"Service to Sufferers is Service to God"

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Managers and employees from the NGOs, garment and leather industry in Bangladesh attended a train-the-trainer seminar on "Occupational Integration" between 18 and 24 August 2019. It took place at the Institute for Work and Health of the DGUV in Dresden, Germany. Salim Rahman the Assistant Manager, Rehabilitation Wing and Md. Habibur Rahman, Assistant Coordinator, Vocational Training Institute (VTI) represented CRP in the seminar which included lectures and related hospital and rehabilitation centre visits at Germany.

The seminar was a part of the project "Employment Injury Protection Scheme for Workers in the Garment and Leather Industries", which the DGUV carries out with the support of GIZ in Bangladesh. The aim is to establish an accident insurance system in Bangladesh that protects employees in the long term against health hazards and financial consequences of accidents at work and occupational diseases.
A mixed method of research approach was applied for this study. 20% of the total 360 employees (72) with disabilities were taken for questionnaire survey through four job fairs from 2017 to 2018. In-depth face to face interview was administered with Key Informant Interview (KII) of both employees and employers, and focus group discussions were administered with co-workers. A total of 4 KII (employers) and 8 KII (employees) were interviewed in different industries. 

Findings: Out of 72 participants, 54 participants continued working in different industries and the rest 18 dropped-out from their jobs. At present, they are jobless and the most common factors are nature of the job, level of education and skills in term of their job, return to formal education, salary expectations, distance from home to workplace, chronic illness, structural barrier, sexual harassment among women, and family responsibilities after marriage. Although the employers reported that they tried to support the employees with disabilities to enable them to continue their work.

Locations of this action research were drawn according to the current reachable address of the Persons with Disabilities tracked with BBDN’s job fair database. Study action was coordinated and conducted through CRP’s Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet divisional centres. CRP’s Rehabilitation Wing, Madhab Memorial Vocational Training Institute, Inclusive Job Centre and the divisional centres facilitated the field level work in many ways during the study period.

The Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Department of CRP conducted a research project on “Tracking Persons with Disabilities Employed in Industries through Job Fairs organized by the Bangladesh Business Disability Network (BBDN)”. A team of 2 Research Officers, Md. Shaikhul Hasan and Rafiu Karim, investigated the whole study process along with 3 Research Assistants, Abul Kashem Shihab, Tazmina Islam Tithi and Tanzima Siddiqua.

The aims of the research were to determine the extent of disability inclusion in a business oriented workplace and the measures needed to strengthen disability inclusive labour market.

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