

Towards a disability inclusive Bangladesh

Murteza Rafi Khan

**Bangladesh Business & Disability Network
Bangladesh**

ILO Forum on Reasonable Adjustments at the Workplace



22nd February 12:50-14:50

Overview

1. The Bangladesh context
2. Introduction to Bangladesh Business & Disability Network and its activities
3. Reasonable Adjustments in Bangladesh



Bangladesh Context



1. Population of 160 Million People with 9-10% people with disabilities
2. Economy of almost US\$200 Billion growing at close to 7%
3. Major drivers in economy: Apparel Industry, Pharmaceuticals and other manufacturing. Agricultural still largest sector.
4. Hard Barriers and Soft Barriers persist resulting in exclusion of people with disabilities from work force
5. Initiatives are being taken on the demand (employer) and supply (skills development) side

Introduction to Bangladesh Business & Disability Network

1. Launched in December 2016 by Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Director General of ILO and President Bangladesh Employers' Federation
2. Platform to bring employers together with disability organizations, NGOs and development partners to create a more inclusive workforce in Bangladesh.
3. Facilitate knowledge sharing on successful policies, practices and challenges.
4. Raise awareness about disability inclusion and promote the business case
5. Create employment for people with disabilities

Activities of BBDN

1. 37 members have joined BBDN with member fees. ILO also providing support.
2. Seminars and workshops held in different cities in Bangladesh to promote disability inclusion and highlight successful disability interventions
3. Job Placement desks started in 2 cities with Chambers of Commerce to build local level ownership of the challenges.
4. Job Fair held in Dhaka which resulted in **151 people with disabilities placed in jobs**. An additional 20 have been placed through the job placement desks.
5. Job Fairs planned in different cities of Bangladesh. Serving as effective tool to bring various stakeholders together.

Successful candidates receive appointment letters Dhaka Job Fair 2017



Employers conducting interviews at their booths Dhaka Job Fair 2017



Reasonable Adjustments in Bangladesh

1. Most companies in Bangladesh don't have a disability inclusion or reasonable adjustments policy but it is slowly changing
2. Through the efforts of Disability Organizations and NGOs, some employers, particularly in the Apparel Industry, have started to develop and implement policies:
 - i) Supervisor level employees trained in sign language at company with 1500 employees with disabilities, majority of whom have impaired hearing
 - ii) Accessible close proximity accommodation and transport arrangements made
 - iii) Hearing aids provided
 - iv) Flexible work schedule offered
 - v) Buddy system introduced
 - vi) Tailored work place adjustments made. Designated Officer manages adjustments
 - vii) Change of work location to ground floor in the absence of elevators
Where available, usage of elevators allowed for mobility impaired employees
 - viii) Washrooms and drinking fountains adjusted

Reasonable Adjustments in Bangladesh



Example of Raised work table



Example of adjustable table

Reasonable Adjustments in Bangladesh



Md. Al-Amin was born with a club foot and denied entry at most factories. He finally joined Vintage Denim where Management readjusted his seat according to his impairment. He is now working well and has started his own family