

# **Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF)**

## **Activity report**

**August 2019**

**We are concluded the following activities, during the period of August 2019 are as follows:**

### **1. Consultation Seminar:**

A consultation seminar on ‘**Unpacking the Role of Medico-Legal Evidence in Rape Cases**’ was being organized by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (**BLAST**) at the **Conference room of BLAST on 21 August 2019**. Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant Coordinator of WDDF participated in this workshop. Shirin Akhter interrogated that, whether the researcher has seen any Woman with Disability has gone to Forensic Department for test after having raped or not and whether Women with Disabilities have been included in her accomplished process of research or not. She requested that, whether Women with Disabilities haven’t been included, they should be included in the rest process of research. Shirin Akhter also mentioned that, rape victim Women with Disabilities have to face multifaceted challenges to prove rape cases due to having disability. So, rape law should be formulated considering the situation and challenges of all types of Women with Disabilities.

### **2. Press Conference:**

A press conference on the Convention against Torture (CAT) review session and the concluding observations was being organized by Human Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB) at Sagar Runi Hall, Dhaka Reporters Unity on 22 August 2019. Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant Coordinator of WDDF participated in this press conference. Shirin Akhter stated that, Persons with Disabilities are being tortured frequently specially Women with Disabilities are becoming victim of different types of violence but these cases aren’t being reported through mass media or social media. Besides, due to having tortured acutely, a number of citizens are becoming disabled but their situation and information aren’t being published. So, legislations and policies reformation under concluding observation of CAT should be disability inclusive simultaneously adopted initiatives in order to achieving the concluding observations of CAT should be disability inclusive.

### **3. Monthly NGO Coordination Meeting:**

A monthly NGO Coordination Meeting was being organized by District Commissioner at the Auditorium of DC office, on 22 August 2019. Md. Abdul Hai, Junior Assistant Coordinator of WDDF participated in this monthly NGO coordination meeting.

#### **4. Discussion meeting:**

A discussion meeting with the Demand Generation Officer (DGO) of Marie Stopes of Daudkandi Cumilla was being organized by WDDF at the office of Marie Stopes at 3.00 PM, 25 August 2019. Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director and office staffs of WDDF participated in this meeting. After having introduced about WDDF and representatives of WDDF, Ashrafun Nahar notified that, WDDF is going to start a project titled “Women Integrated Sexual Health (WISH)2 Action” with the support of Handicap International-Humanity Inclusion Bangladesh in order to delivering Family Planning and Reproductive health and sexual rights services to Women with Disabilities of Daudkandi. So, to continue the activities of the above mentioned project DGO’s cooperation is required. Mr. Noman Abbas, Demand Generation Officer, Marie Stopes was very sincere and cooperative and he promptly provided contact information of Upazila Health Officer of Daudkandi. He assured that, he will provide all types of required cooperation but we’ve to communicate with upazila and union health officers to obtain these services for Women with Disabilities through participating in monthly meeting regularly.

#### **6. Discussion meeting with Mayor of Daudkandi Powrasabha:**

A discussion meeting was held between the representatives of WDDF and the Mayor of Daudkandi Powrasabha in his office at 5.00 PM, on 25 August 2019 The representatives of Executive Council including the officials of WDDF attended in the above mentioned meeting. Mr. Nayeem Yusuf, Mayor of Daudkandi Powrasabha expressed his heartiest thanks to the representatives of WDDF. Afterwards, Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director of WDDF, on behalf of the representatives of WDDF, submitted a paper including the accomplishment, objectives along with a few proposals and Shirin Akhter, Chairperson of WDDF, submitted a brief report on the activities for the promotion and protection of the rights along with dignity of Women With Disabilities to the Mayor and call upon to express the solidarity on behalf of Rajshahi City Corporation to these issues. The representatives of WDDF also pointed out that, the building of Daudkandi Powrasabha and footpaths are inaccessible for Persons specially Women with Disabilities. Acknowledging this reality the Mayor told that, actually, this issue of accessibility isn’t being considered but it is immensely an important issue for building and designing an inclusive city for Persons specially Women with Disabilities and from this moment they will consider this issue in accordance with these proposals in the subsequent construction and designing of new buildings and footpaths. He also mention that, present Government is very compassionate to the Persons with Disabilities and very much committed to fulfill their demands. Above all, it is said that, in the present perspective, the adopted initiative by WDDF, of organizing this dialogue between the representatives of WDDF and the authority of Daudkandi Powrasabha in order to include Women with Disabilities in the mainstream of development by ensuring their equal rights along with dignity is really very time required and

effective. At the end of the discussion meeting, the representatives after having been attended in the above mentioned meeting expressed their satisfactory feelings and positive remarks.

## **7. Grassroots Women with Disabilities committee meeting:**

**A)** First discussion meeting with the Grassroots Women with Disabilities Committee of 'Gouripur' and 'Baropara' Daudkandi, Cumilla was being organized by WDDF, at WDDF branch office, Kanora, Baropara Union on 26 August 2019. This meeting is presided over Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, WDDF with the cooperation of Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson, Fatima Keya, Project Officer and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant Coordinator of WDDF.

The discussed issues of this meeting were:

- I)** Introductory session.
- II)** Discussion about name of this committee.
- III)** Discussion about definition and types of disability.
- IV)** Discussion about special initiatives for Persons with Disabilities.
- V)** Discussion about definition of Women Advancement Policy.
- VI)** Discussion about rights of Women with Disabilities.
- VII)** Miscellaneous.

**B)** Second discussion meeting with the Grassroots Women with Disabilities Committee of 'Sundalpur and 'Daudkandi Powrasabha' Daudkandi, Cumilla was being organized by WDDF, at WDDF branch office, Kanora, Baropara Union on 27 August 2019. This meeting is presided over Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, WDDF with the cooperation of Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson, Fatima Keya, Project Officer and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant Coordinator of WDDF.

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- VII)** Miscellaneous.

## **8. Focus Group Discussion:**

A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Women with Disabilities of General Council of WDDF on feminist movement was being organized with the initiative of WDDF at the Auditorium of Aronnobash resort, Pubail on 28 August 2019. Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, Ashrafun Nahar,

Executive Director and Samira Haque, Accounts Coordinator of WDDF were present in this Focus Group Discussion. Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director, WDDF discussed about the situation of Women with Disabilities in feminist movement with the participants. Shirin Akhter, Chairperson expressed her sincere thanks on behalf of WDDF for the spontaneous cooperation and participation of all participants. She also has mentioned that WDDF always raises strong voice for the proper inclusion of Women with Disabilities in feminist movement. After that Samira Haque, Accounts Coordinator distributed questionnaire and help them to fill up this questionnaire. Every participant has to fill up a questionnaire about their situation in feminist movement.

## 9. National Gathering:

A day long national gathering titled national gathering of Women with Disabilities was being organized with the initiative of WDDF at the Auditorium of Aronnobash resort, Pubail on 29 August 2019. Women with Disabilities of General Council of WDDF and public university, WDDF staffs and volunteers participated in this national gathering. This national gathering comprised four sessions including inaugural session and inaugural session contained following topics, i.e. welcome speech, introductory session and necessity and purpose of this national gathering. Welcome speech is being delivered by Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, WDDF. She welcomed all participants and said that, Women with Disabilities have to taught effective approach and method of leadership through this gathering otherwise leadership might be failure. Simultaneously she demonstrated some instructions to become attentive in this national gathering. After that, she facilitated introductory session where every participant introduced with each other. Following the introductory session, Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director, WDDF discussed about necessity and purpose of this national gathering for Women with Disabilities. She said that, Women with Disabilities should be united in order to promote and enhance leadership capacity through sharing knowledge, experiences and challenges with each other. Besides, the situation of Women with Disabilities in feminist movement and story of their inclusion in mainstream women movement would be highlighted in this national gathering. So, this national gathering will be played a vital role to enhance leadership capacity of Women with Disabilities through incorporating their issues in mainstream feminist movement. After having inaugural session been finished, First session was being started.

First session titled barriers of Women with Disabilities, **their situation in feminist movement and** their inclusion; facilitated by Rounak Jahan Usha, Treasurer, WDDF and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant Coordinator, WDDF. These two speakers focused on barriers of Women with Disabilities, their situation in mainstream feminist movement and simultaneously the barriers and challenges Women with Disabilities have to face to include them in mainstream feminist movement in their discussion.

After that, Second session titled leadership of Women with Disabilities and its amplification; facilitated by Ronak Jahan Usha, Treasurer, Shirmin Akter Dolon, General Council member, WDDF and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant Coordinator, WDDF. These three speakers focused on history of women movement, building leadership of Women with Disabilities through enhancing efficiency and experience, deprivation of Women with Disabilities from equity and justice and achieving and actualizing rights through leadership in their discussion.

Shirmin Akter Dolon shared her experience of representing as a Woman leader with Disability of WDDF in an international training titled “Women’s Institute of Leadership and Disability (WILD)” organized by Mobility International United States of America (MIUSA) and her learnings through participation in this training. She also shared about opportunities of scholarship for Persons/Women with Disabilities in USA.

In order to understanding equity and justice, all participants are being divided in to three groups and distributed a story with four questions covering equity and justice. It is seen in the story that, owner/father of a family distributed his property among his three children (Two sons and one daughter) equally though his elder son is non-disabled and both he and his wife are First class Government employees. On the other hand, his younger son has Physical Disability, works in a Non-Government school and his wife is a housewife.

So, it is clear that, his Son with Disability considering his disability and financial situation was deprived from equity and justice and most of the participants responded through justification of equity. This story was immensely important and very relevant with the session to understand about equality, equity and justice for all participants.

Third session titled adopted national legislation, international convention and documents in order to actualize the rights of Persons with Disabilities; facilitated by Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director, WDDF. At the starting of this session, Shirin Akhter discussed about how to prevent rape and some essential tips of keeping evidence and verifying the incidents of rape in order to growing awareness among Women with Disabilities.

Following this discussion, Shirin Akhter and Ashrafun Nahar focused on specific rights of Persons with Disabilities in the spirit of United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They emphasized on achieving perception of Women with Disabilities about specific articles of the abovementioned documents containing specific and fundamental rights of them and strategies of making advocacy with relevant authorities for actualizing these rights for improving their living standard.

The following articles of the above mentioned documents are being discussed:

A) United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD), e.g. Articles 6,13, 14, 15, 16, 24, 25, 27, 28 and 29.

B) Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013, e.g. Preserved rights of Persons with Disabilities in Schedule 16.

C) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), e.g. Goal 4, 8, 10, 11 and 16.

In conclusion, it is discussed that, Women with Disabilities should study and practice the techniques of advocacy for achieving and preserving their rights.

On the other hand, participants said that, this type of training is very significant and effective for them to strengthen their ideas, thoughts and practise simultaneously to prepare them as self advocate for making advocacy not only for them but also in broader level.

## **10. Executive Council Meeting:**

An Executive Council meeting was held at WDDF office, on 31 August 2019. There were almost eleven participants including office staffs. Seven agenda have been discussed including miscellaneous in this Executive Council meeting.

Prepared by

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