

Creating Entrepreneurs through Contribution of Individuals and Corporations: An Insight on Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh

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Abstract : In Bangladesh, particularly in rural areas, persons with disabilities are generally isolated from the mainstream and are pushed to the margins of society. They are seen as an individual problem, not as a social responsibility. As a result, persons with disabilities face challenges to actively participate in social and economic activities. The country is experiencing a steady economic and per capita growth over the past few years and entrepreneurial opportunities are also increasing. However, involvement of persons with disabilities in entrepreneurship is yet to increase. The aim of this paper is to explore the issue of entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities through contribution of individuals and corporations in the context of social responsibility. The paper is exploratory in nature and is approached through a three-month research project 'Shwanirbhor' run by the authors in Pakshi area of Pabna District in Bangladesh. The authors collected data through semi structured questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions. Through the project, persons with disabilities were provided with financial capital (collected through contribution of individuals and corporations), business plans and advisory assistance on a need basis to help them start entrepreneurial ventures. The findings of the study indicate that in terms of contribution toward a social cause, individuals and corporations have positive attitude and are willing to offer monetary and nonmonetary assistance. When provided with entrepreneurial opportunity, persons with disabilities showed motivation in joining entrepreneurship to improve their economic standing and to be financially independent. In addition to that, the study also found that factors such as social inclusion and acceptance, economic empowerment, breaking the social and family barrier are also the reasons that drive persons with disabilities into embracing entrepreneurship. Moreover, while starting and running the entrepreneurial activities, they face constraints that range from personal, environmental, operational and infrastructural to informational barriers. The paper also proposes a strategy framework for entrepreneurship creation in Bangladesh which could be supportive for policy development for persons with disabilities.

Keywords : Bangladesh, entrepreneurship, persons with disabilities (PWD), social responsibility

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