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according to the different categories. Training and incentives are needed for the disabled. It is little bit costly for private organizations, so government should take the lead. Disabled people can gain from out-sourcing activities like translation, graphic designing and so on. There are some infrastructural issues. Building code should be maintained as disability-friendly.

D.net is doing some projects for the development of the accessibility for the disabled like developing Braille readers and USB with Sri Lanka. We are appealing to all of you to suggest to us on the non-technical aspects of these projects.

Colin Risner, CEO, SHIRE:



One cannot reduce poverty without addressing disability because we have approximately 80 thousand households now who are the beneficiaries of our projects and the proportion of disabled people in the households is very high. We have to allocate enough resources proportionate to the number of the disabled people.

There are multiple deprivations because expenditure rises in the case of mental and physical challenges. We have to address them in a coordinated way.

Mohua Paul, Resource Mobilizer, Access Bangladesh:



Article 6 of the Bangladesh Disability Welfare Act 2001 ensures accessibility facilities for the disabled. But ten years have already lapsed and it is yet to be implemented. There are provisions in City Corporation's Building Code-2008 and Housing Authorities Ordinance-2009 to maintain ramps, wheel chairs and toilet facilities for the disabled in the building, transports and public places. We have not found any implementation of these provisions.

Government should allocate more budgets for the easy accessibility of the disabled. Tax holiday provisions could be good options.

Umm Kulsum Ranjana, President, Protibondhi Narider Jatio Parishad:



Government's allocation of 300 taka per month is very poor for a disabled person. Government should allocate more funds for them. Government should create a platform where all the organizations who work on disability issues would be united to

make coordinated and centralized programmes for the disabled.

Prof Dr. Jebun Nasreen Ahmed, Head, Department of Architecture, BUET:



Ensuring universal accessibility is a very important topic. New buildings should maintain disability friendly building code. We have to also think about old buildings because they are large in numbers. Budgetary provisions should be allocated for the conversion of the old buildings to ensure accessibility for the disabled. Existing building code has limitations to ensure universal accessibility. We are preparing indexes for universal accessibility.

I have seen in many educational institutions that there are no ramps or toilet facilities for the disabled students. If there is a ramp it is usually very steep. We should combine the disability-friendly facilities in the building design.

Col Shawkat Ali (Retd) MP, Deputy Speaker, People's Republic Bangladesh:



The honourable members of the parliament need to be mobilized more. Then they will talk more about this issue. I am requesting you to take the chance. Personally, I will try to impress the members of the parliament about this issue. Before the submission of budget any standing committee can make recommendations about it. Those recommendation can be placed in the house and can be communicated to the ministry of finance. Dr. Akbar Ali Khan talked about the Loksabha. I do not know what happens there. But there is no chance to discuss after the announcement of budget in our country. There are many standing committees, there is ministry of social welfare and they can recommend before the budget is placed. As government is committed to the welfare of the disabled, it must stand by their side. Honourable Prime Minister and Honourable Minister of Social Welfare expressed their solidarity with the disabled. There is a committee who can recommend about the promises of the government. Though it is late for this year but I think we can make good efforts in the coming days. We can make it possible for the government to come forward to fulfill their commitments.

Shanawaz Qureshi, Country Director, CBM:



CBM is an international

development and disabilities organization. Bangladesh has ratified the CRPD. Now the challenge ahead is the implementation of the provisions. To implement that effectively, we need to have a comprehensive approach. Actions are needed to be taken by different stakeholders. We need to have some new laws following CRPD action plans, policies as well as resources, so that the provisions could be implemented in the field. A lot of interventions by different organizations, government and different stakeholders are going on. But still as you know there is a sizeable number of disabled people in Bangladesh. So, we are far from sufficient and we need to increase the support and interventions to ensure their rights whether it's in the form of rehabilitation services, inclusive educations or their livelihood opportunities. The need is everywhere.



I would like to say that wherever I go for the field work in the remote area I always make it a point to discuss with the different representatives of the government. There is thinking about their interventions as well as what is going in their area. It is always a kind of sensitization. It is very encouraging to see that they are aware of, they are interested in and they feel that definitely there should be more interventions to ensure the rights and services for the persons with disabilities. But there is always limitation in the field of resources that they face. At the national level there is a need to ensure and to allocate more resources, so that more and more actions could be taken in the fields. I feel today's discussion is very important. Definitely it would be helpful to increase the resources in this sector.

Gazi Mohammad Nurul Kabir, MD, Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation:



It is tough to penetrate into the running budget but it would be an example for the future. The history of disability is as contemporary as the history of mankind. But disabled people are obstructed to progress smoothly as much as human civilization. For many centuries disabled peoples have been left behind. In the passage of time the disabled developed their potential talents. Now many disabled persons around the world

are in top places proving their competence. Let us think about our progress. The issue of disability has been switched over from medical model to social model. This is positive progress. The National Disability Development Foundation was founded in 1999 and has become an effective platform for the persons with disabilities. The disability welfare act was issued in 2001. It is an important progress.

Bangladesh is one of the countries to sign UN CRPD and attain glorious achievements. We are claiming charity allocations, welfare donation in the national budget. On 2nd April, our honourable prime minister talked about motivation programme. In 3rd and 4th class jobs there are 10% quota allocated for the disabled. Moreover, the government is considering for 1% quota in 1st class jobs. Government is planning to provide five years

extra job facilities and to lessen the educational qualification requirement for the disabled. We hope it will be implemented. The disabled are enjoying 10% to 100% extra allocations in many one-stop services.

Actually there is a progress in this sector since 1999. I hope we will talk about the 2012-13 budget from a better position. We are expecting for a complete survey and for effective laws for the disabled within the next economic year. Dr. Abul Barakat talked about the assistive device. But I think it could be comprehended after the complete assessment. We import one-time clinical wheel chair as assistive device but many promising companies in our country are producing disabled-friendly wheel chairs, far better than China, Indonesia and Vietnam. I think they should be promoted in the PPP. Then we can produce to meet our domestic needs. Many disabled persons work in these companies. The progress in this sector will create employment for them.

Dr. Mustafa K. Mujeri, Director General, BIDS:



Today our discussions are in the context of the budget. I think we have to consider the mainstreaming process from a wider context. According to the Conventions on The Rights of the Disabled, every state has to protect, ensure and promote the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom of all persons including the disabled. It is

a matter of rights not allocations only. What is mainstreaming? Why are we talking about this? What is its objective? Here mainstreaming is nothing but inclusion. According to Dr. Abul Barkat 10% of our 160 million people are disabled. We have to ensure that they are included in the existing agenda, policy making, and social agenda. This is mainstreaming. We should not consider this meeting only for some recommendations. Rather, we have to consider all these as a continuous activity.

Disabled people are not a homogenous group. We have to consider the diversity. The state has to come forward to solve the specific problems. Besides, wider social issues like persisting discrimination and exclusion must be addressed. The needs of the disabled are not much different from all other people. They also need medical facilities, education, jobs, and social well

disabled in the garments and bank sectors. We have to pay special attention to the disabled women as they face more discrimination in work. We need to mobilize the honorable members of the parliament in order to get more allocations in the next budget. The government must need to increase the source of revenue and spend it in development especially in the development of the disabled. The implementation of CRPD and MDGs can solve many problems of the disabled people.

Thomas Balivet, Country Director, Handicap International:



Handicap International has been working in Bangladesh since 1997. Our focus is on rights based approach for the disabled according to the framework of the UN Convention on the rights of the persons with disabilities. I am particularly interested about the issue of assistive devices, which is very important in Bangladesh. Any inclusion of the disabled starts with his or her possibility of mobility. An inclusion starts with being able to go out of the house, being able to move in the community, being able to participate in every stage of social life. So we work on the issue of production of assistive devices and availability of quality assistive devices in Bangladesh. We have some projects with our colleagues in Center for Disability and Development. We produce all kinds of mobility devices including wheelchairs, crutches etc. At the elementary level of the project, we made a small survey and found out that in Bangladesh for a population of 160 million people there were no more than 15 places where assistive devices were produced and the quality was very low. So this is really an important issue. I was happy that it came out in the recommendation papers.

Ms. Yasmin Ahmed, Executive Director, NOVA Consultancy:



I think we have to address the reasons behind disability. The rate of road accident is very high in Bangladesh. Every year twenty thousand people become disabled because of road accidents. I think we need to pay more attention in the employment and education of the disabled. It requires more economic allocations. They should be provided more SME facilities. Another important thing is their skill development which is very important for their access to job market. Government can assist them by providing IT training, mobile repairing training and so on. Jobs at call centres could be a good solution to the employment of disabled people because it does not require mobility. For these kinds of jobs they need to develop fluency both in English and Bengali.

In our country the disabled do not get the supporting allowance which is provided properly by the government because of corruption especially in the rural areas. In Bangladesh there is no disability insurance which is very popular in the developed world.

I think we can provide more job facilities to the

Sometimes we see the government talking about

lack of money. In this case experts can come forward to help the government and to find out the sources. This discussion can be helpful to find out our working sectors. Many donors are present here. They can think about these sectors and plan for support. They can support the government by funding. Our honourable prime minister talked about the community clinic services and said the disabled can take health services from there. But we need to ensure that there are enough doctors and physiotherapists for the disabled people. The government is talking about the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities in education sector and gave direction to admit the disabled into schools. But the teachers find it tough to deal with the disabled students. They don't know how to teach the speech or hearing impaired children, how to teach in Braille system. In remote areas it is very tough to send disabled children to school. If the teachers fail to understand them then they lose interest to go to school. So the teachers must be trained how to teach them.

We, the Manusher Jonno Foundation, are working with 120 partners. Many of our partners promote the corporate social responsibilities. After getting trained, now many women are working in the garments sector. The garments owners are satisfied with their work. Muktapani could be promoted in the market. It will create job opportunities for the disabled. Other organizations should come forward to support the disabled. Finally, I would like to say that it is not only a concern of the Social Welfare ministry, but we should engage other ministries in the development process of the disabled.

Md Abdul Halim Sardar, Secretary, National Grassroots Disability Organization



First, I would like to thank the organizers and the participants of this programme. This programme will help to inform and mobilize people about disabilities. We have a little access in the national budget. We don't know how to participate. So we need some guidelines and scope as well.

Ranjit Kumar Biswas, Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare:



Ministry of Social Welfare has already taken some measures. We have introduced a development programme for the disabled. We started the project with allocation of 5 crore taka and in the ongoing budget we have spent 9 crore and 45 lakh taka. In the upcoming budget we have proposed 102 crore

taka for development programmes of the National Disability Foundation and Social Service Department. We have been providing some grant and loans to the disabled people. In the 2010-2011 fiscal year we have spent 47 lakh 5 thousand taka in giving loans and 89 lakh 45 thousand taka in grant. In the 2011-12 fiscal year we will spend 2 crore 50 lakh taka. In this fiscal year, we have spent 5 crore 82 lakh taka for the combined education projects of the disabled. We will spend 6 crore 64 lakh 77 thousand 820 taka in this project in the upcoming fiscal year. We provide 300 taka to each of the needy disabled. The number of beneficiaries is 2 lakh 86 thousand and expenditure in this project is 102 crore taka. In the 2011-12 we have proposed to allocate 10 crore taka more.

The ministry is working with enthusiasm and we are getting support from the apex of the government which is unmatched in Bangladesh up to now. We are trying to produce some dedicated people who will work wholeheartedly to provide support to the disabled persons.

Another point I want to touch is that why the disabled do not get 10% of the budget. They get services from overlapping sectors which we do not count. I think we should count the whole allocation.

Enamul Haque Mostofa Shahid, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare, People's Republic of Bangladesh:



I have budgets but I have no addresses of the concerned institutions who work on disability. I expect from you that you would give me realistic plans.

We have to bring the organizations on a centralized platform. We are doing many things for the development of the disabled like creating disabled foundations, providing loans and grants, employment and so on. But still we have to go a long way.

Prime Minister has given commitment of 17,000 crore taka for the disabled. So we have enough money. If we need more, the Prime Minister can allocate more funds beyond the budget.

We have to plan effectively so that change in government will not affect mainstreaming programmes of the disabled. We need good direction.

We have allocated fund for the autistic children but there is no monitoring how the fund has been spent. So we have to monitor the programmes thoroughly.

Mosharraf Hossain, Moderator:

It is not a one-stop activity. We want to continue such programmes to make a comprehensive disability development programme. Thankyou.