



SARPV

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“DUAR”

Bimonthly  
E - News Letter  
Jul-Aug 2011  
Issue no: 7

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## Self Help Group – a way to organize PwDs for equality

People with disabilities (PwDs) are one of the marginalized communities in Bangladesh. Though a number of PwDs can able to symbolize them in a leading position but majority of them couldn't raise their voice to establish their rights. They are treated as an appendix body in the society. From the deprivation in the society PwDs realize that without common effort it is hard to attain their dignity and prove their ability. In this aspect self help group, also known as mutual group or mutual aid group, is a way to organize the PwDs from a common locality under a common interest. In general Self help group is a voluntary association of people which functions democratically to attain the collective goals or target of the associates.

Social Assistance and Rehabilitation for the Physically Vulnerable (SARPV) has a long experience to works with PwDs. During this period we formed 120 SHGs (Self Help Group) for PwDs in Cox's Bazar and Gazipur districts. All types of disabled people are allowed to join the groups. Through these groups formation, SARPV has been trying to organize PwDs, provide training to develop leadership competency, create awareness about the rights and dignity of PwDs, notify the services under Social Safety Nets programs adopted by Social welfare Department in Bangladesh so that they can obtain the services at optimum level, introduced them with right based approaches such as UNCRPD, CRC, and CEDAW etc.

Each group consist of 8-15 members form an area including one President and one Secretary. Group members met fortnightly. Depending on different situation, need and demand they do advocacy with different stakeholders to obtain the services. Apart from this, the group member also share their feelings, identity their barriers and provide suggestions to overcome the barriers, they also discuss about disability issue and its prevention or minimize the severity of the problems etc.

As a result the group member realized if they work for common interest and involve all then community will pay attention them. It is also notable that it is mandatory for all SHGs members to adopt five main principle of SARPV and practice them in their lives.

Through the group movement some change has been marked in Cox's Bazar and Gazipur district in their personal life and community level also

- PwDs are more organized and confident about their rights and dignity
- Informing about the Safety Net programs
- Trying to Enable them in income generating activities

- Encouraged to participate in different social services
- Perform as a pressure group to protect them from negligence and verbal mistreatment
- Put up strong demand to local government to obtain their services
- Make a linkage with key stakeholders to include them in different services
- Moreover they encourage each other to take on the 5 compulsory works of SARPV to get better livelihood with minimum efforts and costs.

**SARPV proposes five compulsory practices for the beneficiaries**

1. Neat and Clean surroundings, accessible and hygienic latrine, pure drinking water and scope of enough sunlight are need to be ensured.
2. A hole in the yard to dump the household wastage
3. Plantation of 2 papaya, 2 guava trees along with some herbal trees in the yard
4. Either poultry or livestock is obligatory for every beneficiary family
5. Family must ensure the schooling of their children and accessibility in every where

These 120 SHGs has been formed under a project named 'Mainstreaming People with disabilities in the society' funded by Manusher Jonno Foundation and 'Promotion of Human Rights among the Persons with Disabilities funded by Centre for Disability and Development (CDD) in Cox'sBazar and Gazipur districts. Both of the projects goals are to bring the disability issue in mainstreaming life. Though we can make some fabulous changes in the project areas but it was not sufficient according to their needs. Number of Challenges has to face to continue the movement of these SHGs as example:

- Sometimes it is difficult for the PwDs to involve with IGA activities due to lack of fund
- Local govt people are less interested on disability issue, they think this is a humanitarian issue rather than development issue
- Lack of in accessible environment sometimes it is difficult to organize them at a time in a common place

For a long time people even PwDs consider disability as welfare or charity issue. From past decades CBR program have successfully helped PwDs to accumulate them. Now a day's SHGs (Social Help Group) is becoming more popular in Non- Government Sector. According to ESCAP, approximately out of 40 countries in the Asia Pacific region, 25 countries already have self-help organizations for the disabled.<sup>1</sup> It is known that in the rear of any success common effort is more effective than individual effort. So a structured Self help group can play a pressure group to empower themselves in the society and show that unity is potency.

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<sup>1</sup> People with disabilities and self help groups in India by Yutaka Takamine, university of the Ryukyus; Japan 2011

## Even Highlights

**Program Title** : To Include the PwDs in Social Safety Net Programme

**Date** : June 22, 2011

**Venue** : Chakaria Disability Centre (CDC), Chakaria

**Organized by** : SARPV

**Supported by** : Centre for Disability in Development (CDD)

**Chief Guest** : Zakir Hossain the Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Chakaria Upazila

**Special Guests** : Mr. Ziauddin Chowdhury the Chairman of Boraitoli Union Parisad, Mr. Zahirul Islam; Sr. Journalist and Secretary of Chakaria Press Club and Mr. Taslim Uddin the Director of Al-Amin Foundation were presented here as special guest



**Event Brief** : The Main objective of the workshop was to make a proper plan so that PwDs can include in the Social Safety Net Programs of Bangladesh government. In the workshop Mr. Zakir Hossain mentioned, the government of Bangladesh has given more emphasis to develop PwDs friendly environment. In the workshop he told that; we will be trying to make a list about the number of PwDs at Chakaria Upazila. For their Self dependency a fund will be develop and based on their need analysis skill development training will be provide among the PwDs. He added that PwDs are not isolated they are also citizen of Bangladesh. By changing social attitude, adopt proper planning and develop their skill we can make them as a human resource. It is notable that to ensure the education and social security of PwDs Social Safety net Programme is one of major scheme of Bangladesh Government.

## History of Change (Case Study : 7)

### Information can change life

*A few years ago Taslima had no understanding about WWD or not informed about the rights of WWD. She treated herself as abundant from life. The Society including her family also did so. She wasn't included in any safety Net programs of Bangladesh though she was a WWD due to lack of information. But the flourish of SHG primed her as a self dependent person in the society with her dignity. ....The Story is about Taslima who is a physically challenged woman.*

Taslima Jannat,19 lives in Palkata Village under Chakaria Pourashava at Cox's Bazar district. Her father Nazir Ahmed is a farmer and Mother Monoara Begum is a house wife. She has 2



brothers and 5 sisters. At her 3 months she was affected by Polio and her left leg became skinny and narrow. Her father took her a village doctor but nothing happened. Thus she was introduced with impairment.

Due to stigma and stereotype Taslima could not move even at her locality or took part any family function or cultural activities as she has impairment. Even she had no sharing in decision making. Thus impairment brings disability in her life and gradually taking her in the dark. She had treated with the view that disabled person born to suffer for the curse of the parental bad work. In that time she and her family were not inform about the rights of PwDs or rehabilitation program of govt and role of union parisad regarding the rehabilitation program.

As a result she or her family never talks about her presence in the community. She Identified by SARPV team through housing visit at 2006. The team advised her to meet at Chakaria Disability Centre. SARPV provide her training on 28 days to develop leadership quality and besides this also gave one month training on tailoring. By time she was a member of Self help group namely "Palkata "(according to village name) group. She received the both training successfully. Upshot she occupied with SARPV in sewing section of assistive devices centre and her monthly income is 1200 to 1500 taka. Apart from this as a group member of SHG she actively participated in the meetings and shares her learning with neighbors and family. Taslima now studying in HSC and maintains her pocket money through her income and helps her family also.

SARPV can reach Taslima and enlightened her. But Thousand of Taslima in the remote area are depriving in many phases. Only the government can reach to all PwDs . As a state party of UNCRPD the govt of Bangladesh is liable to protect the rights of PwDs.. Though the govt have rehabilitation programs, Safety Net Programs and many other services for PwDs but due to lack of information dissemination most of them are deprived from the services. On the other hand in MDG goal :1 there is no reflection about the Pwds though poverty is correlated with disability. Nevertheless, economic strength is not possible if we keep them far behind. Till now govt cannot produce a particular data about the PwDs. We hope and desire that through the New Law (The Disability welfare Act-2010) add a new dilemma in the journey to establish the rights of PwDs.

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### SARPV's services in making Assistive Device in collaboration with KDM and AMD (France)

Artificial Leg, Finger and Wrist Splint, Brace, Crutch, CP Chair , CP Chair ( Standing), Hand Griper , Knee brace Walker( with and without wheel), Wheel Chair and etc

*For details Pls. contact us*