

From Need to Opportunity: DEPwD, ALIMCO and EkStep Join Hands to Build a Digital Bridge for Persons with Disabilities

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A new digital architecture is set to bring Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and the opportunities, services and support they need closer than ever. The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) and EkStep Foundation, Bengaluru, today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in New Delhi to establish an institutional framework for the design, development, implementation and scaling of the **Purple Dots – UBI (Unified Benefits Interface) Initiative**.



Conceptualised by DEPwD, the Purple Dots Initiative seeks to address a fundamental challenge in disability inclusion—not merely the availability of benefits and services, but the ability of a person to discover the right opportunity, service or support at the right time and place. At its core, a “Purple Dot” is a simple digital profile through which a Person with Disability can indicate who they are and what they need—whether it is employment, assistive technology such as a wheelchair, skill development, training or any other support. Similarly, employers, service providers, NGOs, philanthropic organisations and other institutions can create their own “dots” to indicate the opportunities, services and resources they offer.

By bringing these dots together through an open and interoperable digital infrastructure, the initiative seeks to create a connected ecosystem in which needs and opportunities can discover each other locally and efficiently. An open digital protocol will enable ecosystem stakeholders to interact and respond to

identified needs in real time, helping move disability inclusion from fragmented access towards seamless discovery, linkage and participation.

The MoU establishes a collaborative framework for taking the Purple Dots – UBI (Unified Benefits Interface) Initiative from concept to implementation and scale. It envisages enabling Persons with Disabilities to discover and connect with relevant government entitlements, services, employment opportunities, training programmes, assistive devices and support systems offered by Government Departments, private-sector entities, civil society organisations, NGOs, philanthropic institutions and other ecosystem partners.



The initiative represents a significant step towards strengthening accessibility and inclusion through digital public infrastructure. Rather than creating isolated systems for individual schemes or institutions, Purple Dots seeks to enable different actors in the disability ecosystem to connect and collaborate through an interoperable framework, thereby improving the visibility and reach of services and opportunities that are already available.

EkStep Foundation, a philanthropy instrumental in conceiving and architecting Digital Public Infrastructure/ Digital Public Good initiatives for large-scale societal transformation, is partnering with DEPwD and ALIMCO to bring its experience of building open and collaborative digital ecosystems to the disability sector. The partnership seeks to strengthen the ability of local ecosystem players to discover one another and connect Persons with Disabilities with relevant services, opportunities and support, building on capabilities that already exist across the country.

The collaboration brings together the mandate and nationwide reach of DEPwD, the experience and capabilities of ALIMCO in the disability sector, and EkStep Foundation's experience in enabling ecosystem-led digital innovation at scale. Together, the partners seek to make support and services more accessible, discoverable and connected for Persons with Disabilities across districts, while strengthening the participation of Government, industry, civil society and other stakeholders in creating an inclusive ecosystem.

The MoU-signing ceremony was attended by Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Additional Secretary; Shri Ashish Thakre, Director; Shri Pradeep A., Director; and Shri Sandeep Kumar, Under Secretary, from DEPwD. From ALIMCO, Shri Pankaj Dwivedi, Assistant Manager; and Ms. Priya Grover, Assistant Manager, were present. Shri Ikpreet Singh, Director; Shri Gaurav Gupta represented EkStep Foundation, Bengaluru.

The Purple Dots Initiative envisages a future in which a person's need does not remain invisible and an available opportunity does not remain undiscovered—where digital connectivity becomes a practical bridge between Persons with Disabilities and the ecosystem of services, opportunities and support around them.

This version deliberately uses “**Need to make Opportunity visible and localize**” as the news hook, making the Purple Dots concept understandable to a general newspaper reader rather than presenting the MoU merely as an institutional agreement.

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