



Disability Inclusive Development

People with disabilities (PWDs) are one of the most vulnerable groups in our society; socially excluded, they face various forms of discrimination. They are often isolated and lack awareness, which makes them unable to make use of existing resources, schemes and programmes by the Government.

The Rural Development Trust's (RDT) programmes with PWDs encompass social, economic, physical and medical rehabilitation to tackle societal prejudice and foster understanding. By mobilising the PWDs together, we aim to create a network of support that increases their collective strength and enables the promotion of equal rights and opportunities.

The Disability Inclusive Development sector of RDT focuses on six areas under which the following projects and activities are implemented:

1. Self-help groups and federations

The idea of facilitating these groups and federations is to mobilise them through awareness workshops and training in capacity-building.

- **Viklangula sanghams** are gender-mixed groups of varying ages and disabilities focusing on education, health, rights, schemes and different aspects of rehabilitation.
- **Mandal samakhya and district-level federations** further the cause of inclusion through emphasis on resource mobilisation, accessibility, protection of rights and privileges and tackling violence and discrimination.

2. Resource mobilisation

The aim is to encourage PWDs to be the main actors in their own development by making them aware of their legal rights and privileges and help them access government benefits.

- **Government recognition** to obtain medical certificates, travel concessions, house sites, scholarships, pensions and other allowances.
- **Enrolling** PWDs in the voter's list and for important official documents like Aadhar card.
- **Enrolling to get employment cards** to get work under MGNREGA and other government schemes.



3. Livelihoods

One of key factors to enable PWDs achieve self-reliance is to help them achieve economic independence. They are considered to be a liability, especially in poor families, because of their dependence on others which mainly results in their ill-treatment. Having an income source makes their self-confident and autonomous.

- Under our Fair Trade partner, the Integrated Development Trust, we have established **handicrafts centres** where women with disabilities are trained to be artisans in different crafts and trades.
- **Facilitating mini-banks in the sanghams** which PWDs can access for loans to venture into a business or any income-generating activity.
- **Training workshops for men** in trades like plumbing, carpentry, masonry and electrician works.
- Collaboration with NGOs like Youth4Jobs, APD to **train young graduates** in soft skills to enhance their employability.

4. Special and inclusive education

Empowerment of PWDs is truly possible through education. Education for children with disabilities is offered through special education and also full inclusion in mainstream classes.

- **Inclusive education:** Five primary schools and one secondary school for children with varying disabilities along with children without disabilities and also providing assistance to children in government schools.
- We run a **high school exclusively for speech and hearing impaired children**.
- **Providing scholarships and assistance** to those pursuing higher educations and professional or technical courses.
- Printing books and study materials in Braille in English, Telugu, Hindi and also producing manuals in sign-language.

5. Residential rehabilitation centers

Assistance is provided to improve their daily living skills in order to make them self-sufficient, so they can achieve partial or complete independence.

- We run four residential rehabilitation centers for children with **intellectual disabilities** and three for those with **cerebral palsy** that focuses on improving their motor skills, comprehension and quality of daily life.
- Children with less severe disabilities are also trained in everyday chores and other skills like farming, animal rearing.

6. Medical rehabilitation

Lack of awareness, financial constraints and unavailability of medical professionals are factors that hinder many from accessing timely medical interventions. We aim to reduce this gap and also improve the quality of life for all.

- **Early Intervention** at the village and hospital level for children below three years aims to reduce the risk of developing a disability or diminish the severity of an existing one.
- **Orthopaedic workshops** focus on improving mobility among children and adults with physical disabilities by fabricating and supplying aids and devices and providing supportive services like physiotherapy.
- **Corrective surgeries.**