



# IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## Skilling and Livelihood for Youth with Disabilities

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*Prepared by:*  
*Dr. Gunawathy Fernandez*  
*(Ph.D., Disability Management & Special Education)*

*Prepared for:*



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## 1 Introduction

A Person with Disability (PwD) faces institutional and societal barriers and is less likely to have access to rehabilitation, education, and employment — which could help end the cycle of poverty and disability. HDFC Ltd, through its CSR initiatives, works to improve the ‘quality of life’ of children and persons with disabilities from a social and economic lens. The Supporting Persons with Disabilities - Skilling and Livelihood Project ensures financial independence and increase in workforce participation by skilling and job placements for youth with disabilities. The project also targets employer and workplace sensitization and seamless integration into the workforce.

Implementation Partner	<b>Youth 4 Jobs Foundation (Y4J)</b>
Grant Support	INR 1.97 crore
Duration	FY 2018-19 to FY 2020-2021
<b>Location</b>	Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu), Pune (Maharashtra), and Guwahati (Assam)

## 2 About the Project

Youth 4 Jobs Foundation (Y4J) has more than a decade of experience in skill development of PwD. The organisation started in Andhra Pradesh and now has a presence in 12 states of India with 23 skill training centres. Youth with primarily locomotor, speech & hearing disabilities and with low vision are enrolled in the programs and linked to job opportunities. Y4J also helps companies build a more inclusive workforce. By providing needed skills’ training, Y4J has ensured participation of PwDs in the labour market. The placements have helped in increasing the financial status of the individuals and families.

The **Work Integrated Soft Skills, English & Computers (WISE)** course of Y4J covered basic communication skills, computer skills, life skills, spoken English and sector-specific courses. Such trained youth were then placed in sectors like Data Entry/ BPO (Non-Voice)/ Computer operators, BPO (Voice), Hospitality etc. The target group for the training was unemployed youth with a disability in the age group of 18-27 years.

The project was initially planned for 2 years (FY 2018-19 to FY 2019-20). Due to onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the project was extended by another year by utilising the underspent in the previous years. The project started in existing skill training centres at Pune (Maharashtra) and Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) and a new centre was set up in Guwahati (Assam). However, the Coimbatore centre was closed in FY 2020-21 as Y4J was seeing a reduced demand for the training. The core components of the programme included:

<b>Mobilization</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Employer Sensitisation &amp; Placement</b>
Reaching out to youth with disabilities and motivating them to enrol for the training, through networking government welfare department, local NGOs, community leaders etc	Training in topics like English, Computer skills, personality development, retail or many more market-oriented skills. Counselling is also provided to improve self confidence	Placements in relevant job roles that are sourced through networking with employers, role mapping, facilitating the process of identifying suitable candidates, recruitment, and post placement support services to employers



*Mobilisation Camp in Pune*

### 3 Scope, Approach and Methodology

The impact assessment endeavours to measure the impact in terms of stated objectives in the proposal submitted to HDFC CSR and examines the gap between the intent and outcome. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)'s Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) (OECD-DAC) "REEIS" framework of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability was also considered for the impact assessment. The impact assessment aimed to answer the following evaluation questions:

- **Results** of the grant support and achievement of **outcomes**
- **Effectiveness** of implementation and technical intervention strategies
- **Challenges** faced and **Recommendations** to consider

#### 3.1 Approach of the Impact Assessment:

The impact assessment had a participative and strengths-based approach. Participatory approach seeks participation of the primary stakeholders. Strengths-based approach (Brinkerhoff 2007; Cooperrider 2005; Rhodes 2013 and 2014) was selected in recognition of the concept that the process of valuing existing strengths and recognising existing assets contributes to ongoing motivation towards positive change. The interview and focus group discussion questions were framed in a way to bring out aspects that the individuals respected, liked, and appreciated in the programs. The strength-based approach throws light on the project gaps, and the project strengths that can be a supporting framework to close the gaps.

## 3.2 Methodology

The assessment considered the monitoring and evaluation (M & E) data available to track the project's progress. In addition to the M & E data from the projects, the assessment strove to collect data using a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to answer the evaluation questions. The table below gives the participants for primary data collection.

Table 1 Details of Stakeholders who Participated in the Impact Assessment

Stakeholders	Participants for Semi-Structured Interviews
Project Head	1
Regional Coordinators	2
Trainers	2
Company Representatives <sup>1</sup>	4
Trainees	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

**Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI):** SSIs were conducted with staff, trainees, company representatives, and management staff based on pre-prepared questions. Questions to the staff and management aimed at discerning the strategy, quality, and management of the project. Questions to the trainees and company representatives aimed at understanding their experiences and suggestions for improvement. 29 individuals participated in the SSIs. As the project had completed in 2021, some of the staff had moved away, and interviews could be conducted with only those available.

**Analysis of program reports, records and training curriculum:** Program reports were reviewed against priority evaluation questions to draw out the most relevant information and identify critical elements. Project reports and records were examined to identify the number of target groups reached and proportionate achievement of outcomes. Quantitative measures are analyzed, comparing baseline with more recent data where available.

## 3.3 Limitations

- There was dependency on the implementing partner to organize meetings and interviews, with the risk that those selected may not completely represent all stakeholders
- PwDs are diverse in their lived experience and an individual cannot represent others with similar disabilities, just as an individual from one gender, one location, information from one family or one organization cannot necessarily represent others.
- Efforts were made to have sample representatives from all the stakeholders. The findings of the assessment are based on the responses as described above. It may not exactly match a summary of the total population study, partly due to the fact the study uses both qualitative and quantitative data reported on different mediums by different stakeholders.

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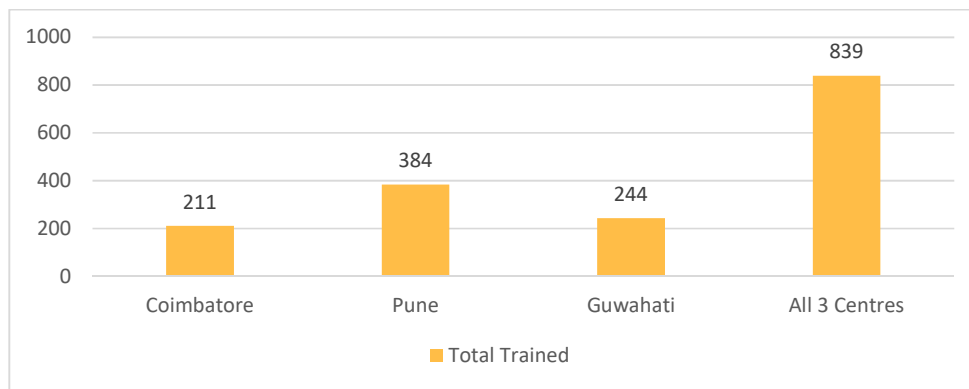
<sup>1</sup> R. Nilesh Chhadawelkar, Executive, Indian Institute of Knowledge, Basuki Jha, Zonal HR, VMart Retail, Venkatesh Sakkuri, Talent Advise Partner at Flipkart, and M. Khurshid, HR Executive, Reliance Trends

The above limitations were addressed by involving many people in the study. Triangulation of all major findings and themes were sought, with at least two sources of information to verify relevance and consistency.

## 4 Overall Reach

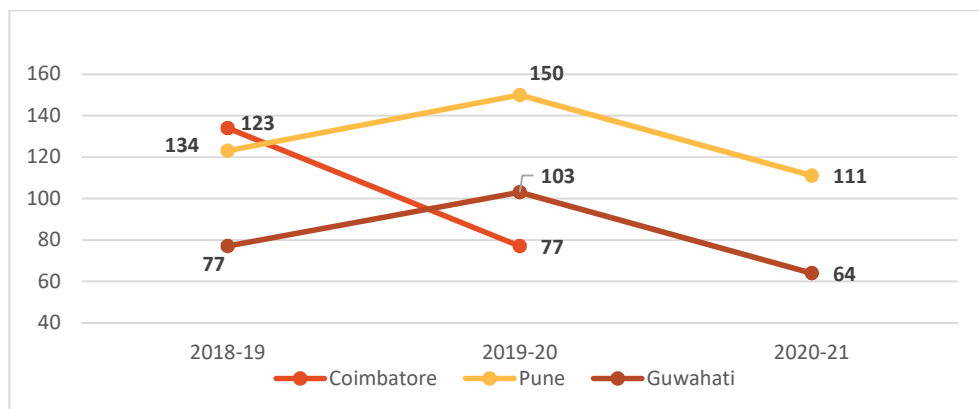
**The project trained 839 youth with disabilities.** In each center, the number of people trained was more than the numbers planned. Majority of the trainees have an education background of SSC or Intermediate.

Figure 1 Actual Number of Trainees Trained



There was a drop in numbers in 2019-20 at Coimbatore and hence it was closed for 2020-21. Y4J moved to online training mode in April 2020.

Figure 2 Number of Trainees Each Year, Per Centre



## 5 Findings of the Impact Assessment

### 5.1 Relevance

According to a report released by Uneathinsight, India has almost 3 crore people with disability (PwD) population of which around 1.3 crore is employable but only 34 lakhs of them have been employed across organised, unorganized sector, government led schemes and self-employed<sup>2</sup>.

There are many reasons that hinder PwDs entering the labour market. These can be lack of appropriate legislations and its implementation, inadequate information, stereotyping, discrimination, no access to technology. However, one of the most critical reasons is lack of knowledge, skills, and competencies. Skills and competencies have become the foundation for employability, and economic and social sustainability. “Skill building is an instrument for empowering the individual and improving his/her social acceptance or values (GoI, 2012). It is widely known that skill development is central to improving productivity and one of the important sources of growth and improved living standards (ILO, 2008; DFID, 2008; Christoph & Berg, 2009; Sanghi & Srija, 2015)”<sup>3</sup>.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment (Govt. of India), Annual Report 2021-22, there are 997 Employment Exchanges functioning which includes 42 Special Employment Exchanges for PwDs throughout India. 38 Special Cells for persons with disability are functioning in normal Employment Exchanges in various States<sup>4</sup>. Out of the candidates registered on the exchanges, 6.9% got placements in 2017.

The project works in the crucial area of skill and competency development and closes the gap between education and employability. Economic independence is critical for everyone. It gives them voice, respectability and for many acceptances among family. Given the global and Indian scenario of employment of differently abled, the project is the most relevant in the current context.

### 5.2 Effectiveness and Impact:

#### 5.2.1 Training curriculum

The in-person training was spread across 60 days (needs to be elaborated – residential training etc). The virtual course during COVID-19 was for 25 days designed with 4 sessions/ day of 45 minutes each. Based on the curriculum and sessions, the overall course time of the WISE training is divided as follows

- 35% towards **English and computers skills**
- 32% for **life skills, soft skills, and money management**
- 33% dedicated for **trade topics**

**Basic English (18%) has a major share of the course time**, the emphasis is on basic communication skills like greeting, introducing oneself, asking for help and simple expressions. The curriculum is designed to suit those who have passed SSLC/ intermediate, which is majority of the trainee universe. Training is undertaken in Indian Sign Language for candidates with Speech and Hearing Impairment. As part of the course curriculum candidates are taken to for Exposure Visits to various workplaces where they can see first-hand the theory put to work that they have learned in class.

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<sup>2</sup> Unused Potential of India's People with Disability (PwD) Workforce Report by UneathInsight, 2021

<sup>3</sup> Impact Assessment Study of CSR (NHPC) Skill Development Project (Submitted to National Skill Development Corporation) by Institute for Human Development: 2019

<sup>4</sup> Annual Report – Ministry of Labour and Employment: 2021-22

Table 2 Allocation of sessions

Subjects	Time allocation of sessions
Basic English	18%
Computer	17%
Life skills	15%
Soft skills	10%
Retail	7%
Money management	7%
Hospitality	7%
BPO	7%
Manufacturing	6%
E-commerce	6%



Computer Skills Session

The candidates are not used to working for 9 hours a day. The course has time and stress management sessions, it would **benefit to include training to build endurance and perseverance**. This could be dealt as after class physical exercises for stamina, mock sessions that reflect work environment, culture etc., hypothetical case studies, puzzles, memory & problem-solving games, brain teasers, and assignments for

endurance/perseverance that can be played as live scenarios.

Pre-Covid opportunities were in retail, BPO and hospitality. Post Covid opportunities are in E-commerce, manufacturing and BPO. Considering that these jobs require ability to interact well with other people, **time on soft skills training** (currently about 10%) **could be increased**.

Trade related topics can be expanded including health care. There are jobs in the health care industry which are similar to the ones in hospitality – cleaning, bed making, food services etc., hence introduction and training in health care can be done in tandem with hospitality.

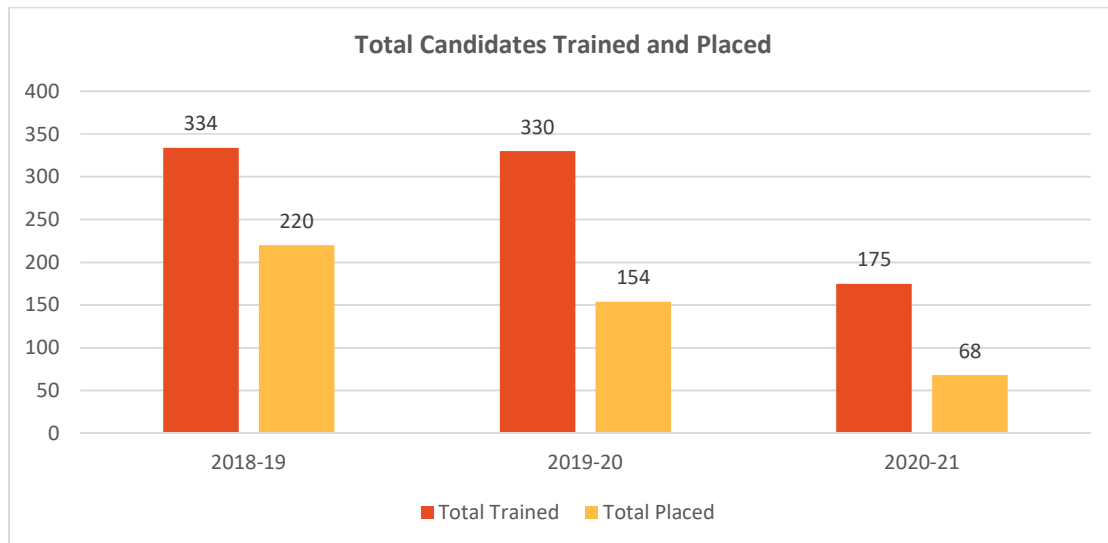
The company representatives were in general appreciative of the training. Y4J is helping them to fulfil their policy on inclusion. They are happy with the basic work skills that the trainees have, where needed they provide in house training as per the job requirements. However, they mentioned a need to strengthen knowledge and skills content of the training based on the needs of the trade which will provide opportunity for higher employment, especially sector specific trainings such as e-commerce and manufacturing. The trainers also suggested revising curriculum to include trade related aspects, similar to the company representative suggestion.



## 5.2.2 Placement of trained youth

It was proposed that 60% of the youth trained would be placed. **The total number of youths placed at the end of the project period was 442, which is 53% of the 839 trained.** The job market was in a difficult situation due to COVID, hence placement opportunities had reduced.

Figure 3 Percentage of Trainees Trained and Placed



When we analyse the centres individually, Pune has done extremely well with 63% of trainees placed. Guwahati's placement performance was 38%, which could be due to a limited IT and other skills-oriented industries for placement. Also it was found that the youth were not open to migrating to locations outside of Guwahati for job opportunities.

The Y4J trainees reported that unemployment among them prior to training was higher, those who were employed stated that their **waiting period between training and getting a job was not long (2-3 months)**. **The trainees also reported that they are happy and satisfied with the training.**



Job Fair in Pune

**Reliance (Retail), Minda Corporation (Manufacturing), KFC (Hospitality) and Star Bazar (Retail).**

The placements are almost completely in the private sector. The objective of the programme is to provide beneficiaries a foothold in the labour market for their employability. Y4J has a network of 80+ employers, of which 26% is from retail sector, 20% from manufacturing, 17% from hospitality and 13% from IT sector. **E-commerce and retail sectors employed maximum number of trainees. The top 5 employers are Amazon (E-commerce),**

Y4J tracks candidates 6 months' post placement and up to one year with phone calls. The follow up until one year can be strengthened. While retention of the trainees was 80% for the ones placed in FY 2018-19, it dropped to 60% for the FY 2019-20 batch due to Covid.

### 5.2.3 Improvement of financial status

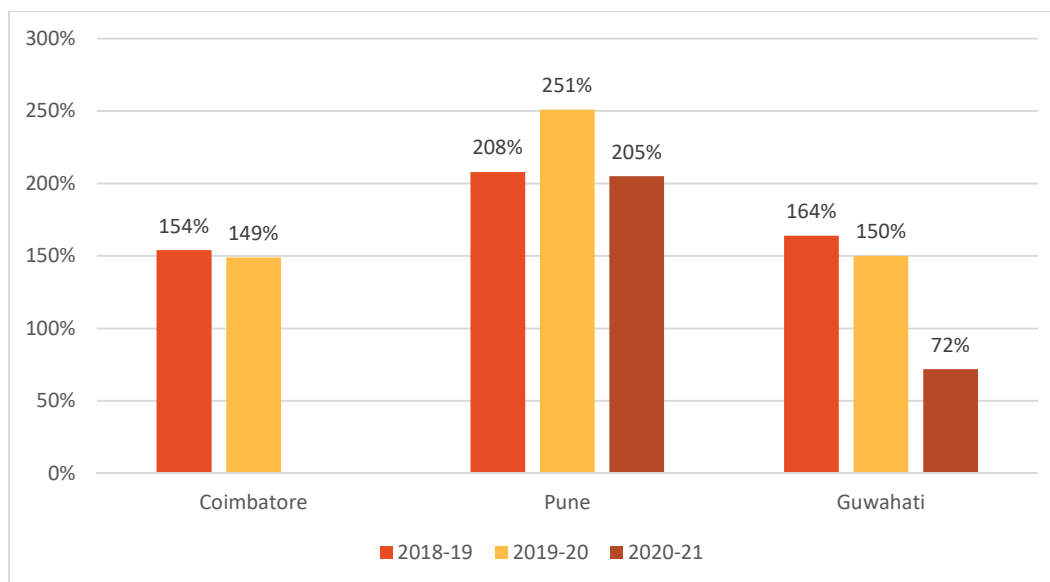
The table below gives the average salary of the placed candidates when they were tracked after six months of placement. **The salary of the placed candidates is in the range of Rs. 8,000 - 12,000 per month.**

Table 3 Average Monthly Salary of Candidates Placed

Year	Coimbatore	Pune	Guwahati
2018-2019	9,563	9,353	8,285
2019-2020	9,055	10,894	8,372
2020-2021	--	11,714	8,334

After the candidate was placed, **the family income increased by 160% (median)**, showcasing the **success of training and placement through the project.**

Figure 4 Percentage Increase in Average Family Income of Candidate after Placement



### 5.2.4 Focus on women candidates

**Out of the total candidates trained, 20% were females. 20% of the total placed candidates were also females.**

“The female labor participation rate in India fell to 20.3% in 2019 – from more than 26% in 2005. The COVID-19 and post-pandemic hybrid work models could become game-changers for many women – offering flexible and more innovative work options with increasingly empathetic work cultures.”<sup>5</sup> When compared to the overall status of women employment in India, Y4J has done well with

<sup>5</sup> Women and Work in India: Trends and Analysis in India Briefing Newsletter produced by Dezan Shira & Associates, April 2022.

achievement of 20% in job placement. Given the advantage of hybrid work models, Y4J can use it to increase the training and placement of women candidates.

### 5.3 Efficiency

- **Mobilisation and networking with employers**



*Sensitization Program at Reliance Market, Guwahati*

Efficiency deals with the implementation of the project. Y4J has been networking with NGOs and employers and have efficiently mobilised youth, there were **22 different meetings/initiatives for mobilisation** in the project period. Meetings were organised with alumni of NGOs, special employment exchanges, district rehabilitation officers, social workers etc. Apart from employment linkages Y4J also conducts sensitization workshops and Sign Language training for companies which make sure seamless inclusion of PwD in the workforce with other staff. Employer sensitization workshops were conducted in which employers like Reliance Market, Big

Bazaar, ICCo, TATA Trust, and Vishal Megamart participated. Y4J engaged with their network of 80+ employers, visiting/ **connecting with them periodically** to receive feedback and source for jobs. Nine different **awareness building exercises** were conducted where trainees visited malls, offices, factories to learn about operations and work mileu. These also served as a sensitising experience for the employers.

- **Management of the project**



*Sign Language Workshop*

As an organisation, Y4J has weekly (regional managers, center team with managers), monthly (pan India trainers) and quarterly (management team) meetings with project staff for efficient coordination and planning ahead. They use a software for Data Management, and Monitoring & Evaluation of the program on an ongoing basis, which enabled them to efficiently plan and monitor the project.

- **COVID-19**

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Y4J transferred training to online mode. As part of the training pre-recorded video content developed in Indian Sign Language for candidates with Speech and Hearing Impairment and Clear Audible videos for candidates with Locomotor disability are shared. The COVID-19 period also saw a boom in E-commerce which was a a good opportunity for employing differently-abled. Many placements were made in scanning, sorting, packing and tracking jobs.

## 5.4 Sustainability

The **effects of the project will continue as it has provided the skills to secure employment**. Once the person is employed they are more likely to stay in the job or develop skills for lateral employment. Major factors that seem to have helped to sustain the project is the ability to mobilise large number of candidates, especially during COVID. **Their flexibility of operation, ability to train their team for online mode has helped to sustain the project.**

## 6 Recommendations

### 6.1 Strengthening relationship with employers

- The employer representatives felt that the feedback system and reaction time must be improved. They wanted to have access and good relationships with senior management at Y4J for a quick turn around. Y4J has key accounts manager for each employer to better manage the cooperation. The relationship of the key accounts manager with the employer may be further strengthened with periodical visits to the companies, examining the reasons for delay in processes and seeking ways to increase networking with employers.
- Central teams need to periodically visit regional offices of the employers like Reliance, Flipkart, Amazon etc., who have the policy to employ more PwDs in order to get more nuanced feedback on identifying upcoming potential jobs and also the overall hiring needs
- It might help to have employers who have benefitted by employing differently-abled to speak to prospective employers and be a resource in sensitising workshops.

### 6.2 Additions to Course Content

- The curriculum of the trainings needs to be revised to include (as per demand and request) sector specific/ trade specific skills. Trade related topics can be expanded including health care. There are jobs in the health care industry which are similar to the ones in hospitality – cleaning, bed making, food services etc., hence introduction and training in such courses of health care can be done in tandem with hospitality. These trainings can include skills to build endurance/ perseverance in the curriculum and increasing soft skills training (which is presently at 10%).
- Y4J interacted with parents when they accompanied the trainees to the training venues but online trainings changed this. The course design can explore more counselling support to parents so that the eco-system around the trainees can be strengthened.
- The course can include sessions that provide skills for PwDs to proactively reach out to employers, especially with the support of NGOs working for PwDs. Y4J is considering initiating a digital portal that provides job details for persons with disabilities. Trainees can register and seek suitable job opportunities. The portal will provide better access to suitable jobs.

### 6.3 Capacity Building of Staff

- Upskilling of existing staff to respond to changing needs is critical. Staff are adept in providing training in common basic skills needed for jobs, however they expressed the

need for upgrading their skills in new accessible softwares, managing virtual group discussions, upgrading their skills in counselling.

#### 6.4 Increasing Accessibility

- Strengthening the accessibility for PwDs through more sign language training. Y4J has a trainer with speech and hearing impairment to provide training in sign language, but many others within the team do not know sign language. This restricts dialogue within the team for the trainer with speech and hearing impairment. In addition trainees with speech and hearing impairment are unable to interact freely with other trainers who do not know sign language.
- Creating a platform for alumni to interact among themselves and Y4J. Presently after training there is not much interaction with Y4J, such a platform will help trainees to interact, clarify doubts, stay connected and ask for additional support/ training. It also can be a source for feedback on the course.

## Abbreviations

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CP	Cerebral Palsy
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Financial Year
HDFC	Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited
IDD	Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities
MIS	Management Information System
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SII	Semi Structured Interviews
WISE	The Work Integrated Soft Skills, English & Computers
Y4J	Youth for Job

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