

**Activity Report**  
**July 2018**  
**Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF)**

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

**1. Press Conference:**

A **Press Conference** titled “Making easy access to justice of Women with Disabilities”, focusing multifaceted challenges of Women with Disabilities including existing barriers of access to justice was being organized with the initiative of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) at 11.00 AM, on Sunday, 1st July 2018 at VIP Lounge, National Press Club, in order to discuss the scenario of deprivation of Persons With Disabilities from development process and how their advancement is being interrupted due to depriving them from various momentous rights including accessibility. The representatives of General Council (GC) and Executive Council (EC) of WDDF, representatives of DPOs, NGOs, CSOs and representatives of mass media were participated in this press Conference.

The main purpose of organizing the press conference is to urge to the Government for an “Inclusive, anti-discriminatory and Persons With Disabilities friendly society for all” through delivering accessible Government services and facilities as well as making accessible roads, public transports and public institutions in order to include Persons with Disabilities in mainstream development process. Simultaneously, to notify Government and the relevant authorities of the City Corporations that, the situation of the roads of Dhaka City are extremely dangerous along with insecure for the mobility of Persons with Disabilities.

This Women with Disabilities right based organization has been working with the Government, policy makers, Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs), representatives of civil society and media for the inclusion of People with Disabilities in mainstream development process through reducing the challenges of Women with Disabilities and discrimination in the issue of access to justice. The keynote paper was being presented by Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director, Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF). In this paper she mentioned that the development indicators of media at the side of inconsistency and incongruity of society. To accomplish appropriate demands and social movement, media works as milestone. She also stated that, WDDF is a right based organization of Women with Disabilities, struggling to build an anti-discriminatory society in order to lead dignified lives of them.

Mentioning about the statistics of Women with Disabilities she said that, according to the household survey of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), 9.07% of total population are Persons with Disabilities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) June 2011, almost 15% of total population of Bangladesh are Persons with Disabilities approximating to all developing countries. So, according to that statistics, number of Persons with Disabilities is approximately 24 million, among them, number of Women with Disabilities is 12 million.

In accordance with the information obtained from different researches, it is noted that, 99% Women with Disabilities are living under poverty line and less than 1% Female Children with Disabilities are getting opportunity of going to school. 96% Women with Disabilities are becoming victim of mental, physical, sexual and emotional violence. According to the reports of different newspapers up to 2016, it is seen that, number of violence happening to Women and Female children with Disabilities is very high but the number of publishing reports regarding violence is very limited. From research and real experience it is seen that, Whether any Woman with Disability becomes victim of violence once; in most cases, she has to become victim of violence again and again. 78% Women and female children with Disabilities are become victim of different types of physical and sexual violence only due to their own limited power of prevention (BLAST) and among them 18% is become victim of violence again and again.

Besides, existing barriers for Women with Disabilities in justice system and techniques of solving are being discussed in the abovementioned press conference. Required instructions about accountability of the state and adopting proper initiatives have been mentioned for protecting and preventing violence against Women with Disabilities in Schedule-12 of “Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection act 2013”, Article-13, 15 and 16 of “Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)” and Goal-16 of “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”. There is no instruction about the process of justice of Persons with Disabilities specially Persons with Hearing and Speech Impairments and Intellectually Disabled Persons in different legislations including Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000.

Camera trial and proper technology in order to get justice of Women with Hearing and Speech Impairments and Intellectually Disabled should be ensured and Witness of Visual Impaired Women should be accepted. All essential procedures involved with justice system including the infrastructure of Court premises should be disable friendly. Lawyers and judges have to achieve training and knowledge on disability issue. The process of police station and getting medical report for Women with Disabilities should be ensured as soon as possible.

Women with Disabilities are suffering from inaccessible environment and deprived from their equal citizen rights. The large number of population in Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged segment of the society. Roads, footpaths, Underpass, over bridge, public transports and public institutions are inaccessible for them. Besides, manholes of the cities and rural-urban areas are often uncovered and it is tremendously risky for the mobility of Persons with Disabilities. We want to live together, contribute in building golden Bangladesh and prosperous nation together. So, it is noted that, Persons including Women with Disabilities are always subject of discrimination including human rights violation and without having been enjoyed accessibility rights in all aspects of society, all types of Persons with Disabilities haven't been included in the mainstream of development and in this consequence national development will extremely be interrupted. Participated media representatives are expressed the same concern with this paper and acknowledged their accountability to Persons including Women with Disabilities.

The representatives of WDDF expressed their high optimism that, the flight of steps of establishing rights and dignity of 15 million People with Disabilities would be easier and they will be able to play a contributive role as human resource not rather being treated as a burden of society in the development of society and nation and in the consequence of achieving their needs and demands through the proper implementation and actualization of "UN Convention on Rights of Persons With Disabilities (UN CRPD)" and "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". So, the representatives of Women with Disabilities led organizations, NGOs and CSOs call vigorously for the rapid implementation of CRPD and SDGs to actualize the development process of the country. Farida Yesmin, Psychologist, Society for the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled (SWID)-Bangladesh, urged that, the Government of Bangladesh, Bangladesh mass Media, Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs), representatives of civil society including all classes to work together to create a friendly environment by ensuring their full and equal participation in all aspects including employment in order to improve the living standard of PWDs. Representatives with Speech and Hearing Impairments said that, As Persons with Speech and Hearing Impairments, they've to face multifaceted challenges due to inaccessible roads and transport. So, they are optimistic that, 15 million Persons With Disabilities will enjoy the equal opportunity like all citizen's, it will be easy to eliminate all forms of barriers to fulfill the demands of Persons With Disabilities and will ensure there full participation in the development activities of the state. Besides them, representatives of DPOs also delivered their speech in this press conference. All the speakers in the press conference expressed their optimism that, successful implementation and actualization of national and international instruments including "UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities" will eradicate all kinds of discrimination between Persons with Disabilities & non-disabled people & will be able to build a happy & anti-discriminatory nation.

The press conference was conducted with the leadership of Chairperson, Shirin Akhter, Member Secretary, Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Council Members and General Council Members including spontaneous cooperation of the staffs of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF),

The Press Conference, which was being organized by WDDF was a very time required and effective initiative. A large number of reporters and photo journalists of Electronic and Print Media were present in this Press Conference. A number of folders along with related documents were being distributed among the participants on behalf of this Organization. Besides, a press release was being published at the end of the Press Conference.

#### **1. Executive Council meeting:**

An **Executive Council** meeting was held in WDDF office, on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2018. There were almost ten participants including office staffs. Five agenda have been discussed including miscellaneous in this meeting.

#### **2. Discussion meeting with Union Nirbahi Officer (UNO):**

A **discussion meeting with Union Nirbahi Officer (UNO)** of Daudkandi in order to notify about the continued programs under the project titled “Strengthening WDDF to make Discrimination free society for Women and Girls with Disabilities” (September 2017-August 2018) in Daudkandi was being organized by WDDF in the Auditorium of UNO office, on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, Masuma Akter, Vice-Chairperson, Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director and office staffs of WDDF were present in this discussion meeting. Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director of WDDF discussed about completed and ongoing project activities in local and national level briefly.

Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Masuma akter, Vice-Chairperson discussed about necessity of this project, direct experience of implementing project activities and the mentionable changes have been happened among Women with Disabilities of this working area due to growing awareness and self-confidence through implementing this project.

Samira Haque, Accounts coordinator, WDDF has notified about project budget and program wise expenditure.

UNO has expressed his satisfaction for advancement of our ongoing activities and he especially encouraged to observe piloting programs on Income Generating Activities (IGA)

for Women with Disabilities of Daudkandi. He asked to submit activity wise budget of the programs have been organized in Daudkandi after having completed this project.

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

Two Grassroots Women with Disabilities committee meetings were being organized in July 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 devise, financial support for small Income Generating Program.

A) The first discussion meeting with the Grassroots Women with Disabilities Committee of 'Daudkandi Uttar' and 'Baropara' Daudkandi, Cumilla was being organized by WDDF, at House of Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson, WDDF of Kanora, Gouripur, Baropara Union on 10th July 2018.

This meeting is presided over Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson, WDDF and representative of Daudkandi Grassroots Women with Disabilities with the cooperation of Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant 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 marriage and family rights of Women with Disabilities, advantages and disadvantages of building family without accurate selection and plan.
- IV) Discussion about challenges of Women with Disabilities about how to maintain family.
- V) Discussion about sanitary latrine set up in the houses of Persons especially Women with Disabilities with the cooperation of Government.
- VI) Discussion about basic instructions of leading healthy and protected lives of Women with Disabilities.
- VII) Discussion about how to prevent family members from different types of waterborne and contagious disease and what types of measures should be taken at the time of having attacked from Typhoid or Diarrhea including preparing Or saline.
- VIII) Discussion about maintaining clean and healthy life at the time of menstruation and protect themselves of having attacked from different types of feminine disease
- IX) Fixing the date of next meeting and so on.

B) Second discussion meeting with the Grassroots Women with Disabilities Committee of 'Gouripur' and 'Baropara' Daudkandi, Cumilla was being organized by WDDF, at House of Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson, WDDF of Kanora, Gouripur, Baropara Union on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

This meeting is presided over Masuma Akter, Vice Chairperson, WDDF and representative of Daudkandi Grassroots Women with Disabilities with the cooperation of Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant Coordinator of WDDF.

The discussed issues of this meeting were:

- I) Introductory session, significance of organizing and participation in this meeting.
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- VII) Discussion about how to prevent family members from different types of waterborne and contagious disease and what types of measures should be taken at the time of having attacked from Typhoid or Diarrhea including preparing Oral saline.
- VIII) Discussion about maintaining clean and healthy life at the time of menstruation and protect themselves of having attacked from different types of feminine disease
- IX) Fixing the date of next meeting and so on.

#### **5. Project launching ceremony:**

A project launching ceremony was being organized by Action on Disability and Development (ADD) International in Spectra Convention Centre on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

Md. Abdul Hai, Junior Assistant Coordinator, WDDF participated in this project launching ceremony.

#### **6. Workshop:**

A workshop on Disability and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was being organized by BRAC and facilitated by Access Bangladesh Foundation at BRAC Centre on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

Md. Abdul Hai, Junior Assistant Coordinator, WDDF participated in this workshop.

#### **7. Consultation:**

A Consultation titled ***“Mobility improvement of Persons With Disabilities”*** was jointly being organized by North and South City Corporations and Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) in WDDF office, on 12 July 2018.

Representatives from Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs), Non-Government were participated in this consultation. The representatives of City Corporations delivered a

presentation and after having completed the presentation, representatives of Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs) are discussed about the challenges they've to face due to inaccessible roads including footpath, underpass, over bridge and zebra crossing and transports as well as how this mobility problem has been influencing their lives through depriving them from getting basic needs and rights.

Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director, WDDF stated that, due to strong and longtime advocacy of DPOs ramps are being created with very limited number of footpaths for improving accessibility situation of Persons with Disabilities specially Wheel Chair users but due to banning motor cycles getting on footpath some pillars are being set up close to the ramps. So, another barrier is being created for Persons with Disabilities to get on footpaths and in this consequence, Women with Disabilities have to face more challenges.

Sumona, Woman with Physical Disability from Bangladeshi System change Advocacy Network (BSCAN) mentioned that, Braille guide block/ special tiles are being set up in very limited number of footpaths due to easy mobility for Persons with Visual Impairments but the existing barriers, E.I. pillars, light posts, large sized trees and so on haven't been removed; so the difficulties aren't also be removed.

At the end of discussion the representatives of North and South City Corporations expressed their commitment to adopt initiatives in order to improve the mobility of Persons with Disabilities and distributed a form for submitting effective ideas/recommendations regarding mobility improvement for Persons with Disabilities.

#### **8. Workshop:**

A workshop on Status of implementation of "Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013" was being facilitated by Bangladesh Legal Aid Services and Trust (BLAST) and organized by BRAC, in BRAC in Centre at 10 AM, on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

Md. Abdul Hai, Junior Assistant Coordinator, WDDF participated in this workshop.

#### **9. Workshop:**

A workshop on State and Disability was jointly being organized by BRAC and facilitated by Turning Point Foundation (TPF) and Disability Research and Rehabilitation Association (DRRA), in BRAC in Centre at 2.00 PM, on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director, WDDF participated in this workshop.

From her practical experience she mentioned about a number of challenges of Persons with Disabilities and recommendations, E.I.

#### **Challenges:**



- **Lack of effective participation of persons with disabilities** in planning, implementation, monitoring, decision making and other areas. Even there are least participation of people with disabilities in the committees formed under the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act, 2013. But the participation of people with disabilities is a prerequisite in disability inclusion.
- **Lack of proper implementation of law and policies**, in spite of having a good legal framework. Besides, some other laws and policies should be disability inclusive.
- **No comprehensive and complete survey** on disability prevalence, which is seriously hindering the planning and allocating budgets for their education, skill development, employment, health, rehabilitation and other interventions.
- **Derogatory attitudes and mind-sets** of decision-makers, implementers and different professionals towards ability of people with disabilities hinder their effective participations.
- **Lack of coordination** among the ministries, government agencies and departments as well as lack of strategy, accountability and knowledge
- **Inappropriate budget allocation** as per laws and policies. Budget allocations are only limited to social safety net.
- **Inaccessible environment** including transport system, buses, trains, air and water transports, parks, hotels, cinemas, banks, educational institutions, etc. Lack of accessibility is a big concern.
- **Lack of education, training, employment** opportunities for persons with disabilities in public and private jobs, lack of enabling environment, training and technological development.
- **Limited scopes for the most marginalised groups among people with disabilities** including hearing & speech impairment, intellectual disability, autism, down syndrome, cerebral palsy, etc.
- **Lack of** awareness and support from families and lack of access to information

### **Recommendation**

- **A database** including disaggregated data on gender, disability types, age groups, geographical areas, etc. though a comprehensive and door to door survey on the persons with disabilities.
- **Universal accessibility** should be ensured in all public and private infrastructure and environments including physical, attitudinal and other barrier free environments.
- **National Strategy for persons with disabilities** by the all ministries as per the laws, policies and national plans with an inclusion lens, where age, disability and intersectionality will get equal priority and independence and autonomy for people of all ages with disability to be ensured as well as Combat neglect and abuse for older people with disability.

### **10. Workshop:**

A workshop on Removing stigma and discrimination was being facilitated by Protibondhi Nagarik Sangathaner Parisad (PNSP) and organized by BRAC, in BRAC in Centre at 2.00 PM, on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

Md. Abdul Hai, Junior Assistant Coordinator, WDDF participated in this workshop.

#### **11. Discussion meeting of Disability Alliance on SDGs:**

A discussion meeting of Disability Alliance on SDGs was being organized by Sight savers International

Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant Coordinator of WDDF were participated in this discussion meeting.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are being divided in to five clusters among the participants and about draft list of disability related indicators is being prepared in this meeting.

#### **12. Discussion meeting with Women with Visual Impairments about article 23 of “United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)”:**

A discussion meeting with the participation of Women with Visual Impairments about article 23 of “United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)” was being organized by Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) in its office, on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

Actually, it was a sharing meeting about challenges for Women with Disabilities of getting married at early age, how early marriage has been interrupted to develop carrier of Women with Disabilities and what types of initiatives have to take to avoid early marriage.

Main discussants were Shirin Akhter, Chairperson and Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director, Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF). Shirin Akhter discussed about the challenges for Women with Disabilities of getting married at early age and what types of initiatives have to take to avoid early marriage. Ashrafun Nahar discussed about how early marriage has been interrupted to develop carrier of Women with Disabilities elaborately. Shirin Akhter stated that, family is the best learning centre for all of us and according to UN CRPD and “Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act 2013” every Woman with Disability should have right to respect for home and family through building family considering their specific time and competence. It is seen now a days that, Women with mild Disabilities especially Women with Visual Impairments are getting married after completing SSC or HSC, they’re becoming mother and at the age of 18 or below 18 they’ve to take responsibility of maintaining a family and children. So, they couldn’t continue their

studies efficiently, they're becoming frustrated and depressed physically and psychologically; in most cases, their husbands left them at a time without taking any responsibility of family. In this critical situation they aren't able to manage any reasonable job for maintaining their family due to low education, lack of efficiency and in this consequence, their carrier development will extremely be interrupted even they've to lead in humanitarian lives due to lack of fulfilling basic needs including nutritious food and healthy living place.

In order to avoid early marriage, Women with Disabilities have to achieve mental strength, they should have realistic carrier development plan excluding emotion and they should discuss with their senior sisters or Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs) especially WDDF for proper suggestion and advice.

Ashrafun Nahar emphasized on establishment of Women with Disabilities with self-confidence and dignified lives through education and economic empowerment. She stated that, Women with Disabilities are still now living in extreme vulnerable position depriving from Government and Non-government opportunities and services. Decision of early marriage and family building of Women with Disabilities without completing proper education or without ensuring required support including economical support for self-dependence destroyed their carrier completely. So, it should be considered by Women with Disabilities that, the erroneous decision of Women with Disabilities early marriage and family building is being destroyed not only their lives and carriers but also the carriers of their next generation face severe threatens and risks. So, before getting marry, it is prerequisite for Women with Disabilities to complete education and become self-independent through economic empowerment. Otherwise advancement of Women with Disabilities will extremely be interrupted.

### **13. Discussion meeting of CRPD thematic group on alternative report:**

A discussion meeting of CRPD thematic group on alternative report was being organized by National Grassroots Disabled Organization (NGDO) at the office of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) on 21st July 2018.

Shirin Akhter, Chairperson, Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director and Arifa Khatun, Junior Assistant Coordinator of WDDF were participated in this discussion meeting. With the opinion of all participants following decisions are being adopted:

1. Report of each thematic group on UN CRPD articles will be prepared in four parts:

- I) Present status,
- II) Gaps with state report,
- III) Challenges and

IV) Recommendation.

2. Each thematic group will submit prepared report within 9<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

3. Next thematic group meetings will be organized on 11 and 18<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

Coordination and communication among group members will be enhanced and continued.

#### **14. Bogura visit from 27-31<sup>st</sup> July 2018:**

One experience sharing meeting and two discussion meetings with feminist groups were being organized during Bogura visit.

A) A discussion meeting with feminist group including grassroots committee of Women with Disabilities was being organized with the initiative of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at Erulia Union of Bogura Sadar.

Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director and Samira Haq, Accounts Coordinator, WDDF were organized this discussion meeting. Ashrafun Nahar discussed about feminism, women rights including Women with Disabilities, family and social discrimination against women including Women with Disabilities and how to reduce this discrimination are being discussed elaborately.

The members of grassroots Women with Disabilities committee stated that, due to having disability and for being gender they always have to face different types of discriminations from their family and society and in most cases, they're deprived from all types of enjoyment, Government facilities and services due to disability. So, this is an effective and important meeting for them where they've learned as Women with Disabilities why and how they will include them in mainstream women rights movement.

B) A discussion meeting with feminist group including grassroots committee of Women with Disabilities was being organized with the initiative of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at Namuza Union of Bogura Sadar.

Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director and Samira Haque, Accounts Coordinator, WDDF were organized this discussion meeting. Ashrafun Nahar discussed about feminism, women rights including Women with Disabilities, family and social discrimination against women including Women with Disabilities and how to reduce this discrimination are being discussed elaborately.

The members of grassroots Women with Disabilities committee stated that, due to having disability and for being gender they always have to face different types of discriminations

simultaneously they've to become victim of violence from their family and society as well as in most cases, they're deprived from all types of enjoyment, Government facilities and services due to disability. So, this is a meaningful and important meeting for them where they've learned as Women with Disabilities, it is required for them to include in mainstream women rights movement, why and how they will include them in mainstream women rights movement.

### **C) Experience sharing meeting:**

An experience sharing meeting with the advocacy team comprising educated Women with Disabilities was being organized with the initiative of Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) at 3.00 PM, on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2018 at the office of Bogura Zila Spandan Protibondhi Nari Parishad.

Ashrafun Nahar, Executive Director and Samira Haque, Accounts Coordinator, WDDF were organized this discussion meeting. Ashrafun Nahar discussed about developing leadership of Women with Disabilities. She emphasized on establishing a dignified lives of Women with Disabilities with self-confidence as well as enjoyment of basic rights of them through getting Government facilities and services properly. Without leadership of Women with Disabilities it will be difficult for them to get need based Government facilities and services as well as to include their issues in development plans and policies. But for leadership, achieving experience is very essential. She also stated that, due to lack of leadership among Women with Disabilities they're still now in extreme vulnerable situation. So, Women with Disabilities have to take responsibility to change their fate. The members of advocacy team were become encouraged, realized the importance of this issue and expressed their commitment to prepare themselves for leadership.

### **15. Project Launching Ceremony:**

A project Launching Ceremony on "Taking Successful Innovation to Scale - Pathways for Disability-Inclusive Graduation out of Poverty" was being organized by Handicap International (HI) in Spectra Convention Centre on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018. Md. Abdul Hai, Junior Assistant Coordinator, WDDF participated in this project launching ceremony.