

Asia & Pacific Disability Forum

3rd General Assembly & Conference

February 27-29, 2008 Dhaka, Bangladesh

"Disability & Development - Practical Strategies"

Abstracts

Organized by

National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD)

&

Asia & Pacific Disability Forum (APDF)

In Cooperation with the Government of the People's

Republic of Bangladesh



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Published On

February 2008

Published By

National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD)

NFOWD

8/9 Block - A Lalmatia

Dhaka - 1207

Bangladesh

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Fax: 880-2-9124487 (Ext-107)

E-mail: Tnfowd@bdmail.netT

Website: www.nfowd.com

Published with the compliments of

ActionAid Bangladesh

Action on Disability & Development

Handicap International

Ispahani Group

Leonard Cheshire International

LEPRA Bangladesh

Manusher Jonno Foundation

Muslim Aid

ORBIS International Bangladesh

Rahimafrooz Limited

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The Leprosy Mission Bangladesh

The World Bank

Foreword

It gives us great pleasure to present a compilation of all the Abstracts that we have received for presentation and publication at the 3rd General Assembly & Conference of Asia & Pacific Disability Forum (APDF) being held at Dhaka, Bangladesh, during February 27-29, 2008.

We had announced a set of broad sub-themes in support of the Conference theme "Disability & Development - Practical Strategies". These areas were:

- International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- BMF & BMF+5 and the role of Networking & Partnerships
- National Strategies, Policies, Legislation & Disability
- Economic Emancipation & Persons with disabilities
- Education of persons with disabilities
- Women with disabilities
- Children with disabilities
- Prevention & Early Interventions
- Disaster Management / Risk Reduction Disability prevention and specific needs
- Technologies (including Accessibility)
- People with psycho-social disabilities and invisible disabilities
- Sports, Culture, Recreation & Entertainment for persons with disabilities
- Accessible Tourism for persons with Disabilities

It goes without saying that we got a huge response and received a rich collection of Abstracts from both home and abroad. Most were based on extensive hands-on experiences and years of practical learning. We also received a few papers, which could not strictly be placed under any of the declared sub-themes, and so have been published as open session papers. Unfortunately, we cannot make time for their presentation at any of the sessions.

A team of experts reviewed the Abstracts mostly to judge whether they were contextual and relevant with the theme and spirit of the Conference. Abstracts that have been selected have all been published in this document. We have published them as we have received them, without any text editing, and thus not disturbing the originality of the documents in any way. Only for the sake of uniformity, the language has been used in US English, fonts have been changed, a few obvious spelling errors have been corrected.

Each scientific session cannot accommodate more than three presentations, considering the time required for presentations & meaningful open discussion. In cases where we received more than three Abstracts in a theme, which were all relevant enough for presentations, but could not be accommodated due to time scarcity, those too are published in this document.

All views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organizers. While this is a printed collection of the Abstracts, they are also available in Braille form, and on our website www.nfowd.com

We hope this will help the participants in choosing the Concurrent sessions they wish to attend, and also help you as a quick reference and handy guide in future.

Sincerely

A H M Noman Khan
Convenor, Scientific Committee &
Secretary, Conference Committee

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International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Presentations by:

1. Aiko Akiyama

Biwako, Biwako Plus Five, Convention and MDGs - Regional Initiatives towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society

1. Daniel Stubbs

Setareki Macanawai

Next Steps for the Convention: Capacity Building for Advocating Rights in the Pacific

2. Mark Harrison

Lessons from Disability Research in Achieving Equality

3. Prof Michael Ashley Stein

Future Prospects for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

4. Monthian Buntan

Kicki Nordström

Changing the Lives of Persons with Disabilities

5. Nandini Rawal

Role of Multilateral & Bilateral Funding Agencies and the Private Sector in the Development of Potentials of People with Disabilities

Biwako, Biwako Plus Five, Convention and MDGs - Regional Initiatives towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society

Aiko Akiyama
Social Affairs Officer
United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific (ESCAP)
Thailand

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been the regional engine to promote awareness, policy development and its implementation on disability for the last 15 years, using the regional decade framework.

The Second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, which started in 2003, aims at the creation of inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society, with the regional guidelines of policy and action, entitled Biwako Millennium Framework for Action.

During the last five years, dynamics within the disability community has changed dramatically: epoch-making adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has reinforced a rights-based approach and increasing attention to disability-inclusive development has started to engage multi-stakeholders to mainstream disability perspective in development activities.

In view of these changes and achievements and challenges on the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, its supplement, entitled Biwako Plus Five, was adopted late 2007, in order to ensure effective policy and project development and implementation.

The paper examines the salient characteristics of the Biwako Plus Five, in particular, in comparison with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Next Steps for the Convention: Capacity Building for Advocating Rights in the Pacific

Daniel Stubbs
Consultant & Policy Advisor
Pacific Disability Forum &
President,
Aus-Pacific Islands Disability Support
New Caledonia
and
Setareki Macanawai
Pacific Disability Forum
Fiji

The Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (RRRT) has developed a human rights advocacy training program to give Pacific Islanders with disabilities the legal skills and knowledge to conduct rights based advocacy thus empowering themselves and people with disabilities in their communities and countries generally. RRRT is delivering the training in partnership with the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF). The training is specifically tailored to the needs of the disability community focusing on the specific rights issues of people with disabilities and delivered in a fully accessible manner.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled persons (CRPD) strongly informs the substance and need for this training. CRPD is highly relevant to Pacific island nations. Most Pacific Islanders with disabilities have little or no access to education, employment or community participation. Reviews of the implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) Priorities in the Pacific show that the rights of Pacific Islanders with disabilities are ignored and contravened. This practical training program will contribute the skills capacity needed by Pacific disabled peoples organisations to advocate for policy and legal change.

This paper will report on the pilot training having been run in Nadi for disability advocates from around the Pacific sub-region. It will consider the way in which inalienable human rights, disability issues, the CRPD and Pacific culture are brought together to enable Pacific Islanders with disabilities to argue for policy, legal and program changes in their home countries. The paper will also discuss the challenges in delivering legal training for people with a variety of disabilities.

Lessons from Disability Research in Achieving Equality

Mark Harrison
Director

International Disability Equality Agency, ODG
University of East Anglia
UK

The Disability Knowledge and Research Program was one of the most ambitious, wide ranging and innovative research programs on disability and development ever carried out. It provided a model for emancipatory disability research grounded in the experience of disabled people from the South and the North. A main theme within the research program was an examination of mainstreaming disability in development cooperation. The policies and practices of some of the main donor agencies were examined to see how and why disabled people continue to be excluded and left off the development agenda.

The international committee of UK Disabled People's Council (formerly BCODP) has written Equalise It! - a Manifesto for Disability Equality in the light of the signing of the UN Convention on the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The convention is a major step forward for disabled people all over the globe. However the UK disability movement is concerned that governments, international donors and the international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), particularly disability INGOs will continue to behave in an oppressive way to disabled people in development cooperation. The manifesto is intended to be a tool for the effective development of DPOs in line with the spirit and letter of the Convention.

The presentation will focus on lessons and messages from this research program and the steps towards disability equality outlined in the manifesto.

Future Prospects for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Prof Michael Ashley Stein
Executive Director
William & Mary School of Law
Harvard Law School
USA

On December 13, 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by general consensus the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Once in operation, the Convention will become the first human rights treaty of the twenty-first century, as well as the first legally enforceable United Nations instrument specifically applicable to persons with disabilities.

My talk will provide a quick overview of the background and contents of the UNCRPD, and then assesses its future prospects for improving the lives of the 650 million individuals with disabilities worldwide. I will focus on three areas where I believe the UNCRPD will have a more immediate impact, beginning with abstract rights notions and moving towards more concrete results.

First, the UNCRPD has expressive value as an acknowledgement by global community of the equal dignity, autonomy, and worth of people with disabilities. Although persons with disabilities technically possessed these rights under existing United Nations instruments, they were neither recognized nor asserted in practice. For example, disability is not mentioned in the Millennium Development Goals, and disability-related complaints under existing United Nations treaties are almost non-existent. Adoption, and soon ratification, of the UNCRPD sends a signal that the international community recognizes the place of disability within the human rights canon.

Second, the UNCRPD forces States Parties to actively engage with disability law and policy. Most nations do not have disability rights laws, and will thus be required to consider or rethink legal and social policies toward disability. This is particularly true as far as balancing antidiscrimination prohibitions with equality measures, resolving unclear interpretations of disability-related principles (e.g., reasonable accommodations and access to justice), and grappling with rights that were implicit but not previously endorsed, such as a right to mobility.

Third, and perhaps most immediately, the UNCRPD will facilitate social integration by persons with disabilities through its mandate of inclusive development. Current development practices have by and large excluded disabled communities, thereby increasing the equity gap between disabled and non-disabled populations. By requiring that technical and other assistance by States Parties conform to the rest of the UNCRPD's principles, inclusive development aid (especially from the European Union, the world's largest donor) can compel great strides towards making the built environment accessible to disabled individuals in developing countries. Experience has shown that increasing social participation - making persons with disabilities visible - brings about other fundamental rights.

Changing the Lives of Persons with Disabilities

Monthian Buntan
President
Thailand Association of the Blind
&
Kicki Nordström
Immediate Past President
World Blind Union (WBU)
Sweden

On December 13, 2006 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 9th Human Rights convention, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

One of the most critical issues of concern is the national monitoring capacity connected to the convention. We managed to convince State Parties that this was a non negotiable issue for the disability movement! We firmly expressed that it must be a strong national monitoring tool to the convention and now it is in place.

The first ratifications of the convention are expected in late 2007 and then 20 countries have ratified the convention it will come into force by the UN as an International Law. But in order to fulfill the intentions of the convention we must continuously advocate for its implementation even if a country has ratified it.

The best way to make sure that our countries will implement the CRPD in the line of the new legislation which must be adopted due to the convention, is to mobilize our common power in the disability movement and get ourselves involved in disability politics - the convention provides us the instrument!

We want the convention to permeate all part of our societies, at all levels and reaching all people, both persons with disabilities and without!

We need in particular to reach out to women and children with disabilities and involve WWD in decision making positions to advocate for changes in legislations and policies and prohibit discrimination on the ground of disability or gender. A political platform will allow our voice to be heard and taken into account.

The lack of understanding among the general population on disability issues forces us establish strategies. We must create strong networks, not only within our own organizations, but cross-disability and also with other mainstream organizations. We need allies and should take every opportunity we can to liaise for the sake of equalization of opportunities, gender equality and human rights for persons with disabilities.

Role of Multilateral & Bilateral Funding Agencies and the Private Sector in the Development of Potentials of People with Disabilities

Nandini Rawal
Treasurer
International Council for Education of people with Visual Impairments (ICEVI) &
Project Director
Blind People's Association
India

The evolution of international aid during recent years has not been encouraging. The data provided by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) show that Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been steadily declining during the 1990s. At current prices and exchange rate, total net ODA between 1992 & 1997 shows a drop in absolute terms from US\$60,8 million to US\$48,3 million.

A lot of practical problems occur when it comes to putting top level agreements into practice. Some have to do with visibility. Specific agencies may request visibility, not so much for publicity purposes but rather for accountability reasons. Indeed, public opinions in donor countries and their political representatives in parliaments are expressing more and more interest in how development assistance budgets is being spent.

The role of NGOs - During the last two decades, a diversified range of NGOs emerged, which have had a profound impact on development approaches and practices. Some of them are specialized in advocacy while others are fully action-oriented. Some are small and heavily depend on resources from bilateral or multilateral government agencies, while others are big and mobilize their own funds. The relationships between NGOs and governmental agencies have for a long time been distant, if not sometimes conflictual. Today however, NGOs are recognized as full partners within the donor community as well as by the recipient countries

If bilateral aid is shrinking, we have seen the increase of a different kind of aid---that given by large Corporates for social and developmental Projects under the new wave of CSR.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept whereby organizations consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on customers, shareholders, employees, communities and the environment in all aspects of their operations. This obligation is seen to extend beyond the statutory obligation to comply with legislation and sees organizations voluntarily taking further steps to improve the quality of life for employees and their families as well as for the local community and society at large.

CSR commitment is growing by leaps and bounds and it is visible throughout the world.

What should developing countries do? What aid should we seek? Who are the potential donors in the future? What strategy should we adopt?

The Paper will address these issues in the context of developing countries and review the past and give some handy prescriptions for the future.

National Strategies, Policies & Legislation on Disability in Compliance with International & Regional Targets

Presentations by:

1. Professor Choi Won Gyu

Human Rights Issues in the Disability Anti-Discrimination Act in Korea

2. Prof Joseph Kwok

Approaches in National Comprehensive Planning Concerning Disabilities: The Experiences of Hong Kong in Coping with Past Turmoil & Challenges of the New Decade

3. Prof Stig Larsson

Johan Borg

Disability and Development: Theories for Practice

Human Rights Issues in the Disability Anti-Discrimination Act in Korea

Professor Choi Won Gyu
Chonbuk National University
Korea

After a few years of enthusiastic efforts of the disabled people themselves to enact the legislation against discrimination, the Act on the Prohibition of Disability Discrimination and the Provision of Remedies(in short 'Disability Anti-Discrimination Act') passed by the National Assembly on 6 March 2007. The Act contains major measures to protect disabled people by prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability and by providing remedies for human rights abuses. The Act applies a wider concept of discrimination to various facets of daily life and provides a number of means of recourse for victims. Its enactment represents a great step forward toward providing appropriate relief to disabled people who face discrimination. The major measures will be incorporated into the 3rd Welfare Development Five Year Plan for the Disabled People (2008~2012). It will be meaningful to share the experiences of Korean situation concerning the human right issues in the enactment of the Disability Anti-Discrimination Act. In this paper a brief introduction of Act followed by major issues concerning the enforcement will be discussed.

Approaches in National Comprehensive Planning Concerning Disabilities: The Experiences of Hong Kong in Coping with Past Turmoil & Challenges of the New Decade

Prof Joseph Kwok
Vice Chairperson
Asia & Pacific Disability Forum (APDF) &
Associate Professor
City University of Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Hong Kong started its comprehensive long term planning exercises concerning disabilities as early as late 1970s. Until 1995, the national planning exercise adopted a ten-year rolling plan approach, based on available census data, service utilization data, service waiting lists, estimates of disability prevalence rates, demand and supply of services, demand and supply of related personnel, and capital and operational financial estimates. The 10-year plan was revised forward every year, with a major review once every three years. The plan remained a blueprint for developments of concerned rehabilitation polices and services, and guidelines for implementation and monitoring. The plan however has become outdated almost immediately after the return of sovereignty of Hong Kong to China from 1 July 1997. From 1997 to 2004, Hong Kong encountered unprecedented political, social and economic challenges, as result of the Asian financial crisis which started in 1995, the acute economic depression, and SARS in 2003. To cope with these severe challenges, Hong Kong has embarked on major social welfare reforms and new planning strategies and processes. From 2005, the Government of Hong Kong set up a Working Group for a new Rehabilitation Program Plan, which completed the final draft in July 2007. The plan was endorsed by majority of stake holders, including the Central Rehabilitation Advisory Committee and the Legislative Committee. The author of this paper, in his capacity as a member of the Working Group and the Chairman of the Central Rehabilitation Committee, will discuss the principles, strategies and processes in the drafting of the 2007 Rehabilitation Program Plan, and their relevance in dealing with political, social and economical challenges that Hong Kong is and will face in the coming decade.

Disability and Development: Theories for Practice

Prof Stig Larsson
Professor
Lund University
&
Johan Borg
PhD Student
Lund University
Sweden

This paper starts with a comparison of the current paradigms and recent paradigm shifts in the fields of disability and human development.

This is followed by a presentation of a study of the relation between the Human Development Index (HDI) and the disability prevalence in a global perspective. The findings indicate a positive relationship between the HDI and its sub-indices on the one hand, and reported disability prevalence on the other.

Finally, based on the discussion of fundamental perspectives and the findings of the study, the possibilities of practically applying the human development approach in the disability field is discussed.

Children with Disabilities

Presentations by:

1. Bandana Shrestha,

CRC and its Cohesion with the Disability Convention

2. Dr Sruti Mohapatra

Project Anjali: Joyful Learning In A Scientific And Inclusive Ambience

3. Ssentenza Paul Kajubi

Working with Families /Parent Support Groups to Promote the Rights of Disabled Children - An Experience from Uganda

CRC and its Cohesion with the Disability Convention

Bandana Shrestha,
Regional Program Coordinator, Non Discrimination & Inclusion
Save the Children Sweden Regional Office for South & Central Asia
Nepal

People with disabilities have argued for many years that disability is a human rights, not a welfare issue. Their arguments were finally accepted when the UN, in 2001, agreed to set up an Ad Hoc Committee to consider proposals for a new human rights convention to address the rights of people with disabilities. It culminated in March 2007 with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was opened for signature and ratification. As of July 2007, there has been 100 countries which have become signatories with one ratification, making it not only the first international convention of the 21st Century, but also the most widely accepted Convention in such a short time. The aim of the Convention is not to create new human rights standards. All the rights embodied in the existing human rights treaties apply equally to people with disabilities. Being a child rights based organization, Save the Children, has been proactively lobbying to ensure that children with disabilities issues are incorporated in this Convention during the drafting of this Convention.

This paper examines the principles and standards of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) together with the new provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) to provide an overall analysis of the rights of children with disabilities and the obligations of States Parties to fulfill, protect and respect those rights. It will also examine the General Comment of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the Rights of Children with Disabilities which makes detailed recommendations to governments on how they should apply the Convention on the Rights of the Child in relation to children with disabilities.

Project Anjali: Joyful Learning In A Scientific And Inclusive Ambience

Dr Sruti Mohapatra
DPI
India

The main thrust of PROJECT ANJALI is 'TO CAPTIVATE THE CHILD AND CREATE INTEREST IN LEARNING.'

- Bag-less in pre-school AND Standard I days
- Beyond classroom walls
- Interactive rather than blackboard teaching
- New mediums

Project Anjali aims at the holistic development of artistic skills and using this as a medium of instruction in elementary schools. ANJALI has successfully attempted teaching history through theatre, local culture through dances, literature through puppetry, importance of inclusion through music and science through outdoor trips. Another thrust area is to 'bridge gaps'- especially between the rural and urban children, disabled and the non-disabled children, poor and rich children, etc and thus create an inclusive world. Sharing stories of challenges and success faced by special children and also other children in challenging situations helps blossom relationships where differences become pillars for inclusion.

Anjali has three components - ANJALI CAMP, ANJALI AWARDS and ANJALI SCHOLARSHIPS.

ANJALI CAMP: For five magical days in November, young participants are engaged and entertained by resource persons, celebrity visitors and hands-on arts activities devised to delight, challenge and spark imagination. The primary participants are children in age group 8-18 years (generally 14 years, but in case of the mentally challenged children it is extendable to 18 years).

ANJALI AWARDS: The awards identify and recognize people who have discovered doors where others had seen walls, specifically in context of the physically and socially challenged. Those who set out to have a second look, at what was available and then explored different ways of making things better.

ANJALI SCHOLARSHIPS: These scholarships enable competent students, young with physical and sensory disabilities) who may otherwise be economically weak, to receive higher education or professional training and thus pursue their dreams and careers and become economically self sufficient and independent.

Working with Families /Parent Support Groups to Promote the Rights of Disabled Children - An Experience from Uganda

Ssenteza Paul Kajubi
Program Officer/Policy Analyst
Uganda Society for Disabled Children (USDC)
Uganda

Before I joined this [Parent Support Group], I didn't know what do with this girl (Mother of disabled child)

Introduction

Out of the 24.7 million People in Uganda, 2.5 million (10%) are disabled and 800,000 are children with disabilities . 38.5 % of the Ugandan Population survives on less than 1 US Dollar per day and mainly including people with disabilities .

Despite the general protection in the existing legal framework (Uganda Constitution 1995; and Disability Act 2000), the biggest problem still facing children with disabilities is their exclusion at family and community level.

USDC Work with Families of disabled children

Uganda Society for disabled children (USDC) is a non-governmental organization established in 1985 and committed to promoting the rights of children with disabilities. Over the last 20 years, the USDC Community Based Rehabilitation Program has directly benefited over 250,000 individual disabled children by working with Parent Support Groups.

Parent support groups are mutual/self help groups of parents of disabled children that enable them cope more effectively with disability at home.

These groups have been and are still one of the means of increasing family participation in promoting the rights of disabled children. They also help to raise public awareness and consciousness about disability, mobilize children for rehabilitation services, follow-up on families and advocate for inclusion of people with disabilities within mainstream development processes.

UBOS, Uganda Housing and Population Census (2002)
Charles Lwanga Ntale , Chronic Poverty and Disability in Uganda ,2003

Disaster Management / Risk Reduction - Disability Prevention and Specific Needs

Presentations by:

- 1. A H M Faizul Kabir
Abdur Rahman**
Mainstreaming Disability Issues in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)
- 2. K R Rajendra
Gopal Mitra,**
Disasters and Disability: Challenges and Responses
- 3. Zabeehullah
Najibullah Naseri**
Disaster Management/Risk Reduction-Disability Prevention in Human-made
Disasters

Mainstreaming Disability Issues in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

A H M Faizul Kabir
&
Abdur Rahman
Handicap International
Bangladesh

The **hazards of Developing Countries** are massive due to vulnerability of the country and its people. The high population density, widespread poverty, lack on awareness and education, enormous pressure on rural land, and an economic system that relies heavily on agricultural production cause this **vulnerability**. Generally due to the very poor socio-economic conditions, the vulnerability of disasters is manifold. Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), children and women as well as the elderly people are particularly vulnerable. It is evident that eighty five percent (85%) of the deaths during disasters are of persons with disability, women and children.

Due to unstoppable natural disasters, people of developing countries, over the years have tried to develop their own coping mechanism to live with natural disasters. Concurrently, many of the local and non-local initiatives to prevent/reduce the effects have largely failed to bring about a significant or permanent solution to the problem due to the nature of disasters.

Persons with Disabilities are generally not well considered, especially in a situation of poverty and/or disaster. In fact, when daily life is already tough for poor people, families and communities consider a disabled member as a «burden». In a disaster situation, this phenomenon is increased.

For **Disaster Risk Reduction**, this vulnerable group needs to be addressed particularly by fulfilling their needs to participate in the society. Lack of awareness of different stakeholders makes persons with disability unprepared because of their inadequate social interaction and participation as well as communication. This can generate more complications for themselves and their impairment.

Disasters and Disability: Challenges and Responses

K R Rajendra
&
Gopal Mitra,
Leonard Cheshire International South Asian Regional Office (LCI SARO)
India

Recent disasters in South Asia have received tremendous media coverage and an enormous inflow of funds. While this has apparently served to ameliorate the sufferings of those affected, scrutiny has brought to light certain anomalies and challenges, especially in the context of the inclusion of disabled people. This paper explores some of these lacunae and also discusses the experiences gained by Leonard Cheshire International during long term rehabilitation work.

While in policy most development organizations explicitly state their commitment to the inclusion of PWDs, on ground, this is limited to surveys, provision of aids and referrals. PWDs tend to be viewed as a vulnerable group rather than as rightful participants in the process of development. Relief distribution mechanisms are not designed to cater to the constraints faced by disabled people.

Various restrictions in conflict zones further impede relief and rehabilitation work. Complexities also emerge during the transition from relief work to long-term rights based intervention since unprecedented aid tends to create dependency.

Based on its experiences and in consultation with disabled people, LCI has initiated 6 Disability Resource Centers (DRCs) in South Asia which offer a comprehensive range of services. The DRC's aim is to be 'a one stop shop', for all issues pertaining to disability. They have information resources and personnel trained in inclusive education, livelihood generation, therapy and advocacy. Strengthening community linkages, undertaking home and school based interventions and building of self-help and advocacy groups are also focal points in the functioning of DRCs. Advocacy for inclusion of PWDs and mainstreaming disability within development agencies have been central to the work of DRCs.

While disaster brings in its wake unparalleled destruction and suffering, it also offers scope for the rebuilding of a barrier-free environment and for new opportunities for rehabilitation. However, this can only be useful when the rehabilitation process is one that is inclusive and promotes the rights and dignity of all persons with disabilities.

Disaster Management/Risk Reduction-Disability Prevention in Human-made Disasters

Zabeehullah
&
Najibullah Naseri
UN Mine Action Center for Afghanistan
Afghanistan

Situation:

A National Disability Survey was conducted in 2005 identifying a prevalence rate of severe disability at 2.7% which represents a population of 850,000 to 650,000 persons. Analysis shows that 1 out of 5 households have at least one member with disability. A disproportionate number of males are affected and landmines/ERW and war injury are some man made causes of disability in Afghanistan.

Practice and Experience:

Mine Action has five pillars. Two pillars discussed in this paper are 1) Mine Risk Education to prevent accidents and permanent disability and 2) Victim Assistance to build services for persons with disability.

Eighty Teams exist in the country to provide mine risk education and disability awareness to persons in affected areas and to those returning from neighboring countries. Messages are broadcast on radio throughout the country. The rate of landmine/ERW accidents have decreased from 150-350 accidents a month to 40-50. Fifty percent of the survivors are children; therefore, the Ministry of Education is training 9,000 teachers in 2008.

Unfortunately, accidents do occur making emergency and continuing medical care essential to save life and limb. The MOPH is integrating disability into basic health and essential hospital services. They are establishing standards in rehabilitation and coordinating CBR.

Recently a Disability Unit has been established at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled. A strategic plan has been developed bringing the NGO/INGO, DPO, Government and UN systems together to plan, coordinate and implement.

This paper will review the different sectors and discuss lessons learned.

Economic Emancipation & Persons with Disabilities

Presentations by:

- 1. Akhil S Paul**
Livelihood Promotion for People with Disabilities
- 2. Anil Kumar**
N Hemalatha
Usha S Nayar
Health of Young People with Physical Disability in Slum Communities
- 3. Dr Haroon Awan**
Munazza Gillani
Mohammed Bilal
The Painter's Canvas and His Colors
- 4. Imtiaz Mohammed**
Mainstreaming - What Does It Mean And Does It Work?
- 5. Dr K P Kumaran**
Coping Up of Disabilities with Self-help
- 6. Kausar Parveen**
Integration of People with Spinal Cord Injury in the Community Following Vocational Training
- 7. M Mahbubul Ashraf**
Self-Help Initiatives: A key to empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh
- 8. Tingyu wang**
Developing a Holistic Disabled Resource Centre (DRC) for Persons with Disabilities in East Asia & Pacific Region by LCI
- 9. Zelda Coetzee**
Re-conceptualising Vocational Rehabilitation Services towards an Inter-sectoral Model

Livelihood Promotion for People with Disabilities

Akhil S Paul
Director
Sense International (India)
India

Biggest challenge today is how to assist large numbers of people in the developing countries to have a meaningful livelihood which sustains them and ensures they can live with dignity and hope for the future.

A livelihood is a set of economic activities, which includes self-employment and/or wage employment, and which enables a person to meet his individual and household requirements.

The traditional solution to poverty has been 'the increase in income levels through the generation of employment. But there have been changes in the last two decades and now the need is to promote livelihoods as a means for poverty reduction. Livelihood is not only generating income, it encompasses empowerment and the dignity of people's lives. Therefore, livelihood promotion is not only based on the principles of economic growth, but also on equity and human rights.

Health of Young People with Physical Disability in Slum Communities

Anil Kumar
Program C-coordinator
N Hemalatha
Usha S Nayar
TASH Foundation
India

New economic and trade policies have created more poverty and fewer resources for the under-privileged people living in urban slums. The resultant lack of accessibility to healthcare services and lack of awareness worsened the situation of youth with disabilities. Youth who need wheel chair or crutches cannot afford buying them. Even when provided, these equipments are not environment friendly; for instance of public toilets do not have enough space for them to move around the crutches. The passes to reach their homes in the slum is so narrow that commuting becomes difficult, forcing them to refrain from venturing out. Similarly, most of the rehabilitation centers are not accessible to them, preventing them from livelihood options. Being in the slum communities, people with disability are faced with social, physical, cultural and economic barriers that stop them from getting better education, vocational training and employment. With no or meager income, these youth not only remain deprived of the basic requirements, but the financial barriers, such as the cost of medicines transportation make health care also unaffordable.

The papers presents the results of interventions aimed at making the disabled young people self-reliant. The study explored their needs and necessities, their experiences about health care access, and knowledge and skills. During the course of this study, groups of young people (aged 13-25) with disabilities were formed with an objective to provide skills of self-management. Support groups of parents were also formed. These groups regularly met and their needs and necessities were identified. The youth who have already completed 10th grade were encouraged to pursue higher studies. With the support provided most of them acquired computer skills. Most of them had never gone out of their house without others' support. With individual counseling, group work, increased awareness and with provision of emotional and economic support, their confidence was boosted. The paper illustrates how it is possible to build self-confidence and increase participation, thus resulting in enhanced quality of life of disabled youth in poor urban communities.

The Painter's Canvas and His Colors

Dr Haroon Awan
Country Representative
Munazza Gillani
Mohammed Bilal
Sightsavers International (SSI)
Pakistan

Background:

Rehabilitation in the context of persons with disability has been fraught with impediments. Communities in general have never identified rehabilitation as a major priority, while most of the work with communities has been undertaken by civil society organizations whose thrusts have been in development, water and sanitation, security, gender, participation, rights, and a range of other social issues. Disability has never been considered as an accepted part of mainstream or social development. The challenge for Sightsavers was how to foment change in thinking and acceptance for disability as a development prerogative through innovative strategies.

Objectives:

The main objectives of Sightsavers were to build capacities of DPOs for advocacy, support leadership and entrepreneurship, influence change in policy, incorporate disability in development through a community program, and identify employment opportunities.

Methodology:

This paper explores the innovations and their outcomes at policy, recreational, leadership, and development levels.

Conclusions:

Disability and development are complementary and not competing forces. The aim should be to enhance collaboration between the two sectors, harness the collective synergy and institute practical application of strategies.

Mainstreaming - What Does It Mean And Does It Work?

Imtiaz Mohammed
Senior Program Manager for Asia
Leonard Cheshire International (LCI)
UK

The paper will present an overview of mainstreaming over the past 10 years, examining whether it has been a success or a failure, and indeed in many cases, whether the concept has been implemented at all.

Failure to mainstream

- Despite the adoption of impressive policy initiatives on disability by organizations such as USAID, NORAD, the World Bank and DFID, a recent study by the Disability Knowledge and Research Program found that almost all of these policies have yet to be implemented.
- An examination of the link (or lack of it) between the Millennium Development Goals and disability and how the failure to mention people with disabilities could lead to their being ignored.

Examples of mainstreaming

- UNESCO - Education for All
- Save the Children - Starting with Choice
- World Vision - ensuring children with disabilities are included in the Education for All Fast Track Initiative

Successful approaches developed by Leonard Cheshire

- LCI's entrepreneurship program in Wuhan, China, using the ILO's Start Your Own Business materials demonstrates that it is not necessary to develop specific training courses for people with disabilities, but that the focus should be on improving access to such training
- Leonard Cheshire's Disability Resource Centre aims to build the capacity of mainstream development organizations to include disability in their programs. As a result of training received, Action Aid's partners in Sri Lanka are now reaching out to a total of 6000 disabled people.
- Oriang, Kenya - how inclusive education has improved education for all children

Coping Up of Disabilities with Self-help

Dr K P Kumaran
Associate Professor
National Institution of Rural Development (NIRD)
India

The study examined some of the common problems faced by the people with disabilities such as social exclusion, discrimination, lack of awareness about their rights and privileges and supporting livelihood programs and how they tried to overcome these impediments with the self help. The study was conducted among 100 persons with disability randomly drawn from 50 self help groups exclusively formed among the disabled under one of the most popular poverty alleviation programs implemented by the govt. of Andhra Pradesh (India). The field data showed that, before joining the group, some of them who were suffering considered as less productive and lack capabilities to lead a normal life. In such cases it was found that adequate were not taken as house hold level to explore the potentialities hidden in them for their own welfare and personal development. By forming SHG of the disabled they got an opportunity to mingle people with differently abled that helped them to understand not only their common problems and weakness but also their strength. By forming such groups, they could come out of the secluded life and work together with passion and empathy for their collective welfare and development.

Social exclusion and discrimination were the major serious problems faced by the disabled. The study showed that the disabled has to face discrimination not only in the family but also in the neighborhood, community and even the place of work. Social exclusion and discrimination coupled with lack of education and exposure to outside world made them ignorant of their rights and privileges made available to them by the Govt. The data showed that before joining the group their knowledge about their rights and privileges in different spheres was limited. But after joining the group their knowledge got broadened and started making use of the benefits and facilities made available to them.

Economic dependency was another major problem faced by the respondents. By joining the SHG, saving habits have been developed. All the respondents could take up income generation activities with the help of loan made available to them through SHGs from various sources. Leaving a few most of them was getting modest from the enterprise enabling them to reduce economical dependence on their parents.

The study showed that by forming SHGs, exclusively of the disabled, they were in a position to tackle many of their problems through self help which otherwise may not have been possible even with the intervention of normal people from outside. The data also revealed that by the forming the group of disabled, the members began to experience a spirit of oneness and a feeling of togetherness in getting their grievances redressed. The forum of SHG also made them feel self-confident and assertive which was absent before joining a group. A sense of feeling that "disability is not inability" seems to have internalized among the members of the group. This feeling has made them to certain extent to stand on their own feet and contribute for their own development which otherwise was difficult.

Integration of People with Spinal Cord Injury in the Community Following Vocational Training

Kausar Parveen
Lecturer of BHPI cum Clinical Physiotherapist
Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP)
Bangladesh

Aim of the study: the projects aim is to show the effect of vocational training on integration of the people with spinal cord injury in Bangladesh.

Setting: participants own environment and working place.

Method: a qualitative study was used to answer the question: what is the impact of vocational training on integration in the community for the people with spinal cord injury? Data were collected using face to face semi-structured interview. Participants were selected by using convenience sampling.

Result: the findings of the study indicate that a major role is played by of vocational training to re- integrate newly disabled people with spinal cord injury into their community. Due to lack of physical accessibility most of the participants didn't implement their efficiently. The result also experienced that, an effective vocational training program could negotiate the discriminatory attitude of general people and not excluded from social participation.

Self-Help Initiatives: A key to empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh

M Mahbubul Ashraf
Secretary and Coordinator
Association for the Welfare of the Disabled People (AWDP)
Bangladesh

Self-help initiative is one of the most important means of the empowerment of people with disabilities. It's an effort of changing situation by utilizing own resources and potentials of an individual or a group. This paper will focus on how persons with disabilities in Bangladesh have been taking the challenges of improving their socio-economic status in the community through various self-help initiatives at individual levels or in groups.

In accordance with the needs and situation, modalities of such initiatives are little bit different from one another, but the objective remains same, empowerment of the disabled persons by their own.

PWDs' self-help initiatives have been demonstrated mainly by NGOs. These include Self-Help Organizations (SHOs) of diverse categories of PWDs, associations of the same categories (i.e. deaf and blind) and parental organizations. This paper will have a quick view to the self-help endeavors of ADD, BPKS, CRP, BPCD, NFD, NFB, SAHIC, SARPV, SWID and NADPO.

There remain a good number of organizations in Bangladesh led by a single PWD. Decision making body of such organizations comprised of dedicated social workers, social activists and resource persons where main initiatives are taken by a PWD leader. Some other organizations have their programs to empower PWDs through organizing peer groups though they aren't commonly known as disability focused organizations. Contribution of all such efforts has an immense impact on the community.

On the backdrop of the above, we have taken an initiative to consolidate all such initiatives in our country. This paper will also focus on our strategy/plan of action to document the efforts and impact, developing a common consensus on the working definitions of self-help initiative terminologies in our country context which could be further enriched by sharing in the conference and other countries of this region could also be benefited from it.

Developing a Holistic Disabled Resource Centre (DRC) for Persons with Disabilities in East Asia & Pacific Region by LCI

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Program Manager of East Asia & Pacific Region
Leonard Cheshire International (LCI)
Thailand

Objectives: this paper reports on the impact of development of a holistic DRC for PWDs in EAPR LCI. While legislation or policy supporting PWDs exists in the most countries of EAP region, there is a gulf between legal/policy intentions and their effective implementation and practice. There is no integrated mechanism for the effective services of PWDs. A large part of the problem is identifying methods and processes of work that are effective for serving PWDs, and take account of the diversity of PWDs across region.

Methods: a series of pilot projects for PWDs take in the countries of EAPR identified and particular issues of poverty / unemployment, vulnerability / no accessible services, social exclusion / discrimination, and PWDs' rights violations as focus for development of local, a holist community-based DRC that act as hubs for integrating service mechanisms across sectors and agencies. PWDs' participation is a core work-method alongside the program design, plan, M & E, and review.

Results: PWDs' rights are increasingly recognized, poverty, vulnerability, social exclusion and discrimination are open for discussion, for instance, the educational pressures in some countries produce the stresses for schools and teachers that disabled children are rejected by most of mainstreaming education; also an existing systems of services for PWDs in other countries are based on older assumptions/norms and struggling to adjust to the impact of economic situation, with growing unemployment for PWDs, no accessible community services, gender inequalities, social exclusion that have brought poverty for the families with disabilities, trafficking disabled children, disabled child abused & abandoned, etc.

Conclusion: Results of project work so far show how a holistic centers and other mechanisms have supported PWDs in the accessibility of community based services, inclusive education, professional information accessible and the training, resilience promoted, provided psycho-social support, some PWDs in the communities reported a reduction in poverty and there are some positive changes for PWDs through the holistic approach program development of DRC.

Note:

DRC - Disabled Resource Centre;
EAPR - East Asia & Pacific Region;
LCI - Leonard Cheshire International;
PWDs- People with Disabilities;

Re-conceptualising Vocational Rehabilitation Services towards an Inter-sectoral Model

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Occupational Therapist
University of Stellenbosch
South Africa

Vocational rehabilitation is a traditional rehabilitation strategy for enabling persons with disabilities or at risk for disability to become integrated or re-integrated into the labor market. In South Africa these services are considered to be the domain of the health sector. This phenomenon has created a critical participation barrier in the employment of persons with disabilities in the Western Cape Province and has limited the real potential of vocational rehabilitation in developing persons vocationally to achieve the outcome of employment.

Occupational Therapists in the Western Cape Province of South Africa were challenged to re-conceptualize vocational rehabilitation services in order to change its impact on the employment of persons with disabilities.

A critical action research inquiry method was used by the Vocational Rehabilitation Task Team to develop a proposal for an inter-sectoral model to promote the vocational development of persons with or at risk for, work disability in the Western Cape Province and this could have significant implications for the application of vocational rehabilitation in inter-sectoral domains of practice.

Part 1 of this presentation discusses the research process utilized for developing the draft proposal. Part 2 will discuss the consultation process engaged in with strategic role players and stakeholders to obtain a final proposal.

KEY WORDS:

Productive occupations
Vocational development
Work disability
Vocational rehabilitation
Inter-sectoral domains of practice

Education of Persons with Disabilities

Presentations by:

1. Dr Bhushan Punani

A Global Campaign on Education for all Children with Visual Impairment

2. Dr M N G Mani

A Global Campaign on Education For All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI)

3. Romela Murshed

Ferdausi Moula

Shamim Ferdous

Sultana S. Zaman

Inclusive Education Practices at Community Level in Bangladesh

Publications by:

1. M Zahir Uddin Akanda

Role of Occupational Therapist in Special Education for Disabled

A Global Campaign on Education for all Children with Visual Impairment

Dr Bhushan Punani
Executive Director
Blind People's Association (BPA) &
ICEVI
India

The Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFAVI) is a global campaign and program of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) acting in partnership with the World Blind Union (WBU) to ensure that girls and boys with blindness and low vision, including children who are deafblind; and multiply disabled visually impaired children enjoy the right to education. This campaign & program primarily focus on children in the developing world. The campaign addresses the key Millennium Development Goals (MDG) viz., achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and developing a global partnership for development.

The campaign will work within the framework of the general and special education system of countries and will create a demand for education of children with visual impairment. Provision of appropriate support in educational settings and creation of alternative settings to reach out to the un-reached will also become the key aspects of the campaign.

The campaign will be implemented at two levels. A Global Task Force (GTF), chaired by the President of ICEVI and consisting of leading umbrella organizations and international non-governmental development organizations will be involved in formulating policies whereas the day-to-day implementation of the campaign will be the responsibility of the National Task Forces (NTF).

In this campaign, capacity building of teachers and other professionals, development of literature, production of assistive devices, research, etc., are some important tasks that will be undertaken through identified centers of excellence. International funding organizations, inter-governmental organisations, corporations and foundations will be approached to contribute to carry out the activities of the campaign.

The success of the GLOBAL campaign will be measured against the enrolment rates of children with visual impairment, reduction of dropouts, creating access to support services, and ensuring performance on par with non-disabled children. The Global Task Force believes that the campaign will serve as a vehicle to increase educational opportunities for children with visual impairment throughout the world.

A Global Campaign on Education For All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI)

Dr M N G Mani
Secretary General
International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI)
India

The Education for All Children with Visual Impairment (EFA-VI) is a Global Campaign and program of the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) acting in partnership with the World Blind Union (WBU) to ensure that all girls and boys with blindness and low vision enjoy the right to education. The Campaign is focusing on children in the developing world where currently it is estimated that less than ten-percent have access to education.

The Campaign addresses three key Millennium Development Goals: -achieving universal primary education, -promoting gender equality and -developing global partnerships for development.

The Campaign works within the framework of the general and special education system of countries and is initially focusing attention on awareness and demand creation for education of children with visual impairment. Provision of appropriate support in educational settings and creation of alternative settings to reach out to the un-reached are other key aspects of the campaign.

The Campaign is being implemented at two levels. A Global Task Force (GTF), chaired by the President of ICEVI and consisting of leading umbrella organisations and international non-governmental development organisations is involved in formulating policies whereas the day-to-day implementation of the campaign is the responsibility of the National Task Forces (NTF).

Capacity building of teachers and others, development of literature, production of assistive devices and operational research are important elements that will be developed through the "centres of excellence" that the Campaign will identify and develop. International funding organisations, inter-governmental organisations, corporations and foundations are partners in this global effort to create educational equity for all children with visual impairment.

The success of the campaign will be measured by: 1. increased enrolment rates, 2. reduced dropout rates, 3. improved access to support services, and 4. educational achievement for children with visual impairment, on par with non-disabled children. The Global Campaign presents a unique opportunity for collaboration between all stakeholders in assuring that all children with visual impairment have access to the basic human right of "education for all".

Inclusive Education Practices at Community Level in Bangladesh

Romela Murshed
Special Education Teacher, Inclusive School &
Assistant Coordinator, CBR
&
Ferdausi Moula
Shamim Ferdous
Sultana S. Zaman
Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation (BPF)
Bangladesh

Introduction:

The present study will provide a holistic view of Inclusive education practice at community level in rural areas of Bangladesh, meaning as to how to set up and run inclusive schools, create conducive conditions within the community to ensure enrollment of children in mainstream educational institutions. It will also provide an effective advocacy tool for respective individuals at policy level.

Objective:

The present research's interest is Inclusive Education practices and includes the study of "all" children facing barriers to learning, which ultimately will lead to achievement of "Education for All" by the year 2015.

Methods:

Five Inclusive schools were set up in five rural communities of Bangladesh e.g. Kishoreganj, Narsingdi, Faridpur, Dhamrai, Savar. One Inclusive School was also set up in urban community at Mirpur, Dhaka (year 2000). These six inclusive schools and the community people were the sample of this study. The research was descriptive in nature.

Findings and observations were collected by applying FGD, dialogue, interviews, questionnaires and from school records etc. Prevailing resources and existing structures remained the same during the research period.

Results:

Findings from this research showed that Inclusive Education is primarily a good practice; and cost effective and easy. It also proved that community cooperation and participation could bring the desired success of Inclusive Education. It could therefore help to contribute in achieving "Education for All".

Conclusion:

Socio-economic conditions and prevailing myth and belief influence attitudes of people negatively to send children at school with disabilities including those who are disadvantaged and ethnic and racial minorities etc. Inclusive Education can help remove these barriers and can create an Inclusive Society.

Role of Occupational Therapist in Special Education for Disabled

M Zahir Uddin Akanda
Clinical Occupational Therapist
Center for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP)
Bangladesh

Education is the fundamental right for all able and disabled children. Though it is the right for all children but our society still does not provide the opportunity to the disabled child. As developing country, it is difficult for ensure all opportunities to all disabled children. The United Nation Child Right Act was included in International Labor Law in 1990. Bangladesh is one of the member countries who obey that Act. Disable child's right has been included in section 23 of the Act stating that the disable child has the right to lead life in such a way which preserve their honor and would increase to be independent and active participation in the society. It also emphasized on the special care for disable child. A large number of children are disabled in our country who are not able to continue general education in the government and non-government institute due to the lack of accessibility. So the addition of a special education program is necessary to ensure proper education to the disabled children. The "special education" refers to that type of education which meets all necessary things like special equipment, environment, management, techniques, aids and also learning methods for special children. A child use to learn learns by using 7 senses when these senses are properly integrated. All sensation could properly be integrated only when proper stimulation and environment is given. An occupational therapist works with hypo or hyper responsive child who can't learn in a normal environment. An occupational therapist helps to make a special environment and a special education program. Besides, a special setting in the home of disabled child is often required. Occupational therapy is a newly introduced health care profession in Bangladesh and could play an important role in the special settings of special education

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People with Psycho-social Disabilities and Invisible Disabilities

Presentations by:

1. Akhil S Paul

Technology for Deafblind People

2. Badrul Mannan

Mental Health and Related Disabilities - Identification of Priorities for Bangladesh

3. Sadaf Noori Choudhury

Challenges to Initiate 'Deafblind' Program in Bangladesh

Technology for Deafblind People

Akhil S Paul
Director
Sense International (India)
India

From the beginning of human race, communication is the basis of interaction and the barriers to communication faced by deafblind individuals, deny them of many independent interactions with the world. Deafblind people are seriously disadvantaged in terms of accessing information and their needs are very different as compared to people with single disability such as blindness or deafness. Deafblind people can neither communicate by 'talking' as visually impaired nor 'receiving' information as hearing impaired.

Due to the lack of communication, the problems deafblind individuals face- include feeling of isolation, lack of independence, difficulty in obtaining education, and inadequate employment opportunities. The underlying foundation of these problems is a barrier to communication. In the past, overcoming these obstacles has been difficult, if not impossible but today, combining recently developed technologies to facilitate communication will allow deafblind individuals to bridge the communication gap. If the need for interpreters could be eliminated or reduced, the independence of deafblind individuals would be greatly improved.

Mental Health and Related Disabilities - Identification of Priorities for Bangladesh

Badrul Mannan
General Secretary
Welfare Society for Mental Health & Rehabilitation
Bangladesh

Introduction

- Mental health has been a neglected area and an unexplored field even by scientists
- Mental health is confined, globally, to definition of health only-WHO report on Govt. expenditure
- Need of own identity of psycho rather than existing as annex of soma - WHO report on share of total DALY, hardware and software concept
- Society's way of acceptance of MI and associated stigma

Causes of stigma

- Lack of knowledge at all levels of people, consequent superstition and myth, non-persistent nature of the disorders and invisibility of symptoms

Disability due to psychiatric problems

- Peculiarities, impact and interaction with society

What needs to be done

- Research and rehabilitation

Priorities

- Awareness development
- Enlightenment at all levels
- Advocacy - Improvement of legal provisions
- Facilities Development - for respectable and meaningful life

Challenges to Initiate 'Deafblind' Program in Bangladesh

Sadaf Noori Choudhury
Executive Director
Research and Educative Action on Disability (READ)
Bangladesh

The issue of deafblindness had been reflected during the 'Second DbI Asia Conference' in Dhaka, with a frightening and alarming condition on the existence of deafblind community in Bangladesh. It was expected that the problem will cater attention of development organizations and government.

But in reality, the reflected situation neither got any consideration nor created any impact as it was expected from concerned actors and duty bearers. As a result, the perpetual expectation of people and community demonstrated disappointment. To define such aloofness of organizations and their failure to integrate the deafblind issue with mainstream disability work needs to be studied first. The paper has intended to focus on that area.

Firstly, to address a problem of deafblindness, organizations initially need skilled human resources to deal with such a vulnerable and sensitive issue. In the context of Bangladesh, the concept of 'Deafblindness' is not even clear to the majority, the thought of handling such problem without having required expertise and ability will be quite irrational. For this reason, development organizations feel threatened to embrace the risk in fear of losing the challenge.

Secondly, to deal with the critical areas of a person with deafblindness, organizations also need a variety of mechanisms, devices and communication options that help foster social interactions and conversations of these people but such methods and devices are completely missing in the country.

Thirdly, and more importantly, since the existence of deafblind people are scattered in different locations, development planners consider this agenda as highly expensive and also not that much feasible on working through interlinking other organizations.

However, there are other factors and problems which discourage and dispirit development organizations and government to put a brake on the matter.

Prevention & Early Interventions

Presentations by:

1. Christina M Rozario

Mothers' Clubs - "Fencing Out" Disability

2. Claire Hicks

Making an IMPACT on Needless Disability

3. Satish Mishra

Rehabilitation in Public Health System - An Initiative to Reduce Vulnerabilities for Disadvantaged Communities

Publications by:

1. Vera van Ek Hungerbuhler

Preventive Strategies and Practices to Minimize Disabilities in Leprosy Patients

Mothers' Clubs - "Fencing Out" Disability

Christina M Rozario
Deputy Director
Impact Foundation Bangladesh
Bangladesh

IMPACT Foundation Bangladesh initiated the Mothers' Club program, as it was perceived to be as an effective way to disseminate information about prevention and easy correction of disability to the local communities. This is due to the major role that women play within the household and community. These include caring for family members, young and old, nearly all homestead production, preparation and distribution of food, collection of firewood and water and an infinite number of other activities within the household. The Mothers Club initiative has three major activities, Health education, nutrition education and a Home Gardening program allowing women to grow vegetables for consumption in their families and for sale.

26,000 rural poor women of Chuadanga and Meherpur districts in the Southwest of Bangladesh are grouped under 1200 Mothers' Clubs. Rural mothers, who are poor and divorced, widowed, pregnant and lactating, having land holding below 66 decimals are encouraged to form Mothers' Clubs. On an average, 18-22 women form a Mothers' Club. These rural poor women understand that they meet and work as a group so that disability is "fenced out" from them and their families and the Bangla term they use for this is "Protibondhitar goray bera deoa".

The activities include: regular meetings; education on disability identification and prevention; education on relation between health, hygiene and prevention of disability; promoting sanitation and safe drinking water; developing home-gardens etc.

Signs of positive change are already visible amongst some of the poorest families of Chuadanga and Meherpur districts. These are demonstrated through improved health and hygiene practice, consumption of micronutrient rich vegetables, health seeking behavior, referral of patients to IMPACT's health centers etc.

The enthusiasms of the poor rural women have sustained the Mothers' Clubs which were formed six years ago. The clubs continue to thrive as the mothers are committed to fence out disability from their families. Least in the list of achievements is that words like "Protibondhita" and "Protirodh", meaning 'Disability' and 'Prevention', rather difficult words of Sanskrit origin, are commonly used and understood by 26,000 poorest, illiterate women.

Making an IMPACT on Needless Disability

Claire Hicks
Chief Executive
Impact Foundation
UK

One in ten of the world's people are disabled. 80% live in developing countries, one third of them are children.

The question Sir John Wilson, IMPACT's founder, who was himself blind, asked was why?

Why are the lives, hopes and opportunities of some 600 million people affected by disability when so much is preventable or treatable? His vision was of a world freed from causes of needless disability, where modern knowledge and technology could be harnessed and shared on a global scale and the right of everyone to live in a non-handicapping environment would be universally recognized.

I should like to use global statistics to outline the potential for change, with practical examples of IMPACT's work to highlight straight-forward, cost-effective action that can be taken internationally.

IMPACT's priorities include:

Early identification and treatment

Affordable, accessible surgery

Safer motherhood and child survival

Ending malnutrition

Immunization

Safe water and sanitation

Empowerment, health education and training

Knowledge about ways to prevent needless disability is a basic human right.

Through IMPACT's work, the lives, hopes and opportunities of millions of people have been transformed. We call for a global alliance, for action to overcome common human enemies of disease, needless disability and poverty.

Rehabilitation in Public Health System - An Initiative to Reduce Vulnerabilities for Disadvantaged Communities

Satish Mishra
Deputy Regional Disability Coordinator
Handicap International - South Asia Region
India

Handicap International is an international organization specialized in the field of disability. Non-governmental, non-religious, non-political and non-profit making, it works alongside people with disabilities, whatever the context, offering them assistance and supporting them in their efforts to become self-reliant. Handicap International has been working in the South Asian region since the early 1980's.

The South Asia region is inhabited by a quarter of the world's population, most of who live in rural areas. The Primary Health Care System (PHCS) is the cornerstone of rural healthcare. It forms the first level of contact and a link between individuals and the national health system. However, often the early identification of disability and appropriate medical and rehabilitation intervention for People with Disabilities (PWDs) are not the focus areas for PHCS.

The purpose of this presentation is to continue to promote the mainstreaming of Disability i.e. Prevention, Early Identification, Intervention and Rehabilitation in PHCS through sharing the ongoing practical learning experiences gained by Handicap International in this field. A project titled "Early identification and intervention for prevention of disability and its complications" is being implemented in Gujarat, India.

This initiative in Gujarat has developed the capacity of PHCS to implement disability prevention, identification and rehabilitation through capacity building of staff and enhancing a comprehensive cross-sector referral network among different stakeholders, including different government ministries and identified referral rehabilitation centers activities. Consequently, it enables PWDs in remote rural areas to better access health care and rehabilitation services.

This paper will assist professionals involved in the field of rehabilitation to realize the benefits and the scope of the outlined mainstreaming strategy. The practical experience of Handicap International in Gujarat will be further supported by outlining other experiences gained on the subject by Handicap International in the region (and across the globe). This presentation will ultimately highlight how mainstreaming disability into PHCS can assist in the development of rights based and inclusive communities in the South Asian region.

Preventive Strategies and Practices to Minimize Disabilities in Leprosy Patients

Vera van Ek Hungerbuhler
Disability Coordinator
LEPRA Bangladesh
Bangladesh

Leprosy is a chronic infectious disease caused by the Mycobacterium Leprae which primarily affects the skin and the peripheral nerves.

The nerve impairment is the main cause for disabilities to develop in Leprosy patients if no preventive measures are taken.

The objective of this presentation is to show that prevention and early detection are detrimental to curb the development of disabilities among leprosy patients.

LEPRA Bangladesh tries to achieve the governmental target of less than 5% disabilities among newly diagnosed leprosy patients. LEPRA Bangladesh also tries to reduce the development of further disabilities in patients with primary and secondary impairments. Whereas the grading according to the WHO may not be altered, we like to share our strategies and practices in reducing the score within the grading system.

The combination of awareness raising, the monthly treatment clinics, the strict follow up schedule, exercises health education and networking has made the program concerning the prevention and development of further disabilities very effective.

LEPRA Bangladesh has developed special home programs for the patients. Combined with information on self care, patients are able to prevent disabilities themselves and need less to depend on services from other people.

Conclusion: LEPRA Bangladesh is using a combination of tools in order to prevent the development of disabilities among leprosy patients. We hope that the sharing of the practices LEPRA Bangladesh uses, will lead to the development of strategies for prevention and early intervention of disabilities in the different diseases that can lead to disabilities.

Sports, Culture, Recreation, Entertainment & Accessible Tourism of Persons with Disabilities

Presentations by:

1. Emma Li-Chia Lee

How to Develop Your Community through Accessible Tourism

2. George Abraham

Lessons in "The Art of Winning"...

3. Ziaul Hassan

Sport And Fun For All

How to Develop Your Community through Accessible Tourism

Emma Li-Chia Lee
Director
Eden Social Welfare Foundation
Taiwan, R O China

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in Asia and the Pacific, and that people with disabilities and older persons are beginning to enjoy newly found opportunities for travel, sports, cultural, educational and entertainment activities.

We have also recognized people with disabilities have equal right of access to all tourist infrastructure, products and services, including employment opportunities and benefits that the tourism industries can provide, and that people with disabilities should be provided with the same choices for all consumers, to ensure their full participation and protection of the individual's right to travel with dignity.

While we thought of community development for people with disabilities and older persons, accessible tourism has been found as an innovative channel to make an inclusive community for all. In this presentation, we will see how community development for people with disabilities and older persons can be made in different aspects such as: accessible environment, accessible transportation, accessible accommodation & accessible information. Meanwhile, we will present few examples from developed and developing countries in the Asia-Pacific Region presenting how community has been developed through accessible tourism as well as to promote the inclusive society.

In addition, we will also like to have the open discussion with the floor to formalize the community-based accessible tourism for South Asia to broaden the range of accessible tourism in the AP region.

Lessons in "The Art of Winning"...

George Abraham
Chief Executive Officer
Score Foundation
India

"I was born with a triple handicap.

I was born Black.

I was born poor.

I was born without knowing who my parents were.

I grew up with no real direction and meaning to life till I was introduced to the game of cricket which taught me the 5 Ds - the Mantra for a winning life.

Dream

Desire

Discipline

Dedication

Determination"

-- Conrad Hunt (Former West Indies opening batsman)

The disabled love their sport. They do play an improvised form of the game with great skill and passion.

The sport is an arena where the disabled persons have the opportunity of learning the art of winning. They learn to compete, work in a team, build confidence, discipline, leadership, fitness, mobility and learn to cope with win, defeat, and all emotions.

Sport also provides the disabled with a very effective platform to project and demonstrate ability. Sporting action makes for a very positive picture and does send out to society a very positive perception and message about the disabled. It helps the society appreciate the Ability and helps them take their minds of the disability.

Finally, sport provides the disabled with a great opportunity to travel. Travel is one of the most effective medium of knowledge gathering. All of us know that Knowledge is Power.

Hence, if "Sport be the food of life, then play on"

Sport And Fun For All

Ziaul Hassan
Project Officer - Sports
Handicap International
Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, sports and leisure activities are poorly developed for PWDs. There is a lack of qualified trainers and a limited number of organizations offer sports and leisure activities on a regular basis.

Practical experience: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) on behalf of the people of Switzerland, supported Handicap International to develop and implement an exciting project on "Inclusive Sports and Physical Activities for Children and youth with and without disabilities" for 15 months in collaboration with three Disabled People's Organization for Development (DPOD's) in three different Districts. The project turned out to be an exciting challenge for all members involved. The aim was to improve the quality of life of children and youth with disabilities by developing their physical, psychological and social capacities through the practice of sports and physical activities.

This first phase was considered as a pilot phase to test the capacity of the DPODs to collaborate with HI in inclusive sport and leisure activities, to analyse the response of the disabled persons and their communities, and to develop skills in Bangladesh. First phase of this project focused on 4 main aspects:

1. Development of a Resource Team combining the skills of sports trainers and disability professionals (Occupational therapists, physiotherapists)
2. Awareness of local authorities, teachers, students and families.
3. Regular practices of sports and leisure in the 3 districts.
4. Production of IEC materials for the promotion and explanation of inclusive sports and leisure activities.

³Six persons were trained (3 sports trainers and 3 disability professionals) and are now able to handle sports and leisure practice including disabled persons

Technologies (Including Accessibility)

Presentations by:

1. Abha Negi

Barrier Free Environment by Svayam (An Initiative of Sminu Jindal Charitable Trust)

2. Dipendra Manocha

Beginning of New Era of Information Access with DFA Project

3. Dr Nazma Kabir

Developing Low Vision Services in South Asia

4. Priyanka Kabir

Flattening the World for Intellectual Disabilities

5. Shankar Nath Goswami

Empowerment of Differently Abled

Barrier Free Environment by Svayam (An Initiative of Sminu Jindal Charitable Trust)

Abha Negi
Director
Svayam
India

Need Of the Hour

Barrier free universal design is the need of the hour especially in countries like India. With India on the threshold of infrastructure redevelopment this is the right time to take up the issues related to barrier free accessible public infrastructure.

Observations

The very expanse of the nation and the size of the population make the task of incorporating barrier free universal design features in the built environment daunting despite best of intentions. Low awareness levels, lack of trained manpower in the field and monitoring of implementation of various laws, rules, regulations and schemes further adds to the woes.

Work Experience

Svayam, an initiative of Sminu Jindal Charitable Trust, steps in to fill the gap by way of undertaking audits, identifying problem areas, developing strategies to overcome the same as per international standards of accessibility and universal design and handhold the implementation process to ensure the accurate execution so that rightful needy benefit.

To date Svayam has been involved with govt civic agencies like the NDMC as Access Consultants as well Education Ministry of Government of Delhi to make its public conveniences and schools respectively accessible and barrier free.

An Access Consultant to ASI Svayam has so far undertaken access audits for the heritage site of Qutub Minar. The accepted report is currently under execution stage. Won over by the dedication and commitment of Svayam, ASI further invited Svayam to help make the World Heritage sites in Delhi, Agra and Goa barrier free. Svayam is involved in motivating corporate houses and hospitality giants like ITC and Hyatt to incorporate accessibility as one of their prime concerns in making their built and social environment barrier free and accessible to all.

Constant interaction and dialogue with other NGOs working in the field of Disability and Aging, Svayam has taken the lead in highlighting issues that affect the ability to lead normal life.

Svayam also powers one-stop information portal www.svayam.com for people with disabilities.

Beginning of New Era of Information Access with DFA Project

Dipendra Manocha
Assistant Project Manager
DAISY For All Project &
Regional DAISY Focal Person
India

DAISY For All Project is being implemented by DAISY Consortium. DAISY consortium is an international standards organization for accessible multimedia content. Objective of the DFA Project is to introduce accessible multimedia digital content in developing countries. Project implementation in countries like India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and Philippines has resulted in:

- Preparation and distribution of accessible books for persons with print impairment. Many of the developing countries did not have these services at all. Thus the project which started to convert existing analogue technology to digital technology actually resulted in introduction of effective library services in such countries.
- Formation of network of organizations involved in Braille and talking books for better cooperation and content sharing among organizations. Many books were being created again and again at different organizations resulting in wastage of resources. Formation of networks such as DAISY Forum of India, DAISY Lanka foundation, DAISY forum of Nepal and DAISY Forum of Pakistan has shown remarkable results and examples of cooperation.
- Availability of software and content in local languages
- Availability of open source software for creating and reading of multimedia content in local languages.
- Development of local low cost solutions
- Creating awareness about ICT Accessibility among related government departments, universities and NGOs

Activities undertaken under the DFA Project include:

- Setting up of DAISY Focal Points for production, distribution and DTB production training
- Training of trainers
- Focal point training
- Software development in open source domain for local languages for production and playback of digital content

Developing Low Vision Services in South Asia

Dr Nazma Kabir
Regional Director - South Asia & Caribbean Region
Sightsavers International
UK

Sightsavers International works to combat blindness in developing countries, restoring sight through eye care services and supporting people who are irreversibly blind by providing education, rehabilitation, counseling and training. Sightsavers also works with individuals affected with low vision, a visual impairment condition that cannot be corrected by standard glasses, contact lenses, medicine or surgery.

Sightsavers' low vision programs provide services at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels implemented by the government and non-government partner organizations. Technology plays a vital role in low vision programs. Until recently, even basic equipment such as binoculars and CCTVs, were out of reach due to their cost. However, advancements in technology have made these devices more affordable and available. Thus, Sightsavers aims to incorporate these devices into their program services, thereby improving the quality of life of visually impaired individuals.

In South Asia, Sightsavers has experienced vast improvements in low vision programs. In Bangladesh, a resource centre with Braille printed reference books has been established at the Central Library of Dhaka University, with the goal to incorporate computerized technology and ICT facilities in the near future. In Pakistan, Sightsavers has worked with the government to create a national low vision program. In Sri Lanka, three low vision clinics have already been established at the government tertiary health facilities.

Blindness and low vision are not only major causes of morbidity, but also inhibit the mobility and economic well-being of individuals affected and their families. It is thus critical to take advantage of new technology and increase their availability in South Asia.

Flattening the World for Intellectual Disabilities

Priyanka Kabir
Asian Implementation Specialist
Therap Services
Bangladesh

The best support for disabilities needs to take the best from all parts of the world. Individuals with disabilities and their families everywhere need information, resources, and support. In developed countries, these are often provided through residential and day care facilities, which may lack the loving care provided by families. In developing countries families and communities often provide loving care, but lack the other resources.

Therap Services is currently working with governments and NGOs in the US, Bangladesh and Nepal to explore uses of technology to bring together the best of these approaches into a single working system.

Therap works as a service bureau that provides integrated online reporting, documentation and communication technology services for people with developmental disabilities. Implemented successfully in over 30 US states and in Asia, the Therap system provides an all-encompassing set of services to provider organizations and care givers. Therap applications are designed to readily support multiple languages for the system.

Therap's global nature allows its team to study different needs and requirements by disability communities around the world. Therap uses the outcomes of its research to design 'Best Practice' applications. The flexible architecture of the Therap system enables it to be deployed in widely varied locations to meet diverse needs. Capitalizing on this strength, Therap has started providing national scale solutions in Nepal and Bangladesh where it is using its best practice applications to implement a nationwide database and communication mechanism.

These databases will help to generate a broad range of accurate statistics for the first time ever for these two countries where, currently, the mere count of individuals is not available. With limited resources and too many sectors to look after, these databases are expected to be milestones in proper allocation and management of these resources as well as ensuring transparency and accountability of the service agencies.

From this conference Therap seeks several governments and NGO's to share its experience and jointly carry out research work worldwide with appropriate partners.

Empowerment of Differently Abled

Shankar Nath Goswami
Managing Director & CEO
Media Lab Asia
India

As per the WHO estimate 10% people in world are disabled. In India there are more than 20 million disabled persons. It is also to be noted that 70% of the total population live in rural areas. The services available for persons with disabilities are urban centric and does not reach to masses. The main problems in disability sector are lack of awareness, trained manpower, availability of suitable resources, under utilization of resources, meager literacy rate and delay in treatment. ICT can play a vital role in improving the lives of persons with disabilities by disseminating information and skills available to the masses and thus assisting them to be a part of mainstream as practicable by facilitating them the Education, Rehabilitation/Inclusion and Communication augmentation. It leads to "Intangible Multiplier Effect" and make them self-sustainable, thus lessens Govt. burden. Media Lab Asia is engaged in and supporting several projects to empower differently abled. It is implementing a Comprehensive Satellite/ Internet based National Network for initiating interactive programs through Edusat for students, parents, trainee teachers and professionals associated with and engaged in different areas of disabilities like Mental Retardation, Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Autism, Cerebral Palsy and Multiple Disabilities etc.

Media Lab Asia is also involved in hosting a "National Disability Portal" to provide all the related information regarding disability issues such as National Disability Register, Government Orders, Directory of Specialists & Care-givers, ADIP (Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fitting of Aids/Appliances) Schemes, Digital Audio Books, Text/Audio and Multimedia Repository in Indian languages, Details of Assistive Devices, LMS (Learning Management System) etc. Media Lab Asia is also involved in development and deployment of various tools and systems for Education and Communication of differently abled persons such as TTS (Text to Speech) Engine, Speech Recognizer, Screen Reader Software, Braille Transcription system and portable communication tools. Media Lab Asia favors such tools and systems incorporate different vernacular languages so that they can be beneficial in every region of the country.

Thus ICT can fill the gap in infrastructure and support visibly and help in identification of requirement of trained manpower, development of products & services, trend/ impact analysis of measurements taken, W3C compliant websites, research-ICT, Psychometric, Medical and Rehabilitation of educated & trained differently abled persons.

Media Lab Asia, company promoted by Department of IT, Ministry of Communications and IT, Government of India is mandated to leverage the benefits of ICT for Empowering persons with disabilities.

Women with Disabilities

Presentations by:

1. Daniel Stubbs

Sainimili Tawake

Pacific Women with Disabilities: Multiple Challenges and Many Responses

2. Kuhu Das

Issue of Sexuality & Women with Disabilities

3. Shuchita Sharmin

Making Development Meaningful: Disability Rights in Bangladesh

Pacific Women with Disabilities: Multiple Challenges and Many Responses

Daniel Stubbs
Consultant & Policy Advisor
Pacific Disability Forum &
President,
Aus-Pacific Islands Disability Support
New Caledonia
&
Sainimili Tawake
Pacific Disability Forum
Fij

Pacific Islander women with disabilities are one of the most marginalised and forgotten groups in the Pacific. Their disadvantage is three-fold: (1) regularly discriminated against because of their disability ; (2) often suffering second rate treatment because of the unspoken cultural place of women in many Pacific communities; and (3) more likely to be pushed into poverty because of the compounding effects of their gender and their disability.

This paper prepared by Sainimili Tawake and Daniel Stubbs is the first to specifically explore the challenges faced by women with disabilities in the Pacific. More importantly it investigates the practical policies and programs that are being implemented to respond to the needs of these Pacific Islander women. Finally the paper considers and suggests best practice responses to the multiple challenges facing Pacific Islander women with disabilities in the context of Pacific culture and other local needs.

Some governments and NGO's in the Pacific are starting to recognise the plight of women with disabilities with some programs to assist entry into education or Entrepreneurship. The majority of governments and mainstream women's organizations do not recognize the plight of women with disabilities and CEDAW ignores women with disabilities (although countries are now encouraged to report on their issues). Women with disabilities are more likely to suffer abuse, neglect and poverty. With the CRDP and the BMF both specifically identifying women with disabilities the time is now right to turn this around.

Issue of Sexuality & Women with Disabilities

Kuhu Das
Director
Association for Women with Disabilities
India

Myths & misconception:

i] WWDs are asexual, ii] WWDs cannot be mothers iii] Disability is transferred in children of a woman with disability

Defining sexuality & Factors influencing sexuality:

i] Gender ii] Age iii] Sexual orientation iv] Physical and Emotional needs v] Personal perspectives vi] Cultural / religious influences & beliefs vii] Reproduction viii] Self image

Issues in relation to Sexuality of Disabled Women

- Disabling situations affecting sexual potentials of the WWD from physiological points of view
- Status in disability rights movement and women's movement
- Issue of sexuality of WWDs in academic / social research discourses and debates
- HIV / AIDS & WWD. Steps taken to promote Sexual Education among WWD
- Steps towards promoting Reproductive Health rights of WWDs
- Sexual Abuse & Violence - measures to deal physical & emotional trauma

Factors Invalidating women-ness and sexual being of WWDs

- Stereotype of Gender role
- Image of perfect -ness of body
- Making beauty and sexuality synonymous

Women's movement & status of WWD

- **Conflict** - Issue of women's body & its representation
- **Power & Hierarchy** - movement controlled by non-disabled women

Disability Rights Movement & status of WWD

- **Gender discrimination within disability movement:** Invisibility of WWDs
- **Power & Hierarchy** - influence of patriarchy

Challenge - Steps forward

- Research producing Authentic data about the issue
- Questioning beauty quests
- Breaking myth and misconception around Sexuality
- Inclusion of issues of WWD in women's movement
- Gender equality within Disability Movement

Making Development Meaningful: Disability Rights in Bangladesh

Shuchita Sharmin
Assistant Professor
Dhaka University
Bangladesh

Development the century old debate had always been evolving in its focus. Having achievement of Millennium Development Goals in the centre of present concern for developing countries, inclusive development is essential. For making MDG based national development meaningful, there is no alternative to including children, disable, women and all different disadvantaged groups in the total development policy and process. Through historic, policy and legislative discussions the present paper explores the current situation of disable children and women in different socio-economic background and also in rural and urban context in Bangladesh. The importance of the socio-cultural and psychological considerations with regard to disability is established through this paper. The paper indicates obstacles on the way to implement the Rights of the persons with disabilities and sheds light on the possible future interventions needed.

Open Papers

Publications of:

1. Dr Shamim Ferdous

Prevalence and Rehabilitation of a Population Based Sample of Children with Neuro-Disabilities in Rural Bangladesh

Prevalence and Rehabilitation of a Population Based Sample of Children with Neuro-Disabilities in Rural Bangladesh

Dr Shamim Ferdous
Executive Director
Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation (BPF)
Bangladesh

Objectives:

To ascertain the prevalence of neuro-disabilities in children in rural Bangladesh and provide evidences of improvement in their quality of life through center and home based community based rehabilitation (CBR) programs.

Methods:

Community Health workers screened 18259 children aged 2-9 years in 40 villages of Bangladesh in 1996-2006 using a sample and well validated screening questionnaire, Ten Questions Plus (TQP). Sub-samples of children were assessed by a multidisciplinary professional team comprising of psychologists and child health physicians. Health, nutritional, educational, rehabilitative, and social interventions were provided through both center based programs and regular home visits. Developmental improvements were noted serially over time.

Result:

17% children screened positive for disability. Overall prevalence of motor, vision, hearing, cognitive and behavior disabilities and epilepsy was 70 per 1000 for all grades of severity; and mild cognitive disability was the most prevalent condition. There was significant association between malnutrition and cognitive difficulties. Both home-based and center-based interventions yielded functional improvements which did not differ significantly by place.

Conclusion:

Prevalence of disabilities in rural Bangladesh children remains high. Most children remain unrecognized early in life as they are more 'covert' and mild disabilities related to intellectual abilities, hearing, speech, communication and behavior. Socioeconomic associations suggest their strong link with poverty.

Significant progress, self reliance and independence of the children with disabilities were shown in both home based as well as center based programs. CBR facilities are now being actively pursued as the best way to ensure early intervention of children at-risk for disability and integration and the empowerment of children and their families.

