



Disability Inclusive Reporting

**Report on the Capacity Building
Workshop for Media Professionals**

**Capacity Building Workshop on
“Disability Inclusive Reporting for Media
Professionals”**

**Organized by
National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC)
and the Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme,
UNDP**

12th and 13th May 2025, Rangpur



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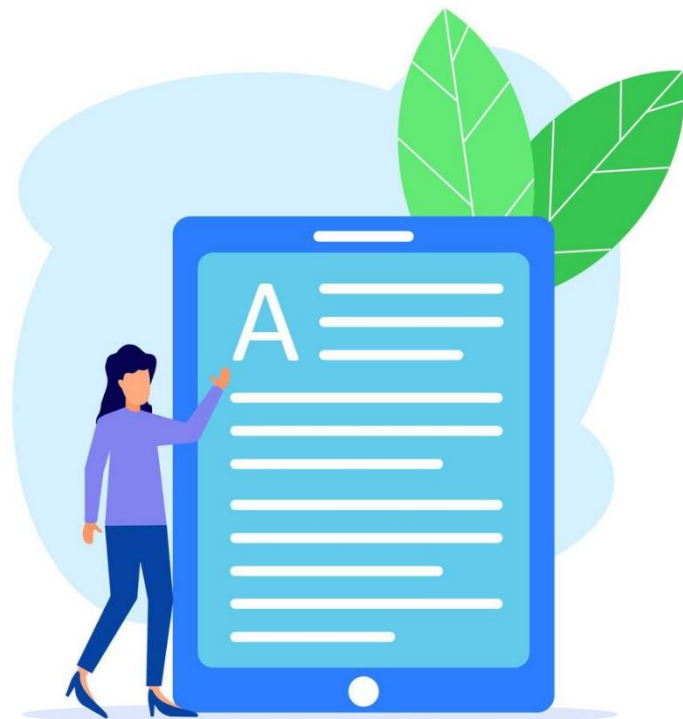
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Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme
Cabinet Division and General Economics Division (GED) of Bangladesh Planning Commission
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
www.socialprotection.gov.bd

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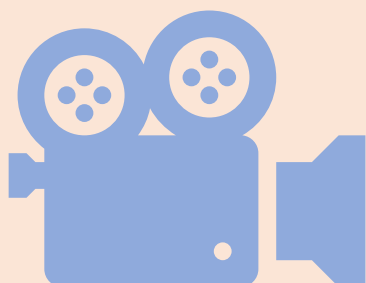
Executive Summary

The two-day workshop titled "Disability Rights and Inclusive Reporting", held on 12th and 13th May 2025 in Rangpur, was jointly organized by the National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC) and the Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme, UNDP. Designed to strengthen the role of media in advancing disability inclusion, the workshop brought together journalists, media professionals, and development actors to enhance awareness, build capacity, and promote ethical standards in reporting on disability-related issues.

This workshop marks the beginning of a nationwide series of capacity-building initiatives aimed at sensitizing media professionals across all 64 districts of Bangladesh. By equipping journalists with the knowledge and tools necessary for inclusive and rights-based reporting, the initiative seeks to foster a media environment that is informed, empathetic, and socially responsible.

Aligned with Bangladesh's commitment to the global pledge of "Leave No One Behind," the workshop emphasized the importance of accurate, respectful, and empowering narratives around disability. Sessions focused on key legal and policy frameworks such as the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2013, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Participants engaged in reflective discussions on ethical considerations, language sensitivity, and the significance of consent and privacy in disability reporting.

Importantly, the workshop successfully established a network of 25 trained reporters committed to advancing disability-inclusive journalism. The participating journalists pledged to continue reporting on disability-related issues, aiming to challenge stereotypes, raise awareness, and support the realization of rights for persons with disabilities through their platforms.



Day 1

Setting the Discourse

Media Sensitization on Disability Rights



Inauguration Ceremony

Amplifying Voices, Reshaping Narratives: A Two-Day Workshop on Disability-Inclusive Reporting

“Disability is not a burden—it is diversity. And diversity is our strength.”

With these compelling words, Tanjim Tamanna, Assistant Director at the National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC), set the tone for the two-day workshop on Disability-Inclusive Reporting in Rangpur. As the moderator of the opening session, she outlined the workshop’s goals and objectives, emphasizing the need for inclusive narratives and responsible reporting that reflect the lived experiences of persons with disabilities.

Divided into three interconnected segments—

- (1) Inauguration and Orientation;
- (2) Training and Capacity Development, and Hands-on Practice;
- (3) Closing Ceremony & Certification Distribution

the workshop was designed to move beyond theory and towards action, equipping regional journalists with the skills, sensitivity, and solidarity needed to reshape how disability is portrayed in the media.



“Media professionals are not just storytellers - they are our Partners in Development” -Aminul Arifeen

Mr. Aminul Arifeen warmly welcomed participants, setting the tone for a transformative two-day workshop focused on disability-inclusive reporting. He emphasized that the media is not merely a mirror of society but a powerful engine for change; capable of reshaping narratives and dismantling barriers for persons with disabilities.

Framing the workshop as a critical step toward inclusive development, Mr. Arifeen highlighted its goal: to equip media professionals with the sensitivity and skills needed to report on disability issues with accuracy, empathy, and purpose. Referring to the global commitment of "Leave No One Behind," he reaffirmed the Government of Bangladesh's pledge to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities through inclusive policies and institutional reforms.

Drawing from the SSPS Programme, he shared promising signs of multi-agency collaboration and growing momentum in disability inclusion. He applauded the National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC) for spearheading this initiative, calling it a guardian of inclusive storytelling.

Describing Rangpur's workshop as a pilot, he envisioned a nationwide "spider network" of empowered media professionals—connected, informed, and ready to champion inclusive development.

In closing, Mr. Arifeen called media professionals "partners in development," underscoring their essential role in shaping an equitable Bangladesh for all.



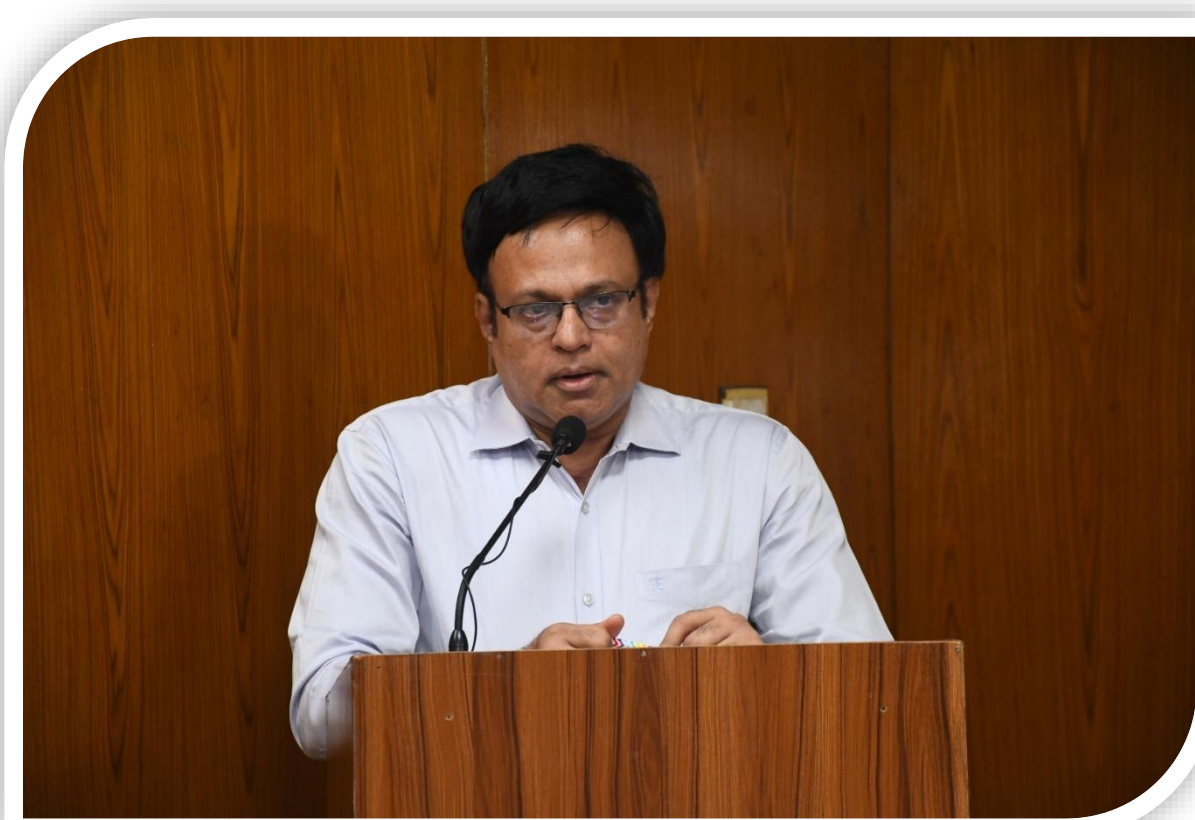
“The government alone cannot achieve inclusive development; real change requires collaboration across sectors and society”

- Dr. Md. Maruf Nawaz

Dr. Md. Maruf Nawaz, Director (Training Programme), NIMC, warmly welcomed all distinguished guests and participants to the two-day workshop, grounding his remarks in the Constitution of Bangladesh – which enshrines equality and non-discrimination for all citizens, including persons with disabilities.

He emphasized NIMC’s enduring commitment to capacity-building in mass communication, highlighting the institute’s role in shaping informed and responsible journalism. Appreciating the collaboration with the SSPS Programme of UNDP, he **acknowledged the workshop as a timely step toward strengthening disability-inclusive reporting in the country.**

He concluded with a hopeful message, reaffirming NIMC’s dedication to promoting inclusive and rights-based media practices and expressing confidence that this workshop would act as a catalyst for inclusive journalism that empowers persons with disabilities and reshapes public perception for the better.



“Disability is around us – but too often, empathy is not”

- Moinul Islam

Mr. Moinul Islam, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Rangpur District, opened his remarks by commending the organizers for initiating a timely and meaningful workshop focused on disability-inclusive reporting. He emphasized that disability is not a distant issue—it exists within our families, neighborhoods, and everyday lives. Yet, as he noted, “We frequently lack empathy,” pointing to the invisibility of the challenges faced by persons with disabilities and their families.

Drawing from his own administrative experience, Mr. Islam shared a personal encounter with a family caring for a child with a disability. That moment, he said, made the abstract real; it illuminated the resilience of families and the urgent need for society to respond with understanding and support.

He underscored the powerful role of the media in amplifying these often-unseen stories, urging journalists to approach disability not as a charity topic but as a core issue of human rights and social justice.

In closing, he lauded the commitment of everyone involved, calling them “**compassionate individuals working for a noble cause,**” and pledged continued support to ensure that the dignity and rights of persons with disabilities are reflected in the stories the media tells.



“The greatest barrier persons with disabilities face are not their condition - but society’s persistent lack of empathy.”

- Aminul Islam

Mr. Aminul Islam began his remarks by extending heartfelt thanks to the organizers for convening a timely and purposeful workshop on disability-inclusive reporting. He stressed that persons with disabilities are not the responsibility of a single group, but a shared responsibility of both society and the state. Acknowledging that societal attitudes often fall short, he underscored the importance of empathy, awareness, and systemic support. “Diversity is not a burden—it is a beauty that enriches our nation,” he emphasized, urging everyone to reframe their understanding of disability.

Mr. Islam referred to the recent student movement in Bangladesh, where several young individuals sustained life-altering injuries and now live with disabilities. He highlighted that these individuals, like all others with disabilities, are entitled to the state’s support and protection. Their inclusion, he noted, must be part of the broader national responsibility.

Drawing from his own professional experiences, Mr. Islam shared a powerful story of a police officer in Thakurgaon who lost both legs in a road accident while managing traffic. Despite his severe injury, he continued his service in the control room with exceptional dedication. He praised his courage and commitment, stating, “We honored him then, and we continue to value his now.”

He commended the SSPS Programme and UNDP for their efforts to mainstream disability issues, and called on media professionals to play a critical role in transforming public perceptions. He urged journalists to use respectful and empowering language when reporting on persons with disabilities and to highlight stories that focus on their abilities, not limitations.



“Persons with disabilities should not just be reported on – but meaningfully represented in stories that reflect their strengths, struggles, and contributions to society.”

- Md. Abdul Quayyum

Md. Abdul Quayyum, Head of Communications, UNDP, Bangladesh, began by expressing his sincere appreciation to the organizers of the workshop, particularly the NIMC and the SSPS Programme, for their strategic collaboration in promoting disability-inclusive media practices.

He reaffirmed that the core principle guiding UNDP’s work globally and in Bangladesh is the commitment to “leaving no one behind”, a foundational pledge embedded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This principle, he stressed, is especially significant when it comes to ensuring the rights, visibility, and inclusion of persons with disabilities – who often remain among the most marginalized and underrepresented in both policy discourse and media narratives.

Mr. Quayyum highlighted that media is a powerful tool in shaping public opinion, challenging stigma, and influencing policymaking. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of equipping journalists with the appropriate language, sensitivity, and context to report on disability issues responsibly and inclusively.

He further stated that this workshop is a timely and important intervention to build the capacity of regional reporters and ensure that persons with disabilities are not just reported on – but meaningfully represented in stories that reflect their strengths, struggles, and contributions to society.

Mr. Quayyum concluded by reiterating UNDP’s continued commitment to fostering inclusive development.



“The media plays a transformative role in shaping public perception and policy discourse.”

- S. M. Monjur Rashid

S. M. Monjur Rashid, Senior Advisor, SSPS Programme, UNDP, began by expressing his deep appreciation to all participants, particularly the distinguished resource persons, for their commitment and valuable contributions to the workshop. He extended a warm welcome to everyone and facilitated a round of introductions to foster an open and collaborative environment.

He noted that the workshop was designed with a specific and strategic objective—to enhance the understanding and skills of local journalists in reporting on issues related to disability inclusion. Explaining the choice of Rangpur as the location for this capacity-building initiative, Mr. Rashid highlighted that local reporter outside the capital often lack access to training and sensitization programmes on disability and inclusive development. “This workshop,” he said, “marks the beginning of a long and sustained journey toward empowering local media professionals across Bangladesh.”

He emphasized the importance of using inclusive, respectful, and rights-based language while reporting on persons with disabilities. He urged participants to be mindful of the power of their narratives - recognizing that the media not only informs the public but also influences policy and societal attitudes.

In conclusion, Mr. Rashid reaffirmed the SSPS Programme’s commitment to working in partnership with national and local stakeholders to ensure that persons with disabilities are portrayed in the media as empowered individuals with talents and aspirations, rather than as passive recipients of charity. He encouraged the participants to carry forward the knowledge gained from the workshop and apply it in their day-to-day reporting practices.





Technical Session 1

Understanding Disability
Key Concepts and Models



Facilitator

Ayon Debnath

Campaign Adviser

Sightsavers Bangladesh

Topics Covered: Definition and Types of Disability, Rights-Based Approach, Appropriate Terminology and Language

Mr. Ayon Debnath began the session by directly engaging the participants. He asked the journalists present to share their personal understanding of disability. This interactive opening aimed to gauge their existing knowledge. However, to everyone's concern, none of the participants could answer the question correctly, which clearly revealed the widespread misunderstanding and misconceptions surrounding disability – especially within the media sector.

He then moved forward to explain the legally accepted definition of disability in Bangladesh and elaborated on the 12 officially recognized categories of disability as outlined in [the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities \(RRPD\) Act 2013](#). This legislation, enacted after Bangladesh ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2007, replaced the earlier welfare-oriented legislation of 2001 and adopted a progressive and inclusive legal approach to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities.

Mr. Debnath provided a detailed explanation of the evolution of disability models over time. He described how perceptions shifted from the Charity

Model, which saw persons with disabilities as objects of pity and charity, to the Medical Model, where disability was viewed as a problem within the individual requiring cure or treatment. Then he emphasized the Social Model, which asserts that it is society's barriers and attitudes that disable people, not their impairments. Finally, he explained the globally accepted Rights-Based Approach, which aligns with international treaties such as the UNCRPD and national policies like the RRPD Act. The rights-based model acknowledges that persons with disabilities are equal citizens with equal rights and must be enabled to live independently and participate fully in society.

A significant portion of his presentation focused on language and terminology, which play a vital role in how persons with disabilities are perceived by society. He firmly stated that commonly used terms such as “special child,” “special person,” or “persons with special needs” are not appropriate and should no longer be used, as these terms reinforce stereotypes and suggest that persons with disabilities are somehow different from others.

He emphasized the use of person-first language, where the focus is on the individual and not their condition. For example:

- Instead of saying “blind,” one has to say “person with visual impairment”
- Instead of “deaf,” say “person with hearing impairment”
- Instead of “crippled” or “immobile,” say “person with physical impairment”

He reminded participants that the person must always come first, and the impairment is only one aspect of their identity. To reinforce this point, Mr. Debnath played a well-crafted audiovisual presentation that showcased real-life examples of appropriate language use and how it can influence public perception positively or negatively.

He then addressed the global and national policy frameworks. He explained that the foundation of the Human Rights Model at the international level is the UNCRPD, while at the national level, it is the Rights and Protection of Persons with Disabilities Act 2013. He further elaborated on the National Action Plan undertaken in 2019 by the Government of Bangladesh, which has specific focus areas such as:

- Social participation and inclusion
- Accessibility and reasonable accommodation
- Sharing of information in accessible formats
- Independent movement
- Inclusive education and employment
- Social protection schemes
- Participation in natural disaster and emergency response
- Engagement in sports, arts, and cultural activities
- Tourism accessibility
- Public awareness building
- Use of accessible language and communication
- Promoting organizations and self-help groups of persons with disabilities
- Research and identification

He shared that globally, countries like Japan are advocating for a “barrier-free” approach, which focuses on removing structural and attitudinal barriers, rather than labeling individuals as having “challenges.” The “barrier-free” philosophy is about creating a society where everyone can participate equally.

The importance of **disaggregated data and research on disability** was also highlighted. Mr. Debnath emphasized that without data, policy

formulation and implementation become guesswork. He shared that globally, persons with disabilities are the largest minority group, with the World Health Organization estimating over 1.3 billion people worldwide living with some form of disability. In Bangladesh, data from the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) suggests that approximately 9% of the population are persons with disabilities.

Another crucial point in his presentation was the role of media in shaping narratives around disability. He urged the journalists to recognize that media has a powerful role in setting agendas, creating awareness, and holding governments accountable. He questioned why media often sensationalizes the academic success of persons with disabilities, such as headlines saying “a disabled student got GPA 5,” as if it is an extraordinary or unlikely achievement. He reminded that such portrayals imply a lower expectation from persons with disabilities, which is inherently discriminatory.

He stressed that media should instead focus on stories that highlight their talents, rights, participation, and agency. He reiterated that disability is a cross-cutting development issue, and inclusive reporting is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the national vision for inclusive growth.

The session became further interactive when a participant raised a question about the scope for revision or modification of existing laws. The participant pointed out that institutions like the National Deaf Institute still use outdated terminology. In response, Mr. Debnath acknowledged that legal reforms take time to translate into institutional and cultural change, but continued advocacy and sensitization are necessary.

Another participant pointed out that terminologies are often introduced and promoted by governments or NGOs, and media personnel merely replicate them. Mr. Debnath acknowledged the point and added that globally, the disability rights movement has significantly influenced both policy and language. However, he emphasized that media professionals are not just passive recipients of terminology; they are active agents who can and must shape public perception with responsibility.

He concluded the session by underscoring that the inclusion of persons with disabilities should not be treated as an act of charity, but as a matter of justice, rights, and responsibility. Media professionals, he reminded, have a duty to ensure their reporting contributes to building a more equitable and inclusive society.



Technical Session 2

Communication Strategy



Facilitator

Md. Abdul Quayyum
Head of Communications
UNDP Bangladesh

Mr. Md. Abdul Quayyum opened the session with a welcoming tone, referring to the participants as partners in development, echoing the words of Mr. Aminul Arifeen. He highlighted that globally, nearly 15 percent of the population are persons with disabilities—a figure that is often overlooked in mainstream narratives. He reminded participants that UNDP operates in over 170 countries and therefore carries a responsibility to uphold inclusive values and human dignity in all aspects of development, including communication.

Setting the context, Mr. Quayyum posed a reflective question to the journalists in attendance:

“What percentage of your reporting covers persons with disabilities?”

This question triggered a powerful and honest exchange. One participant admitted that journalists rarely take initiative to cover disability-related issues on their own. He shared,

“We write stories when there is an issue or an event that has market value—like a disability exhibition. When we see that persons with disabilities are ‘in demand’ for news, we respond. But not proactively.”

Another journalist added,

“We either write about their struggles or we write about their success. Recently, I did a story on a man named Jitu Roy. But honestly, most of our newsrooms lack the empathy or editorial push to explore stories that don’t have commercial value.”

The session quickly turned into a space for deep reflection on the role of media in promoting inclusive narratives. Another participant highlighted that media houses today are drifting away from human stories, as commercial priorities dominate editorial choices. She emphasized that media should rediscover its purpose of “telling humane stories”, especially those that spotlight the voices of the marginalized.

One of the most emotionally resonant moments came when a female participant shared her personal story as a mother of a child with cerebral palsy. She introduced a Facebook page called “Angels Live Here”, a digital platform created to highlight the lives of children with disabilities and their caregivers. Her voice shook with emotion as she shared:

“I want to leave this country. The state has made sure there is no space for children like mine. I don’t see any support, any empathy, or any system. For us parents, the responsibility is always being passed like a pillow in a game. No one holds it.”



The participant highlighted the everyday struggles around accommodation, accessibility, and the hidden costs associated with raising a child with a disability. Her remarks deeply moved the room and grounded the discussion in lived reality. She added:

“Disability has become a slang in our country. People still whisper that word as if it’s a curse. But seeing this event being organized gives me hope. At least now I know that someone is listening.”

The participants and facilitators acknowledged her story with heartfelt respect. One of the trainers responded by recognizing the absence of a Caregiver Act in Bangladesh and reiterated that until caregivers are formally recognized and supported, the disability movement will remain incomplete.

Another participant raised a structural concern about the lack of reliable information on disability. This was acknowledged by the trainer, who referred to the National Action Plan on Disability, which outlines the formation of District Disability Coordination Committees. However, he admitted that such mechanisms often remain dormant

due to lack of awareness, data, and active participation.

To address this information vacuum, Mr. Aminul Arifeen suggested the formation of a “Development Reporters’ Forum” – a collective platform of media professionals committed to human-centered development reporting. He explained that similar models exist globally and have proven effective in generating regular, evidence-based content around marginalized communities.

He also proposed that this platform could serve as a knowledge hub—a central place for journalists to access disaggregated data, best practices, policy briefs, and inspirational stories on disability and other inclusion issues. This would ensure that media practitioners are better equipped and encouraged to produce informed, sensitive, and constructive reporting on disability.

In closing, Mr. Quayyum reiterated that inclusive communication is not just about representation, but about respect, dignity, and shared humanity. He urged participants to rethink their role as journalists—not just as reporters of stories, but as



catalysts for inclusion and
agents of social change.

Technical Session 3

Voices from the Community





This session created a powerful moment of listening, as a young participant with disability courageously shared his life experiences, bringing the discussion from policy and theory into the realm of lived reality.

He began by recounting his early educational journey, highlighting the accessibility barriers he faced throughout his childhood. From the very beginning, physical infrastructure, mobility limitations, and the lack of inclusive support in schools posed constant obstacles to his learning.

“Attending school was a challenge. There were stairs but no ramps. There were classrooms but no empathy. Still, I went.”

Despite all these challenges, he persevered and is currently pursuing his undergraduate studies in Political Science at Rangpur National University. However, the financial burden of continuing education remains a recurring struggle. He openly shared the economic strain of purchasing educational materials, commuting to campus, and maintaining basic living costs.

He also spoke candidly about employment struggles, noting that he is currently involved in freelancing to support himself.

“I’m doing freelancing now. But I dream of having a dignified job. If I get that, I know I can be transformed into human capital. I just need an opportunity.”

One of the most powerful parts of his sharing was his analysis of stereotypes in rural Bangladesh. He explained that in rural communities, social stigma remains a huge barrier. People often view persons with disabilities through a lens of pity or helplessness, not as individuals with rights, agency, and potential.

“We need awareness campaigns in our rural areas. People don’t know our rights. They only see our impairments. That must change.”

When asked whether he was currently benefiting from any Social Protection Programmes, he replied affirmatively. He is receiving two: Disability Allowance, and Stipend for Disabled Students. While he expressed gratitude, he also implied that these allowances alone are not sufficient for long-term empowerment. What he truly needs is access to education, dignified work, and social inclusion.

On the issue of social dignity, he reflected those perceptions are slowly changing.

“I’ve seen a shift. Earlier, people looked at us with either pity or indifference. Now, at least some people listen and try to understand.”

His testimony concluded with a hopeful tone - but grounded in the urgent need for inclusive policies, public awareness, and systemic change. The audience responded with warmth, reflecting the deep impact of hearing an authentic, firsthand account.



**Voices from the
Community**



Technical Session 4

Media Influence How Disability is Portrayed

Facilitators

Mir Mashruruzzaman

Executive Director, SamoSHTe

&

Reaz Ahmad

Acting Editor, Dhaka Tribune



This session focused on the powerful role of media in shaping public perception of disability. Mr. Mir Mashruruzzaman and Mr. Reaz Ahmad co-facilitated the discussion and took participants through a journey of critical reflection and constructive critique of existing media practices in Bangladesh.

The session began with a content analysis of current media coverage of persons with disabilities - drawing from real

headlines, news stories, photos, and video segments. Facilitators highlighted some problematic patterns, including:

Victim narratives: framing persons with disabilities only in the context of suffering or tragedy.

Charity lenses: focusing on pity and donations rather than rights and empowerment

Inspirational overuse: treating every achievement by persons with disabilities as “extraordinary,” reinforcing otherness

One facilitator asked,

“Why does every story about a person with disability need to be about how they ‘overcame’ something? Why not just report on their work, their talent, their life – like anyone else?”

Examples of positive, rights-based storytelling were shared - both from international and national media. These included:

- Global stories from BBC and The Guardian featuring disability inclusion in workplaces
- Local stories that highlight disabled entrepreneurs, artists, and educators without resorting to pity or glorification

Facilitators emphasized that media can reshape public attitudes by adopting a social model of disability, focusing on removing barriers in society rather than fixing individuals.



Role Playing Interviewing Person with Disability



**Group
Work**

“Media is not just a mirror—it’s a mold. It shapes society. So, it must carry the responsibility of promoting dignity, equality, and inclusion.”

As part of the interactive component, participants were divided into groups. Each group was tasked with: Demonstrating how a standard interview or report should be conducted when working with persons with disabilities. Preparing a reporting assignment on a specific disability-related topic for presentation the next day.

Groups brainstormed how to apply disability-sensitive language, respectful visual framing, and ethical interviewing practices. The emphasis was on:

- Asking for consent
- Using identity-first or person-first language appropriately
- Avoiding sensationalism
- Centering the voice of the person with disability in the narrative
- The session concluded with a clear message:

The facilitator emphasized on:

“A story is not complete until it reflects dignity. The media must become an ally in the fight for disability rights”



Reflections from Participants

In this session, participants shared their learnings, reflections, and feedback after an intensive day of dialogue, training, and community engagement. The atmosphere was reflective, honest, and hopeful.



"We never thought that the way we write or speak about persons with disabilities could either empower or hurt. Now, we understand how crucial language is," remarked one participant.

"It means a lot that you came to Rangpur. The northeast region is often neglected. We are grateful that this time, inclusion began from the margins"



"It means a lot that you came to Rangpur. The northeast region is often neglected. We are grateful that this time, inclusion began from the margins,"



Day 2

Practicing the Principles Disability-Inclusive Reporting





Story Development & Content Analysis



**Group
Work**

As part of the training on inclusive and disability-sensitive reporting, participants were divided into four groups. Each group was assigned an existing piece of media content to critically analyze and correct based on the lessons learned from the workshop—particularly in terms of terminology, representation, ethical storytelling, and inclusivity.

Group 1

Hridoy's Story – Positive Reframing

The original story was about a young boy named Hridoy, who lives with multiple disabilities. The group improved the story by shifting the narrative from sympathy to strength, portraying Hridoy as a resilient child with the potential to contribute to society. They emphasized the use of respectful language, highlighted his courage, and framed the story with dignity and hope. The corrections reflected a better understanding of empowerment-focused reporting.

Group 2

Story of a Girl Forced into Marriage – Need for Constructive Reporting

This story involved a girl with a disability who was deprived of education and forced into early marriage. The group corrected the story by: Replacing negative and generalized statements with contextually accurate, constructive narratives. Emphasizing the need for in-depth reporting that uncovers systemic issues and highlights possible solutions. Recommending inclusion of credible references and community-level perspectives to underscore the wider impact of exclusion. They identified that stories should highlight not just the problem, but the pathways to change.

Group 3

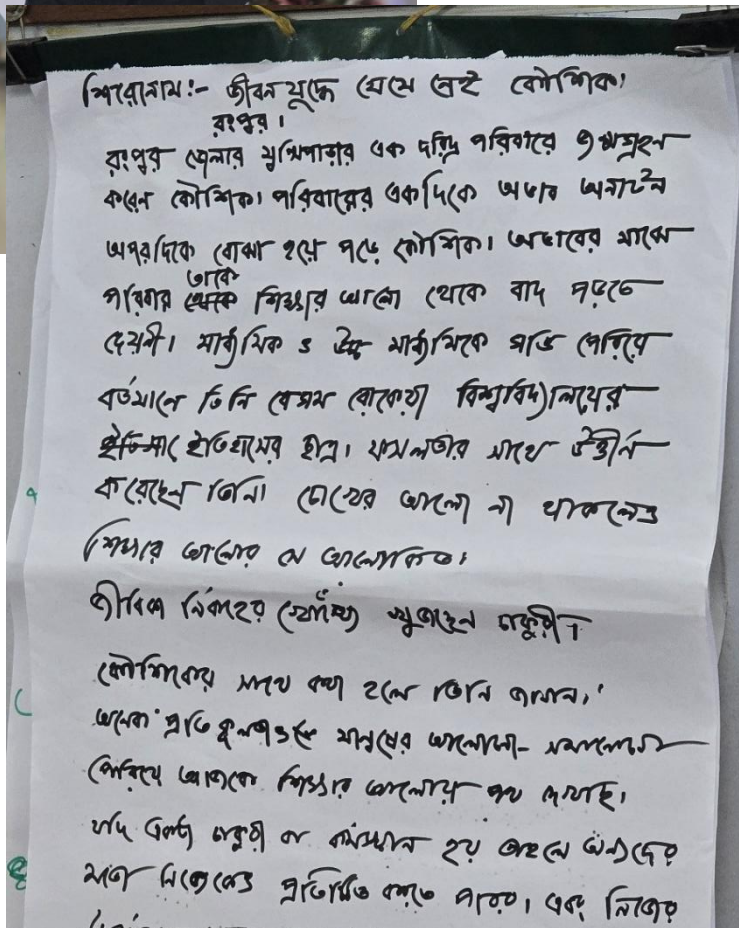
Harmful Stereotypes – Challenging Discriminatory Language

The original report contained a harmful phrase: "Bou jodi kaje na ase, taile songsare ki kaje lagbe", reflecting a deeply discriminatory mindset toward women with disabilities. The group found the core issue relevant, but pointed out the lack of depth and balanced perspectives. Their corrections included: Reframing the story to challenge harmful stereotypes. Avoiding reporter bias, and incorporating voices from all stakeholders, especially the person with a speech impairment who was affected. Highlighting societal roles, attitudes, and the importance of accurate terminology. They stressed the importance of grounding stories in fairness and fact, not personal views.

Group 4

Disrespect at a School Event – Holding Power to Account

The report involved a school function in Dhaka where the chief guest made disrespectful remarks about persons with disabilities. The group corrected the story by: Pointing out the one-sidedness of the original report. Recommending the inclusion of the victim's perspective, in line with the principle "Nothing about us without us." Criticizing the generalized response from human rights activists and suggesting a more specific, rights-based framing. They also emphasized that media should actively call out ableism and hold influential figures accountable, while remaining sensitive to the context.



Cross-Cutting Lessons and Reflections

Across all groups, participants demonstrated an improved understanding of:

- Ethical and inclusive reporting practices.
- The importance of accurate, empowering language.
- How to center the voices of persons with disabilities in every narrative.
- The exercise reinforced that content correction is not just about editing – it's about shifting perspectives toward dignity, inclusivity, and social change.



Technical Session 5

Shaping Public Perception Towards Persons with Disabilities



Facilitators

Reaz Ahmad

Acting Editor

Dhaka Tribune

In this thought-provoking session, Mr. Reaz Ahmad explored the power of media in shaping public perception about disability, with a focus on the socio-cultural realities of Bangladesh.

Key Discussion Points:

◆ Historical and Social Contexts

Mr. Ahmad began by drawing from Bangladesh's historical narratives of exclusion, explaining how disability has long been viewed through a lens of charity, pity, or burden. He emphasized that the need for inclusivity is not a luxury but a necessity for a functioning, equitable society.

◆ Role of Media in Influencing Perceptions

He explained how media serves as both a mirror and a mold of public sentiment. While it reflects society's attitudes, it also plays a pivotal role in challenging and reshaping them. He underlined the need to focus on positive narratives — not as inspiration porn, but to highlight resilience, capability, and contribution.

◆ Challenging Stereotypes Thoughtfully

Mr. Ahmad emphasized that while challenging stigmas, media professionals must remain sensitive to local values and traditional contexts. Reporting must be critical of exclusionary practices without alienating the communities it seeks to influence. Ensuring empathy-driven yet fact-based storytelling

Addressing root causes of exclusion, including policies, lack of accessibility, and social attitudes

◆ Mainstreaming and Representation

Highlighting that disability is still underrepresented in mainstream Bangladeshi media, he called on media houses to make inclusive reporting a journalistic norm, not an exception. He also challenged the notion that numbers and statistics alone define the relevance of a story, urging reporters to value lived experiences and representation.

“Exclusion is not always visible in numbers. The absence of stories in our media is itself a glaring statistic.”

Call for Responsible and Inclusive Journalism

Both sessions reinforced the notion that inclusive journalism begins with awareness and leads to action. The participants were encouraged to embrace their role as storytellers with purpose — ones who can break stereotypes, shift public perception, and ensure that persons with disabilities are seen, heard, and represented in all spheres of life.

This discussion set the tone for the rest of the day's agenda, which continued to delve deeper into content creation, ethical interviewing, and the power of inclusive narratives in transforming society.

Technical Session 6



Rights and Ethical Consideration in Disability Inclusive Reporting



Facilitators

S M Monjur Rashid

Senior Advisor, SSPS Programme

&

Arju Afrin Kathy

Research Associate, SSPS Programme

This session was particularly designed to deepen participants' understanding of the legal frameworks related to disability rights in Bangladesh and to promote ethical and inclusive reporting practices. The facilitators emphasized the urgent need for a rights-based and sensitive approach in media narratives about persons with disabilities, moving away from harmful stereotypes and sensational portrayals.

Alongside the national law, the session explored the global framework – the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which Bangladesh ratified in 2007. The UNCRPD promotes core principles such as respect for inherent dignity, non-discrimination, full and effective participation, and accessibility. It also highlights the importance of inclusive development, where persons with disabilities are actively involved in decision-making processes that affect their lives. Mr. Rashid and Ms. Kathy both reiterated that media professionals, as agents of change, play a vital role in upholding these values and breaking the cycle of stigma and exclusion through accurate, respectful, and empowering reporting.

A significant portion of the session was dedicated to ethical considerations in disability reporting. The role of the media is not to evoke pity or to dramatize disability through sensational storytelling but rather to present it in the context of rights, access, and opportunities. The speakers cautioned against using stories that either depict individuals with disabilities as helpless victims or as inspirational “superhumans” for overcoming their disabilities, as both approaches are reductive and harmful.

In addition to appropriate language use, the session highlighted the importance of

obtaining informed consent and respecting the privacy of individuals with disabilities. Journalists must always ensure that persons with disabilities or their caregivers are fully aware of how their stories will be used. Moreover, vulnerable personal details, especially regarding health, poverty, abuse, or family matters, should not be disclosed without explicit permission. This aligns with the principle of dignity and the right to be treated as equals in the media landscape.

Another major theme was the need to amplify the voices of persons with disabilities in media narratives. The facilitators emphasized the principle of “Nothing about us without us,” underlining the importance of involving persons with disabilities in the storytelling process. Journalists should engage with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), community activists, and self-advocates to ensure that stories are authentic, nuanced, and representative of real experiences. This also helps the media move beyond isolated anecdotes toward more systemic analyses of the barriers that individuals with disabilities face.

To conclude, the facilitators reiterated that inclusive and ethical reporting is not just a professional standard but a moral obligation. The media has the power to challenge societal stigma, influence policy discourse, and promote greater acceptance and inclusion. Therefore, responsible journalism rooted in legal awareness and ethical sensitivity is essential for promoting the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. This session served as a vital reminder that the role of the media goes far beyond storytelling – it shapes public perception and policy, and thus must always strive for accuracy, empathy, and equity.

Technical Session 7

Action Planning and Commitments Media Engagement



This final session focused on transforming the lessons of the training into actionable steps by the participating journalists. It emphasized media's critical role in shaping inclusive narratives and addressing discrimination through ethical reporting practices.

S/L	Focus	Probable Information	Probable Source	Probable Date
1	Socio-economic challenges of persons with disabilities in a specific area	From local experts and community leaders	Expert interviews	TBD
2	Activities of Social Welfare Department in Dinajpur – efficiency and gaps	Budget use, grant disbursement, allowance data	Social Welfare Office, SP beneficiaries	Within 25 days
3	Case Study: Halima, a woman with disabilities – her journey and barriers	Personal experiences, institutional and family insights	Halima, family, schools, SW Dept.	May 25, 2025
4	Inspirational story of a person with disabilities	Life journey, training, family support	Individual, trainers, community	June 2025
5	Families of disabled children and access to Disability ID cards	Inclusion status, bureaucratic barriers	District Info Office, OPDs	May 20, 2025
6	A student with disability turned entrepreneur	Struggles, transition to success	School, family, Social Welfare Dept.	This week
7	Daily struggles of disabled children and their families	Social stigma, accessibility gaps	TBD	TBD
8	A family where all except the mother have visual impairments	Daily life, resilience	Family members, neighbors	June 15, 2025
9	Rahima's success story – a woman with disabilities	Personal growth, impact	Rahima, community members	TBD
10	Disability quota and employment gap – the "Invisible Ceiling"	Systemic barriers, quota ineffectiveness	Govt departments, jobseekers	TBD
11	Local School "Proyash": Education access and cost for children with disabilities	Infrastructure, inclusivity, fees	School authorities, parents	TBD
12	Begging despite disability budget allocation – effectiveness and empowerment	Budget analysis, lived realities	Families, SW Dept., budget documents	TBD

Closing Session & Certificate Distribution

The closing session of the two-day workshop was marked by reflections, expressions of appreciation, and commitments to advancing inclusive communication and disability rights. The session began with an open floor for experience sharing, where participants spoke candidly about their takeaways and personal journeys.

Ms. Laboni, one of the participants, shared her heartfelt reflections on the workshop. She spoke not only about the knowledge she gained but also about her own lived experiences and struggles, which made the sessions especially meaningful for her. Her narrative underscored the importance of creating spaces where voices from the disability community are heard and valued. Another participant expressed gratitude to the organizers and emphasized the need for longer workshops. He suggested that such initiatives should span at least five days to allow for deeper engagement, interactive learning, and the development of more robust reporting skills around disability issues.

Mr. Aminul Arifeen, Communication Specialist at UNDP, delivered a thoughtful message to the participants. He stated, “Communication never ends – it only begins.” He highlighted that this workshop was just the starting point of a continuous dialogue and collaboration. Declaring the journalists as partners in development, Mr. Arifeen reiterated UNDP's commitment to engaging the media in future efforts to promote inclusive development and social accountability.



“Accountability should not be feared – it is the foundation for building an inclusive society where persons with disabilities are recognized not as burdens, but as assets to the nation”

– Md. Shahidul Islam, NDC

Mr. Md. Shahidul Islam, NDC, Divisional Commissioner (Additional Secretary), Rangpur Division, began his closing remarks by appreciating the successful organization of the two-day workshop, noting that it was impressively executed within a short time frame. He acknowledged the efforts of all partners involved, including the NIMC and the SSPS Programme of UNDP, in bringing together journalists and stakeholders for such a meaningful discourse.

Reflecting on the dynamic between the administration and the media, he noted that public officials often view media attention with a degree of apprehension, largely due to the responsibilities and scrutiny it brings. However, he emphasized that this very accountability is not only necessary but also desirable in a democratic society. “Accountability should not be feared—it is the foundation for building an inclusive society,” he stated.

He cautioned journalists to remain vigilant against the tendencies of sensationalism or "yellow journalism," which can distort narratives and undermine public trust. Instead, he encouraged the participants to uphold truth, sensitivity, and responsibility in their reporting, especially on issues that impact vulnerable groups.

On disability inclusion, the Commissioner drew from global examples – such as Japan’s progressive approach to accessibility and inclusion – urging society to view persons with disabilities not as burdens, but as contributors with potential, dignity, and value. He stressed that for inclusion to be meaningful, it must begin with a shift in mindset across all sectors – policy, media, and public perception.

He concluded by expressing hope that this workshop would inspire journalists to become more inclusive in their storytelling and serve as champions for a just and equitable Bangladesh.



Dr. Md. Maruf Nawaz, representing the Bangladesh Government, delivered an inspiring final note. He remarked that “every reform has its heroes.” In this context, he recognized the participating reporters as potential agents of social change. By engaging in this workshop, he said, they have taken the first step toward transforming public narratives around disability and fostering a more inclusive, rights-based society. Dr. Nawaz expressed confidence that these media professionals would act as social heroes, committed to challenging stereotypes and promoting dignity for all.

The session concluded with the distribution of certificates to all participants, formally recognizing their active participation and new commitment to ethical and inclusive reporting. The atmosphere was one of hope and shared responsibility, reinforcing that the workshop was not an end, but the beginning of a broader movement toward inclusion and equity in media.





Conclusion and Way Forward

The Rangpur workshop on “Disability Rights and Inclusive Reporting” marks a pivotal step in recognizing and strengthening the media’s role in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh. Over two days, participants not only deepened their understanding of national and international disability frameworks but also critically reflected on the language, ethics, and responsibilities involved in reporting on disability. The workshop reaffirmed that the media can be a transformative force; shaping societal attitudes, influencing policy, and elevating the voices of marginalized communities when reporting is done with integrity, respect, and inclusion.

This pilot initiative has set the stage for a nationwide movement toward more inclusive journalism. The formation of a network of trained and committed journalists in Rangpur is a tangible outcome that signals both momentum and potential. These individuals, now equipped with knowledge and sensitivity, will play a crucial role in reshaping public discourse and fostering an inclusive information ecosystem where the rights, dignity, and aspirations of persons with disabilities are amplified.

Building on the success of the Rangpur workshop, a national roadmap for inclusive journalism should now be pursued through a series of strategic actions. First, similar capacity-building workshops must be rolled out across all 64 districts, creating a critical mass of sensitized and skilled media professionals. The local media network established in Rangpur should serve as a prototype for divisional networks, which can ultimately be integrated into a National Media Network on Disability Inclusion—encouraging peer learning, collaboration, and unified advocacy. To sustain and enrich these efforts, a centralized online resource hub should be developed, offering journalists access to guidelines, tools, case studies, and policy updates. Importantly, editors, media managers, and decision-makers must be brought into the fold through targeted workshops to ensure top-down commitment to inclusive reporting practices. Finally, a robust follow-up mechanism should be introduced to monitor reporting outcomes, celebrate impactful journalism, and amplify success stories—thereby nurturing a media landscape that is not only informed, but also transformative in its role toward building an inclusive Bangladesh.

Annexure 1

Participating Organizations

- Dhaka Tribune
- UNDP
- Regional Information Office
- District Information Office
- Dainik Dinkal, Rangpur
- Ekushey Television
- Dhaka Tribune
- Jamuna Television
- Editor, Amader Protidin
- Doinik Jugantor
- Doinik Amar Desh
- Doinik Inquilab, Bureau Chief
- Doinik Korotali
- Banglavisision
- Additional Director, Bangladesh Betar
- District Information Office
- NIMC
- Divisional Chief Channel 24
- Banglavisision
- Ekattor TV
- ATN News

Annexure 2



**Capacity Building Workshop on
‘Persons with Disability Inclusive Reporting for the Media Professionals’
Organized by:
National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC)
and the Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme, UNDP
12th and 13th May 2025 | Rangpur**



নাম: _____ পদবি: _____ প্রতিষ্ঠান: _____

১। এই কর্মশালা আপনার প্রত্যাশা কতটুকু পূরণ করেছে? (রেটিং করুন: ১-৫)

১	২	৩	৪	৫
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২। কর্মশালার সামগ্রিক বিষয়ে আপনি কতটুকু সন্তুষ্ট? (রেটিং করুন: ১-৫)

১	২	৩	৪	৫
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৩. প্রশিক্ষকদের দক্ষতা, উপস্থাপনা, ও বিষয়বস্তুর উপর ধারণা কেমন ছিল?

চমৎকার	ভাল	মোটামুটি	দুর্বল
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৪. কর্মশালার পাঠ্যক্রম/মডিউলগুলো কতটুকু সহায়ক মনে হয়েছে?

অত্যন্ত কার্যকর	কার্যকর	কিছুটা কার্যকর	নিরপেক্ষ
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৫. কর্মশালা প্রশাসনের মার্বিক সেবা ও দক্ষতা কেমন ছিল? (রেটিং করুন: ১-৫)

১	২	৩	৪	৫
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৬. প্রশিক্ষণ উপকরণ (প্রেজেন্টেশন, হ্যান্ডআউট) আপনার জন্য কতটুকু উপকারী ছিল? (রেটিং করুন: ১-৫)

১	২	৩	৪	৫
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৭. কর্মশালার ব্যাপ্তি কতদিন হতে পারে?

২ দিন	৩ দিন	৪ দিন	৫ দিন
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৮. প্রশিক্ষণে প্রাপ্ত জ্ঞান এবং দক্ষতা ব্যবহার করার ক্ষেত্রে আপনি কতটা আত্মবিশ্বাসী? (রেটিং করুন: ১-৫)

১	২	৩	৪	৫
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৯. ভবিষ্যতে কর্মশালার মান উন্নয়নের জন্য আপনার কোনো পরামর্শ আছে কি?

১০. আপনার অন্য কোনো অনুরোধ বা সহায়ক থাকলে লিখুন।