

Inclusion of Persons With Disabilities Bangladesh Perspective



Inclusion of Persons With Disabilities: Bangladesh Perspective

The new Secretary of State for International Development, Penny Mordaunt, has vowed to "put disability at the heart of DFID" (Department for International Development) and announced that the UK will host a major Global Disability Summit in July 2018. The event will bring together global leaders and technology companies to tackle the barriers that prevent people living with disabilities in the world's poorest countries from reaching their full potential.

To include the voice of Persons with Disabilities from Bangladesh at the Global Summit, BRAC along with other organizations including alliances and DPOs arranged group discussions and came up with the major challenges and recommendations faced by persons with disabilities.

We face variation of data from different sources while targeting the population for intervention. The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) data for 2010 indicates that about 9.07% of Bangladesh population lives with disability- whereas the National Population Census used their own tool to come up with a much lower proportion of persons with disability level, which was only 1.4%. Then again, in March 2018, the Dhaka Tribune quoted the Secretary for the Ministry of Social Welfare informed of a government mapping which has identified 1.51 million people living in Bangladesh as persons with disability. So, accurate, segregated, reliable, complete, legible, timely and accessible data is a vital element to achieve success in inclusion of persons with disabilities. Other major challenges include: lack of accessibility of physical and virtual environments, discrimination, stigma and negative attitudes- this create barriers for the inclusion and mainstreaming of the persons with disabilities. The group discussions were done to get firsthand knowledge and experience from the persons with disabilities, disabled peoples' organizations (DPOs) and also other organizations who have been working in this field for several years.

A working group was created to ensure inclusiveness in preparing the document. The working group consisted representative from Disability Alliance on SDGs Bangladesh, BLAST, NADPO and PNSP. The working group selected 7 major issues for group discussion to be led by 7 leaders from Turning Point Foundation, DRRA, CDD, PNSP, BLAST, NCDW and Access Bangladesh Foundation, where persons with disabilities, DPOs and NGOs participated actively. The Global disability summit and current situation in Bangladesh were kept in mind while choosing the issues. The issue selected were:

1. State of Achieving SDGs: Perspective of PWDs
2. Implementation of Rights And Protection Of Persons With Disabilities
3. Inclusion and Mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh

4. Removing Stigma and Discrimination towards Person with Disabilities: Society and State
5. State of Disability in Bangladesh
6. Women and disability
7. Voice from Children with disabilities.

Recommendation:

1. **A database** including disaggregated and easily accessible data on gender, disability types, age groups, geographical areas, educational status, income etc. through a comprehensive and door to door survey on the persons with disabilities.
2. More interventions are required in **creating awareness in the society** from local to national level including all the actors consisting state and non-state actors-through dissemination of Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013. Media can play a vital role in raising awareness in the society.
3. **Active participation and meaningful representation** of the persons with disabilities in planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring of development interventions, all Government level decision making, even in the Parliament; funding and capacity development initiative and leadership of Youth with disabilities need to be ensured.
4. **Universal accessibility** should be ensured in all public and private infrastructures, transport, information, services and justice including physical, attitudinal and other barrier free environments. For example, publication and dissemination in different accessible format (Bangla Sign Language, large text, audio/visual messages, Braille, video, easy version (practical, simple/local language), train or bus station, health services etc.
5. **Ensure systematic inclusion and mainstreaming** of persons with disabilities in all government and non-government sectors. Special focus on women with disabilities, children with disabilities, ethnic persons with disabilities and severe disabilities.
6. **Capacity building** of service providers including professionals and to be more sensitive in handling the issues of persons with disabilities. Ensure empowerment of persons with disabilities through inclusive education, skill development, employment and capacity building.
7. **Ensure engagement** of DPOs and take necessary steps to **build coordination** among ministries, departments and other relevant government and non- government sectors.
8. Ensure reflection of **SDG indicators** related to Persons with Disabilities in the country's Development Results Framework. Additionally, integrate disability issues in

the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) system of the government ministries, divisions, departments etc.

9. **Proper implementation** of the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013, Neuro Developmental Disability Protection Trust Act 2013 along with harmonization of different laws, policies and programs with the RPPD Act-2013 considering rights of persons with disabilities as cross cutting issue. Directorate of Persons with Disabilities can play coordinating and monitoring role in this regard.
10. **Adequate budgetary allocation** for implementing relevant laws and development programmes. Additionally, multilateral development banks like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) should ensure disability inclusion in a systematic manner in their bank finance projects so that persons with disabilities can be benefited.