



Ministry of Women and Children Affairs Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Activities on Autism and Other Disabilities by MoWCA

A large number of children are born with Autism and neuro-developmental disorders. They have right to live with proper dignity in this world. Now we should act in such a way that awareness to action will lead the autistic and other persons with disabilities towards social and economic inclusion for their mainstreaming.

The Constitution of Bangladesh

Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman ensured human and fundamental rights of women, children and other distressed segment of the society, like persons with disabilities in the Constitution of Bangladesh

- No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to any place of public entertainment or resort, or admission to any educational institution.
- Nothing in this article shall prevent the state from making special provision in favor of women or children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens.
- There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in respect of employment or office in the service of the republic.



Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited a stall of ELCD project

Bangladesh Shishu Academy

- Bangladesh Shishu Academy & Early Learning for Child Development Project jointly organized a training programme of Master Trainers for children with disability, especially those with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other Neuro-Developmental Disabilities from 28 February to 3 March 2013.
- To create awareness on autism to the mass people regular 'UthanBaithak' (meeting at the courtyards) is being held in 64 districts and 50 upazilas.
- Regular orientation programmes are organized for the parents/care givers of the Day Care Centers.

- Children with disability(including autism) are being enrolled in the Early Learning Centers of the Ministry. They are referred to appropriate institutions for proper investigation, treatment and follow-up.
- ELCD project under MoWCA has been operating--
 - 1397 pre-primarycentres for 41910children of the age 5+ years.
 - 535 ShishuBikasKendro (Child Development Center)for 16050 children of the age 4+ years.
 - 20 daycare centresfor 400 children of the age category 3-5years.
- Content validation of ELDS (Early Learning and Development Standards) has done and age validation is underway.
- Autism issues have been integrated with the on-going ELCD and EECR Project the MoWCA.

Expected Outcomes of the ELCD project from Children

- Be able to say own name and address and names of parent, brothers/sisters
- Be able to recite rhymes with correct pronunciation and body movement
- Be able to sing juvenile songs with rhythm and melody
- Be able to participate in group play with joy
- Be able to conduct group play following rules
- Be able to play maintaining physical balance
- Be able to tell story observing the picture sequentially
- Be able to tell story as their own
- Be able to draw picture on the wall or paper as they wishes with chalk and pencil
- Be able to answer short questions from a known story
- Be able to work in small groups following instruction
- Be able to expose their own creativity by doing work alone
- Be able to know how to keep neat and be able to keep neat for their own
- Be able to arrange play materials at the end of the play
- Be able to maintain social norms
- Special discussions meeting with local stakeholder are held regularly.
- Special Chapter has been incorporated in life skill training module for the member of Adolescent Clubs.
- ToT Training course for the leaders of adolescent club on autism has been arranged.
- A high level committee has been formed with the chairmanship of Secretary of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs for the welfare and development of street children and underprivileged children. This committee coordinated the activities of underprivileged children from different ministries where the issue of disable and autistic children are also included.
- Various awareness programme along with many competitions (Art, recitation, dance song etc.) have been arranged at District and Upazila level offices of BSA. Many special needs children participated in these programme.
- About 30 special needs children attended training on art course at central office every year.
- World Autism Day is being observed on 2nd April every year.

Action Plan for Special Children

Strategic provision on Autism and NDDs in ELCD Policy 2013

- Preparation of early Identification mechanisms for special child and appropriate service delivery framework.
- Preparation of Integrated Service Delivery system considering the demands, locality, socio-economic conditions of special children.
- Introduce appropriate tools to identify the types and degrees of Neuro-developmental disability and create appropriate service delivery system to the children with special needs and gradually make all the efforts within in a specific institutional coverage.
- Identify the types and degrees of special needs for children with special needs and thus to design necessary service delivery procedure.

Action plan to address the strategies

■ Short-time Activities

- Identify the risk or special needs of the children's age ranging from zero to 3 years through the early screening process.
- Provide minimum Service package towards 3 to 6 years children.
- Introduce integrated mandatory education system towards 6 to 8 years children.
- Provide necessary service towards the children with special needs immediately after being identification.
- Introduction of all information related to the curriculum and training module of disabilities in all health services program.

■ Mid-term Activities

- Establishment of permanent infrastructure based on the risk and demands of special need gradually.
- Introduction of modern technology and skilled manpower for effective identification and comprehensive service delivery system.
- Mainstreaming the whole service process framework.
- Enhance the proficiency of the employees of community clinic in accurate identification of disability.

■ Long-term Activities

- Inclusion of all children in unified Service Package of thorough identification process.

■ Lead Ministries/Divisions and Associate agencies

Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and Department of Women Affairs, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs.

- A Nation can't advance by ignoring a section of people. So it is very important to ensure social security and co-operation for the children with Autism & Neuro-developmental Disabilities. For the development of the children with Autism & Neuro-developmental Disabilities, respective ministries should formulate a comprehensive Action Plan. If all sections of people stand for the betterment of the children with special needs then days are not very far to mainstreaming them in our society.

Department of Women Affairs (DWA)

- National Training Academy of Department of Women Affairs (DWA) organized an orientation for the DWA officers by the clinical psychologist of OCC (One-Stop Crisis Center) to identify and counseling the Autistic children.
- Topics on Autism and Neuro-Developmental Disabilities have been incorporated in the regular training curriculum of the DWA. Gradually training is being organized for all the officers of the DWA by the Autism Expert.
- To increase awareness among the community, autism issue was included in the safety net Programme under DWA.
- If necessary, autistic child with their mother is given short safe shelter women support programme under DWA.



MoWCA's programmes with other Ministries and Agencies

- Discussion about Autism in monthly Co-ordination Meeting of the JMS.
- JMS organized 2 seminar/workshop on Autism at its head office in Dhaka in June 2015. District and Upazila Chairmen of the JMS participated in these programmes.
- The Autistic children, who have given shelter are given free medical support by the medical officers of women support programme, clinical psychologist of the OCC also provide counseling support to them, if it is needed.
- Formulated and approved Operational and Implementation Plan for ECCD Policy where Early Screening for any sort of disability of children specially kept and provision of awareness building for Children with disability including Autism is also kept and Strengthen helpline service to provide emergency support to children with Autism.
- Developing guideline/tools/protocols for Early Screening to detect Disabilities including Autism through Preparation of tools for early screening with the support of the MoHFW and the MoSW, developing master trainer with technical assistance from Shuchona Foundation and train up field level officials and Frontline Workers of the MoWCA, teachers of Daycare and ELCD's learning centers with the technical assistance from Shuchona Foundation and IPNA.
- Prevent Autism through safe delivery as well stop early marriage by Awareness campaign by GO-NGO-Development Partner, Media and Citizen's Groups (through courtyard meeting, parenting session etc.) and Ensure no marriage before 18 years of girl and 21 years of boys by involving formal and non-formal marriage registrar and field levels officials of the MoWCA in awareness programme.

- Awareness build-up through Dissemination of core messages on disability including Autism to parents, society, adolescents will be strengthened and upazila based adolescent network will also be strengthened.



Early Brain Development Skill Enhancement Programme

Early Brain Development Skill Enhancement Programme of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) is being implemented with the assistance of Institute of Child and Human Development (ICHD) as a technical expert.

■ Specific Objectives of the Programme

- To enhance knowledge and raise awareness of the different level government officials and other relevant actors about early childhood and early brain development.
- To inform them about the importance of early brain development and its science.
- To tell them about their crucial role as sensitive parents in the development of children.
- To inform them how they can apply their experience from the training and course at their work.
- To give them an idea how they can play a supportive role in the implementation of the government approved Comprehensive ECCD Policy.

■ Total Beneficiary

About 1,075 government officials and other relevant actors will receive the short Foundation Course on ECCD and about 1,350 government officials total (1075+1350)=2425 and other relevant actors will receive the parenting education course. The number of participants is 25 in each batch.

■ Coverage of Training on Parenting Education

- City Corporation Level: 350 participants (14 batches)
- District Level: 1,000 participants (40 batches)
- Total: 1,350 participants (54 batches)

Social Safety net Programmes

The VGD (Vulnerable development programme): The VGD is the biggest social safety net programme of the Bangladesh Government. VGD aims at ensuring socio-economic development of the poverty stricken and destitute rural women of Bangladesh. Women with disable children are given priority in VGD programme.

A total of about 100,000 VGD women/families in 35 Upazilas are benefitted with six micronutrients (VitA, B1, B12, Iron, zinc and folic acid) mixed fortified rice, this overall assistance is to ensure nutrition requirement of women of vulnerable families with special attention to disabled women and children.

Pregnant Mother Allowance: A total of 0.264 million pregnant mothers receive an allowance of Tk 500 per month for the cycle of 2 years for ensuring nutrition.

Lactating Mother Allowance: A total of 0.120 million lactating mothers received an allowance of Tk 500 per month for the cycle of 2 years for ensuring food security. Female garments worker and female house worker, day laborer are selected as beneficiaries.

National Women Development Policy 2011

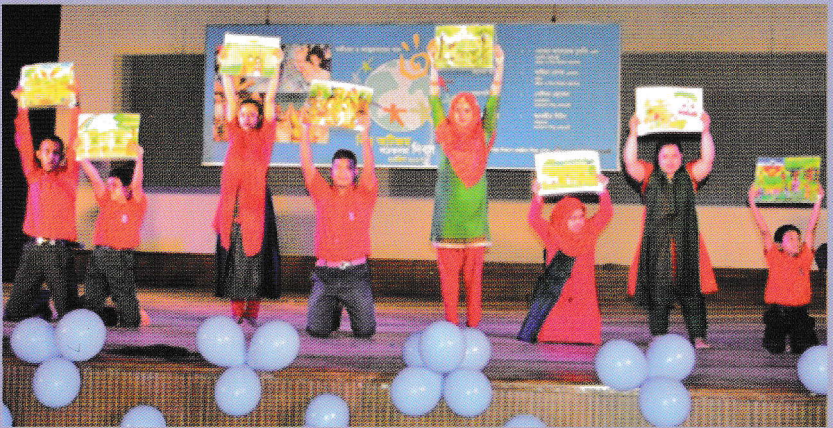
- To ensure rights to recognition and to live with honor and dignity according to UN disadvantage right convention.
- To have the disabled women unified with the mainstream society and ensuring their active participation in all the areas of life including education. To give importance to the differentiation of disability in aspect of education.
- To consider special type of education in only those areas where they could not be mainstreamed for reasons obvious.
- To undertake appropriate institutional programme for education, treatment, training and rehabilitation of the disabled women.
- To undertake programme to prevent disability and its determination and extending special co-operation to their families for taking care and growth of the disabled women.
- To make the framework, facilities and services accessible to all so that on women only because of disability are not deprived of any kind of rights, facilities and services endowed under the National Women Policy.



National Children Policy 2011

- Each school shall have recreational programmes wherein the idea of a library shall be inculcated. The disabled children shall have appropriate recreational facilities.
- The rights of all types of disabled children to recognition and respectable living as enshrined in the UN Charter on the rights of the disabled shall be ensured.
- Measures shall be taken for mainstreaming of the disabled children in the society and for ensuring their active participation in each area of life including education. Education is major concerned, according to the types of disability shall be given due importance.

- The children who cannot be mainstreamed in education for the reason obvious for them only special education arrangement shall be considered.
- Appropriate institutional programmes shall adopt for education, treatment, training and rehabilitation of the disabled children.
- The families of the disabled children shall be given special assistance and co-operation by undertaking programmes in the matter of preventing and assessing of such disability and for their upbringing and growth.
- All infrastructures, facilities and services shall be made accessible to all to ensure that no child is deprived of any kinds of rights and receiving services under the National Child Policy because of their disability.
- Most autistic children have normal intelligence. So measures shall be taken to their mainstreaming in the society and their active participation in all areas of live including education.



- Measures shall be ensured to make provisions for specific educational institution, educational method and material, if necessary for the autistic children.
- As the autistic children home lacking in the social development. So, the age appropriate training shall be ensuring to the parents and their family members for overall development.
- Appropriate institutional programmes shall be taken for education, treatment, training and rehabilitation of the autistic children
- Importance shall be given to the special needs of the autistic children during and after disaster.

Dhaka Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management

- Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, and Ministry of Social Welfare jointly organized an international seminar titled Dhaka Conference on Disability and Disaster Risk Management in 2015.
- It is observed that autistic persons are more vulnerable to disaster rather than the children, women and aged in the family and community.
- Vulnerability of the women and the children with autism during the disaster is more than the common people.
- Recommendations were made to design special programmes for the mitigation of the risks before, during and after the disasters for their safety, security and rehabilitation.

Celebration of World Autism Awareness Day 2 April 2017 by MoWCA

- Bangladesh Shishu Academy Organized a Cultural Programme on 2 April 2017 in participation with Autistic Children on the occasion of World Autism Awareness Day-2017. The theme of the day was, 'Toward Autonomy and Self Determination'
- Cultural Programmewas arranged with the participation of children with special needs justified the theme.
- A special Documentary was displayed



- Artists of Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC) delivered a group dance with the song titled "2 April". The learners of PROYASH Special School charmed the audience with the deliberation of a dance based on a song titled "Nimphuler Ban". The autistic children recited different rhymes



The campus of Bangladesh Shishu Academy was decorated with banners and blue light from 1 April to 3 April 2017 on the occasion.

Websites: www.mowca.gov.bd/ www.dwa.gov.bd/ www.jms.gov.bd
www.shishuacademy.gov.bd/ www.joyeeta.com.bd
www.mspvaw.gov.bd.

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