

# Impact of Mainstreaming Children and People with Disability through People's Organisations



**A Pilot Project**

*Implemented by*



**SARPV Bangladesh**

*Funded by*



**BANGLADESH FREEDOM FOUNDATION**

# PROJECT AREA



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SARPV has been working for mainstreaming and pursuing group technique for addressing challenges of disability since inception. Recently, SARPV ran a 3-year pilot project in the union of Durgapur in Kapasia upazilla of Gazipur district under the auspices of Bangladesh Freedom Foundation. The union is one of the backward one of Kapasia, which is characterised by bad road communication for decades. Moreover, no distinct disability sensitive programme or organisation was functioning there.

The purpose of the pilot project was to strengthen the union or ward based people's organisations (a slightly variant disabled people's organisations- DPOs) in a sustaining way so that they mainstream the children and people with disability and make people aware about disability towards an attitudinal change in favour people with disability through their own participation. Organisations' development through increased community support and participation from the very beginning, as per a new strategy, and work of those organisations for mainstreaming disability equality, particularly in securing education and income opportunities, have been on focus. By the end the project, SARPV wanted to have an assessment of its impact, understanding some major achievements out of the changed strategies it followed for the project.

A simple methodology, involving focus group discussion, case-study on significant changes and interviews of a few key people, is followed to learn from the people who contributed to the project in various capacities- ranging from the implementing organisation SARPV to funding organisation BFF to the people's organisations, members of those and the concerned families and community people. As per the project proposal, the following impact areas are considered: Sustainability of the newly formed people's organisations; volume of finance from community, changes in environment and facilities promoting education of children with disability and socio-economic roles of people with disability. A good number of representatives of project partners talked about sustainable significant changes having significance in life of people with disability and their recommendations for better sustainability. In addition, respondents talked about learning and changes they had started practising. This impact study is a compilation of such opinions of the people who got engaged with the project in various capacities.

The project succeeded to develop three people's organisations in three wards of Durgapur. The organisations got 30 children with disability enrolled in school, raised funds of 17000 taka, trained their members and got 4 persons with disability employed through their advocacy and persuasions. The organisations procured appreciable support and services in cash and kinds, including land for their offices, from local community and local government bodies for its members and the organisational work.

In general, respondents acknowledge the increased awareness of the local community about people with disability and the roles and responsibilities towards them. Everyone exclaims at the prevalence of so many people with disability in

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

their neighbourhood. They consider: people with disability became confident to demand rights, enrol children with disability in school, and secure training, jobs and income opportunities for people with disability and increase confidence of themselves; practice of SARPV's 5-principle helped them; local community and government bodies started caring about their fellow members with disability in schools and elsewhere because of the project. SARPV considers: shared responsibility of organising people with disability with local people and members with disability is cost-effective.

About significance, the respondents consider: the work has proven good for people with disability and respective families, particularly for education and children; the project earned them social recognition because of campaigns by themselves and increased income; the reach and coverage of available government services for people with disability benefited; corresponding gaps decreased.

The work will sustain through having increased local support; skills training and job opportunities for members, training for leaders; joint work of all three organisations to overcome lags. The organisation will depend on voluntary services of members. Local government can support registered bodies and organised campaigns.

The project has taught the partners in various ways, they rediscovered the belief in capacity of people with disability as well as of themselves and respective strategies, and acknowledged people with disability better represent them. The need for information on disability and appropriate services for people with disability and such provisions is huge, these need to be planned for the entire country under a comprehensive plan. Any disability programme engaging large number of people with disability and focussing on active participation should have arrangements for assessment services for special aids and appropriate assistive devices for the key project partners. Project partners consider: increased financial ventures and networking amongst the disability organisations can sustain the people's organisations' work.

This piloting is well-timed, but needed well planning for consolidating the learning for scaling up. The national and global contexts under the UNCRPD regime and gender mainstreaming, and the national laws and provisions, certainly has influenced the project, while it benefited from SARPV's work and experience. However, the achievements can be credited to the project for apparently Durgapur being a new area of intervention and to the people's organisations of people with disability who made things happen. In two major areas, the targeted mainstreaming has taken place- children with disability are going to schools and schools are increasingly allowing them, and increasingly people with disabilities are becoming involved in economic activities. However, the state preparations for mainstreaming disability equality, even for education for children with disability, are poor, falling awfully short of global and national commitments to people with disability and their families. Provision of better and longer education, as proposed in the new

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

education policy, on doorstep of people with disability living in isolation at far-off places (in terms of physical accessibility), is utmost necessary.

Mainstreaming in Durgapur as a process just has started. It can sustain through ensuring more support to the new people's organisations and through capacity development of local young community leaders with disability, though currently the organisations are mostly represented by home-maker rural mothers. Income opportunities for individual with disability and financial ventures for the people's organisations can help them sustain, it is widely believed, as it has been demonstrated. The advocacy work with local communities and government non-government bodies like SMC is expected to have lasting effect. The impact of the project is demonstrated by the changes in the project partners, particularly in the local communities and SARPV towards increased capacity for disability mainstreaming.

The study recommends: pilot project leave the people's organisations in more stable status than now within the extended period, such organisation should have more capacity development support, the mainstreaming in education needs review and national advocacy campaign for better inclusive education should be strengthened, and advocacy and media campaigns for awareness nationwide is still a priority.

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## INTRODUCTION

'Mainstreaming the Children and People with Disability through People's Organisations' is one major project in recent times as well as the central programme for decades of SARPV.

SARPV ran a 3 year (September 2008 – August 2011) pilot project, under the auspices of Bangladesh Freedom Foundation. In the union of Durgapur in Kapasia upazilla of Gazipur district the project was accomplished.

The purpose was to strengthen the union or ward based people's organisations (in particular, Disabled People's Organisations- DPOs) in a sustaining way so that they mainstream the children and people with disability and make people aware about disability towards an attitudinal change in favour people with disability through their own participation.

SARPV commissioned this study considering that the project had made a significant impact on overall development programmes and processes in the project location in mainstreaming people with disability. Within the scopes of the project plan and budget, in consultation with its funding organisation BFF, SARPV commissioned this independent study to understand such impact.

The project location for piloting the concept of 'Mainstreaming People with Disability through People's Organisations' was selected as one adjacent to SARPV's similar project, running in larger scale with different strategies, in Kapasia. The project location was chosen considering its backwardness and newness in terms of mainstreaming intervention.

This study is neither an evaluation, nor a full impact study, looking into the direct causality relationship between the input and outputs, or the quality of the intervention. The study looks for the changes that the project partners consider have taken place because of the project intervention.

It compiles the verses “straight from the horse's mouth” and matches with the evidences, as outlined in short case-studies of persons and incidences.

This report is designed in following parts: Description of the project and the implementing organisation SARPV; Introduction to the study and its methodology; Key findings from the opinions of the project partners; Analysis of the findings; Recommendations; and Conclusion.

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# 1. THE PROJECT AND THE ORGANISATION

## *Organisation Background and the Project*

SARPV has been working for mainstreaming and pursuing group technique for addressing challenges of disability at both grassroots and national levels.

In earlier days, the work for establishing disability as a development issue in line with mainstreaming disability equality through national and regional campaigns has seen major progresses in inclusion of disability as a cross-cutting concern by major non-government organisations- national and international, in their respective development activities.

In rural settings, the development work in the field of disability was accomplished through the joint work with groups of people with disability across villages in a number of districts. SARPV worked with the concerned families of people with disability, so that overall family development is practised through pursuits of SARPV's mandatory 5-Practices<sup>1</sup> for rural families engaged with SARPV.

The long term engagement with such communities has resulted in that people with disability are mainstreamed in diverse capacities in SARPV's project areas. For example, SARPV's achievement then in 1994 in securing 0.5% of development budget of a Union Parishad (Fashikhali, Chakaria, Cox's Bazaar) for local people with disability has made dramatic progresses in recent years, now being 5% in Fashikhali and around 5% in some other Unions, through an increased focus on work with the local government and local communities for mainstreaming disability equality.

Starting from early days of 1990s, SARPV tried to engage community people to work with groups of people with disability working for their respective betterment. The loans administered to cyclone affected people with disability were monitored and managed by the local community leaders free of cost during 1991-92. Engaging and empowering community people and experts in delivering services for people with disability have been central in SARPV's work. SARPV arranged high-professional training for educated youths on physiotherapy, assistive device production, teaching children with disability and placed the trained people in local community. SARPV invited professionals and had them interacting with people with disability and their parents for advocating the changes that can benefit all.

<sup>1</sup>SARPV proposes five mandatory practices for its programme beneficiaries at rural settings:

- Ensure accessible and hygienic latrine, neat and clean surroundings, and a pot- hole in the homestead yard to dump the household wastes;
  - Arrange for pure drinking water and better sunlight and air circulation for living houses;
  - 2 fruit-trees, 2 wood-trees and preferably some herbal trees in homestead yard;
  - Raise poultry or livestock;
  - Send children to schools.
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## 1. THE PROJECT AND THE ORGANISATION

Besides all the above, decade long experience in inclusive education programmes has empowered SARPV to try out more result-oriented and community-driven programmes like this pilot project. SARPV's pilot project 'Mainstreaming the Children and People with Disability through People's Organisations' has its roots in SARPV's another similar project on disability mainstreaming being carried out for several years in Gazipur and Cox's Bazaar.

### *Project Goals and Objectives*

The project aims at mainstreaming children and people with disability through forming sustainable people's organisations at wards and unions in Durgapur through following objectives-

- to strengthen people's organisations at wards and unions in Durgapur through participation of local people;
- to enrol all school-age children with disability in union of Durgapur through people's organisations;
- to make inhabitants of the union aware about disability and help them form positive attitude towards disability through people's organisations.

### *Project Area*

Durgapur is one of the three Unions of Kapasia that are situated on the west side of the Shitalakkhya that divides Kapasia Upazilla of 11 Unions in two parts in the district of Gazipur. It is assumed to have a population of around forty thousand (40000), according to an estimated increase of around 20% from its earlier census population of 33355 (16740 females, 16615 males). As per SARPV's disability sample survey conducted at Kapasia in June 2006, the disability prevalence rate is 5.78%, what suggests that 2312 persons are experiencing disability in Kapasia.

At Durgapur, no disability focussed programmes or organisations were functioning before the project intervention. A sample survey at Durgapur at the beginning of SARPV's intervention registered that 94.11% people with disability were found to have no incomes or education opportunities. A negative attitude about capacity of people with disability was registered, what was distinctly demonstrated by the responding families through their non-compliance of compulsory primary education for respective children with disability. It was opined then that children with disability could not learn, nor get any job to earn even after any education.

The project challenged the very notion described above, and accordingly focussed on education and income opportunities through active roles of people with disability.

Road communication inside Durgapur is awfully poor. Apart from inter-district and inter-union roads, majority of roads inside Durgapur are earth roads. Roads are often narrow and with pot-holes for erosion of soil by rains. The service infrastructure in Kapasia ranks far below the national average. Characterised by forests, water-bodies, and cultivation of agriculture produces and fish, Kapasia is more characterized by its bad old road communication for decades.

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## 2. STUDY

### *Study Objectives*

- to identify and better understand the impact of the strengthening people's organisations of people with disability as per project targets in disability mainstreaming;
- to document the impact related evidences;
- to provide a foundation for further extensive assessment and inputs to the sought development targets.

### *Scopes of the Study*

- Review of the project documents namely- approved proposal, base-line information, project reports, reviews and feedbacks, project records and documentations, including audio-video, texts and photographs, and relevant organisational documents namely- Annual reports, mandate, etc., to understand the evidences of changes as recorded;
- Interaction with the project partners, to assess qualitatively the understanding about changes as they perceive.
- Project and study location is centred around only the Durgapur Union of Kapasia Thana in Gazipur district, and the concerned groups of people with disability and representatives of their various partners.

### *Methodology*

Mainly qualitative data are collected to have an understanding of the impact, what people consider the observed changes as part of the project results. It also uses relevant project monitoring and review data and documents, as are planned, prepared and/or made available.

Impact areas as outlined jointly in the project proposal are as follows:

- Sustainable organisation under leadership of a tested member from the group in terms of independence from SARPV as a direct project implementer;
  - Finance of the organisation's work coming from a diverse local sources including local government support, local people's contribution besides members' contributions, and investment in income generating projects involving usage of khas (govt.) land and resources;
  - Pro-growth environment and facilities for education in local schools for children with disability; and
  - Pro-growth and supportive environment for people with disability in general.
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## 2. STUDY

Key questions the study made to the project partners in order to understand the impact of the project are as follow:

- What has changed, particularly because of the project? Are the changes due to something different other than the project? The changes in themselves were also inquired from all mentioned project partners. Where possible, evidences of such referred changes, were explored.
- Is the change significant for the local community, particularly for the people with disability?
- Will the change last without further intervention?

Additionally, the project learning in general is inquired with the project partners.

Key activities of the study include:

- Focussed group discussions with the representatives of the project partners;
- Case-studies preparation on a prescribed format about the changes (inquiring for significant ones) reported by project partners; and
- Interviews of the representatives of the project partners.

Specifically, the study analysed the opinions of the project partners, collected according to the key questions, in order to understand the following in relation to corresponding impact:

- Achievements of the project in mainstreaming disability, particularly enrolling students with disability in local educational institutes and increasing access of people with disability to local services and provisions;
  - Sustainability of the project initiatives and the project relevance; and
  - Achievements in influencing policy towards increased mainstreaming.
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### 3. MAJOR PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

The project has major focus on the education of children with disability and the people's organisations of people with disability.

#### *Achievements of the project in three years' period*

- a) People's organisations are formed in three wards of Durgapur Union - one in each of bigger/former ward - comprising of a total of 158 members, majority (94) being females, by the people with disability. Members are either personally experiencing disability or representing a family member with disability. Increased capacity has been demonstrated by the associated people with disability towards their increased presence and participation in the society after the project intervention.
- b) Trainings (12 sessions) for members of the people's organisations are arranged on the disability and organisational issues like Advocacy and Rights of people with disability and the United Nations Convention on Rights of People with Disability (UNCRPD), Leadership, Organisational management and monitoring, and the trade skills like that of tailoring including stitching with a machine.
- c) Awareness and advocacy meetings, numbering sixty-six (66), are held with local school/market authorities and committees and local government authorities by the members of the people's organisations jointly with SARPV facilitators.
- d) School-age children with disability, numbering 30 (thirty), are enrolled in local educational institutes.
- e) SARPV's '5-Principle' has been introduced to the families linked to the people's organisations, the reported benefits in terms of monetary gains and better home environment are praiseworthy.

#### *Achievements of the newly formed people's organisations*

- a) Raised a fund of around 17000 through collecting local donations and members' voluntary contributions.
- b) Arranged by themselves training of 20 (twenty) members with disability on sewing and stitching and cutting, with support from outside, rather than from SARPV.
- c) Got 4 (four) persons with disabilities employed locally.

#### *Govt services arranged for members of newly-formed people's organisations*

- a) Disability allowance: 44 people with disability (20 females, 24 males);
  - b) Educational stipend: 9 children with disability (3 girls and 6 boys);
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### 3. MAJOR PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

- c) Interest free loan: 8 people with disability (5 females and 3 males), totalling taka 80000;
- d) 'Work for Food' programme: 5 people with disability (2 females and 3 males);
- E) Old-age allowance: 3 people with disability;
- f) Training on trade-skill: 3 people with disability (Youth development and Livestock Departments).

#### *Local assistance arranged for members of newly-formed people's organisations*

- a) Land for three meeting rooms for three organisations, and their sign-boards (Three local inhabitants);
- b) Building materials like Tin (corrugated iron sheets, bamboo, wooden frame, concrete pillars, earth-filling for raised floor, plastic and bamboo-fences), building on-going (A number of local inhabitants);
- c) Three (3) sewing machines handed over, 2 more committed (Local Market Traders Committee);
- d) 'No fare' for people with disability travelling from and to Durgapur Union (Bus Owners' Society);
- e) A congenial environment for betterment of local people with disability will be fostered as evident through an open commitment for cooperation and joint action by local bodies (School Management Committees-SMCs, Local Market Traders' Committee, Local journalists).

#### *Major outside-locality support*

It is arranged from another disability focussed organisation named Centre for Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP), based at Savar. CRP imparts training to people with disability on garments' jobs and machines (sewing and stitching), and place trained persons in some garments factories with who CRP maintains a referral relationship. Adults with disability who can afford to arrange time long three-month training at CRP, Savar, having minimum skills and knowledge as specified by CRP, are being referred to CRP.

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## 4. OPINIONS COLLECTED FROM PROJECT PARTNERS

Six focus group discussions were held with the three people's organizations and the representatives of the community and local government representatives.

Six interviews were conducted of community people and responsible staff members of SARPV and BFF.

Besides, detailed data in a prescribed case-study format, numbering 20, about the selected change-stories was collected.

The following summary presents the opinions collected from three groups of project partners about the project.

### *Significant Changes.....*

#### *A) Members of people's organisations*

- Became informed and aware about disability and available services for the first time, save information from television;
- Came to know more about neighbours with disability, prevailing in such a huge number in near vicinity, what was little known;
- Ensured and became confident of securing rights for people with disability through collective efforts;
- Work with teachers and school committees proved helpful for enrolling students with disability;
- Jobs and loans after skill training for small trades and businesses increased confidence in people with disability;
- Used homestead and family resources for more incomes and better home-environment.

#### *B) Local community and government bodies*

- Became informed and aware about disability and about the unprecedented prevalence of people with disability around, what was little known and understood;
  - Checked for unusual absence of enrolled children with disability (/primary school teacher, SMC member).
  - Work for people with disability and disability mainstreaming is new in the locality of Durgapur;
  - People with disability and their families are more aware and active to look for opportunities for their family members with disability because of the project.
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## 4. OPINIONS COLLECTED FROM PROJECT PARTNERS

### *C) SARPV and BFF*

- Emphasize capacity development of community member with disability for their organising themselves (through shared roles and responsibility) and recognised its importance community level work in all project locations;
- Emphasized practice of SARPV's 5-Principle for rural development work in all its project locations;
- Found increased understanding about roles and responsibility for people with disability amongst local partners;
- Found better treatment to family member with disability at home with his/her increased income opportunity.

### *Significance of Changes.....*

#### *A) Members of people's organisations*

- Children with disability are more enrolled in schools and having stipends, teachers become more considerate;
- More members with disability are receiving govt safety net services like disability allowances, loans and training;
- People with disability are more active and respected in respective locality, people in general are more aware and cooperative than they were before;
- Parents are now active to develop their child with disability;
- Changes in economic status and organised presence of people with disability earn them social recognition. Neighbours now address them by respective names, people in general and local administration show better attitude to them.

#### *B) Local community and government bodies*

- Became more informed of rights and aware about dignity of people with disability;
  - Became aware education for children with disability can more be ensured through local schools;
  - Work can augment increased government focus on, commitment to and efforts for people with disability and their well-being as rights, as per UNCRPD and the disability laws and provisions;
  - Better reach of government services to people with disability through their local organisations is possible.
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## 4. OPINIONS COLLECTED FROM PROJECT PARTNERS

### C) *SARPV and BFF*

- Gaps in coverage of existing services by local government decreased.

### *Sustainability of Changes.....*

#### A) *Members of people's organisations*

- Increased interactions will be done with the local influential and business people;
- People with disability and their families will form and run local organisations with own initiatives and funds, and combine forces of other similar organisations nearby to campaign for gaps and violations of rights;
- Through skill training and scopes for work from homes, particularly for readymade cloths, mini-garments can be set up by people with disability in the locality;
- More local organisers will be trained with the support of facilitating organisations like SARPV to run and develop the organisations and expand its work for other locality, for other people with disability;
- Only one organisation is progressing well, so more support is needed for other organisations and respective leaders, till they attain certain level of performance. However, if the three organisations jointly approach for increased provisions and better services for them.

#### B) *Local community and government bodies*

- More support needed for better leadership by trained members with disability for these people's organisations;
- More interactions needed with the local community and local government offices by competent representatives of the organisations for mobilising local available resources.

### C) *SARPV and BFF*

- Scopes for income generation for the groups after training and access to govt resources are proven.
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## 4. OPINIONS COLLECTED FROM PROJECT PARTNERS

### *Learning from the work.....*

#### *A) Members of people's organisations*

- People with disability are not burden for families or to be left behind at home;
- If adults with disability got specific training on any trade skills that have market demand, they can join the mainstream work-force;
- Collective work and economic capacity place people with disability at a better social status;

#### *B) Local community and government bodies*

- Local organisations of people with disability can better refer deserving people with disability and report on problems of disability;

#### *C) SARPV and BFF*

- There is a huge need of proper information on disability and appropriate services for 'people with disability and their parents' as well as for 'community and local bodies- govt and non-govt';
- Lack of information and referrals for people with disability and their communities at rural level warrants attention;
- Shared project responsibility with local member with disability is cost-effective;
- Work on one project locations does not ensure changes in situations in adjacent areas without any interventions;
- Increased focus on SARPV's five principles for all rural programmes can ensure better family performance;
- Any programme or project for organising people with disability, particularly in a wide geographical area and poor development background, should have provisions for assistive devices and do a proper need-assessment of the people to be engaged.

### *Recommendations for sustaining the changes.....*

#### *A) Members of people's organisations*

- Facilitation for easy procurement of disability certificate for all the local people with disability.
  - Trained special teachers and training of special teaching for local schools and educational institutes.
  - Facilitation for increased credit support and training on trade-skills.
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## 4. OPINIONS COLLECTED FROM PROJECT PARTNERS

### ***B) Local community and government bodies***

- Registration of local organisations for securing govt allocations and support-services;
- Expansion of disability focussed work in other unions of Kapasia, particularly in locations with poor local communication facilities;
- Independence of local organisations through ensuring long-range financially benefiting ventures for them out of government provisions.

### ***C) SARPV and BFF***

- Continuation of the support under a revised plan for the new organisations towards their increased independence.
  - Short and long range business plans of the people's organisations towards their increased responsibility.
  - Better organizational functions and documentation and increased networking with disability focused organizations.
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## 5. ANALYSIS

### *Piloting*

The BFF-SARPV project is a pilot one. Similar projects with somewhat different approaches and strategies have been being carried out in much larger scale- by volume of work coverage and money-wise, in nearby two unions of Kapsasia by SARPV and MJF, now for a total period of 6-7 years, 2006-2012.

This BFF-SARPV pilot project tried to look into the role of people's organisations in disability mainstreaming where increased shared responsibility, compared to SARPV's other earlier group approach involving people with disability, from the very beginning was practised. Mainstreaming disability equality by organisations of people with disability through their leadership is however also the current day national priority.<sup>2</sup> This piloting is well-timed.

However, proper documentation of the pilot process by the project partners is found to be lacking. Hugely varying achievements of the three people's organisations imply that piloting is still in progress.

### *Other factors contributing to the changes*

The project achievements as outlined in this report, as are compiled from various project documents- narrated in terms of outputs, outcomes and results, and after verification through interactions with the project partners, can be credited direct to this project as the project location appears to be quite void of any disability intervention before.

The local people from the project partners talked about television messages about disability, the local authority referred to government notifications about disability and current-day emphasis and national campaigns, particularly the ones involving UNCRPD and national law. However, the changes reported are found to be new, as per opinions of the local people with disability and community members.

Other than these, the earlier work of another disability centred organisation named CRP in the locality is little referred to, but the new relation with the CRP (training and referral for jobs in the garments industry) for the members with disability is believed to be due to certain faint linkages and contacts.

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<sup>2</sup> National Disability Policy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (Article 13, Dec 1995) outlines that the state's policies in support of the collective effort of people with disabilities through provisioning leadership qualities and self-reliant programs and self awareness programs towards movement by and for people with disabilities. The Disability Welfare Act in 2001 reaffirms the state's support, particularly for leadership development training at different administrative levels, self-reliant organizations and seminars, workshops, and such other similar activities for experience sharing and exchanging ideas for people with disabilities and their organizations (Articles 2, Article 6.2, Article J). The implementation of the UNCRPD also entails organizational roles of people with disabilities and the representative organizations of people with disabilities (Articles 4.3, 29b, 32.1, and 33.3). It is noteworthy, the constitution of Bangladesh proclaims that the attaining the public assistance in cases of underserved want arising out of disablement will be a fundamental responsibility of the state (Art. 15, Part II, Constitution of Bangladesh 1972).

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## 5. ANALYSIS

Obviously, SARPV's work in other two unions of Kapasia has facilitated the work in a complete new and untouched location like Durgapur. Because of such a backstage support base, SARPV could venture into engaging local people with disability with shared responsibility for the project. SARPV's experiences in the MJF-SARPV project in the other Kapasia unions have been useful.

The people's organisations are found to be predominantly comprising of females. Be they be mothers of a child with disability or women with disability, the female members of the people's organisations outnumber their male counter-parts. The evident gender bias might be linked to the current-day inherent component of development programmes, particularly gender mainstreaming as well as disability mainstreaming.<sup>3</sup> These people made things happen. The outcome is welcoming.

### *Mainstreaming*

People with disability are mainstreamed in the society of Durgapur to a considerable extent, compared to their earlier position, through the pilot project, though in a very limited number. At least in two areas the evident changes are demonstrated what can be said without much in-depth study into the scenario:

- increase in students with disability in local schools, and
- increase in number of people with disability in safety-net and local trades and business.

The encouraging enrolment<sup>4</sup> of school-age children with disability, the listing people with disability for government services, the support provisions for and the

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<sup>3</sup> The regional framework of action titled the 'Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF)' proposes the following two priority areas for action (out of the seven), to the agreeing governments, stakeholders, self-help groups or organizations of people with disabilities and people with disabilities themselves in the ESCAP region, as the central for attaining an inclusive, barrier-free and rights based society for people with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific over the decade 2003-2012:

- Self help organizations of people with disabilities and related family and parental associations, and
- Women with disabilities;

with its roots in the international disability movement, with a motto "Nothing About Us Without Us", denoting a fundamental shift in the perspective towards a principle of participation and the integration of people with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

<sup>4</sup> Compared to the national average of primary school-going aged children with disability being enrolled in schools 4% as per recent study by NFOWD (Disability Rights Watch Group Bangladesh, 2009) or 11% as per an earlier concept note (A H M Noman Khan, 2005), the achieved figure of 30 children for an estimated population of 40000 in Durgapur, with around 6% disability prevalence for around 10% school age children, accounts for around 12% enrolment, only by the project.

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## 5. ANALYSIS

participation of local people with disability towards their increased visibility (as assumed from discussion) suggest more people with disability have joined in the mainstream of Durgapur.

Increased understanding and awareness about and recognition of the marginalised position of the people with disability in the locality and their challenges are demonstrated by families of the people with disability and the community people and local government representatives. The support and commitment by the local community for the organised groups of people with disability for letting them have increased access to economic and academic arena and social services is evident.

However, compared to the needs and preparations for mainstreaming of people with disability in Durgapur, the quality and the capacity demands serious revision and huge augmentation. Also support for people with disability in particular local contexts is to be customised and provided by disability focussed or disability sensitive organisations and relevant professionals, what is lacking in Durgapur, if SARPV's presence is not counted.

Schools are not ready to properly teach the students with disability, as claimed by school teachers, concerned parents and school management authority. However, inclusive education opportunity in line with the SALAMANKA declaration<sup>5</sup> entails provisioning of enhanced trainings of teachers, adequate materials and support health and special education departments, taking care that children with disability get access to quality education at the nearest centres, with prior assessment of special needs. The mainstreaming process at the grassroots level confronts the daunting challenge in the face of much needed preparations and provisions on part of the educational institutes or the state in terms of having training on disability and special education, trained teachers, and one special teacher lacking.

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<sup>5</sup> . . . ensure that the education of persons with disabilities is an integral part of the education system. . . schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. . . (with) 'special educational needs' . . . from disabilities or learning difficulties. . . Schools have to find ways of successfully educating all children, including those who have serious disadvantages and disabilities . . . special schools or units within inclusive schools may continue to provide the most suitable education for the relatively small number of children with disabilities who cannot be adequately served in regular classrooms or schools . . . Educational policies at all levels, from the national to the local, should stipulate that a child with a disability should attend the neighbourhood school that is, the school that would be attended if the child did not have a disability. . . The practice of 'mainstreaming' children with disabilities should be an integral part of national plans for achieving education for all. Even in those exceptional cases where children are placed in special schools, their education need not be entirely segregated. Part-time attendance at regular schools should be encouraged. . . The success of the inclusive school depends considerably on early identification, assessment and stimulation of the very young child with special educational needs. Early childhood care and education programmes for children aged up to 6 years ought to be developed and/or re-oriented to promote physical, intellectual and social development and school readiness. . . (Excerpt)

## 5. ANALYSIS

However, it deserves mention the planned extension of primary schooling from class five up to class eight as per current national policy<sup>6</sup> will surely benefit the children with disability in general, given the current scenario of majority of children with disability who are trying to study are completing only primary education, if they are properly accommodated in the proposed inclusive education system. It is observed in the project location, children with disability generally do not continue education outside their locality after the primary school. (Please see the corresponding photo-story.)

As a process, the project appears to have such mainstreaming just started in Durgapur, and is creating a demand at the grassroots' level for better mainstreaming support and services.

Though the achievements in enrolling children with disability in school and increasing income opportunities for a number of people with disability and organising them for further mainstreaming campaign are notable, the mainstreaming in the wider context, particularly in health, employment, movement, access to legal entitlements as well as quality mainstreaming in all such sectors of life are far-off. The look into such factors was beyond the scopes of the study.

### *Sustainability*

The people's organisations and the respective members are aspirant. They are expected to procure support from diverse community bodies- government and non-government, individuals and themselves. The strategy to approach local communities, authorities and local government authorities form the very beginning is considered to have helped the people's organisations have confidence in continuing their work with local support. The advocacy efforts by SARPV and the people's organisations are found to have produced good results and profound influence on the audience, the local community, as is demonstrated by the support services generated from them out of pursuits and requests by the people's organisations.

Through sensitising the School Management Committees (SMC) attached to local primary schools, the project promoted participation of guardians of children with disability in such committees as well as enrolment of such children into local schools. The changed strategy of local schools despite their limitations is

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<sup>6</sup> Besides emphasis on inclusive school, 100% enrolment of all children, irrespective disability - mild to severe, of hearing, physical, speech, visual, intellectual/learning difficulties - for universal, compulsory and equal quality education is the current policy directive. For an inclusive education system, assessment of disability of children and accordingly arrangement of special provisions in general school (accessibility of schools, training of teachers in general about special teaching, disability inclusion in teachers' training curriculum, and in each educational institute one special teacher) with high preference to meeting the identified varying special needs of individual student with disability, are proclaimed as the policy targets. (Summary)

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## 5. ANALYSIS

welcoming. It is reported by the participating teachers in the FGDs that children with disability in the schools are learning themselves and causing others to learn mutual socializing behaviours. It is expected to cause a sustaining result.

Voluntary work of the members is considered to continue and help the organisations grow, provided that a number of local leaders are trained and developed. However, organisations are found to be heavily represented by and dependent on mothers and include a considerable figure of older people with disability. A few young people with disability are found to mainly active and vocal for these new organisations. While such mothers in rural contexts have limitations for contributing time and efforts for long advocacy campaigns, the dependence on the few young people with disability is expressed.

Despite varying performances of the three organisations, as expressed by themselves, they consider exchanges and joint actions by the three groups can help them overcome future growth challenges for individual organisation, even if SARPV decide not to continue their work.

More economic activities of the organisations and income opportunities for the members are believed by the concerned to support joint work and build the organisations.

### *Policy level changes*

The study finds that policy level changes in enrolment of children with disability have been practised at the project locations through the SMCs.

Special attentions as demonstrated and committed by the local business community and the local government officials and representatives suggest some changes in them towards mainstreaming disability equality.

Project learning and subsequent changes in practice in different projects and programmes by SARPV suggest that SARPV itself has reviewed and revised its work due to the experience of this pilot project.

As BFF underwent massive changes in man-power and mandate, the study could not look into any specific changes due to the project that have taken place in the BFF and its operations.

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## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) The pilot project should be augmented by the provisions for the growth and functioning of the newly formed people's organisations up to a certain level till a planned exit programme.

Project achievements are interesting and inspiring and they are expected to sustain to certain level no doubt, but more extensively through certain carefully planned interventions, to be customised for three different people's organisations. Merging the project with the bigger similar project of SARPV, supported by MJF, can help SARPV proceed to that effect, what SARPV is currently pursuing. It can be a good opportunity to complete the pilot project with more interesting results.

- b) The people's organisations of people with disability in villages like the ones formed through the project should be given more capacity development support for continued growth and expansion to reach the majority people with disability, who are yet to take part in any development efforts.
- c) The project findings and processes should be further reviewed for assessing the quality and scopes of mainstreaming, particularly in the areas of the education of children with disability.

Despite the obvious achievements and in-depth learning for the concerned, more in-depth look into the processes and outcomes of such an important piloting can have bearing on national development plans and wider disability mainstreaming programmes.

- d) A strong national advocacy campaign should be run in order to ensure better provisions for supporting inclusive schools at village level, while mainstreaming campaigns at all level continues.
  - e) Advocacy and media campaigns for awareness about disability should be incorporated and continued in all development initiatives by both government machinery and non-governments actors like NGOs, civil society in order to reach the people living in marginalised status with available information.
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## 7. CONCLUSION

Unlike many other pilot works, what are generally reviewed and analyzed internally rather than being published and publicly shared, this project is being reviewed for the outcomes and impacts for the others concerned beyond its partners, what is very welcoming.

The project matches national and global priorities of an increasing focus on working with people with disabilities towards their getting organized and working collectively for realizing their rights themselves through their representative organizations.

The pilot project to mainstream people and children with disability through their own organisations and with an increased support from the local community and authority appears to be a promising one to be replicated and scaled up.

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## 8. CASE STUDIES

### *1. Getting admission in primary school finally.....*

Sourav of village Raunat at Durgapur Union has speech impairment since his birth. Considering the challenges in communicating with him, the local primary school authority at first declined to admit him.

When Sourav's parents joined the people's organisation named Alor Poth, the members along with SARPV staff members approached the school authority and convinced them to admit Sourav. Alor Poth also lobbied with the school authority and ensured the government educational stipend for Sourav, so that his landless farmer father did not need to worry about some of the costs of Sourav's schooling.

Sourav's parents realized that they would not be able to educate their only son unless they joined the people's organisation. They knew so little about available services and provisions and the disability campaigns in and outside their locality!

### *2. Teachers looking for the student they once declined to admit.....*

Emon's mother considers that now a days the teachers from the primary school inquire about Emon's absence from school, because the people's organisation have duly counselled the school authority.

She credits the change to the people's organisation she belongs to as a representative of her son. She recalls the time, just a couple of years ago, when her son was not considered fit to study in the school.

Emon lost partial capacity of one hand and one leg in 2003. Emon's mother needs to spend the time of his school-hours at the school, so that hyperactive Emon can not affect other peers' study much.

### *3. Little guidance and support changing life overnight.....*

Amena did not continue her study after class five, as she found it too challenging to walk down to school on foot along the long earthen roads. Her parents also accepted it. Her both legs lost functions severely after a fever during her childhood.

She was married off early by her parents. After having two children in the eight years' conjugal life, her husband left her. She returned to her parents with two kids.

After joining the people's organisation Ashar Prodip, Amena came to know about the government services and allowances. She enrolled herself for the disability allowance, and had a short training on operating a sewing machine. SARPV approached another disability focussed organisation CRP who arranged longer training for the garments industry. They had also a good referral arrangement for placing trained people in local garments factory. When Amena completed a longer training on operating a commercial sewing machine, she was employed by a local sweater factory to work as a machine operator. Now Amena is working outside her village home and earning herself the very livelihoods that she was worried of after her husband had left her.

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## 8. CASE STUDIES

### *4. Local organiser demonstrates competence for fellow people.....*

Masud leads the people's organisation Ashar Prodig at Raniganj. Education has enlightened him to do more in life, not to get confined at home.

Masud always walks on hands. He lost capacity of both legs during early childhood days, he considered for polio. He prefers not to use any assistive device as no suitable one can really offer him increased accessibility in his locality of Gazipur, characterized by very bad earthen road communication.

After primary school, he did not go to far-off high school. He continued the study in the nearby madrasa, with help and encouragement of his family members. His elder sister taught him first at home. She and other family members started carrying him up and down to near-by schools and madrasas.

Masud decided to explore the challenges around- in far-off colleges, offices, and the offered services centred around cities and towns going on hands. As the leader of his local organization he has formed with the support of the SARPV project he is confident of taking all children to schools.

Disability of the state can be challenged only by a few exceptions like Masud.

### *5. Local people give land for people's organisations.....*

Each of the three people's organisations have procured some land from local benevolent persons and built their office room on it. The 10ft by 20ft piece of land beside the road is given for allowing the members of people's organisation to hold meetings. When the organisations started holding regular meetings alternately at respective houses and painted their organisational signboards, community people grew interested in them and on consultation offered what they could do.

The original land-owner in Raniganj says, "I have given them the land, with a hope that these people will develop a factory of their own here so that other people with disability can be trained here and they can work here. I know they are trained on sewing and stitching and they are procuring sewing machines from local business persons. They can set up their garments factory here. My daughter in law is leading the organisation, I personally feel obligated to do more for them. I commit to give more space if needed to set a permanent income generating project like a factory. I can also legally transfer the land for them." The land-owner in Fulbaria also expressed the same determination, "If I need to officially register my donated land for them, I can do. But you need to ensure that they are given the necessary equipment and training. They need to have skills to earn from here and demonstrate their capacity to raise funds like other organisation."

The act of giving was followed by others in the locality donating tin (corrugated iron sheets) for roof, wooden frame and concrete pillars for hosting the roof, and plastic sheets or fences for walls. The offices of organisations are being developed with the community support.

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## 8. CASE STUDIES

### *6. Local observer comes forward to join the people's organisation....*

Shahnaz came to know about the people's organisation 'Protikkha' when she was invited to their community meeting. She attended the meeting as an observer. She, however, welcomed the process, understanding the need for such an organisation in their locality as the road communication was not good and no development organisations, particularly any disability-focussed ones, were functioning there. She was maintaining close relationship with the group.

Once she came to know about certain difficulties of the organisation, when the former local organiser left the job and the organising committee of 'Protikkha' was struggling with their accounts and campaigns, on persuasion by the SARPV facilitator, she came forward expressing her desire to work for them as the local organiser.

Shahnaz considers the organisation is not only of the people with disability, rather of the community people; not for the benefit of the people with disability, rather for the community people.

### *7. Challenges for compulsory primary education of children with disability.....*

Subarna is learning to copy, teenager Eba once excelled in exams but left study while Ainu has recently got into adulthood but had left study several years ago after passing out the primary few classes.

Challenges for them have been different; they are growing up in the same locality with different support bases and family backgrounds. Government's emphasis on disability mainstreaming and education for all and the relentless persuasion of the local organisations like Ashar Prodip need to combine in order to make big changes through such enrolments.

Yet they demonstrate for many like them a same fate, their academic feats will be same; they all are destined to complete only primary education maximum up to class five, in oddly varying quality, as long as it is available in nearby schools.

Enrolling such students more in primary school may affect the overall performance of the school, the fear is expressed by a member in the school management committee. In order to hide drop-outs of these students or bad performance of the school sometimes linked to such students like Subarna, Eba, or Sumon with speech-hearing impairments, the school authority rather prefers to allow them to schools without registering properly.

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## 8. CASE STUDIES

### *8. Business community's interest to work for people with disability.....*

Members of the people's organisation Alor Poth approached the local market committee (Raunat Notun Bazaar) to have their contribution to their initiatives. They demonstrated that the training on sewing and stitching enabled people with disability, particularly womenfolk, to work and at home and earn.

After consultation, three persons with disability were employed as guards at road-crossings. Contributions for setting up the office rooms on the land given by local people were given by such market committees in Raunat and Raniganj. While support for setting a village shop for a member with disability was raised by a people's organisation, the commodities for sale were procured on credit and on soft terms from business communities and others lending organisations.

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## 8. GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS AS MEANT BY THE STUDY

### **Disability**

When genetic causes, diseases or accidents limit physical or intellectual development or functions of a person, permanently or for a prolonged period, and as a result when that person is deprived of having access to his/her all rights as a citizen and is not accepted equally like others in the society due to existing barriers, that is disability.

### **Impact**

Changes expected to sustain and augment themselves towards the sought changes by the specific project.

### **Mainstreaming**

Disability mainstreaming is the process to create a society where no person with disability faces any economic, environmental or social barrier and she/he is equally accepted, included and involved in the society.

### **People's Organisation**

People's organisations are formed to ensure the right to voice, right to food, right to education through advocacy with the policy makers and concern authorities, particularly for people with disability. They are slightly different versions of disabled people's organisations (DPOs) for this project. Unlike SARPV's earlier groups in other locations, organisations in Durgapur are developed in such a way that they depend more on local communities and people for their various needs and support from the very beginning. One local person with disability leads the new organisation as well as works for the facilitating organisation like SARPV.

### **Project partners**

Project partners are considered as who contribute to the project concept and its implementation for expected results through providing finance, labour, technical and organising support, counselling, time, participation, and whatsoever in agreement. For this project, they are mainly comprised of:

1. People with disability in newly formed people's organisations in Durgapur and respective families;
2. Local communities at Durgapur and the local government bodies who took part in the project in various capacities;
3. SARPV and Bangladesh Freedom Foundation.

### **Strengthening of People's Organisation**

Training for organisational growth and practical work to demonstrate capacity to grow with support from local bodies.

### **Sustainability**

Organisations of local people, particularly of people with disability, functioning and growing for betterment of local people with disability with support of the local bodies, organisations and institutions.

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## MAINSTREAMING THROUGH ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES



*Sewing Machine Distribution by local business community*



*Supporting a shop at the market place*



*Supporting Goat-rearing for income generation*

# Impact of Mainstreaming Children and People with Disability through People's Organisations

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*Acknowledgments*

People and People's Organisations of Durgapur:

**Alor Poth**  
**Ashar Prodip**  
**Protikkha**

**Local Government Officials and Representatives, Kapasia, Gazipur**  
**Toitomboor**

**SARPV Teams, Kapasia and Dhaka**  
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*Date of Publication*

**Dhaka, October 2011**  
an sarpv-aperture publication

*Publisher Contacts*



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