

PRESS RELEASE

“Need to focus on innovation to explore the talent of people with disabilities” during Sensitization Workshop On

Accessibility & Inclusion at Workplace: Rights of Persons with Disabilities ACT 2016

NEW DELHI, 9 December 2017: Ms Shakuntala Doley Gamlin, Secretary, Department of



Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Govt. of India said, “today the total number of disabled in India according to 2011 survey is 2.68 crore, of which, majority are living in poor condition. We need to focus on making them part of the society and discover their talent which is

often unexplored because of lack of exposure. We must look at people like Bill Gates, Stephen Hawking who have achieved exemplary success despite their disabilities. We need to look for innovation beyond technology and focus on innovation for people with disabilities so that their optimum talent can be explored. The central government is taking a leadership role for it to be implemented successfully across the states”.

She was addressing a sensitization workshop on ‘**Accessibility & Inclusion at Workplace: Rights of Persons with Disabilities ACT 2016 (RPwD Act, 2016)**’ organized by FICCI in collaboration with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Gol here on Thursday.



Smt. Dolly Chakrabarty, Joint Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Gol took the audience through the salient features of ‘The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016’ and shared about the plans for popularization of Accessibility Index and Incentives to Private Employer Scheme.

Briefing about the Act, she mentioned that the obligations under the new disability act apply not only to Government establishments but also to “private establishments”, be it companies, firms, cooperatives or other societies, associations, trusts, agencies, institutions, organizations, unions, factories or such other establishments as may be specified. Such private employers are now subject to requirements (i) to promote an equal opportunity policy and (ii) to comply with the standards of accessibility prescribed by the Indian Central Government.

Supplementing Smt. Gamlin's speech, she also said that Disability and poverty go hand in hand and to break this vicious circle, we must empower them through access to opportunities.



Ms Uma Seth, Director, FICCI CSR said, 'FICCI strongly believes in creating an inclusive India and we have been working on building such an environment through FICCI's CSR vertical since the last two decades.

Going beyond the Act, **Shanti Lakshmanan** from **V-Shesh** shared National and International Best Practices

on Accessibility & Inclusion at the Workplace. This was followed by discussion with corporates who are already striving to make their workplace both Accessible & Inclusive. Mr. Ashutosh Chaddha, Group Director, Government Affairs and Public Policy, **Microsoft India** shared about assistive technology for empowerment of people with disabilities. Ms Akanksha Sharma, Head, CSR & Sustainability, **Jubilant Food Works Ltd.** shared how Jubilant has created an inclusive and accessible environment for employment of PwDs in their business operations and Mr. Nipun Malhotra, Executive Director, **Nipman Fastener Industries Pvt Ltd.** shared how Nipman Foundation has a team of trained accessibility auditors who have audited and provided recommendations for PwD friendly infrastructure including Delhi Metro, Delhi Haat, Supreme Court and have also worked with the Election commission and the Indian Railways Committee.

The discussion concluded with interesting question and answers between government, corporates and NGOs highlighting issues such as the roadblocks of empowering PwDs in backward rural areas, unavailability of sign language interpreters in various locations like airport, tourist areas etc., bringing attitudinal change towards disability. The program was attended by over 80 organizations.



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