

# National Disabled Women's Convention, 2006 Retrospect

## DECLARATION OF THE CONVENTION

This Convention unanimously demands the realization of the rights of 7 million (70 lakhs) disabled women. The demand is the result of consensus reached in 114 workshops in 23 districts participated by 12,000 disabled persons, local elected representatives and elite of society, organised by National Disabled Women's Council with the support of ADD.

### The demands of the disabled women are

**Education:** Primary education is ensured for all but disabled children especially girls are being deprived. The following initiatives are needed:

1. The education of disabled children should be placed under the Ministry of Education instead of Social Welfare Department as at present.
2. Experienced teachers preferably disabled who can understand the needs of disabled children should be recruited.
3. Scholarships granted to disabled girls should be increased.
4. Education using the Braille system should be introduced in schools and colleges.
5. Availability of teachers knowing sign language for those with hearing impairment.
6. More time should be given to disabled examinees with multi-disabilities.
7. Teachers training syllabus should have suitable provisions for teaching the disabled.
8. PTI and B.Ed training should have arrangements for teachers who are well-versed in teaching disabled people.

**Health:** The special health-care needs of disabled women are:

1. Free/reduced charge treatment in Govt and non-Govt hospitals/health/care centres.
2. There should be reserved seats in such institutions for disabled women.
3. 10% seats in all Government health care centers should be reserved for the disabled.
4. Trained Public Sector grass-roots workers made available to cope with disabled people including those intellectually challenged.
5. Treatment and awareness of all disabilities be given wide coverage in the media.
6. Disabled women made aware of HIV/AIDS and necessary precaution in this respect.
7. Creation of awareness in disabled women regarding mother-child and fertility issues.

### Employment

1. To generate employment, each division to have one vocational training center to educate and train disabled women.
2. Implementation of existing employment quota of 10% in all Govt and non-Govt organizations.
3. Interest-free loans must be made available to disabled women for self-employment.
4. Denial of employment opportunities to disabled people must be changed.

### Legal Policies

1. National women's law and policies should be in conformity with those in CEDAW.
2. Strict laws must be promulgated to protect disabled women against violence.
3. Protection of legal rights of those with hearing and speech impairments and special arrangements to protect the disabled from exploitation.
4. Quick justice to the disabled victims of violence and rape with punishment to the guilty through speedy tribunals.
5. 6 reserved seats for disabled women in National Parliament.
6. Amendments to and implementation of the Disability Welfare Act, 2001 ensured.

### Accessibility to Transport

1. Reserved seats and separate counters for disabled women in all forms of transport.
2. Separate transport made available for disabled women and I/D card issued to them.

3. Disabled women should be allowed to travel free of charge or at reduced rates.
4. Special landmarks on roads for the visually impaired to facilitate their movement.
5. Ramps in transport and buildings to facilitate access to them for the disabled people.

**Action on Disability and Development - ADD along with Disabled Women's Council held the first ever-Disabled Women's Convention at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center on 09 June 2006. The daylong programme was divided into four different sessions where many distinguished guests gave their opinions as follows**



**Mosharraf Hossain**

Country Representative ADD  
Overcoming the difficulties faced in 1995 when ADD Bangladesh first started its work in getting the disabled people out of their houses, they have today come out and are fighting for their rights to participate, for empowerment and to establish human rights. Bangladesh is no exception when it comes to neglecting and depriving the disabled people, especially women and children who are the most marginalized and frequent victims of violence and torture. This cannot continue and change is inevitable. This change has manifested itself today when disabled people including ethnic minorities have gathered in unison from 27 districts of the country. ADD has been working to establish human, social, political, economic and cultural rights of the disabled people all over the world. The disabled people now have become vocal about development of their situation, to attain rights to education, health and employment. The PRSP in Bangladesh also promises change for the development of the disabled people. If proper opportunities of education, health and employment are provided then the disabled people will prove that they can be assets and not burdens to society.

**Umme Kulsum Ranjana**  
President National Disabled Women's Council  
I believe the main deterrent for the disabled people is the attitude of the society. Lives of the disabled people will turn about if this is changed. Today I am earning a masters degree because I got the right environment. Today we require equal opportunities in all sectors of society including sports.

**Ramachandran**  
Director ADD India  
I work in Bangalore, India where we focus on people with disability especially in the rural areas. Through this convention declaration today, the disabled people of Bangladesh have voiced their demands. These demands are very relevant and it is very important that we respect their demands.



**AKHTAR HOSSAIN**  
President National Grass-roots Disabled Organization  
Since 1995, the grass-roots disabled people have been united and improved their situation, getting respect and participate in representative activities. We call for the amendment and implementation of the disability welfare act 2001. We demand allocation of 10% in the education budget and increase in national budget for disabled people. To develop as a nation, we must at first develop the condition of our disabled people.

**ABDUS SATTAR DUFAL**  
Chairperson Nadpo  
Counting the disabled and their families and neighbours fully 20% people of this country are closed to the disability issues. Each policy formulated to alleviate



**ABDUS SATTAR DUFAL**  
Secretary Ministry of LGRD  
I have personally noticed the embarrassment and restrictions disabled peoples and their families. If the physically impaired students in the rural primary areas apply to me then we will construct ramps for them in every school. With hard work, I believe that physical challenges can be overcome but it is the obligation of the government to remove all artificial barriers on the path of the disabled people and I request the government to do so.

**ISAAC KUTE**  
GEO ADD UK  
Having toured many areas in Bangladesh, I have realised how vibrant and committed



**Hafizul Islam Miah**

DG Social Services Department  
The government has taken steps to facilitate the lives of the disabled people. About 60 thousand disabled people receive benefits each month. 10% quota has been reserved for the disabled people in the recruitment of 3rd and 4th class government employees. The first water plant directed by disabled people 'Mukta Mineral Water' is situated in Tongi. Work for the disabled is progressing in the private sector as well. The performance of ADD deserves praise in this regard for achieving so much in just a decade.



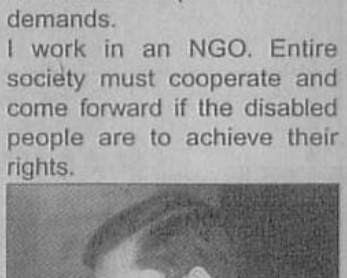
**Nasir ur Rahman Sinha**

Chairperson, ACME Group  
The disabled people must come forward themselves and achieve their goals through love and asserting their rights. The disabled people must first be identified and given identity cards as per their impairment. Employment opportunities, access to transport and other services must be made available to them. I can vouch for the fact that a person with disability works with more interest and sincerity than a non disabled person. We have a Disability Welfare Act : why has it not been implemented? To bring the grassroots disabled people forward, the role of ADD is praiseworthy.

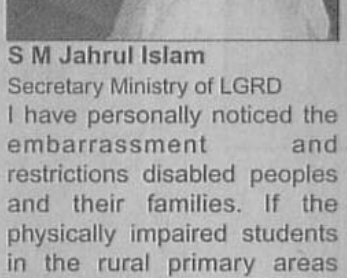
**KUSHI KABIR**  
Coordinator Nijera Kori  
The national policies for the disabled people and Disability Welfare Act in 1995 and 2001 respectively. We have to scrutinize these acts and begin a nation wide movement to press for our demands. I work in an NGO. Entire society must cooperate and come forward if the disabled people are to achieve their rights.



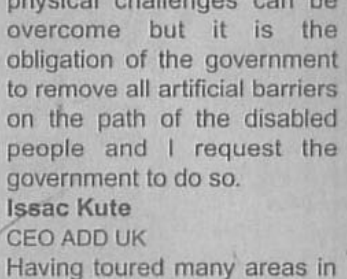
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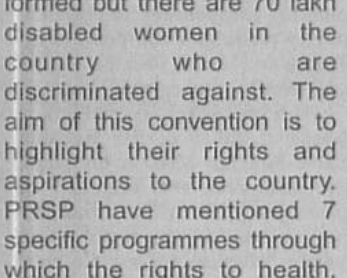
**Colonel (Retd) Faruk Khan**

Whip of the Opposition & MP Gopalganj-1  
To have success the 1.5 crore disabled people of this country must be mobilised into an united organisation with dedicated leaders. Accidents have resulted in 1 lakh 88 thousand people becoming physically impaired



**Bilkis Islam**

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It is the constitutional right of the disabled people to be treated equally. To eliminate discrimination they must be included in the political parties. If they take part in the national election and policymaking then the issue of their participation will be resolved.



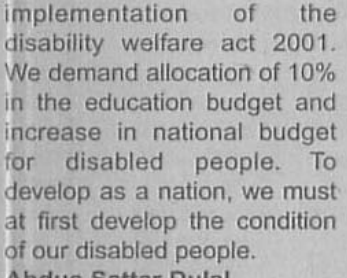
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MP Neelphamari-2  
There is disabled person in my family, I understand their helplessness and sorrow. We have to fight to achieve our constitutional rights and nothing is handed to us without a struggle. I feel that we have to work dedicatedly to create a united move towards obtaining our rights.



**Shahjahan Khan**

MP Madaripur-2  
Any budget that is brought by the disabled people will be supported by the present opposition party in the parliament.



**Gulam Mohammad Quader**

MP Rongpur-3  
We must keep reserved seats for disabled people in the parliament. The disabled people must be brought into mainstream politics for implementation of the disability welfare act.



**Ayesha Khanam**

General Secretary Bangladesh Mosila Parishad  
All disabled people face some restriction in one way or another. Even the able are politically disabled. We need policy makers who will prioritize the needs of the people and will not only work for their personal benefit only.



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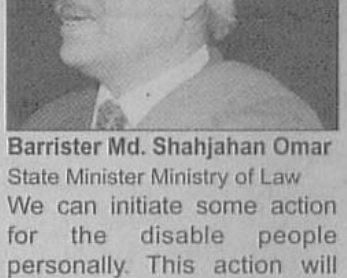
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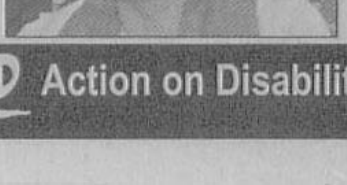
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**Barrister Md. Shahjahan Omar**

State Minister Ministry of Law  
We can initiate some action for the disabled people personally. This action will encourage others because proper use of allocated funds is just as necessary.



**Sultana Kamal**

Executive Director Ain o Salish Kendra  
The disabled people are very much a part of the civil society and thus all of us have to work hand in hand to help each other out.

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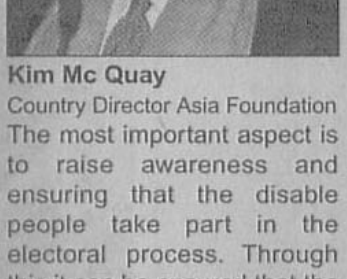
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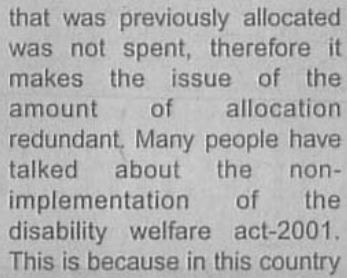


polymakers are misusing taxpayers money. The allocation of the budget is inappropriate to the demands. Only 60,000 additional disabled people have been brought under the benefit scheme of 200 tk. In a budget of 70,000 crore, only 40 crore have been allocated for the disabled. Disabled freedom fighters have to beg to survive. Therefore to achieve any of our rights we must create a united movement.



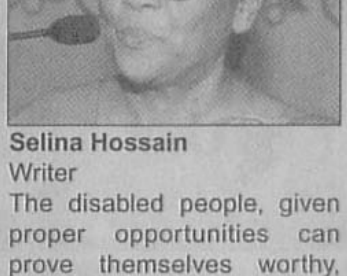
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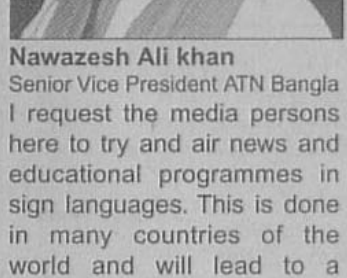
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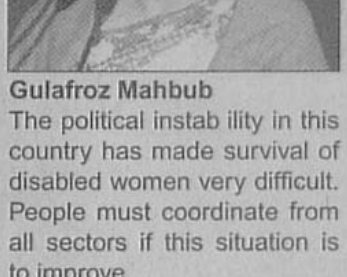
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Last year we have done a workshop on the disability welfare Act-2001 with the disabled people to increase awareness about what measures can be taken legally if this law is not followed. We hope this act will soon emerge as a full-fledged law.



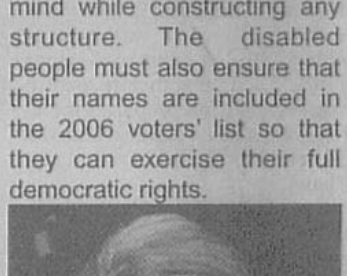
**Anna-Campbell Johnston**

Programme Coordinator ADD UK  
Compared to the past I see now that the disabled people have grown in confidence, are more aware of their rights and are ready to fight for them. The disability welfare act 2001 is an example of this. In Bogra I met a group of disabled women who have been trained in how to conduct legal actions where necessary and take proper procedures. Thus non-disabled women now come to this group to seek cooperation and legal advice. The movement of the disabled people is growing very quickly as we have realised that the rights of the disabled people are human rights.



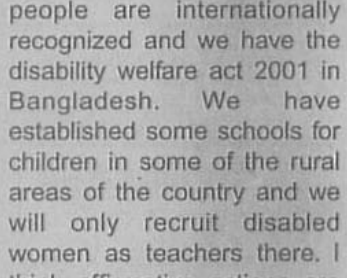
**Abdul-Muyeed Chowdhury**

Executive Director BRAC  
A ramp was built in our Shahid Minar only in 2006. Before this, the disabled people could not pay homage to martyrs of the language movement. We have to keep the needs of the disabled in mind while constructing any structure. The disabled people must also ensure that their names are included in the 2006 voters' list so that they can exercise their full democratic rights.



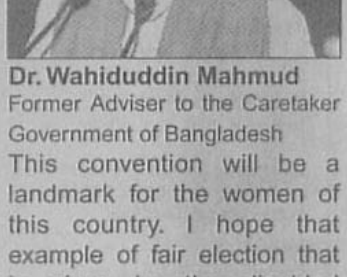
**Selina Hossain**

Writer  
The disabled people, given proper opportunities can prove themselves worthy, now also we must prove ourselves worthy.



**Dr. Hameeda Hossain**

Founder Member Ain o Salish Kendra  
The demands of the disabled people are internationally recognized and we have the disability welfare act 2001 in Bangladesh. We have established some schools for children in some of the rural areas of the country and we will only recruit disabled women as teachers there. I think affirmative actions are necessary to take the disabled women forward.



**Dr. Wahiduddin Mahmud**

Former Adviser to the Caretaker Government of Bangladesh  
This convention will be a landmark for the women of this country. I hope that example of fair election that is given by the disabled women today will be followed by the national election commission. Though this budget has largely ignored the needs of the disabled, future budgets will be unable to do so because the disabled people will prove that in the future it will be impossible to win an election without their support.

**Jalal Uddin Ahmad**

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate