

Impact of COVID-19 on employment situation of Persons with Disabilities:

COVID-19 and the government and healthcare responses to this crisis are having a significant impact on the lives of people all over the world. It is vital that governments and health officials ensure that human rights are part of this response. In particular, they must ensure that the rights of people from marginalized communities those who are most likely to see their livelihoods evaporate, their healthcare and employment needs go overlooked, and their lives upended during a crisis are the top priority.

Bangladesh has been listed as one of the 25 high risk countries. Hence, to stem the spread of COVID-19, Government of Bangladesh has declared the countrywide shutdown from 26 March 2020 and the duration of shutdown has been extended step by step due to stemming the spread of Covid-19. Consequentially, low income People with Disabilities lost their means of daily income, due to the ongoing shutdown situation.

The present situation and especially the lockdown has put a large portion of population including Persons with Disabilities in a precarious situation. The pandemic and locked down situation has an adverse impact on the employment situation of Population with Disabilities especially Women with Disabilities and they are leading in humanitarian lives.

According to long time working experience of WDDF, most of Persons with Disabilities are living under poverty line and they're working in informal sectors as garment workers and daily wage earners, e.g. hawkers, day labourers, rickshaw-pullers, van-pullers, transport workers, hotel workers, roadside tea stall owners and due to shutdown situation they become workless and they've no income to meet up the daily needs of their family so they're living in extreme poverty and insecure lives.

Government has started to list the poor people who are jobless due to Covid-19 situation but very unfortunate Women with disabilities are overlooked from all the support such as reshown Card or 2400 BDT financial service for poor people. At the present; District Authority for relief distributions has clearly mentioned only disability Card holder and except disability allowance receiver will get this support from government which is less than 1% even whom are in government

survey. So more than 14.5% of total population and 99% of People with Disabilities of Bangladesh are deprived from Government support at the moment.

Limited number of Persons with Disabilities are working in GOs and NGOs but due to shutdown situation they aren't continuing their job and passing days with uncertainty.

The situation is extremely adverse for Women with Disabilities as very recently some women with disability had opportunity to started job in different Garments Factory. They couldn't continue their job and in some cases they're going to lose their job. Almost one thousand garment factories have been opened within shutdown situation and garment workers without disabilities are going to be joined in their work through enormous struggle but it is impossible for Persons with Disabilities including women with disabilities worker. So they're going to lose their job.

Women with disabilities are also likely disproportionately affected by job losses, including in the informal sector, meaning that any source of income they had to meet their basic needs may have evaporated, while they also are likely to have fewer savings due to historically lower pay and higher costs of living.

Furthermore, in order to abridge economic loss during locked down situation, a large number of companies/factories will terminate staffs and in most cases, We are scaring Persons especially Women worker with Disabilities will become victim of this termination.

A number of unemployed Persons with Disabilities are trying their level best and expecting to get job in private sectors but in this unprecedented economic crisis due to this global pandemic there is no possibility to employ new staffs by the companies/factories.

It would also be noted that, all types of Government employment procedures including job circulars of Department of Social Services (DSS) for Persons without and with Disabilities where priority has been given for Persons with Disabilities are going to be postponed as Government officials are busy to manage existing situation due to outbreak of Covid-19.

Hence, considering existing situation, it is realized that, employment situation of Persons with Disabilities has massively been affected due to outbreak of Covid-19.