

**Thematic Strategy Paper**

**Towards Inclusion:  
Making the Rights Real for Persons with Disabilities**

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## **List of Acronyms**

COPE	Creating Opportunities for the Poor and Excluded People
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DFID	Department for International Development
DPOs	Disable People's Organisations
EPR	Excluded People's Rights in Bangladesh
FYP	Five Year Plan
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IGA	Income Generating Activities
LF	Logical Framework
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
PWDs	Person with Disabilities
PCR	Project Completion Report
PNGOs	Partner Non Government Organisation
RPPD	Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities
RTI	Right to Information
SAF	South Asian Federation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UKAid	A British Initiative for International Development Assistance
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls
WHO	World Health Organisation

## **1. Introduction**

**Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF)** is a national Non-Government Organisation (NGO) that promotes human rights and good governance through funding, policy advocacy and capacity building of NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). MJF assists in supporting entitlements of people by building their capacity to demand basic services and raise voice against rights violation through support to local /national CSO's and people's movements. MJF also works on the supply side to promote organisations responsiveness towards the demands of people, especially the poor and marginalized. MJF's work includes policy advocacy which has facilitated enactment of some of the most progressive and pro-poor laws and policies in the past 16 years. MJF is known for testing innovative approaches and willingness to take risks.

MJF has gained credibility over the years as an organisation with high standards of financial and programme accountability along with an effective Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system capable of reporting on achievements, results and lesson learned. MJF is governed by a nine-member Governing Board comprised of eminent personalities from civil society.

MJF received grant from Department for International Development (DFID) in 2002 as a project of CARE Bangladesh to implement HUGO (Human Rights and Governance) Project. MJF later started its journey as an independent organisation, obtaining registration from NGO Affairs Bureau and Joint Stock Company. Since then MJF received international development grants from the British Initiative for International Development Assistance (UKAid) in two more phases. In 2013, MJF received over 26 million GBP for the Creating Opportunities for the Poor and Excluded People (COPE) Project which was completed in June 2017. In October 2017, UKAid awarded a five-year Project titled '**Excluded People's Rights in Bangladesh**' (EPR) to MJF.

### **MJF Vision:**

A world free from poverty, exploitation and discrimination where people live in dignity and human security.

### **MJF Mission:**

Promotion of human rights and governance through partnership with different stakeholders including duty bearers to ensure dignity and well-being of all people, especially the marginalized.

MJF supports innovation and new ideas to address the many challenges faced when bringing about positive changes in the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized.

MJF will support CSO's to work on the following programme areas

- a. Tackling Marginalization & Discrimination (including rights of ethnic people)
- b. Security and Rights of Women and Girls
- c. Decent & Safe Work (Protection of Workers and Working Children)
- d. Youth & Social Cohesion
- e. Strengthening Public Institutions

Disability is a cross-cutting issue which will be integrated with all other programmes and will also have separate programmes.

This thematic paper encapsulates the five-year (2017-2022) strategic plan built on strengths and experiences of previous years of MJF. The paper premised lessons learned, contextual realities, EPR Business Case, priorities of 7<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan of Government of Bangladesh (GoB) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and a series of consultations with all level of MJF staffs, stakeholders and issue expert and academics. The paper clarifies specific problems associated with disability, programme brief, programme implementation approach, coverage, intended key results, Theory of Change (ToC) and monitoring mechanism for the next 5 years.

## 2. Disability

Disability cuts across all sections of the population irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, belief, geographical location, profession and sexual orientation. Within the sections and/or communities of the population that already are recognized as vulnerable, having any kind of disability adds to their vulnerability with multiplying effect. In most cases, they are left out of all mainstream development agenda.

**Definition:** “Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” MJF has gained hands-on experience of promoting and defending human rights and addressing marginalization and discrimination of a wide section of diverse populations for a decade and a half. Addressing disability will be a part of the Tackling Marginalization and Discrimination programme, however, MJF considers disability as a cross-cutting theme, based on certain principles and criteria. MJF took into account (a) the deep-rooted link between poverty and disability, (b) the historical negligence and marginalization faced by PWDs , (c) MJF’s experience of working with socially and economically vulnerable people (d) the changing overall national and global context, including commitments, and (e) the capacity within organisation and partners to address the issue collectively and across programmes.

The aim of the disability theme is to strengthen movements of PWDs in such manner that they can claim opportunities and services on an equal basis with others. Another aim is to bring about positive change in social position of PWDs and contribute to developing and implementing policies that ensure inclusion of PWDs into mainstream development.

## 3. The Context: (Situation & Causes)

**Disability in Bangladesh:** The Constitution of Bangladesh commits to ensure equality, human dignity, and social justice to all citizens. More than four decades later, the nation is yet to ensure these three conditions for a large portion of its citizens.

The marginalized people, for whom fulfilling these three conditions would have made the most significant impact in their daily lives, are the ones who have enjoyed these least. And among the wide variety of people who are considered as marginalised in this country, those that suffer most are the PWDs – which increases their vulnerability and marginalization further. If that person is again a woman, her condition is even worse. An attempt has been made in the next few pages to summarise the overall disability scenario in Bangladesh.

**Number of People with Disabilities:** It is estimated that approximately 650 million people with disabilities live in about 60 countries that are part of Asia and the Pacific<sup>1</sup>. The Department of Social Services is currently conducting a large nation-wide study, but that too is reportedly missing out a large number of PWDs from counting due to lapses and loopholes.

While no reliable national data exists, anecdotal information and a number of micro studies generally suggest a disability prevalence rate of between 5%-14%, which is close to the World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates of 15%. Based on WHO estimates (15%), Bangladesh with a population of about 160 million people could conceivably have around 22 million people with disabilities, while only about 1.5 million is being reported. Such under-reporting have always been challenged.<sup>2</sup>

**Education:** Access of children with disabilities to education is extremely limited. An unequal educational system, a rigid and unfriendly curriculum, ignorance and lack of awareness of parents, compounded with inadequate knowledge of teachers and the unsupportive environment existing in most of the educational institutions has done very little to promote education of children with disabilities in Bangladesh.

With regard to special education, the Government is operating 13 primary schools for children with disabilities. Private voluntary organisations are also involved in institutional-based educational rehabilitation through schools for children with hearing and visual impairment, and for those with autism and intellectual disabilities, with branches in different districts. At the high school level, the Government is operating an integrated programme attached to 64 regular schools, while voluntary development organisations are operating a number of schools each for those with visual and hearing disabilities.

Bangladesh has two Ministries catering to education – the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. Yet the education of the children with disabilities is under the purview of the Ministry of Social Welfare, which plays no part to achieve the universal goal of “Education for All”. A major success of the Government in recent years is distributing new books to each and every child in schools on the first day of the New Year. However, it took months for the children with visual disabilities to get a books in Braille version, which came either from Ministry of Social Welfare or from NGOs. 2017 was the first year that such books were made available from the National Curriculum and Textbook Board. The books, however, are riddled with mistakes. (Citizen Charter, Ministry of Social Welfare)

**Work, Employment and Access to income:** Employment and/or self-income generation activities are essential towards economic self-reliance of PWDs. Where access to education is a huge obstacle, employment of PWDs in Bangladesh is even more difficult. The government had declared a 10% quota for PWDs along with orphans<sup>3</sup> about two decades back. A further 1% has been declared in BCS Cadre Service jobs. But due negative attitude of employers and lack of knowledge about the potentialities of disabled people, contradictory employment policies, loopholes in the system and a lack of proper monitoring, the declared quota for the PWDs had never been implemented properly.

**Health & Rehabilitation:** The Government operates only one orthopaedic hospital in Dhaka and one orthopaedic unit at each of the medical college hospitals, as well as three leprosy hospitals. The GoB is also running two vocational rehabilitation centres for those with orthopaedic disabilities. Under the

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<sup>1</sup> The Incheon Strategy to “Make the Right Real” for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, UN ESCAP, 2012, available at: <http://www.unescapsdd.org/publications/incheon-strategy>

<sup>2</sup> <http://openblogbd.wordpress.com/2012/07/16/bangladesh-disability-population-1-4/>

<sup>3</sup> Vide Article 29(3) of the Constitution: “Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from (a) making special provision in favour of any backward section of citizens for the purpose of securing their adequate representation in the service of the Republic;”

Ministry of Social Welfare there are another 103 one-stop-service centres, located at the upazilla level. There also are 32 mobile vans that are supposed to provide outreach services to remote communities. But due to their large size, the vans cannot access remote areas. Several private & voluntary organisations are operating orthotics & prosthetics workshops, as well as training centres each for people with visual & intellectual disabilities. The oldest functional hydrotherapy unit in the country is also run by an NGO.

Ensuring supply of clean drinking water to the persons with disability was not on the agenda of any of the donors for long. Similarly, in the area of sanitation, low-cost user-friendly slab latrines had been made available all over the country. But in most cases, these are not at all accessible to PWDs, especially the wheelchair users.

As Bangladesh has made progress through its health policies such as reducing infant mortality rate, universal immunisation coverage and general health care and expected to experience a lower incidence of impairments. However, certain challenges remain, for example, lack of consistent oxygen supply at the hospitals beyond the district level means that a new born child, especially suffering a prolonged labour, might not get the required oxygen support soon after birth. This alone can result in conditions like cerebral palsy, or intellectual disabilities. This is compounded with natural calamities and the frequent occurrence of road traffic accidents implies that the prevalence of impairments in Bangladesh is likely to rise or continue. The national health policies have rarely incorporated disability issues, and so the main actors in this field are the non-government organisations in collaboration with government departments.

**Freedom of Movement and Accessibility:** Bangladesh has a building code, which clearly mandates accessibility options for all including PWDs. Yet again, loopholes in the system, lack of proper monitoring, and lack of penalization systems could not establish accessibility for the PWDs. Public and private offices, educational institutions, public transportation, utility infrastructure, recreation and tourist spots, and market places – almost all are inaccessible to PWDs.

The Dhaka City Building Construction Rule 2007 was adopted under Building Construction Act 1952 (E.B Act II of 1953). This Rule recognized Universal Accessibility and Universal Design. There are several sections to ensure accessibility of all including PWDs. However, this Rule is not yet strictly observed and practiced.

As such, even though the country is making some slow yet steady progress in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector, options for visually impaired persons are limited. Websites are rarely accessible to them. Braille materials are still not widely available.

**Disasters and other humanitarian conditions:** Frequent natural disasters of various types hits Bangladesh. It currently ranks as the world's foremost disaster-prone country. The situation is aggravated by being one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Natural disasters like floods, cyclones, storm surges, nor'westers, tornadoes, earthquakes, river erosions and droughts etc. occur regularly. Human-made disasters like conflicts – both political and apolitical (mostly related with land ownership issues); and other disasters like fire, epidemics and road transport disasters are also frequent.

During these catastrophic times, PWDs suffer the most. Starting from evacuation and rescue from the affected areas, to shifting them to safer shelters and higher grounds, while during their stay in the shelter, to relief and post-disaster rehabilitation efforts – at almost every step they need some additional attention. However, the general understanding on disability among the non-disabled community is so little, that disaster experts often have not addressed these issues in their response programmes until recently.

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief hosted an international conference in 2015, which came out with a Dhaka Declaration on Disability Inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction. The Standing Orders on

disaster have now been made disability inclusive. Also the disaster management committees across the country have been instructed to meaningfully include PWDs within the committees.

**Participation and Voice:** The Constitution of Bangladesh has recognized PWDs to cast vote in all elections at national and local levels. The Representation of the Public Order 1972 has no restriction for PWDs to participate in national and local government elections as candidate, rather the Conduct of Election Rules (1972) clearly specifies processes to be adopted to facilitate vote casting by people with visual and/or physical disabilities, along with maintaining all necessary secrecy and confidentiality. Disability-related information were incorporated for the first time in the national voter's list in 2008, and the Conduct of Election Rules published as gazette in 2008 declared that voters with disabilities could cast vote through postal ballot, and that voters with physical and visual disabilities could seek assistance of a trusted companion while casting vote at a polling booth.

**Information and ICT:** Availability of information has always been a challenge for the common Bangladeshi citizen. When that citizen is a person with disability, especially with either visual or hearing and speech-related disabilities, the challenge has been greater. The situation is gradually improving. In 2009, the National Parliament enacted the Right to Information Act 2009, more popularly known as the Right to Information (RTI), which duly addressed disability issues.

It is widely understood that access to ICT could break down many barriers, and pave the way for PWDs to compete with non-disabled peers on an equal footing. The National ICT Policy (2008) for the first time addressed PWDs very firmly.

**Recreation and Cultural Activities:** Access of PWDs to recreational and cultural activities is highly limited in Bangladesh. Recreational facilities that are open to public, such as parks, children's parks, theatres, cinema halls, places of cultural interests and historical heritage, museums, tourist spots etc. absolutely lack any kinds of accessibility features whatsoever. Even good and established restaurants do not have any accessibility features for PWDs.

NGOs working in the disability field, with their limited capacities, try to arrange events at every given opportunity. These programmes reveal the high quality of many performers with disabilities in the areas of painting, crafts, music and dances, which, with a little support and patronization could help establish them in society. Over the last few years, the Prime Minister's Office has begun using paintings by children with disabilities for their greetings cards on national occasions.

**Sports and Games:** Despite a scarcity of resources, Bangladesh historically spends fairly large sums in the arena of sports and games. A large contingent of athletes and officials participate in the Olympics, larger contingents go to the Asian Games, and far larger contingents take part in the South Asian Federation (SAF) Games. But in terms of results, apart from only a few good examples at the SAF level, and a rare few at the Asian level, our overall performance at the international level is extremely poor. Only the Bangladesh National Cricket Team is recognized torchbearer at the international sports level.

The National Sports Policy (1998) has made provisions for the promotion of sports for PWDs with the support from the government. However, the mainstream sports meets do not have events for them.

**Safety, Security and Access to Justice:** Amongst women facing gender-based violence in the country, a large number of them are women and girls with disabilities. Women and girls with visual and hearing impairments and those with intellectual disabilities are the most vulnerable, as they cannot express their evidences to the investigating agencies and before the court. Furthermore, sometimes families of those victims attempt to conceal the facts fearing and/or anticipating social humiliation. Appropriate legal

actions cannot be taken due to absence of witness before the Court. The legal justice system requires major changes to address these issues adequately.

In general practice, the judicial system is reluctant to take statements from persons with hearing disabilities, persons with psycho-social disabilities and persons with intellectual disabilities. The Bangla Sign language is not yet officially accepted in the courts of Bangladesh, since it is not legally standardized. There have been exceptions though, where certain judges have invited sign interpreters. But when the poorly educated person with hearing impairment is not conversant in formal sign language, and uses rather indigenous signs, the presence of the interpreter makes little difference in the proceedings of the court.

In absence of proper and caring legal guardians, persons with intellectual and psycho-social disabilities become victim when there is co-sharer of inheritance. The court generally interprets and considers them as mentally not sound to manage their property interests. So they are cheated out of their rightful shares. The Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities (RPPD) Act 2013 has created specific provisions, which is expected to generate positive changes.

**Minorities with Disabilities:** Disability cuts across all sections of the population, young or old, rich or poor and adds to the vulnerability. Within the sections and/or communities of the population that already is recognized as vulnerable – either for gender, age, ethnicity, religion or belief, geographical location, profession, sexual orientation, or whatsoever reason, a considerable number of them additionally have a disability, for whom the vulnerability has a multiplying effect. In most cases, they are left out of all mainstream development agenda.

Within ethnic minority groups, many have an in-built social support system that has been practiced for generations. This ensures that the needy do not go hungry, or the sick does not go without healing. Unfortunately, PWDs in the three hill districts live in extremely vulnerable conditions. Physical accessibility is a huge issue there, so is enrolment into regular schools.

**Inclusion vs. Exclusion:** Ministry of Social Welfare is the nodal ministry to cater to all issues concerning people with disabilities in Bangladesh, including areas like education, employment, rehabilitation etc. But the Ministry, along with the Department of Social Services, is not capable enough to deal with all the issues as the other relevant ministries do not address the needs of PWDs.

A majority of the NGOs are addressing the rights of women, however the rights of women with disabilities are rarely being addressed. Many organisations operate safe shelter homes for women who have been rescued from traffickers and/or abused. But most of their doors are shut to an abused woman if she is intellectually disabled.

Most of the NGOs working on rights of children generally perceive that only Article 23 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) applies to children with disabilities, not recognizing that these children are first and foremost children – and then they should be looked upon as children with disabilities. Hence the CRC applies to these children in its entirety, and in the cases of non-disabled children, Article 23 has no implications.

**Key Disability Inclusive Laws:**

- Right to Information Act, 2009
- Disaster Management Act, 2012
- Children Act, 2013

**Key Disability Inclusive Policies:**

- Education Policy
- HNPS
- Women Development Policy
- Disaster Management Policy
- Standing Orders on Disaster
- National Skills Development Policy

**Key Disability Inclusive Circulars:**

- To ensure accessibility features in all built new public infrastructure
- To ensure disability inclusion in all local government initiatives
- To reserve 5% seats in all technical education schools & institutions

**The Policy Framework:** The first legislation was the Disability Welfare Act, 2001 adopted in the National Parliament. But this too was so welfare oriented and not strong enough to uphold and promote rights and fundamental freedoms of PWDs.

Adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in December 2006 brought about a fundamental change in the fate of PWDs across the world. Bangladesh was one of the pioneering countries in ratifying both the CRPD and its optional protocol.

Finally, the RPPD Act 2013 was enacted in the parliament in October 2013 based on the same principles, spirit and content of the CRPD.

A second law was also enacted the same year, the Neuro-Developmental Disability Protection Trust Act, 2013, based on which a National Trust has been created to support and promote welfare and development of persons with neuro-developmental disabilities.

**Our Collective Capacity to Create Change:** Policy advocacy and influencing work requires a strong team of advocates who have a thorough and clear understanding of the concerned issue, preferably from a personal point of view, to national & international policies, who have strong roots at the primary grassroots level, and a collective body with a strong enough voice and position to influence changes in the government.

MJF has had the opportunity to work with such partners over the last decade and a half. Partners included small grassroots NGOs and Disable People's Organisations (DPOs), large local & national NGOs, DPO federations with grassroots to national leaderships, disabled women's organisations and organisations focusing on capacity building for disability inclusion, and the largest and the oldest national network and think tank in the field of disability in Bangladesh. With this unique mix of partners, MJF has played a major supporting role in the changing policy context in the disability and development field in Bangladesh. The change in policy has created an obligation for the duty-bearers to provide services to the persons with disability all over Bangladesh. Unlike piecemeal project-based service delivery in different pockets, policy change can address a vast population of persons with disability as part of State responsibility for all.

#### **4. MJF's Previous Work**

MJF's has vast experience of working with disability issues and particularly with PWDs communities to address their problems. Disability will work with individuals, communities, local influential people and government simultaneously. This is because change needs to happen at all levels starting from the attitudes and awareness of individuals, up to legal and institutional reforms. MJF past interventions and approach is to increase the awareness of individuals and communities, build leadership and help PWDs organise themselves in order to collectively demand and realize their rights and entitlements. MJF works through partner NGOs and civil society organisations located across Bangladesh.

#### **5. Lessons from Previous Work<sup>4</sup>**

Past experience from COPE Project shows that PWDs people's vulnerability becomes acute due to lack of access to basic services and resources, deficiency in rights awareness and dearth of optimal skills to make

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<sup>4</sup> Learning from COPE and PCR

their occupation competitive in the market. Therefore, as a result, a multi-pronged strategy is needed in implementing the objective of disability theme. Some of the learnings, strategies during COPE period that worked well are mentioned below.

### **What Worked Well**

- Collective actions by CSOs, Community Based Organisations (CBOs), media and other community platforms can influence on reducing violence, improving service delivery, reforming pro-poor policy, ensuing inclusion, promoting mainstreaming and developing leadership. In disability theme future intervention, collective action strategy will get high priority in implementing our programme for the marginalised.
- Even if poor PWDs have not had the opportunity to acquire formal education, they still can articulate their challenges because they have encountered these through first-hand experience.
- The grassroots level demands for pro-poor policy reform can better influence the political process, if it enjoys the support of the broader civil society organisations. However, to sustain a disability mainstreaming movement it is essential to educate the broader civil society organisations on disability related issues.
- To sustain a disability mainstreaming practice it is essential to incorporate disability rights as fundamental element of different policies of both MJF and that of its partner organisations, just not limited within the Project.
- Critical engagement of civil society, media and social support groups can play catalytic role in sensitising duty-bearers to become responsive to poor people in establishing their rights to life and livelihoods.
- For the poor PWDs, livelihood support like skills training, asset transfer, creation of jobs and other supports like therapies and assistive technologies, and even safety nets are very essential.
- A greater emphasis is needed for the plight of women with disabilities to be equitably included within the mainstream women’s rights movement.
- Our legal justice system needs to go a long way to ensure rights and freedoms of PWDs, especially in its addressing gender-based violence.
- Disability inclusion shall not be possible without addressing accessibility. Reasonable accommodation principles and practice however could be the minimal first steps.
- Meaningful engagement of PWDs is essential in every step of the way to ensure any level of disability inclusion.
- COPE experience also shows that collective advocacy is effective to enact or drafting law and government circular. During COPE period, due to collective advocacy initiative with different networks RPPD Act 2013, Neuro Developmental Disability Protection Trust Act-2013 law were enacted. The theme will take such interventions so that communities with disability can be brought together on the same platform for facilitating the adoption of commonly-affecting laws and policies. Moreover, efforts will be made to facilitate implementation of existing laws, such as Disability Protection Act, Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Act, etc. The programme will also work in close collaboration with “Strengthening Institutions” programme to ensure accountability and transparency of relevant public service providers<sup>5</sup>.
- Our experience revealed that livelihood support like asset transfer and interest free loan or capital support can help a section of marginalized people for building their self-confidence, self-development

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<sup>5</sup> Evaluations confirm that through its support to these partners MJF has achieved immense progress in building “beneficiaries” knowledge of and demand for their rights in the targeted areas, linked strategically to national level pro-poor policy advocacy. The result has been an improvement in project area and at-scale service delivery targeted at marginalized groups (Ibid.).

and self-dependence. Thus they can earn and sustain their own livelihoods leading to poverty alleviation. Therefore, it is planned that we shall keep some allocation for livelihood support in extreme cases for marginalized people to become self-dependent.

- Our work with the extremely marginalized and excluded people like persons with disability, shows that if the needs of these communities are incorporated into mainstreamed development process, then they get optimum benefit to change their lives and livelihoods. As a result, this thematic area will give utmost priority to change the existing government policies in favour of the disable communities, so that they can be part of broader mainstreamed development process.

### **What Did Not Work Well**

- PWDs business enterprise didn't function well because of lack of market linkage strategy in COPE Project period.
- Economic opportunity creation ignoring demand-led market oriented approach didn't show promising results in spreading entrepreneurship sustainably.
- It was difficult to tangibly instil rights-based approach into those NGOs who have worked on service delivery, and are more focused out their own sustainability through micro-finance or other profit-oriented programmes.

## **6. Programme Brief:**

**Goal:** Persons with disabilities are enjoying equal rights and have their lives improved through an integrated approach at MJF.

### **Outcomes:**

- PWDs across the MJF programme (have access to public services and resources (e.g. health, education, safety-net, agricultural extension, Income Generating Activities (IGA), land and water-bodies).
- PWDs (men and women) have representation in different institutions and participated in decision making process.
- Incidence of violence against women and girls (including men and boys) with disabilities addressed.
- PWDs (men and women) have increased opportunities for income generation.
- Partner NGOs other institutions contributed to new development programmes and policies for PWDs.

### **Outputs:**

MJF expects that, as a result of its disability inclusion strategy across all its work:

- PWDs are included in different community groups.
- PWDs and other group members are sensitised and capable of claiming their rights and entitlements.
- Leadership skills of PWDs developed.
- MJF and P-NGO staff members have developed better understanding on disability issues.

- Awareness and sensitisation of community group members on gender equality and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) improved under different programmes.
- The legal services are available for the women violence survivors.
- Leadership skills of PWDs developed on IGA and different trades in different programmes.
- Government duty-bearers are more sensitive to disability issues.
- NGOs are sensitive to include disability issues in their programmes.

## 7. Programme Approach:

**The strategic directions of MJF to ensure disability inclusion across the organisation and the work, including that of partners, will be as follows:**

- A twin-track approach shall be followed. On the one hand, priority shall be given to support self-help, community-led and membership-based organisations of PWDs. On the other hand, capacities of all partners, including that of MJF, shall be built to ensure disability issues are adequately and meaningfully addressed in all our work.
- Build strength of the groups or organisations of PWDs, especially women, so that they can raise their voice and demand rights.
- Address the issues and concerns of PWDs in the otherwise diversified excluded groups (religious & caste-based minorities, people living in extreme vulnerable areas, landless, indigenous communities etc.), as they face far steeper challenges.
- Plan and design all programmes keeping PWDs at the core.
- Give emphasis on policy influencing for generating greater and synergic results.
- Extend service delivery support to extremely poor people with disabilities, where necessary, however, ensure that their dignity is upheld.
- Keep in mind other cross-cutting issues of MJF (gender equality and capacity building) every step of the way.

MJF commits to start an inclusive development practice, where PWDs are initially identified, and included in our development programmes as equal participants. All staff of MJF and its partners shall be gradually oriented with required skills and awareness to ensure and support the effective inclusion of disability across its work. Partner staff shall also be made aware of possible resourceful organisations for creating effective linkages and/or referrals.

The MJF disability inclusion venture shall thus be guided by the following principles:

- **Respect for Diversity:** MJF practices a respect for difference and recognizes PWDs as part of human diversity and humanity. MJF also values the diversity within disability, manifested by type and grade of impairment, age, sex, educational status and profession of the person, and also economic status, geographical location and various other factors.
- **Respect for Dignity:** MJF recognizes that every human being has a right to inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons; and that the same principle also applies in cases of PWDs.

- **Addressing Multiple Layers of Discrimination:** MJF recognizes discrimination takes place in our society based on a multitude of factors and parameters, where disability aggravates such discrimination. So MJF will pay particular attention to persons with disability who often experience such multiple layers of discrimination (women, children, elderly people, people in emergencies, people marginalised due to ethnicity, remote geographical locations, professions, Dalits, sexual orientation etc.).
- **Equality of Opportunity and Full and Effective Participation & Inclusion:** MJF recognizes that people with disabilities have equal rights to all programme resources, activities, and infrastructure, and so will ensure that PWDs are included as full participants in all stages of the programme cycle and that they have the same opportunity for participation and decision making as all other programme participants.
- **Equity for Equality:** Nothing shall stop MJF from taking proactive affirmative actions to ensure full and meaningful inclusion of PWDs in its organisational and programmatic initiatives.
- **Accountability:** MJF will demonstrate its accountability to PWDs by ensuring that formal and informal feedback and complaint mechanisms are accessible to them, and that its programmes are evaluated from the perspectives of all, including persons with disability.

**To ensure that disability is meaningfully included in all programme, these specific strategies will be as follows:**

- MJF's agenda is to foster leadership amongst disability population and ensure that more targeted PWDs people are placed in leadership and decision-making positions at the community level.
- MJF and its partner organisations will work with service providing institutions especially social welfare department and ministry, education, health and employment service providing institutions for ensuring better services for PWDs.
- Women and girls with disabilities are more vulnerable in accessing justice, therefore, MJF will support disability movements to ensure justice for victims of violence It will also involve all partner organisations in the disability movement so that together their voice becomes stronger to influence policies that are disability friendly.
- MJF's partners will link targeted marginalized men and women with government and non-government skill training and microfinance institutions for income generation, self-employment and job placement. Partner organisations will also organise skill training in some cases.
- Disability dimension shall be incorporated into the situational analysis of all our programme and sectoral /thematic contexts to appraise us on considerations for inclusion and set feasible targets for the inclusion of PWDs in all MJF programmes based on the analysis.
- All MJF staff and partners shall have an awareness of the principles of disability inclusive development and how these align with a rights-based approach. They also will have knowledge and competencies in implementing practical strategies to promote disability inclusion.
- As an equal opportunity employer, MJF shall give preference to recruit equally qualified PWDs in the organisation, and promote the same with partners.
- Ensure physical accessibility in organisational premises and that of its partners. Where full accessibility features are unreasonably difficult, MJF shall at the least follow the principles of reasonable accommodation.
- MJF's website and those of our partners shall be made accessible.

- Produce public documents of MJF in accessible formats.
- When hosting public events, reasonably accessible venues shall be chosen.
- As an organisation MJF itself shall, and also promote and encourage its partners to form alliances with prominent disability organisations and DPOs to support our work towards full and effective inclusion.
- MJF and its partner will initiate and facilitate advocacy processes to implement, review laws and policies.
- As person with disability are more vulnerable because of environment that they are living in so disability-friendly working environment will be ensured in MJF and its partner organisations.
- MJF will support sports and cultural events of PWDs to participate locally, nationally and internationally particularly in South Asian countries.

## 8. Programme Coverage

**Geographic location:** The inclusion strategy will be applicable all over the country in the districts where MJF will have partner organisations.

**Target population:** PWDs, where special emphasis will be given to those living in more marginalised communities. Priority will be given to women and children with disabilities. In case of access to safety nets, priority will be given to the elderly people with disabilities.

**Duty-Bearers/ Holders (state actors as well as non-state actors):** Service providers (health, education, land, forestry, agriculture, social safety-net, etc.); local government authorities; locally elected public representatives (MPs) and bureaucrats; NGOs providing services; law enforcers; private institution providing health, education and education services.

**Community Level Actors:** Local elites, professional groups, mediator, local leaders, religious leaders; political and economic actors.

**Rights Defenders:** DPOs, CBOs; National and regional NGOs; Women’s organisations; Human rights organisations; Media groups; Community platforms.

**Guardian Institutions:** National Human Rights Commission and Information Commission.

## 9. Institutional Capacity of MJF

MJF and Partner Non Government Organisations (PNGOs) have worked together in policy influencing work to create change in the disability development field in the country over the last 16 years. MJF will build further alliances and work together to ensure disability inclusion across the entire EPR Project.

Internally, MJF has staff who are experienced in working with PWD’s and their organisations. True to its principal of gender and diversity, MJF has recruited one person with physical disability. MJF understands that in terms of capacity, this is not enough to achieve disability inclusion comprehensively across all MJF and its PNGOs immediately. However, during this period, MJF has had opportunity to interact work with, and form partnerships with several unique organisations and individuals who have championed and promoted disability inclusion in different organisations. Meanwhile, MJF has gained a reputation as a committed partner, when it comes to promoting its PNGOs and strengthening their capacities.

Based on this trust, MJF plans to keep on interacting with those resource organisations and individuals, to help develop internal capacity further. MJF will also undertake orientation on Disability Inclusion for programme team members working on other programmes of EPR.

## 10. Integration of Cross-cutting Issues

While disability inclusion itself is one of the three cross-cutting issues identified by MJF, MJF will also keep in mind the other two cross cutting themes (a) gender equality and (b) capacity building.

There are ample examples to prove that women with disabilities face further and disproportionate marginalization than their male counterparts, in terms of their identity, access to services and opportunities, expressing their opinion, choice and voice, and their overall safety and security. Therefore, without addressing their issues and concerns equitably, disability inclusion either in policy or in practice cannot be achieved. MJF will ensure this both in MJF and within the work of its PNGOs.

Capacity building is another important cross cutting issue. PWDs need to be made aware of their rights and fundamental freedoms, and the ethical processes of claiming them. They need to learn to work in teams and share different responsibilities. If they wish to form their own organisations, they need to learn to run and operate their organisations ethically and transparently. For MJF and PNGOs, the staff members have to understand disability, its implications, have respect for diversity and ensure dignity of the people with disabilities. For all other stakeholders like family members, neighbours, community leaders and duty bearers – sensitisation is important and has to be developed gradually and carefully. It does not happen through a one-size-fits-all process or approach. These will be dealt with not only as integral parts of programme components, but also as cross cutting issues.

## 11. Risk Analysis

Any risk arising out while implementing disability theme will be dealt with by MJF's overall risk management strategies to be furnished by M&E department.

## 12. Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) system of MJF has been developed in light of its core principles of a rights-based approach. In the EPR Project it will be focused on gaining knowledge and evidence and explore best practices to evaluate progress and apply learnings to enhance programme efficiency and effectiveness.

MJF commits to entrench disability inclusion in our planning, monitoring and evaluation systems, ensuring structural attention to the issue. It believes to provide valuable information that can be used to improve the inclusion of PWDs in our programmes and explain to our different stakeholders that inclusion is relevant, effective and efficient. The measures will include:

- (a) Including a disability perspective in existing reporting formats and evaluations.
- (b) **Including a disability perspective in project proposals:** Project proposals from MJF and possible partners shall clearly state how the programme is of relevance to PWDs and their families. They should also state what measures will be taken to ensure that PWDs benefit in equal measure in the impact group.
- (c) **Modifying targets and indicators:** MJF has already initiated a process to collect disability disaggregated data by adding a column to our existing formats. MJF will further disaggregate the columns to gradually collect information on gender, age, type and grade of disability among our beneficiaries.
- (d) **Looking out for inclusion:** MJF will cover inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in programme activities, achievements that have been made and challenges faced during their visits.

During mid-term or end-line Project evaluations, the Terms of Reference (ToR) shall include evaluation questions about the participation of PWDs and their benefits from the programme.

Disability programme will keep track of the positive or negative changes, success/achievements, failure, challenges and new information that results from the implementation and initiatives. Process monitoring will be undertaken to tracking the progress and also changes taking place. As the programme is rolled out, regular monitoring will help MJF and partners to decide what actions have been the most helpful and what actions have been the least helpful for the PWDs to gain access to services and resources.

M&E unit of MJF will guide the programme staff to set baseline and milestone of this programme at the beginning of the Project and will also assist the partners to develop their M&E plan. Partners and MJF M&E unit will jointly undertake certain monitoring task in a systematic manner. Quarterly and annual progress reports will be completed by partners and MJF contact person will validate those reported data during field visit. Six monthly and annual reports will be sent to DFID as part of donor reporting plan. In addition to annual and quarterly report, case studies related to Project achievements or challenges will be prepared by partners'. M&E unit will analyse partners reported case studies to understand nature of the Project achievements and contextual challenges and provide feedback as relevant.

Detailed indicators will be finalised through a participatory discussion process with DFID and MJF. However, some of the research questions and indicators are suggested in the following table:

<b>Name of the Programme</b>	<b>Key research question (suggested)</b>	<b>Key Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling Marginalization &amp; Discrimination (Disability theme)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How PWDs and their DPOs are organized to claim their rights?</li> <li>• How PWDs advanced their social status in the society?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of PWDs received government services and resources.</li> <li>• Number of PWDs engaged to protect rights violation activities.</li> <li>• Number of PWDs represented in social committees/ forums.</li> </ul>

Annex 1: Theory of Change

**Disability Inclusion**

