



WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (WDDF)
(AND ORGANIZATION OF AND BY THE WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES WORKING FOR ALL)

March 2018

We are concluded the following activities, during the period of March 2018 are as follows:


Discussion meeting on violence against women with Novel Laurets Women:

A discussion meeting on Violence against Women with Two Women Peace Novel Laureats and with the representatives of Women's Novel Initiative was being organized by Naripokkho at Padma Hall of Dhakaclub on 1st March 2018.

Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Md. Hasanuzzaman, Program Coordinator, WDDF were participated in this discussion meeting. Shirin Akhter said that, Women with Disabilities are not free from violence, rather they are become victim of violence in their family and society more times than non disabled women and due to their disability they can't prevent violence. Most of the relevant legislations and policies don't address or incorporate the issue of Women with Disabilities and justice system is completely inaccessible for them. Police stations and court premises are informationally and infrastructurally inaccessible for Persons specially Women with Disabilities. In most cases, Judges are refuse to take the witness of Women with intellectual Disabilities, Visual Impairment and Speech and Hearing Impairment. So, large number of Women with Disabilities are depriving from obtaining justice.

2. Focus Group Discussion:

A focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the Women with Disabilities of Comilla City Corporation Sub district (Sadar Dakkhin), was being organized with the initiative of WDDF on 5th March 2018 at the Auditorium of Doctor Monwara Market Cumilla.

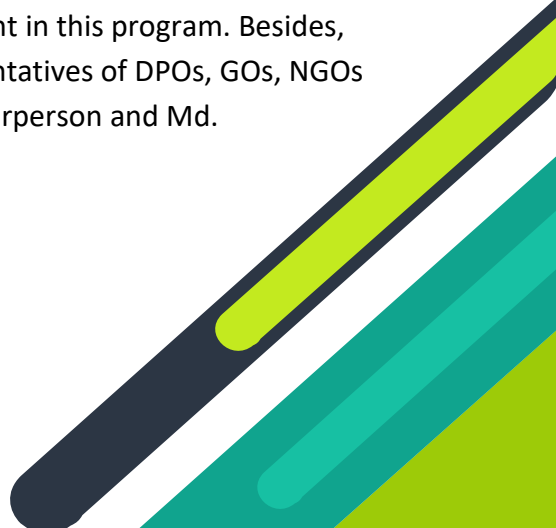



Md. Khalequjjaman, President, Drishtihin Kallyan Sangstha locally cooperated with WDDF to conduct this program. Twenty one Women With Disabilities participated in this FGD. Among these Twenty one Women with Disabilities, there are 11 women are physically Disabled, 1 woman is visually impaired, 1 woman is intellectually disabled, 1 woman is multiple Disabled (Autistic and Speech Impaired), 1 women is Mentally Disabled and 7 women are speech impaired. Ashrafun Nahar Misti, Executive Director, WDDF briefly mentioned about the activities of WDDF and discussed about it's future plan. 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 WWDs in every aspects of the society. Md. Khalequjjaman, President, Drishtihin Kallyan Sangstha encourages the activities of WDDF and also mentioned that in future WDDF will try to adopt required initiatives for the development of Women With Disabilities of this area. After that Samira Haque, Accounts Coordinator, Md. Hasanuzzaman program Coordinator and Johnny Islam Assistant Program Officer of WDDF distributed questionnaire and help them to fill up this questionnaire. Every participant has to fill up a questionnaire about her situation in different aspects.

3. International Women day:

A discussion meeting and a cultural program were held on 8th March 2018, on the occasion of International Women day, organized by Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA), at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) Vaban.

Honorable Prime Minister Shiekh Hasina of Bangladesh was present as the Chief Guest; the State Minister, Meher Afroz Chumki, MOWCA, the Secretary along with other relevant officers of MOWCA, a number of Ministers and MPs were present in this program. Besides, Country Representative from UN Women as well as the representatives of DPOs, GOs, NGOs and CSOs were present. GC and EC members, Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Md.





Hasanuzzaman, Program Coordinator of WDDF were participated in the abovementioned program.

4. Discussion meeting:

A discussion meeting regarding 'Women's innovation grant' and grant distribution ceremony was being organized by Access To Information A To I in Prime Minister's Office on 8th March 2018.

Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Md. Hasanuzzaman, Program Coordinator of WDDF were participated in the abovementioned program.

5. Discussion meeting:

A discussion meeting followed by a cultural event on the occasion of celebration International Women's day 2018 was being organized by National Human Rights Commission Bangladesh (NHRCB), in the Auditorium of Liberation War Museum, on 8th March 2018.


Johnny Islam, Assistant Program Coordinator, WDDF was present in this program.

6. National Conference:

A National Conference on "Access to Justice for All" is being organized jointly by 28 legal aid and human rights organizations, in the auditorium of Bissho Shahitto Kendro from 10 to 11 March 2018.

Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Johnny Islam, Assistant Program Coordinator of WDDF were participated in this National Conference. Including inaugural session, The representatives of WDDF participated in

5 following sessions:

1. Justice and Citizens rights.
 2. Parallel session -2, Barriers and duties in access to justice of public in Court.
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3. Parallel session-5. Problems and inadequacy of implementing Existing policy and legislations for establishing justice of marginalized people.

4. Parallel session-9. The role and contribution of Citizens organizations to achieve Goal-16 of SDGs.

5. Final session- Summary of the sessions duties.

In Parallel session -2, Shirin Akhter raised the emerging issue, the barriers of Persons specially Women with Disabilities in access in Court. She mentioned that, Firstly, Courts premises are infrastructurally and informationally inaccessible for Persons specially Women with Disabilities even Legal Aid Centres of Government are located in the highest floor of Court buildings. So, this is the first and most important barriers that, there is no ramp and lift at the entrance of the Courts premises which consistently hinders Persons specially Women with Disabilities to access in Court premises.

Secondly, Having no accessible wash room and sitting or moving places for Persons specially Women with Disabilities in Court buildings.


Thirdly, Court staffs even Judges and lawyers have no experience of how to deal with a Person with Hearing and Speech impairment/Visually Impaired/Intelectually Impaired. Besides, Most of them have no idea about Sign language.

So, she suggested that, The issues; IE: Disability and handling process of all types of Persons with Disabilities in Court premises should be included in training curriculum of Judges, Lawyers and all Court staffs.

In Parallel session-5, Shirin Akhter is played her role as speaker on behalf of marginalized group on Disability. Emphasizing on implementation of existing policies and legislations for marginalized groups, Shirin Akhter mentioned that, due to problems and inadequacy of implementing existing legislations and policies, Simultaneously, Bureaucratic complexity, marginalized people have to face multifaceted discriminations and challenges in their daily lives and almost 50% challenges might be reduced in the consequence of proper implementation of existing legislations and policies.

7. International program:

I) Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)62 Session:



CSW62 session was held from 14 to 24 March 2018 was being organized by United Nations in New York, USA. With the representatives of Government and CSOs. on behalf of Women With Disabilities of Bangladesh, Ashrafunnahar, Executive Director, WDDF was participated in this session from 9 to 16 March 2018.


She has participated in Inaugural session, Two discussion sessions and Five side events. in Two side events she has participated as speakers and other Three side events as participant.


As speaker She focused on the advancing condition of women and girls with disabilities in rural communities and ICT, digitalization. There were 4 and 5 discussants in both side events from 5 countries. 4 Women discussants with disabilities about Women with disabilities in rural condition were from Sweden, Philippines, Bangladesh and USA. Among these countries, the situation of Bangladesh is most disadvantage categories as Government does not have specific initiatives for women and girls with disabilities. The situation of Sweden is better. government has different and specific initiatives for women and girls with disabilities empowerment through providing suitable assistive devices, health card and insurance, incentive care for daily living and education, open the employment opportunity or unemployment allowance, freedom from any type of barrier, accessible road and transportation. So, it is said that, Citizens with Disabilities of Sweden are living in inclusive society for all. USA also has American Disability Act which supports all types of cooperation for enjoying as equal as other citizens.

As women with disabilities of all countries have some limitations but most of the countries have taken measures to meet up the limitations except Bangladesh.

In her presentation she briefly presents the very grassroots situation and focus on the gaps which has not considered on the basis of priority for the empowerment of women and girls with disabilities from family to state level though we have Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013, Government has signed and ratified UNCRPD.

There were 5 speakers in ICT and rural women where I was only woman with disability and introduce of ICT to rural women with disabilities is not remarkable; it is only for the self or individual users. other 4 speakers haven't speak or mentioned about disability issue. But in the open discussion it was interesting that even the participants, who have no interest to know about disability situation before the session, they've mentioned that, it is really important to make the program inclusive otherwise society will not be





prepared for all and all developments for advancement will be destroyed. From More other 6 sessions where she was present as participant were wonderful discussion but it is still disappointing to her that most of the speakers always forget to speak about the situation of Women with Disabilities And in most cases only women and girls with disabilities raise their own issues. Still disability is less priority issue and not focusing the route cases for empowerment of Women with Disabilities issues in the global Women rights Movement. This year she has followed girls and women with disabilities participation is also lower than other years. She had participated for too short time and at the beginning sessions. So, it could be increased up to other sessions.

It is very important to increase the participation of women with disabilities activists other wise the issue of Women with Disabilities will not be address properly and it will be alarming to achieve SDGs for different countries including Bangladesh.


II) Fifth Asia Pacific People's Forum on Sustainable Development and Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development program: Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, WDDF has participated in these Two abovementioned programs from 24 to 31st of March 2018.


Asia Pacific Peoples'

Forum on Sustainable Development (APPFSD) on 25th to the 27th of March 2018 and the Asia Pacific

Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) from 28th to 30th of March 2018. Both events were held in Bangkok, Thailand.

She narrated that, It was a great opportunity for her to participate in these events as Chairperson of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) and South Asian Disability Forum (SADF) on behalf of Bangladeshi Women with Disabilities.






This participation has brought an enormous and unanimous opportunity for Women with Disabilities to engage with the APPFSD which is the largest gathering of civil societies working on sustainable development from across Asia Pacific and is jointly organised by the United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP) and the Asia Pacific Civil Society Regional Engagement Mechanism (APRCM).

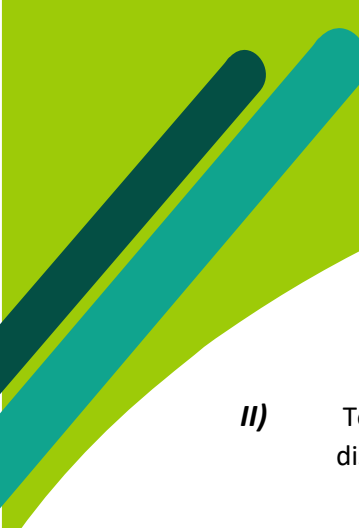
As disability is an intersectionality of human diversity so disability has existed amongst all vulnerable groups and considering this point of view, Women With Disabilities are the most marginalized group amongst all marginalized groups and the issues of their improvement and inclusion are the furthest behind.

APPFSD is a largest, momentous and dynamic platform of CSOs from where Persons with Disabilities have obtained opportunity to strengthen their movement, to raise their collective voice about their challenging issues of Persons specially Women With Disabilities through different events of CSOs which will make the CSOs responsive to the movement of Persons With Disabilities.

A vibrant, time required and dynamic workshop was being organized with the leadership of the disability constituency of Asia Pacific, titled ***“Sustainable Cities and Communities grounded in Development Justice: Disabled People’s Movements in the Asia Pacific”***. ***In this workshop the disability constituency raised collective voice highlighting the importance of making the cities sustainable for Persons With Disabilities from the ground of development justice from different perspectives. It is also mentioned with high importance that, the cities should be resilient and sustainable considering the mobility limitation of Women With Disabilities on the basis of high priority. Otherwise meaningful and effective inclusion of Women with Disabilities in societies will extremely be interrupted and this population will live furthest behind from development process.***

She is highly optimistic through participating in APPFSD 2018 on behalf of Bangladeshi WWDs that, this largest platform will be played a contributive role to create the linkage of Persons With Disabilities in the following areas:

- 1) Disability constituency and CSOs will reconnect*** with each other at regional level and amplify the messages in various intergovernmental processes in the regions.
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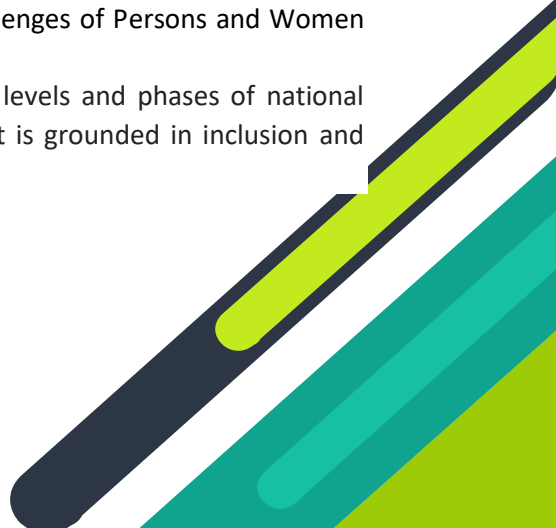
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- II) **To strengthen the movements, the solidarity and struggle** of disability constituency to dismantle systemic barriers in achieving sustainable development and development justice.

5th APFSD is a regional and inclusive preparatory event which has engaged member states, United Nations bodies, other international organisations, major groups and other stakeholders where she has participated and raised strong voice in a number of side events focusing the challenges and discrimination of Women With Disabilities.

Through out this participation she has obtained the opportunity to share experiences and explore common ground and actions, develop common messages and coordinate strategies for more effective participation in the regional and global intergovernmental processes on sustainable development as well as for developing cooperation and joint work plans on sustainable development.

It is a great achievement for disability constituency to include in APRCEM and through this participation disability constituency has obtained opportunity to build collective capacity and efforts to advocate for Women With Disabilities human rights and development justice in the region.

Recommendations:

- I) Enhancing the participation of the number of all types of participants with disabilities specially Women with Disabilities.
 - II) II) It would be better for her if Braille documents of APPFSD program would be available.
 - III) III) APPFSD team members were very sincere, active and cooperative to ensure effective participation of Persons with Disabilities and to highlight disability issue; she is very grateful to them.
 - IV) IV) Enhancing participation of CSOs in the event of disability constituency.
 - V) Organizing side event of disability constituency focusing challenges of Persons and Women With Disabilities from 6th APFSD event.
 - VI) VI) Include Persons specially, women with Disabilities in all levels and phases of national planning, development, implementation and monitoring that is grounded in inclusion and development justice.
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- VII) VII) Develop regional and national mechanisms to end violence against women and access to justice.
- VIII) Developing and sharing different materials on disability issues in APRCEM Website.
- IX) Commit to strengthening the capacity of women with disabilities to contribute to their local communities and be able to take on leadership positions at various levels.

8. Consultation session on 'Women's Rights Movements in Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities':


A consultation session on 'Women's Rights Movements in Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities' was being organized by the High Commission of Canada, with the cooperation of Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), on 19th March 2018, in the Auditorium of **Canadian Recreation Centre**.

Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director of WDDF were participated in this consultation.

They discussed briefly what types of challenges they've to face as Women with Disabilities at the time of their joining with women rights movements, what types of challenges they've to face at present and what types of initiatives they're planning to take in future for their advancement.

They mentioned that, most of the Women leaders have no idea about the challenges and needs of Women with Disabilities . But as the first registered organization of Women with Disabilities they've to struggle to understand the women that Women with Disabilities are an integral part of women are living in most vulnerable situation and they've special needs along with hidden potentialities. So, for the real improvement of women, there is no alternative of including Women with Disabilities. They participated in all types of programs of NGOs and CSOs and raised voice regarding the inclusion of Women with Disabilities.

At present, due to regular participation and advocacy of WDDF, women rights based organizations have started to consider the issue of Women with Disabilities, they invite WDDF in their programs to raise voice regarding this issue. Even many of women leaders and activists raise their voice about the needs and inclusion of Women with Disabilities and include this agenda in required documents. Now WDDF has included in a number of Government and Non-Government committees and platforms as



advocacy organization of Women with Disabilities. It is certainly, a great recognition for WDDF and Women with Disabilities. Though as a small and Women with Disabilities organization, there are many challenges; E.G. funding limitation, lack of efficient staff and efficiency among Women with Disabilities, frequent staff shifting, no specific plans and programs of Government considering the situation and needs of Women with Disabilities and so on.

Actually, WDDF would like to change the living standard and situation of Women with Disabilities through inspiring their hidden potentialities and enhancing leadership specially in remote areas where they're leading in humanitarian lives; they've no acceptability and they're often becoming victim of all types of violence. WDDF is struggling for proper inclusion of Women with Disabilities in mainstreaming development in light of UN CRPD and SDGs.

9. South Asia Regional Conference: "Gender, Rights and Choices, Access to justice in a Mega city":

A south Asia Regional Conference titled "Gender, Rights and Choices, Access to justice in a Mega city" was being organized by BLAST at senate Bhaban, Dhaka University, from 19 to 20 March 2018.

Johnny Islam, Assistant Program Coordinator, WDDF was present in this Conference.

10. National Conference on "Disability Inclusive Poverty Graduation Model":


A national Conference on "Disability Inclusive Poverty Graduation Model", was being organized by Handicap International (HI), at Amari Dhaka hotel on 20th March 2018.

Johnny Islam, Assistant Program Coordinator, WDDF was present in this National Conference.

11. Grassroots Women with Disabilities committee meeting:

Two Grassroots Women with Disabilities committee meetings were being organized in March 2018.





The aims of forming these grassroots Women with Disabilities committees in remote areas of different districts are as follows:

I) To introduce Women with Disabilities of the same union with each other as well as to establish a friendly relation among them through regular communication appearing in monthly meetings.

II) To encourage and motivate Women with Disabilities and their parents through reducing their negative attitude about disability.

III) To make Women with Disabilities self-conscious about their basic rights, contribution and self-dignity in family and society through enhancing their self-confidence.

IV) To build leadership capacity of Women with Disabilities through enhancing awareness among them.

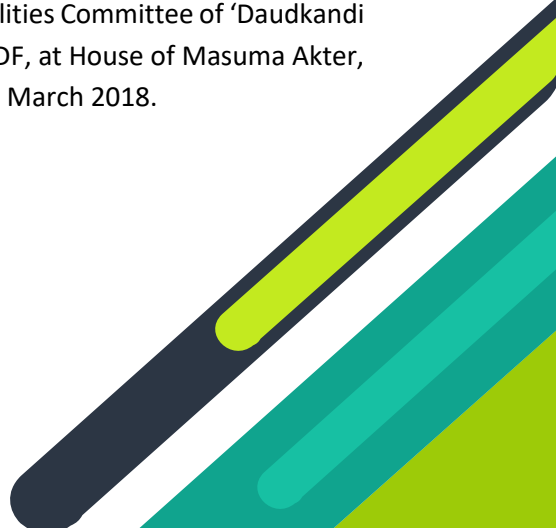
V) To provide information about disability related Government initiatives, documents along with facilities including NGOs as well as make them experienced on how to obtain these facilities through advocacy in different level.


VI) To adopt required initiative in order to include Women with Disabilities in local level including women related development process through their regular and active participation.

VIII) To create space in order to share multifaceted challenges in their daily lives, sufferings as Women with Disabilities including success E.G family conflict or discrimination, family/social violence, any type of torture/harassment and adopting the strategy of reducing these challenges and sufferings.

IX) To encourage Women with Disabilities to be self-dependent mentally and financially through identifying their hidden capability as well as providing need based technical and financial support E.G training, assistive device, financial support for small Income Generating Program.

A) The first discussion meeting with the Grassroots Women with Disabilities Committee of 'Daudkandi Uttar' and 'Baropara' Doudkandi, Comilla was being organized by WDDF, at House of Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson, WDDF of Kanora, Gouripur, Baropara Union on 20th March 2018.





This meeting is presided over Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson, WDDF and representative of Daudkandi Grassroots Women with Disabilities with the cooperation of Md. Hasanuzzaman, Program Coordinator of WDDF.

The discussed issues of this meeting were:

- I) Introductory session, significance of organizing and participation in this meeting.
 - II) To review the discussed issues of last meeting.
 - III) Discussion about day observation.
 - IV) Discussion about International Women Day.
 - V) Discussion about theme of International Women Day.
 - VI) Understanding about basic rights of Women without and Women with Disabilities.
 - VII) Discussion about rights of Women with Disabilities in light of “Persons with Disabilities rights and Protection Act 2013” and “National Women Advancement Policy”.
 - VIII) Fixing the date of next meeting and so on.
- B) Second discussion meeting with the Grassroots Women with Disabilities Committee of ‘Gouripur’ and ‘Baropara’ Doudkandi, Comilla was being organized by WDDF, at House of Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson, WDDF of Kanora, Gouripur, Baropara Union on 21st March 2018.

This meeting is presided over Nila Akter, president of grassroot Women with Disabilities Committee and facilitated by Bethi Akter, Secretary of this committee with the observation and cooperation of Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson and Md. Hasanuzzaman, Program Coordinator of WDDF.

The discussed issues of this meeting were:





I) Introductory session, significance of organizing and participation in this meeting.

II) To review the discussed issues of last meeting.

III) Discussion about day observation.

IV) Discussion about International Women Day.

V) Discussion about theme of International Women Day.

VI) Understanding about basic rights of Women without and Women with Disabilities.

VII) Discussion about rights of Women with Disabilities in light of “Persons with Disabilities rights and Protection Act 2013” and “National Women Advancement Policy”.

VIII) Fixing the date of next meeting and so on.

12. Consultation of draft committee on National Action plan of “Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013”:

A consultation of draft committee on National Action plan of “Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013” was being organized by Department of Social Services (DSS) In Jatiya Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation (JPUF) from 23 to 27 March 2018.

Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director, WDDF has achieved membership of this committee on behalf of Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs) and she has delivered her inputs according to all the articles of the abovementioned legislation to make the ‘National Action Plan’ inclusive and effective for Persons with Disabilities specially addressing the issue of Women with Disabilities properly through participating actively and regularly.

