A Visit to Shitakunda

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THE scorching heat was raging on and the sky was sunny, cloudless and crystal clear. In was in this settings we had to go to Shitakunda, Chittagong, for a 3-day visit for the partial fulfillment of our TPD (Trainee Professional with Disability) program. This was a training program implemented by YPSA (Young Power in Social Action- a local specialized social development organization) under the aegis of AAB (Action Aid Bangladesh) and HSBC (Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation), comprising twenty higher-educated differentially able people from various parts of the country. We got on the car to Sitakunda at 2.15 sharp. The car was heading for the Human Resource Development Center (HRDC) of YPSA. All of us were mesmerized seeing the green surroundings and serene beauty of the area. The YPSA personnel there gave us a cordial reception. We had a brief discussion on the proceedings of the next two days with Mr Harun - our program organizer. As time progressed and the sun was setting, Iftar (fast-breaking) time approached and that we had Iftar in a befitting manner. As we were tired from the journey, we went to bed early.

For the next two days, we had a hectic schedule. It is necessary to mention here that YPSA conducts all its activities under a program named DISC, which stands for Development Initiative for Social Change. In a broad sense, DISC is a comprehensive approach that addresses some key factors of community-based rehabilitation of person with disabilities (PWDs) in an integrated manner. The range of the DISC program is vast. It conducts different activities for the disabled and distressed people of the society.

Below is a description of the affairs we observed and explored.

YPSA Health Service Centre:

It consists of two well-equipped rooms, the Therapy Centre and the Clinic. Paralyzed patients of all ages come here for treatment and physiotherapy. The center provides all kinds of medicines at 25% reduced rate for the poor and distressed patients. The therapy center is equipped with various state-of-the-art machineries. There are four workers including a doctor who provide daylong services.

Disability and Education:

Primary education is a basic right. To ensure this right, YPSA is conducting an exceptional program. It has set up a school named Evergreen International School to enlighten the poor and disabled children of the society with primary education. This school conducts their activities from playgroup to Class Five. There are 175 students in this school of whom seven are disabled. There is also an opportunity for the children to receive education for free. One noticeable thing is a wide ramp at the entrance of the classroom for the physically challenged. This catches the eyes of every visitor and reminds them of the YPSA's consideration for all kinds of people in society.