

IMPACT OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND LIVELIHOOD OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO AI-SUPPORTED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN CHINTAMANI TALUK, KARNATAKA

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at how skill development initiatives affect PwDs' employment prospects and means of subsistence in Chintamani Taluk, Chikkaballapur District, Karnataka. The report acknowledges that PwDs still encounter obstacles such as restricted access to social inclusion, education, training, and work possibilities despite policy support from the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and other federal and state welfare programs. Using both primary and secondary data, a descriptive and analytical study approach was chosen. Convenience sampling was used to gather primary data from 109 respondents via a structured questionnaire; secondary data came from government papers, policy documents, and journals. Jamovi software was used to analyse the data utilising tables, charts, and percentage analysis. The results show that most respondents were from rural areas and belonged to the economically active age group of 18 to 40. Among the responders, physical impairment made up the largest category. Government organisations and Multipurpose Rehabilitation Workers/Village Rehabilitation Workers were the primary sources of information, and awareness of skill development initiatives was rather strong. Approximately 74% of the participants reported having taken part in training programs, with computer skills training being the most popular, followed by technical and entrepreneurial training. The study also shows that training programs greatly enhanced participants' abilities, self-assurance, and employability and participation in digital and AI supported environment. Nonetheless, a significant percentage of respondents continue to have lower income levels and unemployment is still high, indicating insufficient placement assistance and restricted access to high-quality employment. The study concludes that while skill development initiatives have positively influenced the livelihood prospects of PwDs, stronger policy implementation, diversified training programs, rural outreach, and post-training employment support are essential to achieve inclusive economic empowerment and sustainable development.

Keywords: Persons with Disabilities, Skill Development, AI, Employment Opportunities, Livelihood, Inclusive Growth, Karnataka, Training Programs, Empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Disability is now seen as a complex interplay of environmental, social, and physical limitations that prevent a person from fully participating in society rather than just a medical

illness. Accessing social opportunities, work, and education can be extremely difficult for people with disabilities (PwDs), especially in poor nations. Over one billion people, or roughly 15% of the world's population, live with a handicap, according to the World Health Organization. This emphasizes the necessity of targeted interventions and inclusive policies to guarantee their socioeconomic development.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which places a strong emphasis on equality, accessibility, and the right to work, reflects the global commitment to the empowerment of PwDs. The Convention requires member nations to provide PwDs with inclusive education, career training, and employment opportunities. It acknowledges that attaining independence, dignity, and social inclusion requires having access to quality employment. Additionally, international development frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals and the Millennium Development Goals emphasise the significance of fostering inclusive growth and lowering inequality, with a focus on vulnerable populations like people with disabilities.

For PwDs to be empowered and financially independent, employment is essential. However, they frequently run against obstacles like low educational attainment, a lack of skills, social stigma, and limited access to training options. In this regard, skill development initiatives have become a crucial tactic to improve livelihood outcomes and increase employability. The goal of these programs is to give people the technical and vocational skills they need to successfully engage in the labour market.

Disability is still a major issue in India when it comes to social inclusion and economic engagement. There are roughly 26.8 million PwDs, or 2.21% of the overall population, according to the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. Their engagement in the workforce is still low despite numerous policy attempts. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, which offers a thorough framework for guaranteeing equality, nondiscrimination, and inclusive development, was passed by the Indian government in order to solve these issues. The Act highlights the significance of work opportunities, skill development, and education as major forces behind empowerment.

The National Action Plan for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities (NAP-SIPDA), which was introduced in 2015 under the Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, is one of the government of India's targeted skill development projects. By offering demand-driven skill training through empanelled training partners, including as government institutions, non-governmental organisations, and private businesses, this Central Sector Scheme seeks to improve employability and livelihood options for PwDs. The program encourages inclusive participation and concentrates on those with at least 40% handicap, with a 30% reservation for female beneficiaries. Under the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), training programs are in line with industry standards and offer financial help for certification, training, and post-placement support.

Karnataka has put in place a number of state-level initiatives to improve the socioeconomic circumstances of PwDs. The state has a sizable PwD population that needs focused interventions, according to the Department for the Empowerment of Differently Abled and Senior Citizens. Numerous programs have been launched to encourage employment, vocational training, and skill development. However, a thorough assessment of these initiatives' real efficacy in raising income levels and employment prospects is required.

Skill development programs are expected to significantly improve PwDs' quality of life by increasing their abilities, confidence, and employability. However, a number of factors are

essential to their effectiveness, including beneficiary awareness, training facility accessibility, training quality, and job aid availability. These elements become even more important in the context of developing AI-supported and digital learning environments since technology-enabled platforms may improve training delivery, increase accessibility, and customise learning experiences. However, a lack of understanding, digital literacy, and limited access to technology resources often hinder PwDs' participation in these projects, reducing the programs' potential impact.

In this regard, the current study is to investigate how skill development programs affect PwDs' employment prospects and livelihood outcomes. The study focuses on important factors like awareness, training participation, and the ensuing shifts in income and work status. The study aims to provide empirical evidence about the effectiveness of skill development initiatives in empowering PwDs through the use of primary data. Policymakers, government organisations, and other stakeholders should find the study's conclusions helpful in identifying gaps and enhancing the planning and execution of skill development initiatives. By offering insights on the connection between training, employment, and income among PwDs, it will also add to the corpus of knowledge already in existence.

OBJECTIVES

1. To examine the socio-economic profile of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).
2. To assess the level of awareness about skill development programs among PwDs.
3. To analyze participation in training programs in the context of AI-supported learning environments.
4. To study the impact of skill development training on employment status and income levels.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITY

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Services, introduced the National Action Plan (NAP) for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities (PwD) in March 2015.

Fairness and Self-determination The Indian government is putting skills training into place to help PwDs integrate into mainstream society and become independent, productive members of society. The NAP is implemented nationwide under the "Scheme for Implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2016 (SIPDA)" program, which offers skill training to people with impairments between the ages of 15 and 59.

With a national vision and an emphasis on disability skills, the Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPwD) was founded in October 2015 with the goal of providing meaningful, industry-relevant training based on skills intended to formulate local and national level strategies to shape the future of PwDs in India. Since its founding, the council has carried out a number of initiatives in this direction. One of the most recent is a partnership with Glasgow Kelvin College in Scotland under the UK-India Education and Research Institute (UKIERI) to compare disability standards in Scotland and India. Under the direction of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MOSJE) and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSME), SCPwD collaborates with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is implementing its flagship Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) program as part of the Government of India's ambitious Skilling Mission, which aims to train youth nationwide, including candidates with disabilities, through Short Term Training (STT) courses and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). While RPL acknowledges the candidate's current skills and does not require placement, STT is connected to placement. Additionally, the Skill Council for PwD (SCPwD), a unique Sector Skill Council for people with disabilities, provides training in PwD Friendly Training Centers (TC) and attends to the needs of candidates with disabilities. These facilities are built in a way that makes it easy for applicants with disabilities to participate in the training.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study conducted by **SoulAce (2024–25)** assessed the impact of employment-led training programs for persons with disabilities. The study adopted a mixed-method approach with a sample size of 100 beneficiaries. The findings revealed that skill development programs significantly improved employment opportunities, with a majority of participants securing jobs and earning between ₹10,000 and ₹20,000 per month. The study also highlighted improvements in soft skills, confidence, and financial independence, thereby enhancing the overall livelihood of persons with disabilities.

A study by **Muhd Khaizer Omar, M. Iqbal Saripan, Mohd Hazwan Mohd Puad, Abdullah Mat Rashid, Mohd Azlan Mohammad Hussain, Irwan Mahazir bin Ismail, and Khairunisa Mohd Kadir (2025)** examined the **role of employability skills in enhancing job opportunities for persons with disabilities (PwDs) in Malaysia**. The study emphasized that disability does not define an individual's capability; rather, skill sets and employability competencies determine workforce participation. Using a mixed-method research design, the authors collected and analyzed both qualitative and quantitative data, integrating findings through triangulation. The results highlighted that employability skills are highly valued by employers and are essential for effective job performance. However, barriers such as administrative complexities and employer reluctance continue to limit opportunities for PwDs. The study developed an employability skill model aligned with the capabilities of PwDs, which can be used as a guideline for curriculum development. The findings suggest that structured skill development programs can significantly improve employment prospects and increase employer acceptance of PwDs in the workforce.

A study by **Abha Shree (2025)** examined the **role of skill development in improving the quality of life and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities (PwDs) in India**. The study highlights that PwDs constitute a significant segment of the population with untapped potential for contributing to a knowledge-based economy. Despite the presence of various policies and legislative measures such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, many individuals continue to face low skill levels and limited access to productive employment due to inadequate training opportunities and poor quality of education. The findings suggest that skill development plays a crucial role in enhancing employment prospects, increasing productivity, and improving income levels. However, the study also identifies environmental and societal barriers as major constraints, emphasizing that disability is largely a social construct. It concludes that strengthening skill development initiatives is essential for integrating PwDs into the workforce and promoting inclusive economic growth.

A study by **Xiangdong Liu, Lin Yao, Wenchu Lai, and Zhengzong Huang (2025)** examined the **challenges and importance of re-employment training for persons with disabilities in**

China's rapidly evolving socio-economic environment. The study highlights that despite the growing need for skill development, training programs often remain misaligned with current labour market demands. Key barriers identified include inadequate resource allocation, lack of accessible vocational programs, and weak institutional support such as career guidance and workplace accommodations. The findings emphasize that aligning training programs with industry requirements and strengthening support mechanisms are essential to improving employment opportunities. The study concludes that innovative and inclusive training approaches can enhance equality, autonomy, and social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market.

A systematic review by Charlotte Messiaen (2025) examined the **role of employability and soft skills in improving employment outcomes for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID)**. Following PRISMA guidelines, the study analyzed 21 research articles sourced from databases such as Web of Science, Scopus, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The findings revealed that soft skills—particularly communication, social interaction, teamwork, motivation, and independence—are critical determinants of successful workforce inclusion. The review also identified various strategies for skill development, including vocational training programs, mentoring, and video-based learning methods. However, the study highlighted inconsistencies in the classification of employability skills and emphasized the need for more structured and targeted training approaches. It further recommended increased focus on innovative methods and greater inclusion of employer perspectives to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

A study by Sabrina Hossain, Kay Nasir, Alecia Carolli, Monique A. M. Gignac, Dwayne Van Eerd, and Arif Jetha (2025) explored strategies to enhance **employment inclusion for young adults with disabilities in the evolving world of work**. Using a Delphi-based survey approach with 125 participants, including experts and individuals with lived disability experience, the study identified key challenges such as the impact of digital technologies, artificial intelligence in recruitment, globalization, and changing workplace attitudes. The findings highlighted that future employment outcomes depend not only on skill development but also on supportive policies and inclusive workplace practices. The study emphasized strategies such as lifelong skill-building initiatives, strengthening accessibility standards, improving employer awareness, and protecting employment rights. It concluded that a multi-dimensional approach integrating skills, policy support, and institutional changes is essential to ensure sustainable employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in a rapidly changing labour market.

A study by Hairani Siregar (2025) examined **the impact of vocational training effectiveness, disability independence, and program inclusivity on the satisfaction levels of persons with disabilities**. The study adopted a quantitative research design with a sample of 150 respondents and employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis. The findings revealed that vocational training effectiveness and program inclusivity have a significant positive influence on the satisfaction and well-being of individuals with disabilities. However, disability independence was found to have no significant effect on satisfaction. The study emphasizes that structured training programs and inclusive environments play a more immediate role in enhancing outcomes for persons with disabilities. It concludes that policy frameworks should focus not only on skill development but also on fostering inclusivity to improve overall livelihood and well-being.

A study by Laura Mudde, R. Colin Reid, and Rachelle Hole (2022) examined the **role of soft skills in vocational training and employment outcomes for youth with intellectual and**

developmental disabilities (IDD) in Canada. The study focused on the Impact Project, a vocational training program designed to enhance employment readiness. Using qualitative data collected from youth participants and their parents or caregivers, the findings highlighted that soft skills such as confidence, social interaction, and job readiness significantly influence employment experiences and outcomes. The study emphasizes that person-centered vocational training approaches are crucial for improving employability among individuals with disabilities. It concludes that integrating soft skill development into training programs can enhance employment prospects and better prepare individuals for workforce participation.

A study by Jitender Kumar and Garima Hooda (2024) examined the **role of skill development in enhancing employment opportunities in India within the context of globalization and technological transformation.** The study highlights that skill development is a crucial tool for improving workforce efficiency and addressing unemployment. It notes that initiatives such as Skill India and the establishment of the National Skill Development Corporation have significantly contributed to expanding training opportunities through public-private partnerships. However, the study identifies a persistent gap between skill development programs and career guidance, leading to inefficiencies in employment generation. Key challenges include lack of standardization, low wages, conservative attitudes, and insufficient emphasis on soft skills. The findings conclude that despite progress, the shortage of adequately skilled workers remains a major barrier to bridging the employment gap, highlighting the need for better alignment between training programs and labour market demands.

A study by Yoshito Takasaki (2024) examined the **impact of vocational training on employment and earnings among persons with disabilities in rural Cambodia.** Using an experimental research design, individuals with limb disabilities were randomly assigned to either a treatment group, which received intensive vocational training, or a control group. The findings revealed that participation in training significantly increased employment opportunities and income levels among persons with disabilities. However, the study also highlighted an unintended consequence, as participants reported higher levels of perceived discrimination and self-stigmatization after entering the workforce. The results suggest that while skill development enhances employability and economic outcomes, social and psychological barriers such as stigma continue to affect the overall inclusion of persons with disabilities. The study concludes that vocational training programs should be complemented with measures to address discrimination and promote social acceptance.

A study by Abha Shree, Prosari Chanda, and Swati Pandit (2024) examined **employment opportunities and policy support for persons with disabilities (PwDs) in India.** Using a descriptive survey approach, the study analyzed existing schemes, programs, and budget allocations related to skill development and employment. The findings indicate that although various initiatives have contributed to improving economic and social conditions of PwDs, access to these programs remains limited. The study highlights the need for greater awareness, improved outreach, and effective implementation to enhance participation and align with national priorities such as inclusive education and sustainable development goals.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is subject to certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. First, the study is confined to a selected geographical area, namely Chintamani in Chikkaballapur District, Karnataka, and therefore the results may not be fully generalized to

other regions. Second, the sample size is limited and may not represent the diversity of all Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in terms of age, gender, education, and type of disability. Third, the study relies mainly on primary data collected through questionnaires, which may be affected by respondent bias, memory errors, or personal perceptions. Fourth, time and financial constraints restricted wider coverage and deeper longitudinal analysis of program outcomes. Fifth, the study focuses only on selected skill development programs and does not include all government or private initiatives available for PwDs. Lastly, changing policy frameworks and employment market conditions may influence the relevance of findings over time.

METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the impact of skill development programs on employment opportunities and livelihood of persons with disabilities (PwDs) residing in **Chintamani Taluk of Chikkaballapur District, Karnataka..** Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized for the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among 109 respondents who had undergone skill development training, selected using a convenience sampling technique due to accessibility considerations. Secondary data were gathered from journals, government reports, and policy documents such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The collected data were analyzed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis, tables and charts with the help of Jamovi software.

ANALYSIS

Examination of the socio-economic profile of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs).

Table 1 Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage
18-25	41	37.6
26-40	37	33.9
41-50	29	26.6
51 & above	2	1.8
Total	109	100

Interpretation

The respondents' age distribution is seen in the table above. The age group of 18–25 years old accounts for the majority of responders (37.6%), followed by the 26–40 age group (33.9%). Just 1.8% of respondents are 51 years of age or older, while 26.6% of respondents are between the ages of 41 and 50.

This suggests that young people are more likely to participate in skill development programs because the majority of respondents are from younger, economically active age groups. Elderly people with impairments may have less access to or involvement in these programs, as seen by the low representation of older age groups.

Table 2

Type of disability	Category	No of respondents	Percentage
	Multiple	01	1
	Physical	100	92
	Visual	08	8

Education Level	Primary	7	6
	Secondary	18	17
	PUC	24	22
	Graduation	43	39
	Post - Graduation	8	7
Area	Rural	83	76
	Urban	26	24

With regard to **type of disability**, a vast majority of the respondents (92%) have physical disabilities, followed by 8% with visual disabilities, while only 1% have multiple disabilities. This indicates that the study is predominantly represented by individuals with physical disabilities, suggesting either higher participation or accessibility of skill development programs for this group compared to others.

The information shows that a sizable percentage of respondents have higher education levels. Graduates make up the largest category (39%), followed by Pre-University Course (PUC) graduates (22%) and secondary school graduates (17%). The percentage of responders with post-graduation education (7%) and primary education (6%) is lower. This implies that the majority of respondents have intermediate to advanced degrees, which could improve their employability and capacity to gain from skill-building initiatives.

In terms of where they live, the bulk of respondents (76%) are from rural areas, whilst only 24% are from urban areas. This suggests that the majority of the study's participants are rural people with disabilities, underscoring the significance of expanding skill-development programs and job prospects in rural areas.

Overall, the socioeconomic profile indicates that the respondents are mostly from rural backgrounds, have a moderate level of education, and are physically disabled. This has significant ramifications for creating inclusive and accessible skill development programs meant to enhance employment and livelihood outcomes.

Assessment of the level of awareness about skill development programs among PwDs.

Table 3
Level of Awareness

Sources of Awareness	Respondents	Percentage
Government	31	28.4
MRW/VRM	54	49.5
Media	4	3.7
NGO	12	11
Others	8	7.3

According to data on how people with disabilities (PwDs) learned about skill development programs, MRW/VRW was the primary source of information for 54 respondents (49.5%). This suggests that at the local level, Multipurpose Rehabilitation Workers (MRW) and Village Rehabilitation Workers (VRW) are crucial in educating and raising awareness among PwDs.

With 31 respondents (28.4%) citing government outlets as their knowledge source, the government is the second most important source of awareness. This demonstrates that formal outreach initiatives and government agencies are also making significant contributions to raising awareness.

Non-governmental organisations have a supporting but relatively limited role in promoting skill development programs, as seen by the reduced percentage of respondents who obtained awareness through NGOs (12 respondents, or 11.0%).

Newspapers, television, radio, and digital platforms are currently underutilised to reach PwDs about such programs, as only 4 respondents (3.7%) learned about them through the media. Other sources, such as friends, family, local authorities, or personal networks, were mentioned by the remaining 8 respondents (7.3%).

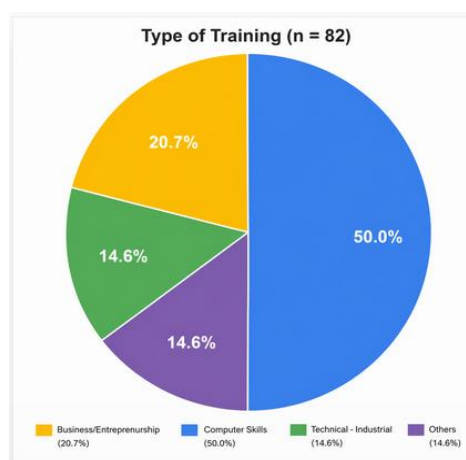
Overall Analysis:

The results unequivocally demonstrate that the most successful communication channel for raising awareness among PwDs is field-level rehabilitation workers (MRW/VRW), followed by government initiatives. Thus, increasing media outreach and bolstering community-based employees can raise awareness and encourage involvement in skill-development initiatives.

To analyze participation in training programs in the context of AI-supported learning environments.

Table 4

Training Received	No. of Respondents	Percentage
No	27	24.8
Yes	82	85.2



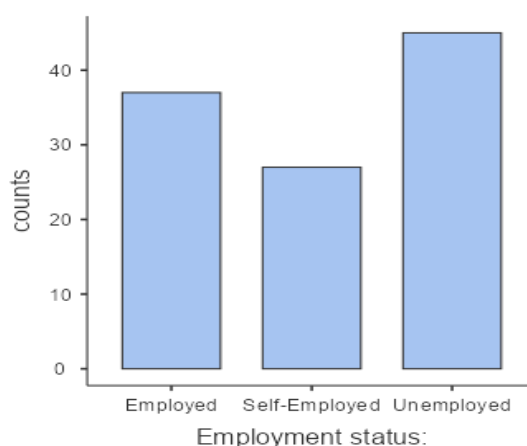
Of the 109 respondents, 27 (24.8%) said they had not received training, while 82 (75.2%) said they had. This shows that most people with disabilities (PwDs) have taken part in skill development programs, indicating a respectable degree of outreach and involvement. Forty-one (50.0%) of the eighty-two trained responders had received computer skills training. This demonstrates a strong emphasis on digital and computer-based skills, which are becoming more and more necessary for self-employment and contemporary career options. This trend also reflects the increasing importance of digital and AI-supported learning environments in higher education, where instruction is provided via online platforms, virtual modules, and technology-enabled systems.

With 17 responders (20.7%), business and entrepreneurship training was the second most popular category. This indicates that a significant percentage of PwDs are being encouraged

to work for themselves and start small businesses. By improving efficiency and market access, AI-driven solutions like digital marketing platforms, automated business applications, and online marketplaces can further boost PwDs' entrepreneurial endeavours. Furthermore, technical-industrial and other types of training were indicated by 12 respondents (14.6%). Even though this shows some involvement in specialised occupational fields, participation is still quite low. PwDs' accessibility and skill acquisition may be enhanced by the incorporation of AI in various fields, such as simulation-based training, smart manufacturing tools, and adaptive learning systems.

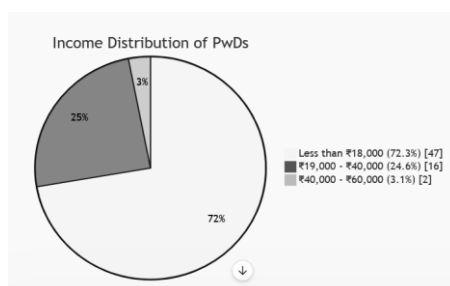
The results highlight the increasing significance of digital literacy and technology-oriented abilities by showing that computer-related training is the most popular and extensively accessed program among PwDs. This pattern is consistent with the growing influence of digital learning environments and artificial intelligence on skill development, especially in higher education. However, by utilising inclusive learning technologies and AI-enabled tools, technical-industrial and entrepreneurship training must be expanded. For PwDs, such integration can promote long-term economic empowerment and a variety of livelihood options while also increasing engagement and skill relevance.

To study the impact of skill development training on employment status and income levels



Interpretation

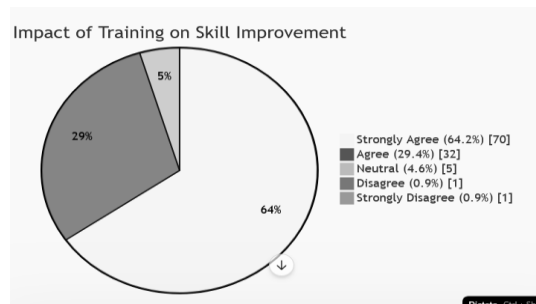
According to the figure, 45 respondents—the largest category—are unemployed, suggesting that unemployment is still a significant issue for people with disabilities (PwDs). Of the respondents, 27 are self-employed and 37 are employed. The existence of self-employment implies that autonomous livelihood options and entrepreneurship are significant sources of income for people with disabilities.



Interpretation

The majority of respondents (47 persons or 72.3%) earn less than ₹18,000 per month,

showing that most PwDs belong to the lower-income category. 16 respondents (24.6%) earn between ₹19,000 and ₹40,000, while only 2 respondents (3.1%) earn between ₹40,000 and ₹60,000. This indicates limited access to higher-paying employment opportunities.



Interpretation

The results clearly show that training programs helped PwDs develop their skills. While 32 respondents (29.4%) felt that training improved their talents, the majority of respondents (70 or 64.2%) highly agreed. The percentage of people who were neutral or unsatisfied was extremely low. This amply illustrates the beneficial impact of skill-development initiatives.

Overall Conclusion

The data shows that skill development training has significantly improved employability abilities, even if a sizable portion of PwDs are still unemployed and the majority are from lower-income groups. The socioeconomic status of PwDs can therefore be improved by increasing access to high-quality training programs, placement assistance, and income-generating possibilities.

FINDINGS

The study on the impact of skill development programs on the standard of living and job possibilities of people with disabilities (PwDs) might lead to several important conclusions. The socioeconomic profile shows that most respondents are from rural areas, suggesting that development issues related to impairments are more common in rural settings where chances are often limited. More women with disabilities should be engaged in skill development programs, as the majority of respondents were men and female participation was quite low.

The awareness of skill development programs among respondents was rather high. PwDs were informed about these programs by government agencies using Multipurpose Rehabilitation Workers (MRW) and Village Rehabilitation Workers (VRW). This highlights the importance of grassroots workers in the spread of knowledge. Nevertheless, it was found that there was minimal awareness via broadcast and internet media. The majority of responders had received some sort of training on their engagement. Among the several training categories, computer skills training was the most well-liked and regularly attended program, followed by business or entrepreneurship training. Due to very low participation in technical and industrial training, it is necessary to diversify training options.

The employment study shows that respondents' unemployment rate is still high even though they participated in training programs. A moderate percentage of respondents were employed, however others chose to work for themselves. This suggests that unless training is linked to financial aid and placement opportunities, it may not guarantee employment on its own.

Income research reveals that most respondents earn less than ₹18,000 per month, indicating

low economic status and limited access to higher-paying jobs. However, the majority of respondents were adamant that training programs improved their skills, confidence, and readiness for the workforce.

The study concludes that while skill development programs have improved PwDs' skills and employability overall, issues like unemployment, low income, poor job connections, and a lack of diverse training opportunities still have an impact on their livelihood outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of suggestions are made to enhance the efficacy of skill development programs for people with disabilities (PwDs) based on the study's findings. First, awareness efforts must to be reinforced via a variety of platforms, including local institutions, social media, local television, and community gatherings. While MRW and VRW workers are playing an significant role, the use of digital and mass media can help reach a larger number of beneficiaries.

Training programs must to be varied according to market demand and individual needs. Technical, industrial, retail, hospitality, digital marketing, handicrafts, and entrepreneurship training must be prioritised in addition to computer skills. Personalised training, accessibility, and skill acquisition can all be improved by integrating AI-supported learning platforms. To guarantee inclusive and successful skill development for PwDs, customised modules with barrier-free infrastructure, assistive technology, sign language support, and accessible digital content are crucial.

Third, it is imperative that training programs be linked to job prospects. Government departments, private companies, NGOs, and industries should collaborate to provide internships, apprenticeships, job fairs, and placement drives exclusively for PwDs. Employers who hire qualified PwDs may receive incentives.

Fourth, financial aid, low-interest loans, subsidies, and mentorship support should be used to encourage self-employment prospects. If given the right skills and finance assistance, many PwDs can become prosperous business owners. Income generation can be enhanced by connecting them to programs like PMEGP, Mudra Loans, and state welfare programs.

Fifth, extra efforts should be made to boost the involvement of rural residents and women with disabilities. To provide training in rural areas, mobile training units and community-based skill centers can be set up.

Sixth, methods for routine monitoring and follow-up should be implemented to assess training results, job status, and income growth. The quality and relevance of the training should be enhanced by using trainee feedback.

In order to help PwDs attain sustainable livelihoods and economic independence, policymakers should take an integrated approach that incorporates social security, employment assistance, skill development, and accessibility initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The current study comes to the conclusion that skill development programs significantly improve the employability and chances for employment of people with disabilities (PwDs) in Chintamani Taluk, Chikkaballapur District. Training programs have assisted respondents in gaining practical skills, boosting their self-esteem, and becoming ready for job or self-employment chances. Training programs are important interventions for social and economic empowerment, as evidenced by the majority of respondents' positive attitudes on their value.

However, the report also emphasises that training is insufficient to guarantee full integration into the workforce. A sizable portion of respondents are still unemployed, demonstrating the persistence of obstacles like prejudice, a lack of accessible jobs, low educational attainment, transportation challenges, and insufficient placement assistance. Therefore, efficient post-training support systems are just as important to the success of skill development programs as training delivery.

Further evidence that many PwDs are clustered in low-income groups comes from the respondents' income status. This implies that their employment options are frequently uncertain, low-paying, or informal. Therefore, it is necessary to provide trained PwDs with fair compensation, encourage entrepreneurship, and develop higher-quality jobs.

The study also finds that raising awareness is essential to the success of a program. While media outreach is still underutilised, grassroots employees like MRW and VRW workers have been quite successful in educating beneficiaries. Participation can be greatly increased by raising awareness through contemporary communication channels.

All things considered, skill development programs are a crucial route to PwDs' social inclusion, economic independence, and dignity. These initiatives have the potential to significantly improve the lives of people with disabilities when paired with inclusive legislation, accessible infrastructure, funding, employer involvement, and **AI-supported learning and assistive technologies** that enhance accessibility and personalized skill acquisition. Therefore, to create an egalitarian society where PwDs may live confidently and independently and participate effectively, ongoing investment in inclusive and technology-enabled skill development is required.

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