

**SPEECH OF CMD, NHFDC on  
Capacity Building Workshop for officials of West Bengal Women  
Development Undertaking, Kolkata, 06.03.2012**

I am very happy and honoured to attend this One day workshop organized by West Bengal Women Development Undertaking in Kolkata today. In this programme we would also like to explore the possibility of collaborative arrangement with RRBs in WB.

The Persons with Disabilities face dual challenges of marginalization on account of socio-economic challenges as well as on account of their physical and mental condition. Hence, education, economic, social empowerment of Persons with Disabilities require specialized efforts for bringing them in the mainstream.

National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation under Govt of India is providing concessional credit to Persons with Disability for starting self-employment activities and also for pursuing professional/technical education. NHFDC also provide 100% grants for skill upgradation/training by operating through its State Channelizing Agencies. The interest rates under our Corporation's schemes are as low as 3.5% p.a in case of women PwDs and the highest rate being 8% p.a i.e, upto Rs 25.00 lakhs loan.

Govt. of India's efforts are dependent on the initiatives and pro-active approach of the State Government. State Corporation is the most important and active partner of National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation of Govt. of India for carrying assistance to grass-root level. The overall achievement is dependent on State Corporation's efforts, and being close to the target group, they are expected to suggest positive initiatives within the ambit of social financing norms to enable us to cover more number of persons.

The state of West Bengal has great potential in terms of self-employment opportunities and with the support of government and proactive approach of the SCA a large number of persons with disabilities could be benefitted. During the current financial year, our Corporation has allocated Rs 5.10 crore to your Corporation. It means, the most conservative assessment is to cover 1000 PwDs in a year. However, the West Bengal Women Development Undertaking has only sent proposals/request for Rs 31 lacs only i.e. 6% of the notional allocation.

Let us pool our efforts to expand the capacity of the West Bengal Women Development Undertaking in extending concessional credit to PwDs linked to skill training. You may also make fresh efforts for imparting skill training to young Persons with Disabilities in various vocational trades. Here, tie-up may be made with Vocational Rehabilitation Center (VRC) at Kolkata which is exclusively devoted to PwDs. Further tie up can be made with Regional Vocational Training Institute for Women (RVTI) in Kolkata which is exclusively devoted for women entrepreneurs. Both these institutes operate under the Ministry of Labour & Employment, GoI. Both the institutes are located in Salt Lake Sector V and providing training to disabled persons and women respectively. The tie-up with VRC & RVTI will not only facilitate training wherein NHFDC would be providing stipend @1000/- per disabled trainee/month; but would also facilitate quality loaning from your Corporation under our scheme. Because, after good skill training, the disabled person becomes entrepreneur and he can start good and viable project for the self employment venture. You can enhance the loaning to 1000 trained PwDs by this single stroke alone.



Also, we may explore the possibility for providing concessional credit to PwDs of West Bengal by way of refinance to Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) in your state under Credit Guarantee Scheme of Government of India. Under this collaborative arrangement, NHFDC will not insist on guarantee from the implementing agency i.e., Regional Rural Bank or from State Government. Also, the RRBs will not take any collateral from the beneficiaries as Credit Guarantee Scheme does not allow for the same. The details of the scheme and the modalities will be discussed in this meeting. I would like to inform that NHFDC has already signed agreements with 14 RRBs in UP, Uttarakhand and Haryana. These are serving as additional channels in these states, under coordination and overall supervision by our SCAs., ie, State Corporations.

I would also like to inform this august gathering that Govt. of India through National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation is also implementing two Scholarship Schemes. The total 1500 Scholarships are available under these schemes and the advertisement is issued in the month of July every year and hence I request your goodself to sensitise higher educational institutions, professional and training institutes of your State to make it a success. I would like to inform you that these Scholarships provide assistance to a PwD student to the tune of Rs. 60,000 in a year. In addition, they are provided with Lap Top and one time assistance for assistive devices to Visually Handicapped and Hearing Impaired students.

Apart from this, our educational loan scheme has been made very attractive which is offering loan to a girl student with disabilities @ 3.5% p.a. and in case of male students with disabilities @ 4% p.a.. We have already sent communication to all Chief Secretaries of the States/UTs in this regard.

Some of our partners in the States, like, West Bengal Women Development Undertaking in this state, have introduced innovative practices worth emulating for other Corporations. This will immensely benefit the PwDs in your State. Some of these initiatives may be narrated here also.

**Chhattisgarh Nishaktjan Vitta Aivam Vikas Nigam** has introduced a scheme through their administrative ministry i.e. Ministry of Social Welfare namely, Utthan Subsidy Yojana. As per the scheme, on regular repayment of loan for three years, the beneficiary becomes eligible for state government subsidy equivalent to 50% of the balance loan outstanding.

**Rajasthan S.C. & S.T. Finance & Development Cooperative Corporation** has introduced Vishwas Yojana in the state of Rajasthan. Under the scheme, out of the total loan advanced to the beneficiaries, 30% of the project cost is subsidized by the state government to start self employment activities under Govt of India schemes. The maximum project cost under the scheme is Rs.1 lakh.

**Madhya Pradesh Pichra Varg & Alpsankhayak Vitt Evam Vikas Nigam** has taken steps to enhance the recovery from beneficiaries through officers of the Industry Department. Every month recovery position is reviewed through video conferencing. Check bounce cases are being followed up regularly through courts. Corporation has also received yearly grant of Rs.20.0 lakhs on account of this new initiative to meet establishment, salary cost etc. This new initiative has made favourable impact in the recovery position of the Corporation.

**Maharashtra State Handicapped Finance & Dev. Corpn.** operates through the district offices of State Backward Class Corporation as they do not have any district office of their own. In order to effectively implement and improve recovery from beneficiaries, the Maharashtra Corporation has appointed 17 staff at district level on contract basis. The staff helps in maintaining district level records, filling of applications, advise prospective beneficiaries and collection of repayments from field. This has improved the recovery of NHFDC dues from beneficiaries significantly.

**Tamil Nadu State Apex Cooperative Bank Limited** has been awarded the best state channelizing agency of NHFDC twice by Government of India. The State Agency has done commendable work in the sphere of small loans. Their stress on advancing small loans as per the need of the beneficiary coupled with continuous monitoring has resulted in loan disbursal of upto Rs. 7.96 crore in a year (2010-11). They have also streamlined and relaxed the requirement of Govt. Servant guarantee for advancing the loan. It is worth mentioning here that the recovery and utilization under our loans in Tamil Nadu is 100%.

In this backdrop, The West Bengal Women Development Undertaking is still in struggling phase and the Corporation has yet to cross many challenges. My expectations from you are very high and I can reiterate here that you can easily accommodate 1000 beneficiary per year by releasing at least Rs. 5 crore loans to them. When the state government has extended adequate guarantee support, West Bengal Women Development Undertaking must take a proactive approach to benefit the PwDs residing in the state. It is not a secret that almost entire disabled population in the state i.e., 18.47 lacs is starring at us with a great hope. This Corporation has so far extended help to 924 PwDs out of our funds. I assure that funds would not be a constraint in case West Bengal Women Development Undertaking come forward to benefit large number of disabled persons.

I would earnestly request West Bengal Women Development Undertaking to focus on five crucial areas and these are

- 1) The Corporation will work wholeheartedly to assist atleast 1000 PwDs in a year by extending loans to the tune of Rs. 5 crore to them.
- 2) The Corporation will make extra efforts to outreach PwDs with the collaborative arrangement with Regional Rural Banks. This extra effort may be @ 10 PwDs per branch per RRB in the state. This means assistance to approximately 10,000 PwDs in a year.
- 3) The Corporation should endeavour to make efforts to link concessional credit to training as trained PwDs becomes entrepreneur in due course of time and he is in a position to start a viable project.
- 4) The other schemes of Govt. of India like Scholarship Scheme, Educational Loan Scheme & EDP scheme should be fully utilized to help the PwDs in your state.
- 5) The state Corporation should try to evolve an innovative approach like in case of Chattisgarh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra & Tamil Nadu to uplift the schemes meant for PwDs in the state. This will make the implementation of NHFDC schemes much easier in the state of west Bengal.

With these words, I wish all success to this workshop as I hope momentous decisions will be taken today in the interest of PwDs.

**Jai Hind.**