



# World Autism Awareness Day-2014



**'Together we are  
for Autism Awareness'**

Ministry of Social Welfare  
Government of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh

2 April 2014



## 'Autism: Awareness to Action'

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and  
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Autism awareness is the demand of the time. Awareness to action will help us to shape and guide concrete and effective action towards social and economic inclusion of persons we categorize as autistic.

The biggest challenge we face today in all sectors is the fact that we tend to create stringent diagnostic categories and then forget to look at the person as a whole, as someone equal to those without such 'interesting' labels and then wonder why nothing is changing for them. And this is saying a lot since my entire professional training is based on conducting differential diagnostic assessments and then labeling individuals! The conversation that needs to happen, I think, is that we need to begin thinking how persons who experience the world differently, who respond to their immediate environments differently, and who cannot always behave according to set social expectations without assistance as can be treated just the same as those of us without unique neurological mechanisms. Just as we are beginning to accept persons who need wheels in order to be mobile, hearing aid devices in order to hear and specialized lenses to see the world around them, we need to begin thinking of persons with neurodevelopmental 'disorders' as persons who have specialized skills rather than person who have disabilities. This distinction is what causes stigmatization and therefore marginalization.

In the last three years Bangladesh has made tremendous progress in reducing the stigma of autism. But what it is still unable to address is how to help these wonderfully gifted, talented and unique individuals participate in all aspects of society and become proactive contributing members of society. Through the Global Autism Public Health Initiative launched in 2011, we are reducing the social stigma of disability; we have developed a unique multi-tiered approach through the creation of a National Advisory Committee, a multi ministry Steering Committee and a technical guidance committee comprised of experts, policy makers and parents. Through efforts of the Southeast Asian Autism Network (SAAN) we have successfully incorporated ASD as a separate agenda item for the WHO's regional office. So far approximately 6000 community clinic workers, 300 pediatric consultants and 470 health care workers, 613 doctors, over 400 master trainers, field supervisors, and allied health personnel, as well as 525 data entry operators have received sensitization training on all disabilities. 400 newly recruited secondary teachers and almost a 100 master teacher trainers have received disability awareness training. Disability specific information has been incorporated into teacher training manuals, and secondary school text books, and soon will also be included in the training programs of medical students. In addition, the Ministry of Social Welfare is conducting a national disability database using a door to door survey. And most recently a pilot study has been completed during which nearly 800 community health workers have successfully screened nearly 8000 children birth to 9 years of age for a developmental disability.

Complex disorders like autism pose an enormous economic challenge for all countries. Not only because of how much it costs families to provide appropriate interventions, but also because under our current approach, persons with autism remain a life

long burden on our social safety net programs. We know that nearly 80% of persons with disabilities reside in developing countries which have limited professional capacity to provide evidence based interventions, and other tools. It is evident that we urgently need to begin thinking outside the box and come up with creative sustainable models of early identification and interventions that are not only effective but also economically feasible and sustainable. Further, these mechanism need to be embedded within a countries existing public health, education and social programs. The only way this is possible is through cooperation and collaboration both within organizations in a country and international institutions. The desire for change is evident as demonstrated by the UN resolution "Addressing the Socioeconomic Needs of Individuals, Families and Societies living with Autism



Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disabilities" (A/RES/67/82) [UN Resolution] adopted on December 12, 2012. and the WHO resolution for "Comprehensive and Coordinated Efforts for the Management of ASDs", which was adopted by WHO's Executive Board on May 30, 2013 and will be formally placed at the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly in 2014.. What we now need is to devise a way to implement the goals we have promised our families through these resolutions. I therefore, urgently request member countries and the United Nations to prioritize neurodevelopmental disabilities as an issue that is closely intertwined with all social and economic development programs.

In conclusion, I would like to say that on this 7th WAAD my thought are with families with disabilities especially autism. I congratulate all parents with children with unique abilities and extraordinary challenges for being strong, courageous and patient with their loved ones. It is only through their dedication and hard work that they are able to meet head-on the daily challenges of caring for their family members and loving them unconditionally.



## Role of Bangladesh on Global Autism

Bangladesh is an over populated country in South Asia. A large number of children are born with Autism and neuro-developmental disorders. According to the Constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, every citizen is equal in the eye of law. That is why the commitment of the government is to ensure the rights of the persons with disabilities. The United Nations 61st General Assembly in 13 December 2006 adopted 'The UN Convention on the rights of persons with disability (UNCRPD)' to ensure the protection of the persons with disabilities. Bangladesh has signed and ratified this resolution respectively in 2007 and 2008.

In light of the Article no 33 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, a 'National Monitoring Committee' has been working under the leadership of the Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare along with 60 members from both government and non-government organizations. Mentioned here, a Joint Secretary (Focal Point) along with a Focal Desk of each ministry has been included in the said Committee to represent his respective ministry for all kinds of activities related to this issue.



The Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh has been taking necessary initiatives to resolve the problem of autism and neurodevelopmental disorders with the help of different government and non-governmental organizations. Saima W. Hossain, the daughter of honorable Prime Minister & the Chairman of National Advisory Committee of Autism and Neurodevelopmental disorders played the vital role to organize the International Conference, titled- "Autism Spectrum Disorders and Developmental Disabilities in Bangladesh and South Asia" on 25-26 July, 2011. The unanimous ratification of the 'Dhaka Declaration' on Autism Spectrum Disorders clearly demonstrates the determination to change the attitude of helplessness and inactivity that has been persisted for decades. The landmark 'Dhaka Declaration, 2011' gave a new direction to create awareness, research and services for autistic children. In this way Bangladesh has been able to make a big impact on Autism over the Globe.

The Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh initiated a proposal on Autism Awareness to UN. Afterwards, a resolution was adopted by the UN on 12 December, 2012 and 71 member states raised their voice to give importance to the socio-economic need of the persons with autism and their families. By this resolution, the United Nations welcomed the member states for their active participation in the society.

Building on the momentum of the Conference on Autism Spectrum Disorders and Developmental Disabilities in Bangladesh in 2011 and the unanimous adoption of the Dhaka Declaration, the South Asia Autism Network (SAAN) was formed. The first meeting of the South Asia Autism Network (SAAN) was held in New Delhi on 11th February, 2013. Saima W. Hossain, the Chairman, National Advisory Committee of neurodevelopmental disorders presented a key note paper in that conference. The health ministers of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timur with other high officials were presented on that conference.

In 23 September, 2013, a meeting of high level was held in the national assembly of the United Nations on Autism and its development. In that meeting Saima W. Hossain, Chairman, National Advisory Committee of neurodevelopmental disorders and Surya Begum, ndc, the Secretary to the Ministry of Social Welfare were presented in that meeting. The main theme of that meeting was 'The way forward: a disability inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond'. Saima W. Hossain presented the scenario of the development of the activities of Bangladesh. At the same time, the international states also agreed about incorporating the matter of the security of disabled persons in the resolution of the Millennium Development Goal, 2015.



## Initiatives taken by the Ministries, Departments and NGOs of Bangladesh on Autism

The ministry of Social welfare along with other important ministries and different Non Gov. org. of the Government of Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh are implementing Different programs to develop autistic people by providing medical treatments and protecting rights. Among these programs are described below:

### □ Ministry of Social welfare

The Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW) is one of the important ministries of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Working for the human resources development . It has implemented several multidimensional programmers like socio-economic development and protection of rights for the destitute, poor, orphan, senior citizens, widows, vulnerable children, persons with disabilities (PWDs) and marginalized people of the country. The Department of Social Service and Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundfation under Ministry of Social Welfare have a significant role in implementing different programs on Autism.

### □ Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation (JPUF)

The basic human rights of a citizen of Bangladesh has been protected by its constitution regardless of gender, class, religion, race etc. It does not discriminate between persons with or without disabilities. The National Policy for Persons with Disabilities had taken as its basis, the relevant constitutional provisions dealing with the rights of the people with disability. Following the National Policy and the international commitments on United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, in April 2001 the Government of Bangladesh had enacted the Disability Welfare Act-2001 to protect and promote the rights of the persons with disabilities. In order to address the disability issues including autism the Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation (JPUF) under the Ministry of Social Welfare was established in the year 1999. Under JPUF, following services are provided.



### □ Services:

#### ● Autism Resource Centre

JPUF has introduced an Autism Resource Centre in it's own campus in 2010. From this centre, special education, therapy and referral services with counseling are being given to the autistic children and their guardians. A group of experts consisting of psychologist, Clinical occupational therapist, Clinical speech and language therapist Clinical Physiotherapist are working in this centre. So far a total of 500 autistic baby/people have been rendered free services from this center. From this Center regular Home Based Intervention Services are provided to the registered Autistic Children.

#### ● Free School for Children with Autism

Under the patronization of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation has been running a special school for the autistic children since 2011. 30 autistic children of 30 poor families have been studying in this special school.

#### ● Disability Service Centre (Protibondhi Sheba O Sahajya Kendra)

JPUF has been implementing a program titled 'Protibondhi Sheba O Sahajya Kendra' since 2009. Under the program at present there are 68 centres in different areas of the country. From these centres physiotherapy hearing test, visual test, counseling, referral service etc. are being provided to the PWDs at free of cost. Besides this, assistive devices like wheel chair, standing frame, crutch, elbow crutch, tricycle, artificial limb, hearing aid etc. are also being distributed at free of cost among the PWDs. So far as many as 3 lakh 50 thousand PWDs have been rendered these services at free of cost from these centres. Gradually this program will be extended up to upazila level of the country. Honourable Prime Minister formally inaugurated this program on 2nd April 2010.

#### ● Autism corner

From 2012 and Autism corner has been established in each 'Protibondhi Sheba O Sahajya Kendra'. Under this programme, 68 centre have been established in 64 districts. Another 5 centres will be established very soon. From this centre, necessary therapeutic services are being provided to the autistic children free of cost.

#### ● One stop mobile therapy service

Another important program called one stop mobile therapy service has also been inaugurated by the honorable Prime Minister on 2nd April 2010 for bringing therapy services to the door step of the autistic people.





- **Autism Training Program**

**JPUF is providing training on the following issues**

- \* Training for the Mothers of Mentally Challenged Children
- \* Behavior Modification and Picture Exchange Communication System
- \* Autism and development Disorder Management
- \* Training on Parents' Role in managing Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- **Protibondhi Complex**

Government of Bangladesh has taken up an elaborate plan to construct a Protibondhi Complex in the capital city. This Complex will have a beautiful school complex for 360 special students including autistic children. There will also be Special Education Centre for 250 learners including autistic Children and babies. Beside these, the complex will also have Rehabilitation and Training Centre, shelter home, day care Centre, etc for all kinds of disabled persons including persons with autism.

- **Protibondhi Sports Complex**

The government has taken a program to establish a Proribondhi Sports Complex as a centre of excellence. For this purpose government has already allocated a total of 12.01 acres khas land under Savar Upazila of Dhaka district in favour of Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation (JPUF). Preparing of DPP of this project is underway. It is estimated that the cost of construction of the said complex will be Tk. 100 (approximately) crores.



- **Department of Social Services on Autism**

The Department of social Services (DSS) has been implementing several multidimensional programmes for protection of rights and development of the Autistic persons. The DSS is firmly committed for the development of children especially for those who are with autism spectrum disorder.

- **Neurodevelopmental Disabled Persons Protection Trust Act, 2013:** Neurodevelopmental Disabled Persons Protection Trust Act, 2013 was legislated to ensure rights and safety of the Neurodevelopmental Disabled Persons by providing physical, mental and financial help. Initiatives has been taken to establish a Trust which will provide appropriate education, trade, comprehensive development, social empowerment and overall to enabling them to live independently in a society. Moreover the Trust will identify the persons with neurodevelopmental disabilities, help her/him to live in her/his family, live long care at her/his parents death, special education, employment opportunities and ensure her/his inheritance. Under this act volunteer organizations working for above purpose will be financially subsidized. The Trust will constitute a fund for their overall development and welfare. The drafting of the said act had been prepared by the Department of Social Services under the Ministry of Social Welfare. Still work is underway to make rules under this act.

- **Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Mujib Memorial Specialized Hospital & Nursing College:** The project which is located in Kashimpur, Gazipur was started in January 2010 and completed successfully in June 2013. The 250 bedded specialized hospital is now providing treatment & research facilities for the poor people especially for women, children, autistic and person with disability.

- **Institute for Autistic Children and Blind Old Home and TN Mother Child Hospital:** The project which is located in Hemayetpur, Saver, Dhaka was started in January 2009 and completed successfully in June 2012. The hospital is for the improvement the existing health condition of the people of Savar and other adjacent areas, especially the quality of care in Maternal, Neonatal, Child Health Care and children with autism.



- **Expansion and Development of PROYASH at Dhaka Cantonment:** PROYASH is the name of a project which is located in Dhaka Cantonment & was started in October 2011. It is going to be completed by June 2014. The main objectives of this project is to provide education and training to the children and youths with autism and disability to ensure their optimum development.

- **Disability Detection Survey:** Keeping in mind the Slogan "Take part in the Disability Detection Survey, have the opportunity to change the day" a Disability Detection Survey is implemented by the Department of Social Services in order to find the accurate statistics of the PWDs of the country. Meanwhile, data collection has been finished in all districts of the country. At the initial stage of the survey, 16,47,005 people were included as PDWs. Some processes are still ongoing like including the excluded PWDs, detection of disability types and levels by doctors/consultants, Image record, data entry online. So far 743961 people with disabilities are detected and classified by the doctors/consultants according to their level of disabilities. Unicef, Bangladesh is contributing financially and technically to develop a Disability Information Storage Software in this regard. Autism related documentary had been displayed in 64 districts and 564 upazils/UCD in the country during the acknowledgement/ addressing meeting. Measures have been taken to create awareness by arranging a national level workshop and meeting in 8 venues of the 7 divisions of the country.



## ❑ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

In order to reduce Autism & Neurodevelopment disease from Bangladesh a Steering Committee was formed consisting 15 members headed by Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare .This committee will take necessary steps in developing a positive attitude in the society on Autism. In addition to that , the committee will coordinate among different Ministries, Civil Society, Non-Government Organizations, Parents Forums, Higher Education and Research Institutes .This committee will discuss about Strategic and Convergent Action Plan on Autism and Developmental Disabilities in Bangladesh(SCAPAND). In order to assist the function of the National Steering Committee, an eight members Autism and neurodevelopmental advisory Committee' was formed . To assist the National Advisory Committee and to compile a developed guideline and medical rules and regulation, a Technical Guidance Committee consisting 17 members was formed. Three meetings of the steering committee were held. In the very first meeting of this Steering Committee, Saima W. Hossain , as Chairperson of the national Advisory Committee participated through Skype and in the third meeting she was physically present.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has formulated a short and long term action plan to reduce autism. A national Strategy Plan is under processed. 'Autism' is inserted in medical curriculum . Medical treatment are being provided to autism and Neurodevelopmental children through 10 'Shishu Bikas Kendra' established in Medical Colleges and Hospitals. Centrally Doctors and Nurses are provided Autism related training by CNAC and Mental Health Institute .At sub-district and it's subordinate level, Autism related Training and vigilance activities are provided to paramedics and parents. Training module , IEC materials and other information were composed.

A piloting program named " Piloting of Home based Screening of Autism and Neurodevelopment Disorders in children Aged 0-9 years at selected 7 Upazillas in 7 (seven) Divisions of Bangladesh and Dhaka City" is completed for identifying autistic children which was compiled on 2012-2013 fiscal year. With this experience, in the running sector, the full country will be covered under this activity. By this time, with the initiation of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibar Rahman Medical College, a DPP of 'Institute of Neurodevelopment and Autism' will be inserted into the green page of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.2 person - one on regional basis and one on area basis , have already been selected as Autism adviser. Not only this , but also as a member of SAAN , Ministry of Family Welfare put a remarkable instance in making a charter of SAAN.



An agenda named "Comprehensive and Coordinated Efforts for the Management on Autism Spectrum Disorders( ASDS)" was accepted in the 133th Executive Board meeting of WHO and it was recommended for acceptance in the upcoming 66th World Health Assembly. In this context , the personal initiative of Chairman of Advisory Committee Saima W. Hossain in accepting this agenda in Executive Board Meeting is remarkable. In every year, on behalf of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Health, all Medical Colleges and Hospitals, Zila Sadar Hospitals, Upazilla Health Complexes are celebrating World Autism Awareness Day. Rally, meeting , blue lighting as a sign for Autism and initiatives to aware people through advertisement in daily newspapers are organized as a part of this day.

## ❑ Centre for Neurodevelopment and Autism in Children (CNAC)

- **Background:** Centre for Neurodevelopment and Autism in Children (CNAC) is a government initiative to establish a nationwide Pediatric Neurodevelopment and Autism related management, training and research Centre in Bangladesh. The centre is located on the premises of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), where a multi-disciplinary and multi-agency team provides comprehensive and tertiary level services to children with disability and their families under one roof. In addition to that, it has also established a 'day care centre' in a 'healing and autism friendly environment'. Continuous high quality training, both for the doctors and the therapists, is an integral part of this centre. It aids these children to achieve their rights and enjoy equal opportunities in all aspects of their lives. Awareness about autism & disability will be promoted in the community at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. CNAC's aim is to incorporate neurodisability and autism issues into the mainstream national agenda.



## ● Objectives of CNAC

- \* To provide special multi disciplinary assessment to identify physical, developmental, psychological and neurological problems of children at an early stage by 'Pediatric Neurodisability Team'
- \* To provide comprehensive and high quality tertiary level services with the child and family by multi disciplinary and multi-agency team for children with complex disabilities.
- \* To provide quality training to physicians, therapists, psychologists and other team members on autism and other neurodevelopmental problems of children
- \* To provide a 'School for Children with Autism' for children with autism- in a healing and autism friendly environment by Autism-expert teachers and their team.
- \* To involve parents in the day-to-day management of 'physically and mentally delayed children' and ensure their counseling and training.
- \* To promote public awareness related to 'Children's disability & Autism'
- \* To carry on clinical research in this specialty and spread the acquired knowledge by regular seminar /symposium in national and international levels.
- \* To publicize the importance of 'Early Child Development (ECD)' to parents and other care givers and thereby help them to create a safe, secure, stimulating and enabling environment for their children from conception to 5 yrs of age
- \* To follow up all the 'high risk babies' regarding neurodevelopmental progress and provide intervention where necessary
- \* To involve junior doctors and post graduate pediatric students so that they can receive practical experience and utilize this knowledge all over Bangladesh, especially in rural areas.
- \* To establish effectively with all other specialized departments of our university hospital where needed- in children with complex disabilities



- **Services :** Our service starts from the very beginning of stepping into the centre. There is no inequality regarding ethnicity, gender and religion. We value and respect every parent who has any question or concern about development or problems relating to neurological aspect. From this point, our dedicated and devoted associates help children where to go. The children, who have come for the first time, are taken to our 'Walk-In-Clinic', the already diagnosed ones to 'Neurology Follow-Up Clinic', diagnosed epilepsy children to 'Epilepsy Clinic', the 'High Risk Baby' to 'High Risk follow up clinic'. We also have a 'Play corner'- a part of 'Early child Development programmer' where normal children can explore and enjoy along with our 'delayed and differently behaved children'-located just beside reception. We always encourage and welcome parents to accompany their children as we strongly believe that parents are the ones who know their children the best and without their active participation it is impossible to make any changes for these affected children.



## ☐ Ministry of Education

Education is the key to a nation's development. Education is the principal means to achieve the goal of poverty alleviation. A properly educated nation, which is modern in genius and intellect and forward-looking in thinking, can only put the country at the zenith of its development. That's why education is the backbone of a nation. In order to provide modern education to all the citizen Ministry of Education has formulated national policy, 2010. In your country a large number of children are born with Disability (ASD) or become Disable by accident. If disabled or autistic children are not educated properly nation can not prosper. To meets this objective Ministry of Education has formulated strategies.

### ● Strategies

- \* As per necessity, integrated education system will be initiated in some selected schools for the education of the challenged children so that they can quickly receive it in company with the normal children.
- \* Under the integrated education program, at least one teacher of each school will be trained properly to instruct the challenged children.
- \* A properly trained teacher will be recruited to look after physical education and sports for these children.
- \* Integrated education program at the primary level will be started at the district and upazila levels for the blind, deaf and dumb and mentally and physically handicapped children.
- \* Separate schools will be established according to special needs and in view of the differential nature of disabilities of the challenged children.
- \* Steps will be taken to distribute education materials free or at a low cost for the challenged children.
- \* PTIs will arrange training for teachers of the school for disabled children about the integrated education program and for the teachers delivering special education. Steps will be taken to establish training colleges/institutes.
- \* In order to initiate the proposed integrated education program in the general schools, the teachers training colleges will include lessons relevant to special education for the challenged children. This will encourage teachers to admit such children in the general class.
- \* Issues related to handicapped children can be incorporated in the syllabus from primary level in order to increase knowledge and create awareness among the people.
- \* Eligible handicapped candidates will enjoy equal opportunity in the job market.



### ● Activities :

- \* On 25.09.2012 a workshop has been conducted by NAEM for preparing a module on autism sensitization.
- \* Global Autism and Public Health, Bangladesh (GAPB) and National Academy for Education Management (NAEM) jointly conducted a training session on Autism for 27 faculty members of NAEM. Through this training faculty members will be master trainers on inclusive education for all disabilities. "Training of Master Trainers on Inclusive Education for all Disabilities includes especially those with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other Neuro Developmental Disabilities" from 20.11.2012 to 29.11.2012 In this training session 27 faculty members of NAEM has participated to become master trainer.
- \* Programmes have also been taken for awareness building through posters, leaflets and mass media.
- \* National Curriculum of Text Book Board (NCTB) has included autism as a subject in the curriculum of Physical Teaching, Health Science and Sports of class-ix and x. This subject of autism has also included in the curriculum of Home Economics of class-viii.
- \* The examination time of public exams has been extended for 30 minutes for all autistic children compared to other autistic children.
- \* In the Admission Test Guideline for Non-Government schools/school and colleges (serial no. 15) at attached primary level, lower secondary and Secondary 2% seats has been reserved for autistic children subject to fulfilling minimum requirement.



## ❑ Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

In order to improve the condition of Women and Children and to protect the child rights, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs was created. In section 6.9 of National Child Policy 2011, there are special programme for autistic children.

Special Programmes:

- \* 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 lack in the social development. So, appropriate training shall be ensured to the parents and their family members for overall development.
- \* Appropriate institutional programs 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.

### ● Activities :

- \* For awareness build up in the rural area, rural gathering for mothers were arranged.
- \* Their is a project in urban area to provide nutrition facilities for working mother.
- \* Bangladesh Shishu Academy has introduced a training programm by name 'Shapna Ranga' for disabled and autistic children.
- \* Bangladesh Shishu Academy through a project (ELCDP) is providing pre-primary education to the disabled & autistic children.

## ❑ Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

Getting admission of every child in all Primary School is one of the commitment of the Government of Bangladesh. To fulfill this commitment, ensuring admission of Autistic children in the mainstream study is a big challenge. In the admission of these Autistic children and to execute their study, GAPH (Global Autism Public Health Bangladesh). To face this challenge, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education has taken the following initiatives:

### ● Activities:

\* "Autism is a mental problem, not a disease"- this theme was inserted in the National Curriculum of Primary Education.

\* With the help of Global Autism Public Health, Bangladesh (GAPH), a "TOT" program for 32 field level officers was arranged on integrated education policy from 16-20 February, 2013.

\* Ministry has formulated a plan to train one teacher from each Govt. Primary School on integrated education policy in 2013-2014 financial year.

\* In order to enroll children with special need "Strategic Action Plan for Children with Special Needs" was approved by the Ministry. By this Action plan different training programs have been introduced for children with special need.

\* Ministry has trained two Instructor/Assistant Superintendents from each P.T.I school on integrated education policy.

\* On the basis of Autism, 'Mina Cartoon' was made. This cartoon was broadcasted in different govt. & private electronic media.

\* Ministry of Primary and Mass Education has built an interactive popular theatre which has been broadcasted at 158 sub-districts in Bangladesh.





## ❑ Parents Forum

Parents Forum is a voluntary social welfare organization dedicated to establish the rights of special children and run by the parents of special children. The organization has provided opportunity to bring all parents in a platform, where they can share information, learning's, pains and happiness and to form a supportive network from each other.

● **Mission of Parents Forum :** Advocacy on behalf of persons with autism to gain and protect their rights; lobbying for providing more concessions and schemes to improve their quality of life; securing the right for inclusive education and treatment to make them part of the mainstream and creating an environment for them to live independently to the extent possible in the community. Creation of awareness in the society to accept persons with autism and other developmental disabilities as contributing members at par with others and with their inclusion in every sphere of life.



## ● Services

- \* The forum is aiming to establish a vocational training center, which would support them to prepare for meeting the expectation of the society and also to participate in economic activities;
- \* Exploration of Special merit and provide facility to bloom and place them to utilize the expertise in economic area ;
- \* Establish Self-sustainable and economically independent Co-operative Society so that they can have economic independence;
- \* By using print, electronic media, information communication technology and by organizing meeting, discussion session and seminar and through other possible approach, raise awareness among mass people;
- \* Establish Rehabilitation center and care home especially to the most vulnerable, orphan and children from low income family background.

## ❑ SWID Bangladesh

Special activities for the autistic children started in 1977 when SWID Bangladesh is initiating services for the children with intellectual disability. At present SWID Bangladesh runs 90 special schools throughout the country where about 7500 students with intellectual disability and autism are getting special education and out of them about 1150 students are autistic.

## ● Activities

Under SWID Bangladesh there is a National Institute for the Intellectually Disabled and Autistic where special children with intellectual disability and autism are diagnosed, and parents are counseled. SWID Bangladesh developed curriculum for the children with intellectual disability as well as autism. Awareness regarding autism is developed through different programs and training courses run by SWID Bangladesh. It is now running 'Training Home for the Autistic and Intellectually Disabled Children' to make them self-reliant and bring into the mainstream of the society. SWID Bangladesh has also established 'Welfare Trust' for them to protect their own properties and social security while their parents are not alive.

## ● Perfomance in Cultural Sector by the special children :

Since 2009 "AIPONA" a Dance Organization of New Deli, India inviting the cultural team of Society for the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled, Bangladesh (SWID-Bangladesh) to perform dance and music there. Their participation is always highly appreciated. SWID Bangladesh team also participated in week-long international cultural programme arranged by a cultural organization of India ANGALI Bhubanesswar. SWID Bangladesh got the second place in general dance and special dance (PWDs) among 37 teams from India and Sri Lanka.





## Success in Special Olympic Games by the Special player

Venue	year	gold	silver	bronze	total
Special Olympic USA	1991	1	4	3	8
Special Olympic USA	1995	6	17	7	20
Special Olympic USA	1999	23	10	7	40
Special Olympic China	1996	6		5	12
Special Olympic Ireland	2003	10	6	6	22
Special Olympic Brunei	2005	12	10	2	24
Special Olympic China	2007	32	24	15	23
Special Olympic Brunei	2008	15	7	1	44
Special Olympic Greece	2011	29	12	3	13
Special Olympic Brunei Korea (Winter season)	2012	9	2	2	56
Special Olympic Australian	2013	33	11	07	51

### Autism Welfare Foundation

Autism Welfare Foundation (AWF) emerged on April 4, 2014 aiming to train and to educate autistic children and to support their families, to increase public awareness about autism to incorporate persons with autism to mainstream in the society.

Services:

\* AWF runs an education and training center "Kanan" and vocational training centre "Krishnachura". Along with this AWF provides support for underprivileged autistic children through "Free Saturday Clinic" and "Early Stimulation program" for autistic children under of 5 years of age.

\* At present AWF runs in two shifts where 160 autistic children are involved with 65 teachers. AWF also runs "Package program" for autistic children who are unable to attend regular curriculum. AWF follows a highly structured program and gives emphasis on communication and social skill, behavior and functional academics.

Its training program is based on "evidence based practice" where structure teaching, ABA and PECS are followed. High functioning ASD students follow regular academics and every students of AWF have their own I.E.P (Individualized Education program).

\* For raising awareness about autism, AWF publishes Newsletter, Magazine and holds cultural programs, sports, fair etc.

### 'Proyash'

'Proyash' is a non-government institute which was registered by the Ministry of Social Welfare in the year of 2006 & situated in Dhaka Cantonment. This institute provides special education for disabled and autistic children of Cantonment area. With the administrative support and patronization by Bangladesh Army, 'Proyash' has expanded all over the country through its seven branches and supported by a handful of trained multidisciplinary team of specialized teaching staff, therapists. The institute is running with the support of Bangladesh Army, ADP allotment from Ministry of Social Welfare and donation from different social workers, business man and bankers.

#### Activities

- \* To run a Vocational Training School for all types of adults with special needs.
- \* To run a school for physical, cerebral pulse and multi dimensional school for autistic people.
- \* To run a school for deaf and dumb.

#### Extra Curricular activities

- \* Sports and Physical activities
- \* Field Trip and Recreational activities
- \* Swimming
- \* Co-Curricular activities
- \* Meeting with Parents
- \* Home Visit Program
- \* Weakly Teacher's Meeting, Training and Case Presentation

\* Proyash also runs a training institute of Special Education and Research (ISER) which is affiliated with Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), Dhaka. The aim of all these programs is to maximize the potential of the individual recognizing that all students have the capacity to learn within a pleasant, supportive, caring and friendly environment.

#### Therapy and Other Facilities

- \* Outdoor Services
- \* Medical and Psychological Services
- \* Dance, Music and Art
- \* Occupational and Physical Therapy
- \* Speech and Language Therapy





## ❑ **Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC)**

SWAC is a non-profitable, non-government and non-political, voluntary organization rendering services to children with autism and their families to improve their quality of life. It was formed with the aim of educating, training and rehabilitating children, adolescents and adults with autism to develop and perform to their fullest potential, making them independent and active members of the society and establishing their rights as citizens of the country. Most recent methods and evidence based practices are applied at SWAC. Importance is given to communication, social skills, appropriate behaviour and self help skills during training.

### ● **Services**

- \* All students of SWAC are provided with Sensory, Occupation, Speech & Language Therapy and Home Rehabilitation Program.
- \* There is Early Intervention class for 3-5 year old students. For 5-15 year old students we have basic education class. From the age of 10 students get prevocational training also. 15-25 year old students go to preparatory work and activity where they are taught vocational skills (block, tie-dye, batik, candle, jewelry, sewing, gardening, paper technology, envelopes and paper bags, dry flowers, laundry, office skills). Students who are 25+ do production and practical work around the centre. Some of them are getting ready to go out to work..
- \* Children with autism coming from different parts of the country get package programs from SWAC. SWAC arranges awareness raising programs and workshops on autism in and outside the capital on a regular basis.
- \* SWAC opened a section for underprivileged disabled children in 2006 where transport, food and treatment facilities are provided along with training. Ambulant teacher service is provided to disabled slum children.
- \* The joint project with Finland named 'Prerona' commenced in 2007. SWAC gets logistic and technical support through this project. (Equipment, toys, educational materials, parent teacher training in Bangladesh and Finland).
- \* In January 2009 SWAC arranged the '3rd South Asian Regional Conference on Autism' in Bangladesh. The first branch of SWAC was established in Rangamati in 2012 named 'Centre for Inspiration' giving free training, transport, food and treatment to the indigenous children with autism.

## ❑ **SEID Trust**

SEID Trust is a non-government voluntary development organization working for social inclusion and promoting rights of underprivileged children with disabilities especially autism, intellectual and multiple disabilities since 2003.

- \* SEID Trust provides pre-primary and special education, vocational training, physiotherapy, transport, food and medical supports to more than 450 marginalized children with autism, intellectual and multiple disabilities through its three centers located at Mohammadpur, Rayerbazar and Kamrangirchar of Dhaka City.
- \* SEID Trust organizes various campaign, training, orientation, workshop, seminar, conference, art and product exhibition as well as joint cultural programs with local govt. representatives, mainstream teachers, students, school authorities, civil society, community leaders, NGO workers and media for raising awareness on disability.
- \* SEID Trust develops Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and conduct research on issues related to disability.



## ❑ **DRRA (Disabled Rehabilitation and Research Association)**

Disabled Rehabilitation and Research Association (DRRA) is a national NGO working for persons with disability since 1996. At present, DRRA works in 19 districts with their 29 implementing partner organizations as well as directly implementing program at Manikganj and Satkhira districts.

### ● **Service provided by DRRA**

#### ● **Residential rehabilitation**

DRRA runs one residential centre at Manikgonj where 8 boys with neurodevelopment disabilities are living. They are receiving medical and therapeutic support. In addition to that DRRA also runs 10 rehabilitation unit at different districts where autistic children get all need based services.

#### ● **Special education**

One special school (AMORJOTI) is operating at Satkhira for Autistic & neurodevelopment disabled children. The School provides ADL & behavioral skills as well as pre-schooling learning session including indoor & outdoor services.

#### ● **"Hope for life" -a mobile clinic**

DRRA has been working since 2011 to identify, to assess and to give treatment for all type of disability including autism & neurodevelopment. In collaboration with Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, DRRA runs a special equipped bus to identify children. During this period 12,000 children was identified and they have been receiving service & support. Through a software by name 'SMILE' DRRA developed online database and ensure outreach service if required.



## Salient features of 'The Trust Act for the protection of neurodevelopmental disabled Persons 2013'

Nasima Begum ndc  
Secretary in-charge, Ministry of Social Welfare

Disability is neither a sin nor a curse rather it is a part of human diversity. The person with disabilities has right to live with proper dignity in this world. Considering this issue, the United Nations has declared the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in December, 2006. The Government of Bangladesh has already signed and ratified the UNCRPD to make sure the protection of the persons with autism and neuro-developmental disabilities. With this view, the present government has taken different steps to provide various services effectively as per the types and degrees of disabilities.

Generally, the physically disabled or visually impaired person can speak about his own rights. Hearing impaired persons can also express their rights with the help of the 'sign language'. But most of the persons with neurodevelopmental disabilities (Autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, Intellectual disability and Cerebral Pulse) cannot express their rights or needs and organize themselves for any action. The Ministry of Social Welfare has been taking a lot of initiatives for the well-being of physically disabled, visually impaired and hearing impaired persons since 1962. In fact no significant initiative has been taken for the persons with neurodevelopmental disabilities especially for the autistic persons due to lack of awareness regarding types and degree of autism. In this context, the present government has created an epoch-making instance by formulating 'The Trust Act for the protection of neurodevelopmental disabled Persons 2013' that would be playing an important role to mainstream the people with autism and neurodevelopmental disabilities.

'The Trust Act for the protection of neuro-developmental disabled Persons 2013' will take effective measures to the empowerment of these people and to make them able with education and technical knowledge. This trust will also ensure to detect disable person and to strengthen facilities to provide support to persons with disability to live within their own families and also to promote measures for the care and protection of the persons with autism and neuro-developmental disabilities in the event of death of their parents or guardians. The most significant feature of this act is to create a fund in order to meet the overall objectivity of this Act.

### ● Salient features of the 'Trust Act for the protection of neurodevelopmental disabled Person 2013'

- \* Types of Neurodevelopmental disabilities: Four types of neurodevelopmental disabilities have been stated under section 3 of this Act which are as follows:
  - \* Autism spectrum disorder- It is a neurological disorder that affects the social and emotional areas of the brain leading to challenges in communication, social relationships and imagination. It typically appears after first one and half to three years of age and is more common in boys. This kind of disable person basically has no physical problem and their faces and physics are almost similar to a normal person. But they cannot communicate and behave properly. For example: unable to be accustomed with their own language or unable to come out from his own surroundings, etc. However, these kinds of people have extraordinary skills in art, design, singing and even in operating computer or solving the complex mathematical problems in most of the cases.
  - \* Down Syndrome: It is a genetic problem which is related to the presence of an extra chromosome other than the 21 pair of chromosomes. Generally these kind of autistic persons have weak muscles and can be identified with undersized physique and mongoloid face.
  - \* Intellectual disability: In this disability, the cognitive area of the brain is affected leading to slow learning and responses. The child will take long time to understand and may need to be explained in simpler terms, one thing at a time.



\* Cerebral pulse: Traditionally described as " an intelligent mind caught in a disobedient body", is typified by motor dysfunction. Gross motor (sitting, standing and walking), fine motor (writing, sewing, painting etc.) and speech are generally affected.

- **Aims and objectives of this trust**

The aims and objectives of this trust are stated in section 10 of this Act. The aims and objectives of the Act is to enable and empower persons with neurodevelopmental disabilities to live as independently and as fully as possible within and as close to the community to which they belong and to facilitate with the education and technical knowledge to the persons with disability.

- **Advisory Committee**

An Advisory Committee comprising of 16 members along with the honorable Prime Minister as a Chairman and the honorable Minister, Ministry of Social Welfare as a Vice Chairman will be formed as per the section 11 of this Trust Act.

- **Trustee Board:**

According to Section 13 of this Act, a trustee board will be formed for administrative and regulatory purposes. A skilled person having working experience on neurodevelopmental disability will be selected by the government as a Chairperson of this Trustee Board. The significant characteristic of this board is the comprising of seven nominated persons along with the parents of neurodevelopmental disable persons and different institutions. Out of them, four persons will be nominated from parents' panel.

- **Main Activities:**

According to section 17 of this act, the main activities of this Trustee Board are given below:

- \* To Identify Neurodevelopmental disable persons and to solve their problem
- \* To assist different registered institution to give necessary help;
- \* To give possible assistance to the family and parents of this kind of persons for their protection and caring.
- \* To give protection and to rehabilitate them after the death of their parents.
- \* To incorporate them equally into the mainstream of the society.
- \* To formulate necessary curriculum and co-curricular activities for their development and to establish proper educational institutions.
- \* To formulate integrated educational systems according to the type and degree of their disabilities and to give support in establishing this kind of schools.
- \* To ensure medical facilities for long term Neurodevelopmental disabled persons.
- \* To help them to take participation in sports and other physical activities.
- \* To give necessary economic and technical assistance for ensuring their self independents.
- \* To give them legal assistance in inheriting property.

- **Trust fund:**

According to section 26 of this Act there will be two different funds named the 'Fixed Deposit Fund' and 'Current Deposit Fund'. To fulfill the objectives of the Trust, the government will permit a grant/donation in favor of this fund. Any person can donate any kind of property to this Trust for the betterment of the disable persons. After fulfilling their basic need, this amount can be used in other welfare activities for the persons with autism and neurodevelopmental disabilities.





**'Theme Song' of World Autism Awareness Day 2014**

Special Day for Special Child

April 2

Called surge in the conscience  
and lit the blue.

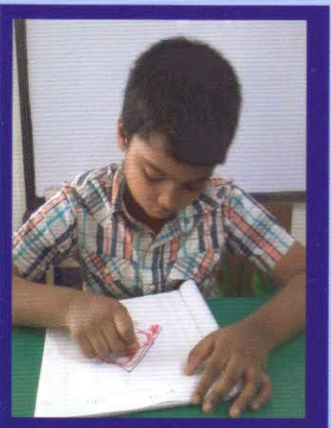
There was a time in life  
full of sorrows and grief.

Now the days are  
Changed march  
ahead with steps  
confident, pushing  
back the dismay  
and despair,  
All we go ahead  
to usher in a  
new dawn with  
the cortege of the  
blues.

Babies specially challenged  
are of different needs;  
Yet they  
dream the  
same dream to  
enjoy the tapestry  
of life.

**" Composed in Bengali by Nasima Begum ndc  
Secretary-in-charge, Ministry of Social Welfare**

**" Translated in English by Ranjit Kumar Biswas ndc, PhD  
Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs**





# AUTISM

Take quick action  
Diagnose early

1. Autism is not a disease, it is a neurodevelopmental Disorder; characterized by social impairments, communication difficulties and restricted, repetitive as well as stereotyped patterns of behavior.
2. Symptoms range from mild learning and social disability to severe impairment
3. Early diagnosis and appropriate training can show significant progress

Contact your nearest medical centre if you see these symptoms in your child

If your child :

- \* Does not smile spontaneously within 6 months of age.
- \* Can't response to sounds, smiles, or other facial expressions within 9 months of age.
- \* Doesn't point or wave goodbye or use other gestures to communicate.
- \* Lack of facial expression within 1 year of age.
- \* Do not utter a single word within 16 months.
- \* Does not produce a sentence combining two words within 2 years of age.
- \* Suddenly loss of acquired Communication and social skills.



Aloof in manner



Not respond to their name by 12 months of age.



Avoid eye contact.



Not point at objects to show interest (point at an airplane flying over) by 14 months.



Enjoys Spinning and rotating objects



Can do something very well but not task involving social understanding



Lack of fear or more fear than expected.



Echoes words and phrases



Does not pretend in play.



Refers to the need by dragging the hands of adults.



Extreme restlessness, hyperactivity or extreme passivity



Crying tantrums, extreme distress for no apparent reason



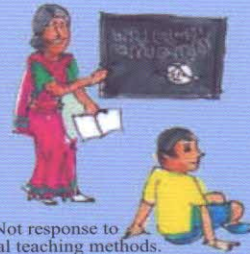
Apparent insensitivity to pain



Like sameness in everyday routine, does not enjoy change



Sometimes doesn't like to be hugged or touched



Not response to normal teaching methods.



Have unusual reactions, flap their hands and rock their body



Have obsessive interests.



Inappropriate laughing and giggling.



Prefers to play alone and Does not share interests with others.

Edited by: Nasima Begum ndc, Secretary In charge, Ministry of Social Welfare

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