

Disability Inclusive National Budget 2012-13

ADD International and The Daily Star organized a roundtable on 'Disability Inclusive National Budget 2012-13' on May 22, 2012. It was attended by the Honourable Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare, Mr. Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid MP, eminent scholars, professionals in the field and many persons with disability. We publish a summary of the discussions

--Editor

Mahfuz Anam, Editor and Publisher, The Daily Star

This is the second round table with ADD on budget allocation for disabled people. The Daily Star is committed to work for the socio-economic development of disabled people. We strongly support this cause through our reporting, editorial and post editorial. We, the media, have grown to be more concerned about the rights of disabled people though not enough is being done for them. You get our full support in this cause.

Mr. Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid, MP, Hon'ble Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare

We are working hard to conduct a survey among disabled people and enlist them. We are thinking of mobile banking to provide them the fund so that they do not face any harassment.

I do not find any ramp in many schools, and when I ask the contractor he even does not what it is. So we have to focus on entire programme planning so that when a design gets passed a ramp should be ensured there.

We have established training centre for disable people in 36 Upazillas. These centres are very well equipped. We have allotted grants so that disabled people can get service at home. We are recruiting more manpower.

Mosharraf Hossain, Country Director, ADD

This year we have taken programme of holding discussions with policy makers, local government and members of civil society at the grass roots level from the very first week of May. Through these discussions we tried to emphasize on the inclusion of the disabled in the budget of local governments along with national budget.

Personally I believe that political commitment and willingness is the number one need to push forward the marginal people. Present Awami League government put emphasis on the development of disabled people in their election manifesto. They pledged to implement and update the Person with Disability Welfare Act-2001. The government promised that steps would be taken for their education, employment, access and enhancement of social status.

- Some important suggestions made by ADD have been implemented already. They are-
- 1% quota has been allocated in BCS, first and second class jobs for persons with disability.
- Project has been implemented to conduct survey on disabled people
- A draft act has been prepared for the rights of persons with disability.

If the government pass the draft act and complete the survey, a revolutionary change would happen.

The globally accepted model for development of the persons with disability is Twin Track Approach. According to this model development issues of persons with disability should be included in the mainstream development projects as well as special projects which could be termed as positive discrimination should be taken so that they can win the hurdles of poverty and obstruction.

In the last 3 budgets the share of budget allocated for disabled persons is less than 0.50%. This does not show that budgets are prepared with liberal mind and grand vision so that rights and respects of disabled persons could be established. We have been demanding 10% of the total budget for the 10% of our population who are disabled. Grass root organizations who work with disabled people have urged to include the following allocations in the budget 2012-13:

1. To increase the number of beneficiaries and amount of donation.
2. To allocate fund for rehabilitation of the people with disability.
3. To allocate fund for building ramps in all government institutions.
4. To take projects to prevent disability.
5. Interest free credit facilities should be given to disabled people by both government and nongovernment banks.
6. To increase the number of beneficiaries and amount of allocation for the students with disability.
7. Education materials should be provided free of cost to the students with disability.
8. Fund should be allocated to increase



efficiency of the disabled people in IT sector.

9. Fund should be allocated to provide technical education to the disabled people.
10. Sign language and Braille should be included in teachers training curriculum.
11. Fund should be allocated to give legal aid to the women with disability who are victims of violence
12. Fund should be allocated so that disabled people can join sports and cultural activities.
13. Disabled people should be included in food security programmes like VGA, VGD and food for work.
14. Quota should be allocated for the people with disability in overall village development, 'Ekti Bari Ekti Khamar' and National Sanitation project.
15. Ration system should be launched for the poor people with disability
16. Especial allotment should be made for the disabled people in time of disaster like situation
17. To pass and implement Disability Welfare Act

To take these massive programmes forward there should be a department or a ministry. We need a strong leadership to achieve our goals.

Dilara Sattar Mitu, Director, SEID Trust

The amount of allowance for the disabled children is very poor. Further, their families have to face hassles to get the money. So I would urge to increase this amount and make the process easily reachable.

Another type of allowance is given to the school going disabled children. We find that after getting the allowance most of them do not come to school because there is very little monitoring from the school or social welfare department. So I think, the allowance should be given to the schools so that they can monitor and bring the disabled children back to school.

My third point is accessibility. In the field level we have found that schools are not friendly to the disabled children. Even teachers have no orientation of the issue. In our curriculum our resources on disability issue is inadequate. So teachers should be trained with orientation with the disability issue.

Another issue is segregation which happens often in both rural and urban areas. This year we have admitted 11 children in schools, but they are facing discrimination there.

Dr M A Muhith, Executive Director, Child Sight Foundation

The disability issue is a cross-cutting issue like the gender issue. But we have segregated this issue into social security programme only. This mind set should be changed. Mainstreaming this issue is very important. If the government monitor how many disabled people are getting benefit from the mainstream ADP programmes, then these programmes would care for the disabled people.

We find in the field level that the disabled feel discriminated by us able people. So here comes the attitude issue. Government can vie for match funding with the private TV who will air social awareness programmes on disability issues.

M A Quader, Secretary, SUPRO
Government should set up a department and one stop service to ensure that disabled people at grass root level can access the services offered by the government.

Ms Yesmin Ahmed, Executive Director, Nova Consultancy

Our initiatives should be empowerment based rather than relief based if we really want to enhance the social status of disabled people and empower them.

I have found that disabled women are the worst victims of violence against women. I think the government should allocate more fund for disabled women along with legal services.

Shahidul Haque, Executive Director, SARPV

I want to address the issue of disability prevention measures. In Bangladesh 1% children below 15 suffer from rickets due to deficiency of calcium. If the parents were made conscious and the public health department took appropriate measures, then we could have saved these children. If the situation lasts five years more then things will become unpreventable. So we need budget for prevention which not only includes diseases but also accidents and disasters.

We need budget for teachers training for sensitizing them about issues related to disability.

People with disability do not have access to PKSF's micro credit programmes though in our experiment we have found that they are the best loan re-payers.

Dr. Sadeka Halim, Information Commissioner

Our approach towards persons with disability is very sympathetic to cure and modify. But we should avoid this victim approach.

Among the 9.07% of the disabled population, most of them are women and they are the worst victims. So I want to add that not only budget for legal counseling but also sensitization of the legal service providers is necessary.

Another important issue is right to information. I have found that disabled people are protesting against corruption by using right to information. I think this Act can be used for further protection of the rights of disabled people. We have already made some Braille copies of the Bengali version of the Right to Information Act. The last point: we should call off projects and take master plans for the development of disabled people.

Rasheda K. Chowdhury, Director, Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE)

Still education of the disabled population is

under the Social Welfare Ministry. It is treated as charity not right. To make the education programme of the disabled population successful we have to relocate it to the Ministry of Education. That needs change of our Rules of Business which was carried forward during the last caretaker government but is now at a standstill.

In Bangladesh, a scientist discovered an easy process to transfer any book into Braille system. But government has showed no interest in it. They give the same excuse of Rules of Business.

My last point is accessibility. It is frustrating that even our freedom fighters do not go to the national mausoleum due to lack of access facilities. There are circulars issued by Ministry of Education to create facilities in the entire infrastructure for the disabled people.

Do we know whether people with disability are included in our census? The answer is no. Later they are included by a sample survey. My question why do we create such discrimination?

Nawazish Ali Khan, Chief of Programme, ATN Bangla

We have good examples where media can partner such initiatives. The advertisement of diarrhea prevention was very successful and succeeded to disseminate information what should we do in a diarrhea case. If we can make similar content and disseminate the message at the grassroot level we can hope for better result.

Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)
Our ADP utilization is at the lowest. I want to urge the government to transfer the unutilized fund to the development of the disabled people.

We have achieved success in mainstreaming gender budgeting. Now all the ministries have gender budgets and Ministry of Women and Child Welfare coordinate among the different ministries. I think Ministry of Social Welfare should play the same role and the fund should be decentralized among different ministries. Otherwise the disabled people's development will remain in charity mode, not right based and mainstreamed.

We have to come out of circular and put emphasis on implementation and give budget according to circular. My last point, without making an inclusive society we cannot achieve inclusiveness.

Mr. Ashfaqul-ul-Kabir, Executive Director, Tauri Foundation

We need long term planning as the disability issue cannot be solved overnight. To make an inclusive society we need to create awareness. The messages should be more communicable and improvised.

Anila, Member, Global Panel, Save the Children UK

I am capable of doing everything like other children but I do not get chance to continue my education because schools deny me admission because of problem in my legs. I went to a school to get admitted but they

told me that it would create problems for other children and their parents would complain.

In India if they can include people with disability why I will not get that chance in Bangladesh. What will happen to my future?

Mr. Ranajit Kumar Biswas, Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare, Bangladesh Secretariat, Dhaka

We are assimilating our thoughts and ideas on a subject which is very close to our heart and I will incorporate your suggestions and recommendations in our work plan to provide better service for people with disability.

We have formed a national committee including senior officers from 46 ministries to discuss the issues on disability and create more scope for them. Bangladesh government has 89 safety net programmes and Ministry of Social Welfare conducts the highest number of safety net programmes. I will invite all of you to work with us and along with your support we will step forward.

Ms Farida Yesmin, Executive Director, DRRA

A government prepares a budget eyeing vulnerability, population size and political commitment. Disability is such an important issue that should be increased over the years according to our financial capacity. I will urge the Ministry of Social Welfare to coordinate with other ministries to sensitize them to include disability issue in their budgets.

We only blame government for their inadequate budget allocation for disabled people, but the scenario is more or less same in case of donor's allocation. I think we should focus on both sides.

Mr Gazi Mohammad Nurul Kabir, MD Jatio Protibondhi Unnoyon Foundation

We are working in line of the spirit of UNCRPD and Ministry of Social Welfare has 450 crore Tk for disabled people. I hope we will do better in the future.

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Nator-3

Besides bribery there is harassment in getting the fund. There is acute shortage of manpower in the Social Welfare office of my constituency. I have only one officer who has to look after 2 to 3 Upazillas which is quite impossible and most of the time he is unavailable.

We should provide card like Agriculture Assistance Card to the people with disability. And a system should be developed so that they can collect the money from the nearby Union Parishad Office. Education and Health cards should also be issued to them so that they can have easy access to these facilities.

Rashed Khan Menon, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Dhaka-8

Please come with specific proposal for budget allocation and only then we, MPs, can raise the issue in the parliament. I have not found any activities of Ministry of Social Welfare in my constituency yet. There are two schools for disabled people in my constituency and they do not know which ministry is operating them. I try to allocate them some money from test relief fund. I agree with Rasheda K Chowdhury that education of the people with disability should be attached with Ministry of Education. Some budget should be allocated for the education of the disabled people from the education budget.

Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Former President, Bangladesh Economic Association, BEA, Chairman PKSF

I agree that the law for people with disability should be passed immediately.

I agree that education of people with disability should be handed to Ministry of Education.

I agree with Sadeka Halim that projects will not yield our desired results. We should take long term plan.

I think people with disability should be given identity card so that they can get facilities.

My last point, we have to start implementation of the budget from the very beginning of fiscal year not at the end of the year.