

Self Help Initiatives: A key to empowerment of People With Disabilities in Bangladesh

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Empowerment of PWDs through establishing their rights.

- Self help initiative is one of the most important means of empowerment of People With Disabilities (PWDs).**
- It's an effort of changing situation by utilizing own resources and potentials**

PWDs' self-help initiative is a group solidarity which enables them to support each other and to overcome common difficulties through the exchange of experiences, information insight and knowledge.

That solidarity and mutual support serve as a basis for collective action to improve the existing situation of PWDs in the community.

Bangladesh: implementing self help initiatives in diverse modalities with common objective

It has been taken place at different levels by different stakeholders including PWDs and parents.

Modalities of such initiatives are little bit different from one another based on the needs and circumstances but the objective is common **empowerment of PWDs through establishing their rights.**

Importance and Recognition

- PWDs have their equal rights, similar human needs and potentials as others living in the community.

- PWDs are the expert of their own issues they are most appropriate and equipped to help each other for the fulfillment of their rights and development needs, as well as making others to listen to their voices and concerns.

In recognition of this fact

- In 1981 The United Nations General Assembly in its World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, stressed on the establishment and growth of organizations of disabled persons as well as facilitating participation of PWDs and their organizations in the decision making.**

Tr 100 regions expert seminar called upon the ESCAP secretariat, ESCAP members and associate members and other concerned agencies and organizations, in the Asian and Pacific region, to provide assistance in establishing and strengthening self help organizations of disabled persons in order to enhance the participation of disabled persons at all levels of society.

Tr 100 the General Assembly through its resolution 4/9 requested the Secretary General to inter alia promote and support the establishment of strong national organizations of disabled persons.

In 2002, self help organizations of persons with disabilities and related family and parent associations came up as the topmost among seven priority areas of actions in BMF

And in September 2006, this priority kept with same importance in Biwako plus five.

Therefore, implementation of self help initiatives of PWDs has got utmost importance for empowerment of people with disabilities globally and regionally.

Emergence and approaches:

- **We started more than 40 years ago**

- **Since 1962 we have been experiencing self-help initiatives in different modalities and approaches that include Disabled Peoples' (self-help) Organizations (DPOs), parent associations and self-help groups activities.**

Who are working in Bangladesh?

• **Bangladesh National Federation of the Deaf (BNFD)**

• **National Federation of the Blind-NFB**

• **Bangladesh Protibandhi Kallyan Samity (BPKS)**

• **Action on Disability and Development ADD**

• **Society for the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled (SWID) Bangladesh**

• **Bangladesh Parents' Club of the Deaf (BPCD)**

• **Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed CRP**

• **And a good number of organizations working for people with disabilities**

Some impact in the country context:

- **Disability movement in this country was based on charity approach until mid fifties.**
- **charity approach was changed to welfare approach in late fifties (1956 57).**
- **the then PWD leaders had brought this movement forward and led it towards a rights based approach that we talk about today.**

As an impact of the activities of DPOs a large number of development NGOs have given attention to this issue and were motivated to contribute in disability and development

As the most significant impact of self help movement in this country we have got our National Policy and legislative tools and instruments for the rights of PWDs

Future Challenges and Consolidation

- **Self help organizations were established here by a spontaneous process even under restricted conditions in terms of resource availability. common understanding and proper coordination**
- **More networking bodies**
- **mixed impression and keen interest among PWDs and their organizations**
- **Strong enthusiasm as well as distortion of understanding**

**need for proper information,
communication and
consolidation**

**there remain a large number of
organizations with their noble
contributions.**

Role of AWDP:

Association for the Welfare of the Disabled People (AWDP) has taken an initiative to conduct a situation review on endeavors of PWDs' Self help Organizations, DPOs and parents' Organizations in the country

- **It will explore pertinent information PWDs' self help organizations in Bangladesh**
- **Will explore organizational structure, approaches and modality of activities of DPOs and SHOs in Bangladesh**
- **Explore level and type of participation of PWDs in self help organizations**
- **learn about national, regional and international policies, commitments, concerns and practices of PWDs' self help organizations and make a comparison with local practices and approaches**

- **Explore steps to establish and run DPOs**
- **Explore measures taken to strengthen and ensure sustainability of DPOs**
- **Explore the trends and evolution of SHOs in Bangladesh**
- **Explore areas of Cooperation with other stakeholders**
- **contribute towards consolidating PWDs' self help movement in Bangladesh as well as in other countries in this region.**

Thank you