

## **Creating Employability in Education for the Persons with Visual Impairment in Developing Countries**

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**Background:** Generally we know that the disability issue and the persons with disabilities are the major concern of the world program of action and it has been emphasized in different international instruments on disability issues like UN-Standard Rules on the equalization of opportunities of Persons with Disabilities, Mandate of Asia-Pacific decade (1993-2002) of disabled persons and Biwako Millennium framework for action of Asia-pacific decade (2003-2012) of disabled persons etc.

The adoption by the United Nations in 1993 of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities was an important official international recognition of the need to address the social and economic exclusion of disabled people. Of course, such concerns, together with the argument that disability is essentially a human rights issue, have been around for some time and these form the principles of the international disability movement, whose lobbying and advocacy have helped move disability up to the development agenda.

But in spite of having such international commitments and agenda, what we see still in the practical life. According to the estimate and declaration of World Health Organization (WHO) 10% of the total population in developing countries are regarded as Persons With Disabilities. As we live in Bangladesh one of the developing countries we encounter many problems here. Bangladesh is a densely populated country with about 140 million of population, so it may be considered that there are 14 million people with disabilities in Bangladesh. There has been little attention given to the needs of people with disabilities. By virtue of their disability the large number people are excluded from normal activities of life like education and employment and socio-economic and cultural life and mainstream development. When poor people become disabled they are often helpless in terms of resources and skills. In different level it has been realized that Disabled persons are among the poorest of the poor.

Almost all the existing services for disabled persons with limited resources are institution based and located mostly in urban areas and some of these services are now extended to a few rural areas. This institutional service by nature of its specialization, can not meet all types of disabilities or the total needs of a person with disability as human being. But a person with disability has the same needs like a non-disabled person living in the wider community and the needs may be identified as social, sexual, learning, economic independence, dignity and respect, access to community services, marriage, recreation and culture etc. Besides, most of the people with disabilities are the poorest of the poor in the country and they are considered as the vulnerable population segments and they lead tragic lives with hard core poverty.

Many of the families are not interested about education of their children with disabilities. Besides, The Negative attitude of the society and school are also major causes to obtaining education for persons with disabilities. Many school refused to enroll children with disabilities. The rude behavior and mistreatment by the peers and teachers deter many of the disabled learners from continuing education. Besides, a lack of assistive devices and accessibility, long distance of school /education institution from home and unfriendly class room environment also act barriers to acquiring education apart from these. The disabled students' fee problems are another factor to participate in existing educational system.

#### **Status of Visually Impaired Students:**

On the above situation it may be mentioned here that the situation of visually impaired persons are very lamentable rather more than other people living under poverty level.

There are very limited opportunities in the education institute of the country to enhance one's skills on vocational and technical arise along side pursuing regular education. If a family has the financial capacity to educate only one or more of their children the family always prefer to educate the child without disability. Education for the disabled people is considered both by there families and policy makers as the squandering of money and resources.

The government of the people's republic of Bangladesh fixed the target to educate all sections of population in Bangladesh by the year of 2020 under the long term project and titled "education for all". But that plan doesn't include disability issue or this has not yet offered any strategy to promote education for disabled persons.

For a pretty long time visually disabled persons who have received higher education from the university even most of them have been suffering from unemployment since long. This is because of not only the attitudinal barriers of the employers but the existing system and qualification of the visually disabled persons don't have matching with the demand of employment situation of the country. It is suppose to a root causes of

extreme unemployment problem of visually disabled persons are the various limitations like scarcity of resources, lack of professionalism and appropriate technology. Intervention of appropriate technology could be utilized in education to achieve employment opportunities.

I would like to further mention about some UN-standard rules regarding employment opportunities.

01. Laws and regulations in the employment field must not discriminate against persons with disabilities and must not raise obstacles to their employment.
02. States should actively support the integration of persons with disabilities into open employment. This support could occur through a variety of measures, such as vocational training, incentive-oriented quota schemes, reserved or designated employment, loans or grants for small business. Exclusive contracts or priority production rights, tax concessions, contract compliance or other technical or financial assistance to enterprises employing worker with disabilities.
03. States should also encourage employers to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate persons with disabilities.

It may be mentioned here that disability is not specifically mentioned in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Perversely, this omission may have served as a catalyst for many people and organizations to affirm or reaffirm the links between disability and poverty.

#### **Governments' Initiative:**

There has been taken initiative by the government to enforce the job quota for the persons with disabilities in the light of the National policy on disability. Government also has a number of vocational training centers where a number of disabled persons receive training every year. Some organizations are providing training to the people with disabilities. But these are not enough to cover at least minimum requirement for persons with disabilities. In Bangladesh according to the presidents' declaration of 1990, 10% job quota for disabled persons and orphan to be executed in Bangladesh. But still it has not yet been enforced as per minimum requirement.

In accordance with practical experience it has been observed that there are integrated blind education centers along with a resource teacher run by the government in different districts of Bangladesh. But this program it is not so active for visually impaired persons. Many visually impaired persons use to attend their classes / center from long distant place. Due to poor economic condition and harmful situation they do not continue their study. Ultimately many students become dropout. It would be effective if it runs through constructive way.

However, Employability in Education for the visually impaired persons in Developing Countries should be created in various aspects. The following recommendations may be emphasized in this regard.

- Availability of Braille materials and necessary equipment and modern technology for the visually impaired persons should be ensured.
- Many resource teachers of the existing integrated blind education center should be provided with special training on Braille education and the strategies to handle the visually impaired and multiple disabled including visual impairment.
- Residential facilities like hostel should be provided for the visually handicapped female students in the integrated blind education center in all developing countries.
- The Government should initiate a provision of support like scholarship-stipend for the visually disabled students.
- The policy makers of the government should include the education of persons with disabilities in general educational system under the Ministry of education.
- The policy makers should initiate appropriate remedial measure for a parallel educational system both academic and study related vocational training
- The existing vocational training institutes should be reorganized in developing good linkage and relation with the general education curriculum.
- Visually disabled persons should have encouragement and arrangement of their potential development during study life to match themselves into open labour market.
- The Government and Non-Government organizations working for the disable people should provide at least two or three disabled persons with suitable jobs/employment in their respective organizations.
- There should be the latest arrangement of mobility orientation training for visually disabled students during study life for their easy movement and use of white cane.
- During student life visually impaired persons should have opportunity in their education institution for excursion visit in home and abroad.

**Conclusion:** In the concluding remarks it may mentioned here that the government and concerned policy makers would take appropriate steps to eliminate the above mentioned problems positively for persons with visual impairment so that they can achieve employability in their education. Opportunity of research and access to the latest technology is essential in this regard. However, Employability in Education for the persons with visual impairment is very important that promote their life-style and dignity.