



மாற்றுத்திறனாளிகளுக்கான வேலை பயிற்சி

JOB COACHING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

**DOWNTOWN
EMPOWERMENT**

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Teacher aspirants are in the current batch. PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Competitive exam coaching centre at NIEPMD opens a new innings

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Twenty-eight-year-old Haran Nataraj is gearing up for his first day at work, which should be in the third week of August. Diagnosed with specific Learning Disability while he was a toddler, Haran cleared two rounds of written examinations conducted by the Food Corporation of India and has been selected for the post of Assistant grade III (General). "I do not have much information about what my work will be but I am sure that I would be reporting to the regional head office in Chennai," says Haran, who graduated in BA (English) from Kumararaja Meena Muthiah College of Arts and Science.

Started in 2022, this new coach-

ing centre is aimed at preparing persons with Intellectual Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Mental Illness, Specific Learning Disability and Multiple Disabilities for a Governmental placement.

The centre is run from 10 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. on all weekdays. K Balasubakar, lecturer, Department of Adult Independent Living, says currently 12 students are enrolled with the centre and this includes three with autism spectrum disorder, two with multiple disability, two with intellectual disability and one with deafblind and low motor disability.

"For any competitive exams, candidates are trained in numerical ability, reasoning, current affairs, English and general knowledge. We have facility to train these candidates, some of who require mindful attention," says Balasubakar. In certain categories of disability, a candidate can enlist the help of a scribe to take the examination.

These youngsters are also trained in interview and soft skills,

personal hygiene, independent travelling, life skills, decision making and problem solving. They are provided with access to computer with internet facility and a library on the campus.

Anyone with a unique identification disability card can enrol with the centre.

"We generally take candidates

that have completed Class XII or a degree as that has become the basic requirement in most government jobs," says Balasubakar.

For the Department of Adult Independent Living, the responsibility does not end with only offering coaching. Follow-ups are carried out to see if the candidate placed in the organisation is able to cope

Haran Nataraj is the first from the batch to get a government job

'Sensitising stakeholders should be a continuous effort'

The Government of India enhanced the employment reservation in governmental sector from 3% to 4% for Persons with Bench Mark Disabilities (PwBD) in group A, B, C and D and released a Gazette notification on the same on January 4, 2022. With this, organisations are required to open up jobs for those with autism spectrum disorder, Down's syndrome, specific learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities and multiple disabilities in addition to the other provisions that covers those with blindness; low vision; hearing impairment and locomotor disability.

The Government of India under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, has established five regional institutes to work for the empowerment of persons with disabilities, with National Institute for Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD) at Marudurai on East Coast Road being one of them.

Nachiketa Raut, Director, NIEPMD, spoke to The Hindu

Downtown about the Institute's efforts to create awareness among various stakeholders about how a job goes.

"A candidate from the Competitive Exam Coaching Centre has got a job offer, what does this mean for the student?"

This special coaching centre to train young adults for competitive exams was started on a trial basis last year. Now that we have a success story with Haran Nataraj getting a job offer we are encouraged to do much work that creates such results. Our content can be structured even better. We would happily get more special educators to come in the campus to coach candidates as that requires specialised skills.

"How has NIEPMD been collaborating with governmental organisations?"

"Our staff are consistently on the lookout for job advertisements in Employment News and other leading dailies to see job postings placed by governmental organisations and how our candidates can be placed. Recently, a well-known

academic research station and a judiciary body had missed mentioning the special quota in their job posting and our team reached out to them. We regularly write in companies, explaining to them this mandate set by the government and even empower them to conduct the entrance exam, if required.

"What are the challenges in carrying out this exercise?"

"While some companies are not aware of the one percent increase in reservation quota, some do not know how people with multiple disabilities can fit into certain roles. Our job is to sensitise them. In the last one year, we have reached out to at least 100 companies in the private and government sector.

"What are the other awareness generation programmes on campus?"

In February, we conducted Ability Hub, bringing more than 50 small-scale enterprises and 30 employers under one platform. All our initiatives have to be a continuous process to bring about a change in perspective towards persons with disability.



Press Release