

*Brief report of 'In Service Training and Sensitization Programme of Key Functionaries Central and State Governments, Local Bodies and Other Service Providers' funded by RCI, New Delhi during the financial year 2016-2017*

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Govt. of India has taken the conscientiousness to generate responsiveness and sensitivity amongst various stakeholders. It was felt that there is an urgent need for in service training of the various stakeholders to create awareness about the rights and entitlements of PwDs, provisions in various schemes, development programmes, and ways and means to access their specific entitlements and those that they are entitled to as equal citizens. Therefore, in order to realize the above objectives, the Govt. of India has made a provision for training and sensitization of key functionaries of Central / State Govt. under the XII Five-year plan through DEPwD, Govt of India. This is envisaged to be achieved by organizing short term training programs through workshop at State/ District / Block level on regular basis amongst public representatives at all level.

Accordingly, Department of Empowerment of Person with Disabilities has developed a new central sector plan scheme i.e. "In-Service Training and Sensitization of Central and State Govt., Local Bodies and other Service providers at the national level". In our state Netaji Subhas Open University, Kolkata is entrusted to conduct the programs with 40 participants (college & University teachers). This RCI sponsored program was organized by the School of Education, Netaji Subhas Open University for the financial year 2016-17 with 06 programs. The 06 programs were conducted in Howrah, Hoogly, BurdwanPurba, PaschimMidnapur, Puruliya, Kolkata and 24 Pargana(South) Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and CochBeharMurshdabad, Malda,Howrah , Hooghly & North 24 Parganas of West Bengal.

The objective of the sensitization programs were to train, guide, tutor and sensitize on the issues of disability, diversity, policies, education and rehabilitation. Each program was of three-day duration, starting from 10am-5pm (Inaugural session followed by technical sessions on all three days). As per RCI mandate, resource persons from Disability field were engaged for all the technical sessions for three consecutive days. Member secretary, RCI, New Delhi graced the occasion in the inaugural session as a Chief Guest in addition to other luminaries. Eminent experts like Dr. AlokaGuha, Former Chairperson, National Trust, New Delhi, Sri. Asok Chakraborty, Chairperson, EZCC, Kolkata, Prof. Mallika Banerjee, Dept of Psychology, Calcutta University shared their experience in this field. Faculties from various NIHH, NIMH, NGOs were also essential speakers of the various sessions of the 3-day program. The sessions were carried out carefully through PPT slides, A-V clips and related Teaching-Learning resources to enhance interaction between participants and speaker. Hands-on training on specific areas of disability was well taken care of. At the end of each program, the participants were provided with all e-resources and a handout on resource material on disability & rehabilitation issues. The intended outcomes of such programs were fulfilled as teachers are the greatest disseminators of knowledge and information to the society.

The idea of inclusion and inclusive setting gained momentum through such motivated schedule of programs. The in-house faculties of Special Education field were actively involved in organizing and creating environment for successful completion of each program. The Faculties from Education field supplemented to the overall management of the technical sessions with due effort on the context. Director, SoE was the brain behind chalking out each program and its technicalities thereof with all precision. The feedback from the participants showed us the path of encouragement and adding enthusiasm to conduct such programs.

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