 Married; 2 Single; 3 Divorce; 4 Widow; 5 Separated

9. Educational Qualification

1 Illiterate, 2 Primary; 3 High School; 4 Higher Secondary; 5 BA; 6 MA;

7 Post-Graduate and above

10. Nature/types of School/college :

1 Regular; 2 Special School; 3 Open school; 4 Home education/ tuition; 5 None

11. Did you face any difficulties or challenges during your schooling/college?

1 Yes; 2 No

12. If yes? What kind?

1 Attitude of teachers; 2 Attitude of peers; 3 Accessibility; 4 Infrastructure

12. Are you employed : 1 Yes; 2 No

13: If Yes? What kind of Employment?

1 Self Employed; 2 Private Sector; 3 Government; 4 Any other_____

14: Attitude of employers : 1 Helpful (supportive, cooperative and motivating)

2 Indifferent (did not care about my needs and rights)

15. Income per month :_____

16. Parents annual income :_____

17. Types of disabilities : 1 Visual Impairment; 2 Low Vision; 3 locomotor disability; 4

Speech impairment; 5 Hearing Impairment; 6 Mental illness; 7

Developmental disability; 8 Multiple disability

18. Degree of disabilities :_____

19. Does any of your family members are disable? 1 Yes; 2 No

20. Onset of disability and how did you acquire it?

21. Do you have disability certificate? 1 Yes; 2 No

II: Vocational Training and Skills

22. Have you attended any vocational training? 1 Yes; 2 No

☐

23. If Yes? Where and for how long? _____

24. Is the training Institute disable friendly? 1 Yes; 2 No

☐

25. Did you face any difficulties/challenges at the Institute? 1 yes; 2 No

☐

26. If Yes? 1 Attitudinal; 2 Institutional; 3 Infrastructural; 4 All three

☐

27. What are the skills you developed/acquire after training? Please list them

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

28. What according to you should the training institutes imparts skills for employment?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

29. What are the personal/creative skills you possess?

30. Do you wish to be trained for skill enhancement?

31. What skills are you interested to pursue further?

III: Employment Opportunity

32. Do you involve in any household activities? 1 Yes; 2 No

☐

33. If Yes? Please elaborate

34. Have you ever seek employment outside your household activities? 1 Yes; 2 No

☐

35. If Yes? Where, please elaborate

36. Where would you like to explore for job? Please elaborate

—

37. Are you currently working? 1 Yes; 2 No

☐

38. If Yes? Please elaborate

—

39. How did you come to know about the job?

—

40. Why did you chose this work?

—

41. How many days in a week do you work and for how many hours in a day?

—

42. Can you please tell me the nature of the work?

—

43. Are you paid the same as others? 1 Yes; 2 NO

☐

44. If No? What are the reasons and did you try to negotiate

—

45. Do you get any financial assistance/scheme from the Government? 1 Yes; 2 No

☐

46. What do you think of the attitude of your employers?

—

47. What do you think of the attitude of your co-worker?

—

48. Did you face any discrimination or differential treatment at work place?

☐

1 Yes; 2 No

49. If Yes? Please elaborate

—

50. Are there any other option to work apart from your present job?

—

51. What is the attitude of your family towards your job?

–

IV: Awareness, Difficulties and Challenges faced by Person with Disability

52. Are you aware of government training institute like Vocational Rehabilitation Centre (VRC) or Industrial Training Institutes (ITI)? 1 Yes; 2 No

53. Have you ever considered approaching these ? 1 Yes; 2 No

54. Do you know about the job reservation for persons with disability in Government sector? 1 Yes; 2 No

55. Did you cast your vote in the last election ? 1 Yes; 2 No

56. If No? Can you please elaborate?

–

57. What is the attitude of people towards your disability?

1 Good; 2 Bad; 3 Indifferent

58. Do you feel discriminated ? 1 Yes; 2 No; 3 Can't say

59. Do you think there is a stigma among people regarding disability?

1 Yes; 2 No; 3 Can't say

60. What are the major drawbacks in social and economic empowerment of persons with disabilities? 1 Lack of awareness and illiteracy; 2 Male chauvinism; 3 Arrogant

behaviour; 4 Inferiority complex among persons with disabilities; 5 No drawback; 6
Poverty; 7 Any other _____

Appendix II

WHAT OTHER SAYS ABOUT THE REPORT

“The research study on “Socio-Economic and demographic profile to explore the Employment needs of Persons with Disabilities Assam: A Study of Kamrup and Kamrup (M) Districts by Dr.Raile Rocky Ziipao has been very informative and leads us to explore various avenues for development of that vulnerable group of the society. The effort presented a roadmap for further involvement of all the stakeholders in bringing positive changes in the lives of persons with disabilities.”

Shri. P.R. Gharphailia

Commissioner for Persons with Disability
Government of India.

“Very informative for us as the stakeholders. The information we can use in our work field. Looking forward to more such studies in future.”

Kunjalata Lachon

District Social Welfare Officer, Kamrup
Government of Assam.

“This research study will hopefully pave the way for a better future and will help towards policy making for the people of Assam in general and the persons with disabilities in particular.”

Ketaki Bardalai

Social Activist

“It is an important research for the persons with disabilities as well as for organizations that have been working for the persons with disability. Employment is a main issue nowadays for all and PWDs must be included in both public and private sectors job.”

Saumar Jyoti Das

Research and Communication Officer

Disability Law Unit

Shishu Sarothi

“A very well made research. The research has covered the issues of employment and livelihood very well. More in-depth idea of various livelihood schemes under different departments can be explored.”

Saswati Barman

Project Coordinator

Disability Employment Initiative

Shishu Sarothi

“The study reveals the true picture of the disability scenario and also brings out the measures to resolve the issues and the opportunities to persons with disabilities to lead better life.”

Nitu Doley

Project Coordinator

Shishu Sarothi

“Very well drafted and detailed report. The skills mapping for persons with disabilities though generic, has been well planned out. With the hope that this study in the long run can help PWDs to economically explore and motivate them.”

Puja Rajkhowa

Assistant Project Coordinator

Disability Employment Initiative

Purnima Sinha- “Thank you for giving us the knowledge on different aspects and model approaches on disability.”

Purnima Sinha

ICT Lab Teacher

“The research report is good. It has mapped down many skill development opportunities. Employment opportunities should also be provided according to the skill. Just giving a certificate or a sum of amount at the end of the skill development training is not enough to

empower persons with disability. The government should make provisions to empower more and more PWDs through different schemes.”

Anindita Gogoi-
Project Coordinator
Vocational Unit
Shishu Sarothi

“As the methodology was multiple, it was highly informative and also leaves us with a curious mind to go further into the concern of the study and research more to help out the PWDs in all possible ways”

Abhilasha Bharali
Project Officer
Disability Employment Initiative
Shishu Sarothi

Appendix III
Research Collaboration Letter



भारतीय उद्यमिता संस्थान
(कौशल विकास एवं उद्यमिता मंत्रालय का एक स्वायत्त संस्थान, भारत सरकार)
लालमाटी, गुवाहाटी- 781029 (असम)

Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship

(An Autonomous Organisation of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Govt. of India)

Lalmati, Guwahati - 781029 (Assam)

File No: C (818) SMD/2015-16 /1145

Date: 15/05/2017

To,
Mr. Arman Ali
Executive Director
Shishu Sarothi
Ramsakrishnan Mission Road
Birubari
Guwahati-781 016


Sub: Collaboration on Research Project under Ministry of Social Justice and Employment, GoI on
"Socio-Economic and Demographic profile to explore the employment needs of Persons with
Disabilities in Assam: A study of Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) districts".

Sir,

This has the reference to your letter dated 15th February, 2017 about the Research Project study on
"Socio-Economic and Demographic profile to explore the employment needs of Persons with Disabilities
in Assam: A study of Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) districts" under the Centrally sponsored scheme for
Research study on disability related issues, needs and policies. I am extremely pleased to collaborate with
your esteemed organization and shall fully extend any possible support for the research project.

I am looking forward for constructive result of this initiative and strongly believe that collective effort
will bring a positive change in current times, so that more and more sustainable employment
opportunities for Persons with Disabilities are planned and executed.

Wishing you all the very best,


Manoj Kumar Das
Director, IIE

आई.एन.ए.सी. : 9001 : 2008 द्वारा प्रमाणित संगठन

An ISO 9001: 2008 Certified Organisation

दूरभाष / Tel : 0361-2302640, 2300994, 2300123, 2300640 फैक्स / Fax : 0361-2300325, 2305394

ई-मेल / E-mail : director@iie.gov.in वेबसाइट/Website : www.iie.gov.in



GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER:::KAMRUP:::AMINGAON
(CONFIDENTIAL BRANCH)

No. KCA/31/2015

Dated: Amingaon, 29th April, 2017

To

Mr. Arman Ali
Executive Director
Shishu Sarothi
Off Ramkrishna Mission Road
Birubari,
Guwahati- 781016

Sub: Collaboration on Research Project under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, GoI on "Socio-Economic and Demographic profile to explore the employment needs of Persons with Disabilities in Assam: A study of Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) districts".

Sir,

With reference to your letter dated 15th February, 2017 apropos the research project on "Socio-Economic and Demographic profile to explore the employment needs of Persons with Disabilities in Assam: A study of Kamrup and Kamrup (Metro) districts" under the Central Sector Scheme for Research on disability related issues, needs and policies; I am extremely pleased to collaborate with your organization and shall outspread any possible support from this end.

I am anticipative of the positive outcome of this initiative and strongly believe that the collective effort will bring in lots of progressive changes in the ensuing time as far as employment opportunities for Persons with Disabilities are deliberated.

All the very best.



Yours faithfully


Deputy Commissioner
Kamrup, Amingaon