

## **Ensuring Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities through Financial Inclusion: An Experimental Study on Sitakund Upazila**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of the study is to investigate how the financial inclusion program of YPSA is facilitating inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), after all mainstream on development. The study is based on primary data sources through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Case Study, Observation and Questionnaire survey methods. A total 250 households from Persons with Disabilities were purposively sampled for interviewing at the field level. Meaningful data were interpreted by IBM SPSS Statistics software was used for descriptive statistics and Microsoft Excel 2013 was also used to prepare graphical presentation. The study reveals that total seven types of disabilities have been identified here, among them 66% are physical disability followed by the visually impaired. About 60% PwDs did not received any government allowance and unluckily 78% PwDs did not have Government certification as a PwDs. Besides, significant portions were aside from the social safety net programs of government. It is shocking that 25.2% PwDs are the main earning members in their family. In this circumstances, nearly 78.8% PwDs would prefer to have financial assistance through loan disbursement to start their own business and other income generating activities. However, nearly 30% PwDs were received loan from government and non-government organizations. The aforementioned program for PwDs has different moods and criterion which made accessible to the targeted groups. Aftermath, the PwDs are being benefited and improving their life and livelihood which is well-being for his family and contributing community development process.

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So, the study suggested that Government and Non-government agencies should be provided assistances in different forms as well as provide soft loan with flexible terms and conditions for PwDs income generating. These efforts will be accelerated the meaningful inclusion of PwDs.

**Keywords:** Inclusion, Person with Disabilities, Financial Inclusion, Sitakund

## **Background and Statement of the Study**

Globally disability has gained recognition as a development issue. Person with Disability (PwDs) is a person having physical, intellectual, sensory or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of that person (The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2006). Approximately one in seven of the world's population over one billion people are Persons with Disabilities. Some estimates suggested that 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries (Braithwaite and Mont, 2008). In 2008, Bangladesh signed and ratified the UN convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as one of the significant convention followed by the adoption of 'Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013'. The Act is meant to guarantee educational, physical and mental improvement of persons with disabilities and to support their participation in social and state activities by removing all sorts of discrimination Risk and humanitarian emergency issues (Hyder, 2015). However, inclusive development is a pro-poor approach that equally values and incorporates the contributions of all stakeholders - including marginalized groups - in addressing development issues. Basically, promotes the capacities and equal opportunities and rights of all people, regardless of their social condition, gender, age, physical or mental condition, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, etc. in sustainable harmony with the environment" (Handicap International, 2006). In its situation, YPSA has started the 'Inclusion of PwDs on Inclusive Finance' approach to incorporate the potentiality of PwDs in main stream of development. This approach is ensure the inclusion of PwDs in sustainable development. This approach was supported by Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) since 2015 at Sitakund

Upazila of Chittagong district in Bangladesh. This research paper has mentined how inclusive financial program is being inclusion of PwDs in development.

### **Rationality and Objectives of the Study**

Bangladesh is classified among the Next Eleven emerging market middle income economies and a Frontier market <sup>2</sup>. The GDP growth rate reached 7.1 percent, the highest rate in the past decade<sup>3</sup>. Still the growth is not inclusive with the economic condition of the underprivileged groups. One of the typical reasons for poverty is being financially excluded. Though there are about 34% of people who are enjoying all kinds of services from savings to net banking, but still around 66 % of people lack access to even basic financial services like deposit and savings accounts, payment services, loans, and insurance <sup>4</sup>. The scenario is more vulnerable in hard to reach area as like Sitakund Upazila. Though Bangladesh Bank, the central bank of Bangladesh has maintained a strong focus on financial inclusion. In 7th Five Year Plan and the Strategic Plan (2015-2019) indicate the importance of financial inclusion as a primary goal for the central bank. The specialty of inclusive financing is that financial services are at the doorsteps of households without insisting on any minimum balance or deposits. However, a substantial section of the rural people, mainly the weaker, poor, PwDs and below poverty line groups continue to remain excluded from even the most basic opportunities and services provided by the financial sector. Now, there is a need to bring people under financial inclusive program. In this context, the study is to investigate the ensuring inclusion of Persons with Disabilities through financial inclusion. The study also focused on the types of PwDs and available financial services for PwDs. In addition, how YPSA's financial services is being improving the socioeconomic and political status of PwDs in Sitakund Upazila, Chittagram.

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<sup>2</sup>. A frontier market is a type of developing country which is more developed than the least developing countries, but too small to be generally considered an emerging market.

<sup>3</sup>. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-economic-prospects> (Viewed July 2019)

<sup>4</sup>. InterMedia Bangladesh FII Tracker survey Wave 4 (N=6,000, 15+), August-September 2001

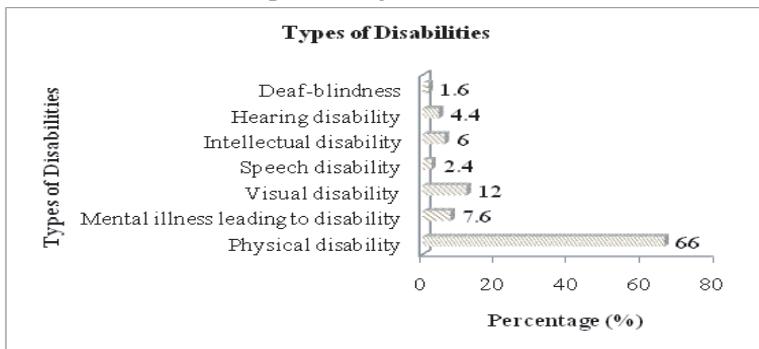
## Methods of the Study

The study was conducted in the Sitakund Upazila. Number of PwDs list was collected from the department of Social Welfare office in Sitakund, 2017 there are total 4,506 persons with disabilities in Sitakund, which is higher than the other Upazila of Bangladesh. Basically, the study was based on the quantitative somewhat qualitative method. Mostly data were collected from primary sources. Primary data were collected through Key Informant Interview (KII), Case Study, Participant Observation and Questionnaire survey. Total 250 households were selected for questionnaire survey at the field level. Secondary data were fairly used for identification of problem, checking authenticity of study as well as comparing the findings with this study. In conducting the survey, purposive sampling method was followed. Relevant data were edited, classified and tabulated on the basis of sequential manner. Quantitative data were analyzed through various types of statistical tools and techniques especially used the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS, version: 16).

## Findings and Discussion

### *Types of Persons with Disability (PwDs)*

The government of Bangladesh adopted the Act 'Rights & Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013 (MoSWR, 2013). This Act mentioned that twelve types of disabilities are available among the people in Bangladesh. But the study detected seven types of disabilities in Sitakund Upazila (figure 1).

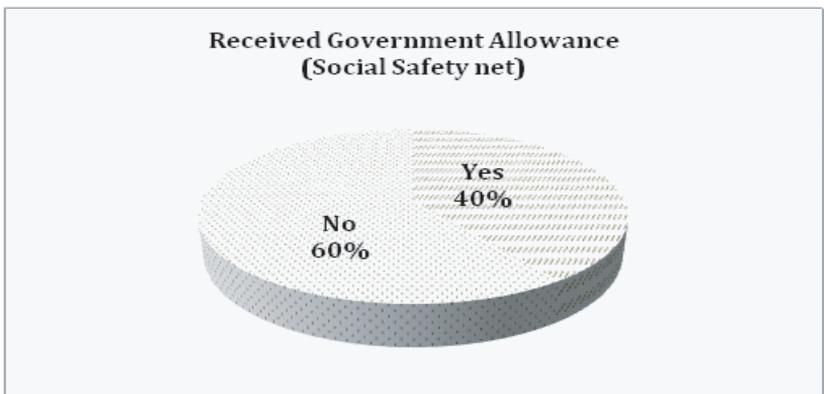


**Figure 1:** Types of Disabilities

Among seven categories 66% had physical disability while only 1.6% respondents were deaf-blind. Nearly 7.6% respondents had disability occurred from mental illness, 12% respondents were visually impaired, 6% respondents had intellectual disability and 2.4% had speech disability.

**Received Government Allowance (Social Safety Net)**

The government of Bangladesh has taken more than 145 social safety net programs for its citizens (MoSW, 2015). Maximum PwDs are not concerned or aware about these programs. Because lack of dissemination of legal authority, lack of awareness and illiteracy of PwDs is the prime causes to the untouched of rural or marginal PwDs in our country. In this point of view, PwDs are so deprived of their civilian rights everywhere.

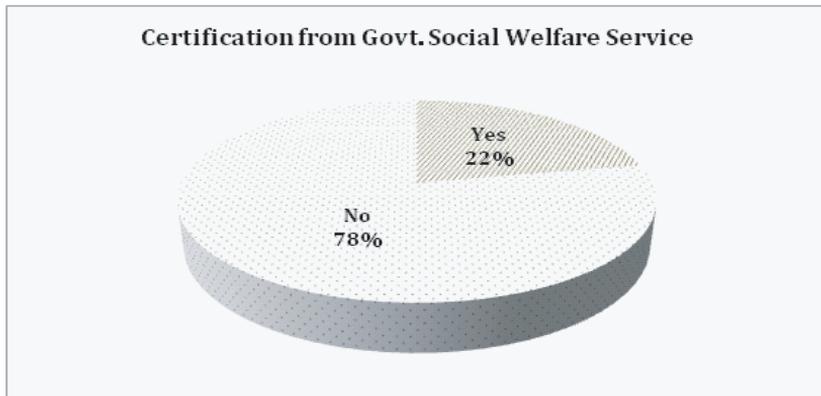


**Figure 2:** Received Government Allowance (Social Safety net)

About 40% PwDs received the government allowance, but 60% of the PwDs did not receive any government allowance from the governmental bodies. In this area, most of the PwDs were unaware about the social safety net programs by the government. Moreover, due to the physical disability and mobility problem they could not receive a government allowance. Government authority should be more concern to find out the PwDs and to give them certification with the justification of their disabilities. This certification would help them to get priority in every sector, such as relief or allowance, education, job and so on.

### Certification from Govt. Social Welfare Service

Certification from govt. social welfare service is totally disappointed scenario having a certificate from Government agencies, by which PwDs can claim the services from government (figure 4).



**Figure 3:** Certification from Govt. Social Welfare Service.

Only 22% PwDs getting certification from govt. social welfare service. Because most of the PwDs were unaware about the initiatives taken by govt. social welfare service for their betterment, so that they did not get certifications from social welfare service in this area.

### Earning status of PwDs in their family

**Table 1:** Earning Status Of Pwds In Their Family

	Frequency	Percent
Main Earning Member	63	25.2
General Member	55	22.0
No Involvement	132	52.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to the household survey, it was found that 25% PwDs were responsible or main earning members in their family (table 1). Although nearly 52% had no economic involvement in the family due to their physical condition, movement problem, illiteracy, student, housewife and so on.

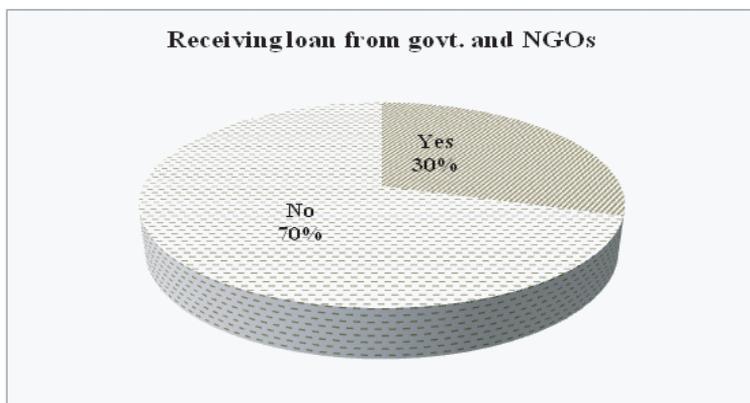
### Types of Assistance Needed for Better Life

In survey period, PwDs talked about the assistance they needed for their better life. So they need financial assistance to be independent. Almost 78.8% PwDs told they would prefer to have financial assistance through loan disbursement to start their own business and 12.8% PwDs preferred monthly assistance such as disability allowance, relief, VGF card, old aged allowance and widow allowance on a regular basis (table 2).

**Table 2:** Types of Assistance Needed For Better Life

Types of assistance	Frequency	Percent
Monthly Assistance	32	12.8
Not Applicable	21	8.4
Financial Assistance through Loan Disbursement	197	78.8
Total	250	100.0

### Available financial services for PwDs in Sitakunda Upazila Received Loan from Govt. and NGOs by PwDs



**Figure 4:** Received loan from Govt. and NGOs

Nearly 30% PwDs are received loan from Govt. and NGOs authorities while 70.4% didn't received any loan. However, maximum PwDs are unaware about the activities or initiatives taken for the improvement of their life and livelihood.

### **YPSA's financial products / services for PwDs**

The study revealed that YPSA's has provided financial support to PwDs in following sectors as;

- a. Agricultural sector;* this sector includes poultry, cattle rearing and fattening, goat rearing, vegetable gardening and paddy farming etc.
- b. Non-agriculture sector;* this sector comprises sewing, bamboo and cane products, cottage or small or petty business, grocery business and so on.
- c. Technical sector;* this sector involves a mobile servicing, packaging, make paper bag, computer training, parlor business, metallic workshop business and so on.

However, before offering on the above sectors to PwDs, YPSA has been carefully gathered the perception of PwDs through formal and non-formal ways, such as need assessment survey, day long workshop and opening sharing workshop and so on.

### **Moods and criterion for YPSA financial inclusion services**

The study found that there are specific loan package for PwDs with minimum service charge, namely '*Inclusive Finance Product*'. There are some criterion for getting these loan which are more flexible for PwDs on the basis of situation and vulnerability.

1. All PwDs be a member of DPO and Savings group.
2. All loan money are fully covered by Risk fund (like as Insurance).
3. If the borrower or family headed of borrower is death than the borrower or his family immediately get support five thousand BDT for funeral work.
4. Every PwDs have to be deposited at least five BDT or more in a week as savings.
5. Yearly profit rate is 6% on average balance money. It is not permissible to withdraw deposited money within one year (flexible for PwDs).
6. If any member wants to withdraw the saving than he/she might be take approval from a weekly meeting of DPO/Savings group (it is flexible for PwDs).

**Why this program is special and inclusive for the PWDs?**

YPSA has followed some privileges and moods only for PwDs such as

1. YPSA has provided Income Generating Activity (IGA) with vocational training as per their condition and need.
2. YPSA provides leadership, life skilled, entrepreneurship, financial knowledge and marketing training to all PwDs before and after received the loan.
3. YPSA has provided special training / orientation to PwDs for accessible communication.
4. YPSA has provided assistive devices like, white canes, cognitive aids, wheel chair and walkers etc.
5. Owing to their physical disabilities, the weekly sitting is not mandatory for PwDs. Even though, YPSA staffs is facilities to collect monthly installment and disbursement of loan from door to door service.
6. They have no enrollment and loan fee for being a member or borrower of DPO or saving group.
7. YPSA has made special type of saving/ credit book for PwDs which is more accessible for them and it is free for PwDs.
8. All training materials/ contents are accessible to PwDs because these contents are forms of digital contents. Every PwDs can use this digital contents through their feature and smart phone.
9. PwDs has received medical and therapeutic facilities from YPSA health and physio therapy center in a minimum cost or free.
10. Along with loan, the potential PwDs are received grant support 5 to 10 thousand BDT as a seed money for being a small entrepreneur.
11. YPSA, also provide some awareness sessions on rights and dignity and facilitating of enrollment at census and survey, collects PWDs certificate and different safety net supports from government.

These privileges are made this program exceptional and accessible to PwDs

## Stages of the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with Inclusive Finance by YPSA

YPSA is the first and foremost organization who has innovated and follows a rigorous cycle to the inclusion of PwDs with financial inclusion program (figure 5). These ways are as follows,



**Figure 5: Steps of the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) with Inclusive Finance**

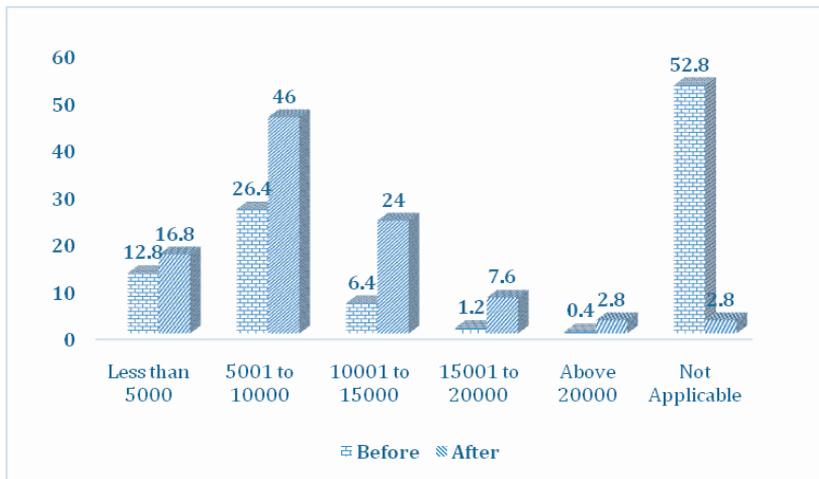
**The steps of the inclusion of PwDs on Inclusive Finance, such as**

1. Selection of PwDs.
2. Motivation.
3. Inclusion in group of existing YPSA group member on DPO (provide support and rights).
4. Own saving /little saving.
5. Training (Leadership and Capacity Building training).
6. Seed money (provide for PwDs those who are financially poor and potential).
7. Inclusion with main stream (those who are spontaneously agreeing to involve this program)
8. On side supervision.
9. Marketing support and linkage.
10. Refinancing.

## Comparison status of socioeconomic condition before and after financial inclusion of PwDs

During the survey, total 250 PwDs are opined the situation of their socioeconomic status before and after financial inclusion. They are argued that after inclusion on inclusive finance program, the family

monthly income are increased as well as improved their life and livelihood (figure 6).



**Figure 6:** Comparison status of socioeconomic condition before and after financial inclusion of PwDs

They also expressed that before inclusion with inclusive finance program, PwDs were unskilled, unemployed, unaware, maximum PwDs are engaged begging and depend on other family members. But after inclusion with inclusive finance program, they are engaging eleven types of Income Generating Activities (IGAs) and improving their life styles. The activities are;

1. Cattle rearing and fattening.
2. Agriculture and homestead gardening.
3. Poultry farm.
4. Grocery and small business.
5. Making and buying bazar beg.
6. Fish farming.
7. Cottage business.
8. Sewing.
9. Making and buying bamboo/cane made fancy goods.
10. Tea stall.
11. Pharmacy and so on.

Besides, they are included as a member of local arbitration body and they are participating in local planning body in Union

Parishad office. Nowadays, they easily enjoy sociocultural program where ensured their rights and dignity. At that project period of time, it is noticed that PwDs are successfully gear up on economically, socially, culturally and politically as well as they considered as an active member of local influential bodies.

*"In the year 2017, me and my husband (Mr. Rafique) as a physical disability started manufacturing and marketing of bamboo and cane products by getting help of YPSA inclusive finance program. Through this business we earn 8 to 10 thousand BDT per month. This source of money is working as a powerful force on changing our socio-economic conditions. In the future, we are thinking of further expanding our business with more financial support and capacities development training from YPSA inclusive financial Program".*

*"Mr. Rafique on behalf of Jahanara Begum, Speech Disability, Sitakund Upazila, Chittogram.*

For justify the how the YPSA financial program is improving the lifestyle of PwDs and being included main stream of development. Here this research has presented a case study of Mr. Abul Kalam.

*Abul Kalam, living in Baraiyadha union of Sitakunda upazila of Chittagong, has been physically handicapped since his early days. He grew up in ignorance and careless. Currently, he is 58 years old and family members are 06. Abul Kalam does not have the*



*courage to do any work outside if he has the desire. Even if he has a desire to do business, no one is willing to cooperate with him. Certainly, Abul Kalam's life has positive changed in 2015. That time he became a member of the disabled organization which was run by YPSA. Later on he became aware of the rights of people with*



*disabilities and informed on income generating activities of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) through YPSA. That time Abul Kalam was involved in the financial inclusion program of YPSA. He received training on income-generating*

*activities (vegetable cultivation, cattle fattening) from financial inclusion program of YPSA. After the training, he took a loan of 20,000 BDT on easy terms from YPSA. With that money, he started cultivating vegetables and cattle's rearing. He was more beneficial to cultivate vegetables. Aftermath he is repaying the loan and borrowing some more money from YPSA. With the extra loan money, he started seasonal vegetables (bean) cultivation. He benefited a lot in the cultivation of this seasonal vegetable and he bought a cultivated land. Now his cows have given a child cattle. He is now meeting the self-demand and selling extra milk to market and earning money. In a nutshell, YPSA's financial inclusion program has increased the living standard of Abul Kalam. And his sons are studying well and the family is doing well too.*

## **Conclusion**

Disability is a vital issue with respect to human rights because a Person with Disabilities is often deprived of the benefits of national development. While basic rights of disabled people are well established in the most of the welfare countries. In Bangladesh, PwDs' social status is inaccessible due to their economic condition because there is limited employment opportunity for them and they cannot contribute to their family as well as national development. Consequently, they are considered as a burden in their family and society. Although they want to take part in the development of his/her family and the society. So they desire to get training, assistance (finance support) and another opportunity to become skilled and efficient for particular things. As well as the inclusion of PwDs in mainstream of development will gear up the process of

being the middle income countries and success of government vision 2021. Finally, it will feed the SDGs aim as 'living no one behind'.

## **Recommendations**

Persons with Disabilities are not burden but they are resource because they are our kinship, neighbors or relatives. Cordial or willing assistance, friendly cooperation, mental supports have been accelerated the accessible life and livelihood of PwDs at everywhere in Bangladesh. The study has been provided following policy guidelines to ensure the sustainable livelihood and inclusive development for Persons with Disabilities.

- 1 Diffusion the program, whereas Sitakund program area is very little geographical location. So, Government and related agencies should wider the Inclusive finance program through their financial operation.
- 1 To adopt accessible education, government should provide PwDs friendly education related materials and techniques lead to the educated with empowerment for all.
- 1 To ensure legal assistances, Govt. and NGOs representatives should be aware of PwDs through advocacy meeting, personal contract, broadcasting or publishing booklets, leaflet etc. about their legal rights and also to register the names of PwDs in Upazila social welfare office and others safety net programs for providing help for the actual and needy PwDs.
- 1 Government should consider the case of PwDs while distributing VGF card, VGD Card and Khas land because most of PwDs are landless (<0.50 acre), according to baseline study to 2017 and should offer different grants those are provided by social elite persons, government related agencies and international aids to PwDs.
- 1 Government and NGOs representative should provide need-based loan for PwDs to generate their income activities, particularly cattle rearing, poultry business, tailoring or dressmaking, agriculture and small business (settlement cum shop) purposes.

## **Acknowledgement**

The author is grateful to 1st International FIN-B Financial Inclusion Conference & Inclusion Fair 2019, organized by Financial Inclusion Network, Bangladesh (FIN-B) and Institute for Inclusive Finance and Development (InM), Dhaka, Bangladesh, p.34 was held on 30-31 July 2019 for published this abstract on the conference proceeding.

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