Country Profile on Disability
People's Republic of Bangladesh

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List of Abbreviations

ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	
A2i	Access to Information	
CBR	Community-based Rehabilitation	
CDD	Centre for Disability in Development	
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders	
EU	European Union	
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	
H&I	Humanity & Inclusion	
HPNSP	Health, Nutrition, and Population Sector Program	
ICT	Information and Communication Technology	
IDA	International Disability Alliance	
ILO	International Labour Organization	
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	
NFOWD	National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled	
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization	
NMC	National Monitoring Committee	
NSDC	National Skills Development Council	
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy	
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities	
PRDH	Planète Réfugiés-Droits de l'Homme	Planet Refugees-Human Rights
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals	
SSPS	Social Security Policy Support	
RAPID	Research and Policy Integration for Development	
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	
UHC	Universal Health Coverage	
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs	
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	
UNHCR	The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund	
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund	
NPRPD	UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	
USAID	United States Agency for International Development	

VNR	Voluntary National Review
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Basic Profile

1-1. Basic Indicators[1]

Gross Domestic Product per Capita[2]	USD2,593.41	2024

Expenditures by Sector

Healthcare (% of GDP)	2.39%	2022
Education (% of GDP)	2.03%	2024
Social Welfare (% of GDP)[3]	0.9%	2022

Population

Total Population	173,562,364	2024
Male (% of total population)	49.2%	
Female (% of total population)	50.8%	
Urban Population (% of total population)	32.7%	
Rural population (% of total population)	67.3%	
Life expectancy at birth (total)	74.6 years	2023
Male	73.0 years	
Female	76.3 years	

Healthcare

Prevalence of undernourishment (% of population)	10.4%	2023
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	24.4	2023

Education

Education System[4]		
Primary Education	5 years	
Compulsory Education	5 years	
Literacy rate (% of ages 15 and above)	79.0%	2022
Adult male	81.4%	
Adult female	76.5%	

[1] Based on the https://data.worldbank.org/indicator (Accessed: 18 March 2026)

[2] Gross Domestic Product. Hereinafter referred to as "GDP."

[3] Based on the ILO (2024) World Social Protection Report, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-09/WSPR_2024_EN_WEB_1.pdf (Accessed: 18 March 2026).

[4] Compulsory education spans 5 years, from age 6 to 10, based on the Compulsory Primary Education Act (1990). Based on the National Education Policy 2010, institutional reforms are underway to extend elementary education to eight years (Grades 1–8); however, these reforms have not been fully implemented. (https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/national-education-policy-2010-enbn, https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en/knowledge-hub/leveraging-families-assets-and-champions-promote-secondary-school-completion-and-success-bangladesh) (Accessed: 4 June 2026)).

School enrollment		
Primary (% gross) (total)	106.5%	2024
Male	100.3%	
Female	113.1%	
Secondary (% gross) (total)	64.3%	2024
Male	58.5%	
Female	70.5%	
Tertiary (% gross) (total)	23.7%	2024
Male	26.9%	
Female	20.8%	

Employment

Unemployment	4.7%	2024
Male (% of male labor force)	4.3%	
Female (% of female labor force)	5.3%	

1-2. Definition of Disability and Indicators on Disability

1-2-1. Definition of Disability

The definition of disability in the People's Republic of Bangladesh (hereinafter referred to as "Bangladesh") is based on the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act enacted in 2013. The Act defines persons with disabilities as "persons who, due to social and environmental barriers, are unable to function fully physically, psychologically, or intellectually. In addition, persons who are unable to participate actively in society are considered to be persons with disabilities."

1-2-2. Indicators on Disability

The 2011 census included a disability survey for the first time, revealing that persons with disabilities accounted for 1.41% of the total population. In the 2021 census, this percentage was 1.43%. By gender, the rates were 1.63% for men and 1.23% for women. In addition to the census, the Department of Social Services of the Ministry of Social Welfare conducts a national disability survey with support from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan[5]. According to a 2021 survey[6], the proportion of persons with disabilities in the total population was 2.80%. The rates by

[5] It is a government agency under the Ministry of Social Welfare and is responsible for the welfare of persons with disabilities.

[6] Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2022) Report on the National Survey on Persons with Disabilities (NSPD) 2021 (https://objectstorage.ap-dcc-gazipur-1.oraclecloud15.com/n/axvjbnqprylg/b/V2Ministry/o/office-bbs/2024/12/f3eabb9f68c14d13acc542a66c164873.pdf)

gender are 3.28% for men and 2.32% for women (Table 1), and a discrepancy with the national census results has been noted[7]. This survey counts the number of persons with disabilities across the disability categories specified in the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act, enacted in 2013 (see Chapter 2-2). The number of persons by disability category is published online in the Ministry of Social Welfare's Disability Information System database[8](Table 2).

Table 1 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities based on the Census and the Survey on Persons with Disabilities

	2021 Census	2021 National Survey of Persons with Disabilities
Nationwide	1.43	2.80
Male (%)	1.63	3.28
Female (%)	1.23	2.32
Rural areas	1.50	2.89
Male (%)	N/A	3.44
Female (%)	N/A	2.35
Urban	1.08	2.45
Male (%)	N/A	2.69
Female (%)	N/A	2.20

Source: Prepared by the study team based on data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2022)

Table 2 Statistics by Type of Disability

	Type of Disability	Male	Female	Third Gender	Total
1	Autism Spectrum Disorder[9]	60,451	37,942	55	98,448
2	Physical Disabilities	1,287,536	775,017	1,437	2,063,990
3	Mental Illness Leading to Disability	87,678	60,478	101	148,257
4	Visual Disability	291,514	220,219	135	511,868
5	Speech Disability	120,507	89,720	110	210,337
6	Intellectual Disability	139,358	102,407	247	242,012
7	Hearing Disability	88,975	86,054	70	175,099
8	Deaf blindness	8,905	7,731	5	16,641
9	Cerebral Palsy	86,638	56,677	37	143,352
10	Down Syndrome	4,490	3,524	10	8,024
11	Multiple Disabilities	146,709	106,569	131	253,409
12	Other Disabilities	12,285	8,588	631	21,504
	Total	2,335,046	1,554,926	2,969	3,892,941

Source: Prepared by the study based on the Ministry of Social Welfare Disability Information System

[7] Mohammad Abdur Rassaque and Emran Hasan (2024) Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh: Addressing Gaps in Data, Social Protection, and Employment Accessibility, prepared for the ILO Country Office for Bangladesh, etc.
[8] www.dis.gov.bd (Accessed: 18 March 2026)
[9] Autism Spectrum Disorder. Hereinafter referred to as “ASD.”

Since 2016, the National Survey on Disabilities has used the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning for disability indicators, compiling survey results across six domains of daily living: (1) Seeing, (2) Hearing, (3) Walking, (4) Remembering, (5) Self-caring, and (6) Communication. In the 2021 National Survey on Disabilities, among the six functional domains, the proportion of the total population with difficulties in at least one function was 7.07%, with 7.22% of men and 6.91% of women. Meanwhile, the same questionnaire set was used in the Household Income and Expenditure Survey conducted in 2022. According to the survey results, the proportion of the total population with functional difficulties in at least one area was 5.71%, including 5.50% of men and 5.92% of women. The results of the 2021 survey are shown in Figures 1 through 4.

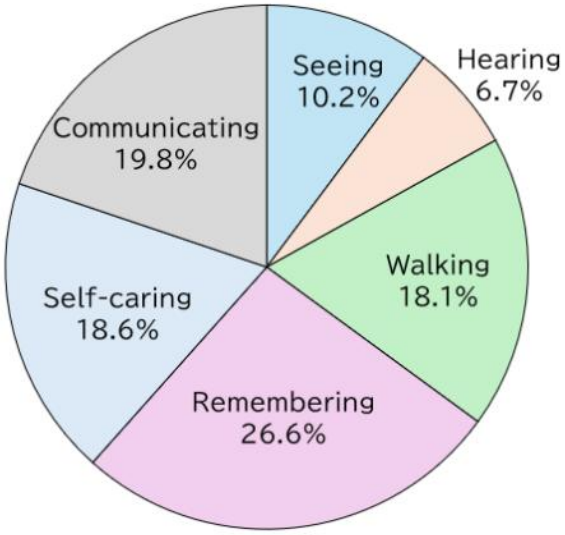


Figure 1 Percentage of Functional Limitation (ages 5 to 17) (2021)

The highest percentage was for "Remembering" (26.6%), followed by "Communicating" (19.8%) and "self-caring" (18.6%). "Walking" was 18.1%, "Seeing" was 10.2%, and "Hearing" had the lowest percentage at 6.7%.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2022)

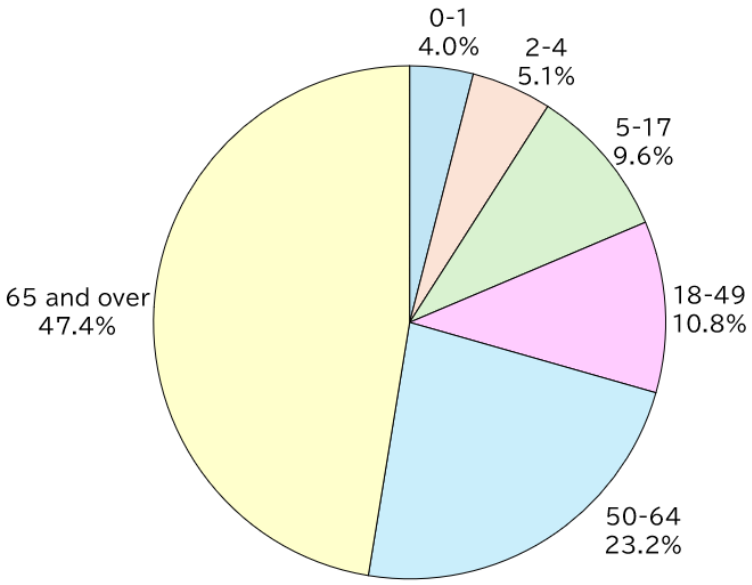


Figure 2 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities by Age Group (2021)

The 65-and-over age group accounted for the highest percentage at 47.4%, followed by those aged 50–64 at 23.2%, those aged 18–49 at 10.8%, those aged 5–17 at 9.6%, and the 0–1 age and the 2–4 age group accounted for only 4.0% and 5.1%.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2022)

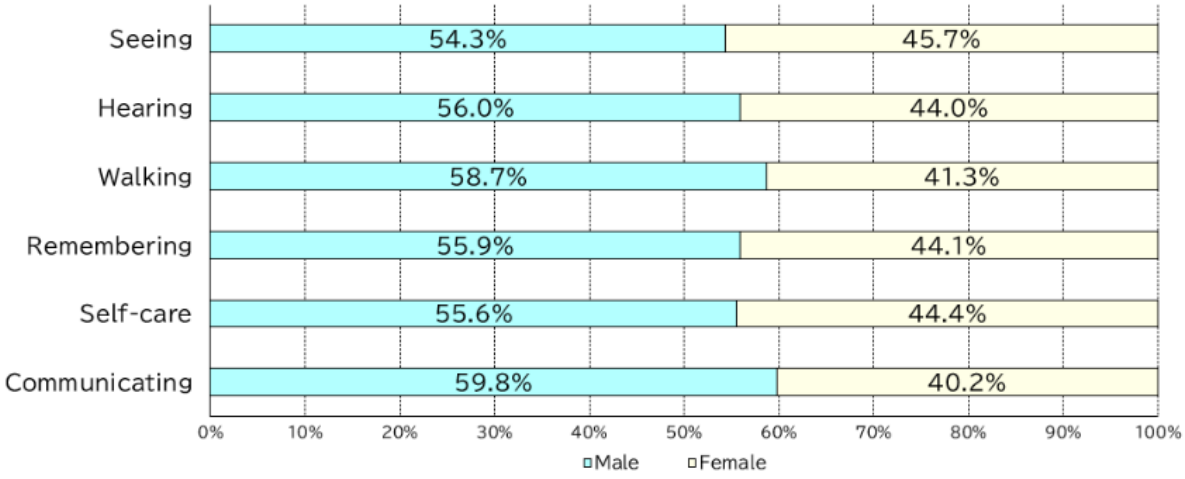


Figure 3 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities by Sex (ages 5 to 17) (2021)

For "Seeing," the figures are 54.3% for males and 45.7% for females; for "Hearing," 56.0% for males and 44.0% for females; and for "Walking," 58.7% for males and 41.3% for females. For "Remembering," the figures are 55.9% for males and 44.1% for females; for "Self-caring," 55.6% for males and 44.4% for females; and for "Communicating," 59.8% for males and 40.2% for females.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2022)

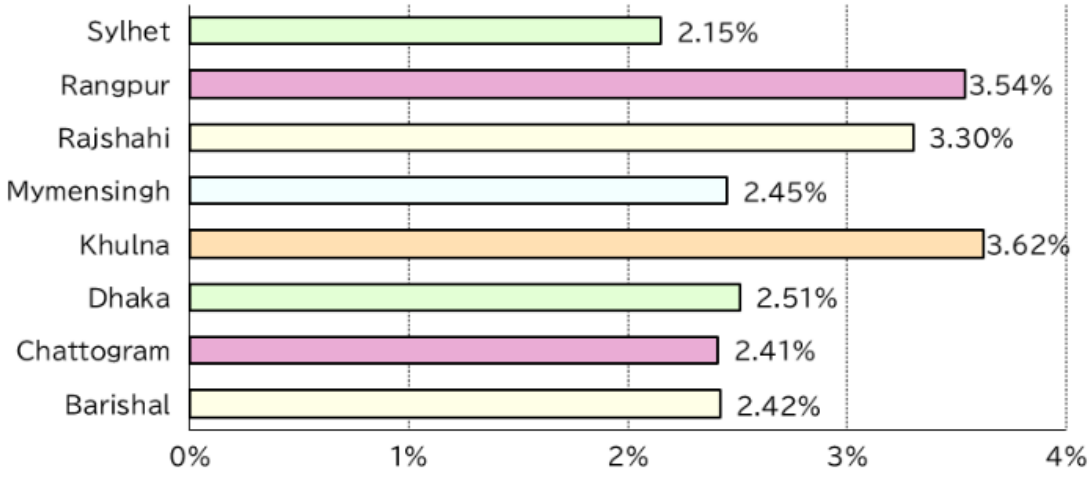


Figure 4 Percentage of Persons with Disabilities by Residential Area (ages 5 to 17) (2021)

Khulna Division had the highest rate at 3.62%, followed by Rangpur Division at 3.54% and Rajshahi Division at 3.30%. Among the middle class, the rates were 2.51% in Dhaka Division, 2.45% in Mymensingh Division, 2.42% in Barishal Division, 2.41% in Chittagong Division, and 2.15% in Sylhet Division.

Source: Prepared by the study team based on data from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2022)

2. Administration and Policy on Disability

2-1. Administration on Disability

<Central Government>

Table 3 Entities Responsible for Disability Issues in Bangladesh

No.	Name	Overview
1	Ministry of Social Welfare Department of Social Services	Responsible for human resource development, poverty reduction, social welfare, and improving the welfare of disadvantaged people. The Department of Social Services, under the Ministry of Social Welfare, is broadly responsible for social welfare operations, including the provision of disability allowances and school subsidies, the identification of disabilities, training, the operation of special education schools, psychosocial and economic support services for the poor through the Hospital Social Service Program, community development, child protection, vocational and technical development, the prevention of social disadvantage, support for improving the livelihoods of marginalized people, and the response to COVID-19.
2	National Foundation for the Development of Persons with Disabilities (Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan[10])	A government agency under the Ministry of Social Welfare was established in 1999. It conducts the National Survey on Persons with Disabilities, operates the National Center for Special Education, the ASD[11] Resource Center, and special education schools for children with ASD, and carries out various awareness-raising activities.
3	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare	In collaboration with the Department of Social Services of the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan, a nationwide survey on disabilities was conducted. A community health program was launched in 2010. Community health workers trained in ASD and developmental disabilities, in accordance with WHO guidelines, conduct screening and therapeutic care in rural areas. The 2011 National Health Policy explicitly includes the prevention of

[10] https://jpuf.gov.bd/pages/static-pages/6922e0d2933eb65569e28bad (Accessed: 27 February 2026)

[11] Autism Spectrum Disorder (hereinafter referred to as “ASD”)

		visual disabilities and approves research, training, and other initiatives focused on ASD.
4	Ministry of Education	Based on the National Education Policy (2020), which incorporates an inclusive education perspective, the Ministry aims to promote inclusive education. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education oversees primary education and lifelong learning. The Ministry of Education oversees secondary and higher education, technical education, and madrasa education. In vocational training, 5% quota system is in place for students with disabilities.
5	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	
6	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	It provides support services focused on maternal and child health and child welfare in accordance with the Children Act and operates child development centers.
7	Ministry of Labour and Employment	It is responsible for the employment, workforce participation, and technical training of persons with disabilities, monitors their situation through labor force surveys, and aims to build an inclusive society.
8	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief	It is responsible for disability-inclusive disaster risk management and operates a disaster risk management knowledge portal.
9	National Council of Social Welfare	It discusses and reviews policies, laws, and other matters related to social welfare.
10	Physically Disabled Protection Trust	It is a trust fund established in 1990 to support persons with physical disabilities. It was established through a vocational training project for persons with physical disabilities carried out by the Government of Bangladesh and the Swedish International Development Agency.
11	Neuro-developmental Disability Protection Trust	It was established in 2014 under the 2013 Trust Act to improve the quality of life for persons with ASD and other neurodevelopmental disabilities, as well as their caregivers.

Source: Prepared by the research team based on the report[12] submitted by the Government of Bangladesh to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2017 and information from the Government of Bangladesh website, among other sources

[12] CRPD/C/BGD/1. Hereinafter referred to as the "State Party's Report."

Status of Coordination Mechanism[13]

To monitor the country's implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "CRPD") in accordance with Article 33 thereof, the Government of Bangladesh established the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities under the Law on the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act to serve as the body responsible for coordinating, managing, and monitoring matters related to persons with disabilities. The Committee was subsequently renamed the National Monitoring Committee (hereinafter referred to as "NMC"), and its functions were strengthened.

Table 4 Overview of Coordination Mechanism for Disability Issues

No.	Name of the mechanism	Overview
1	National Monitoring Committee	Composed of representatives from 46 ministries and agencies, it is responsible for preparing the State Party's Report for submission to the CRPD Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
2	National Human Rights Commission	It is an independent national institution established in 2007. It is responsible for monitoring citizens' fundamental human rights and freedoms. It was established to promote respect for human rights as enshrined in the Constitution. Regarding persons with disabilities and ASD, subcommittees have been established for specific themes, and the committee also serves as a body for receiving complaints.
3	Disability Rights Watch Group	It is a monitoring group composed of representatives from civil society that serves as a third-party body to monitor the implementation of the CRPD.

Source: Prepared by the research team based on the State Party's Reports, information from the Government of Bangladesh website, etc.

<Local government>

The administrative division of Bangladesh consists of 8 divisions, 64 district councils (Zilas), and 492 sub-districts (Upazilas/Thanas). There are 4,554 unions within the sub-districts. In urban areas, City Corporations and Municipalities (Pourashavas) are established.

[13] Based on the State Party's Report (2017).

Entities responsible for disability issues

Name	Overview
Monitoring Committees at the district, upazila, and city levels	It is the Local committee of the National Coordination Committee established under the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act (2013). District committees, Upazila (subdistrict) committees, and city committees have been established, respectively.

2-2. Laws and Policies on Disability[14]

The Constitution of Bangladesh (enacted in 1972) explicitly states the commitment to establishing equal rights, human dignity, fundamental human rights, and social equality for all citizens. To protect the rights, welfare, and development of persons with disabilities, the "Persons with Disabilities Welfare Act" was enacted in 2001. The 2014 constitutional amendment added provisions regarding consideration for persons with disabilities and the prohibition of discrimination. Following the ratification of the CRPD in 2007, the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act was enacted in 2013, and the Regulations on the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection were established in 2015. In 2021, the Disability Data Access Policy was approved to ensure that information obtained through the Special Survey Program on Persons with Disabilities can be utilized by various public and private organizations, the public, and persons with disabilities.

Title	Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act[15]
Year of enactment	2013
Overview	The Persons with Disability Welfare Act, enacted in 2001 and based on the medical model, was replaced by this Act, which adopted a social model approach following the ratification of the CRPD. The implementing regulations for this Act[16] were enacted in 2015. The Act stipulates 13 general rights and 8 fundamental rights for persons with disabilities as follows. <General Rights> 1) Fully alive and developed 2) Equal and lawful recognition and justice 3) Right to Inheritance

[14] Based on the State Party's Report.

[15] https://www.dis.gov.bd/Documents/DisForm/protibondhibektirodhikarosurokkahaiyn.pdf (Bengali) (Accessed: 27 February 2026)

[16] https://www.dis.gov.bd/Documents/DisForm/%E0%A6%AC%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%A7%E0%A6%BF%E0%A6%AE%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%BE.pdf (Bengali) (Accessed: 27 February 2026)

	4) Freedom of expression, opinion, and information 5) Parent, legitimate or lawful guardian, marriage life, children, and leading family life 6) Active participation in social, economic, and national levels according to the types of disability 7) Well protection and facilities of a safe and healthy environment free from suppression 8) Access to all social facilities (e.g., assisting services and rehabilitation) for persons with disabilities, including physical, psychosocial, and artistic skills 9) Receiving Bengali Sign Language when requested by Deaf and hard-of-hearing persons 10) Secrecy of personal information 11) Creation of autonomous organizations and welfare council or association, and administer 12) Getting national identification, enrollment in elections, and being able to vote and participate in elections 13) Any other rights given by the government according to the ordinance <Fundamental Rights> 1) Accessibility 2) In all levels of education, favorable facilities in the institution and participation in general and co-education 3) Employment at Government and Non-Governmental organizations (hereinafter referred to as "NGOs") 4) Getting compensation for disability during employment or getting back the position 5) Getting health care 6) Legal facilities and necessary environment for education, as well as a place of employment 7) Participation in culture, entertainment, tourism, leisure, and sports 8) Dependents who are persons with disabilities have safe residence or rehabilitation after being separated from family It stipulates the establishment of Upazila and municipal committees as related committees, in addition to the National Coordinating Committee, the National Executive Committee, and the District Committee. In formulating this law, a network of national NGOs that implement projects in collaboration with persons with disabilities was responsible for drafting the bill.

Other major laws related to the rights of persons with disabilities include the following.

Title	Neuro-developmental Disability Trust Act[17]
Year of enactment	2013
Overview	A law enacted to protect individuals with neuro-developmental disabilities following the ratification of the CRPD. The Neuro-developmental Disability Trust Fund was established under this Act. The enforcement regulations for this Act were enacted in 2015. Additionally, the National Strategic Plan for Neuro-developmental Disabilities (2016–2021) has been formulated.

Title	Mental Health Act[18]
Year of enactment	2018
Overview	It is a new law based on human rights, enacted to replace the Lunacy Act of 1912, following the ratification of the CRPD.

Title	Rehabilitation Council Act[19]
Year of enactment	2018
Overview	A law enacted following the ratification of the CRPD establishes measures to improve rehabilitation services.

Title	National Education Act (Draft)[20]
Year of enactment	Not yet enacted
Overview	Following the 2010 National Education Policy, efforts have been made since 2011 to enact an Education Act that incorporates the principles of inclusive education. A first draft bill was prepared in 2012 but was not enacted; the 2026 draft (Bengali version) has been made public. In the draft, primary education covers grades 1 through 5 and is free and compulsory, recognized as a child's right. Secondary education covers grades 6 through 10, while grades 11 and 12 constitute upper secondary education. Secondary education includes courses in general education, madrasa education, and technical and vocational education. To improve the quality of education, teacher training, research, innovation, curriculum evaluation, and policy recommendations, the bill mandates the establishment of a central research institute and a national research council.

[17] http://www.shuchona.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Neuro-Trust-Act-2013-20-Jan-1.pdf (Accessed: 26 February 2026)
[18] https://www.refworld.org/sites/default/files/2024-07/en_mental_health_act.pdf (Accessed: 26 February 2026)
[19] http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-1284.html (Bengali) (Accessed: 26 February 2026)
[20] https://drive.google.com/file/d/16Cij26uX60KdJwsRtm3fYScSIKVpR80o/view (Bengali) (Accessed: 16 March 2026)

Title	Compulsory Primary Education Act[21]
Year of enactment	1990
Overview	A law stipulating free compulsory education at the primary level. Regarding the education of children with special educational needs, there are provisions that can be interpreted as permitting segregated education.

Title	Labour Act[22]
Year of enactment	2006
Overview	The Act explicitly guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities in the workplace.

Title	Children Act[23]
Year of enactment	2013
Overview	The Act explicitly stipulates children's rights and the prohibition of discrimination and includes specific provisions regarding children with disabilities.

Title	National Building Code[24]
Year of enactment	2020
Overview	The concept of universal design is incorporated into the law.

Title	Standing Orders on Disaster[25]
Year of enactment	2010, 2019
Overview	These regulations were formulated by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief include specific measures such as promoting the participation of persons with disabilities in disaster preparedness drills; ensuring the transmission of disaster alerts and evacuation guidance tailored to persons with disabilities when alerts are issued; securing safe evacuation sites for persons with disabilities during disasters; establishing dedicated shelters for persons with disabilities; and implementing socioeconomic rehabilitation during the recovery phase. The 2019 version was developed in accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

[21] https://file-chittagong.portal.gov.bd/media/59a512a6-5c94-41b1-b368-b86e9c79338d/uploaded-files/1239englishcompulsory-pry-edu-act-1990.pdf (Accessed: 16 March 2026)
[22] https://mccibd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Bangladesh-Labour-Act-2006_English-Upto-2018.pdf (Accessed: 16 March 2026)
[23] https://www.dpp.gov.bd/upload_file/gazettes/15210_91883.pdf (Accessed: 16 March 2026)
[24] https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/node/3520 (Accessed: 16 March 2026)
[25] https://file-chittagong.portal.gov.bd/uploads/6b9a9df8-2650-4326-bbfd-55418d77e00d/681/9ce/7cb/6819ce7cb0a3f332539892.pdf (Accessed: 16 March 2026)

<Disability Policies>[26]

The Government of Bangladesh first formulated a National Policy on Persons with Disabilities in 1995. Six years later, in 2001, the Persons with Disabilities Welfare Act was enacted, and five years after that, in 2006, the National Action Plan on Disability was formulated. One of the objectives of these initiatives was to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.

In terms of national development planning, the Sixth Five-Year Plan (2011–2015) set forth an inclusive policy aimed at comprehensive social protection and economic growth, including persons with disabilities. Following the ratification of the CRPD, the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act was enacted in 2013. The 7th Five-Year Plan (2016–2020), formulated in response to this, sought to mainstream disability issues across a wide range of sectors—including health, education, access to information, transportation, disaster risk reduction, and poverty—with a focus on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (hereinafter referred to as "SDGs"). The current Eighth Five-Year Plan (2021–2026) builds on the policies of the Seventh Plan and explicitly promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities by enhancing social protection programs and adopting a human rights-based approach.

The 2012–2020 Action Plan[27] promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities and is aligned with the Seventh Five-Year Plan. In 2025, under the new administration, a roadmap for 2026–2030 linked to the SDGs was drafted and announced in December 2025[28].

Title	National Action Plan on Disability
Year Implemented	2006–2011
Overview	It was formulated to implement the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities (1995) and the Persons with Disabilities Welfare Act (2001). It mandates that relevant ministries and agencies implement initiatives to promote the inclusion and protection of persons with disabilities and to prohibit discrimination against them.

Title	National Disability Action Plan
Year Implemented	2012–2020
Overview	Like the 7th Five-Year Plan (2016–2020), this plan promotes

[26] Based on the State Party's Reports

[27] Based on the State Party's Reports. Although the original plan is not available online, this section is based on interviews with support organizations conducted for this study. (Interview with Mr. Nazmul Bari of the Centre for Disability in Development on March 19, 2026)

[28] Scheduled to be finalized in FY 2026/27 with the cooperation of UNDP (based on a needs assessment of support organizations)

	disability inclusion and aligns with the CRPD. As of 2019, the action plan outlined the following 18 areas of action in accordance with the 2013 Act on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. 1) Early Identification and Prevention: Focused on prenatal care and early screening for disabilities in newborns. 2) Health and Rehabilitation: Ensuring access to inclusive healthcare and therapy services. 3) Inclusive Education: Removing barriers to education for children with disabilities at all levels. 4) Skills Development and Training: Providing vocational training specifically tailored to different disability types. 5) Employment and Livelihoods: Promoting job opportunities in both the public and private sectors, including quota enforcement. 6) Accessibility in Built Infrastructure: Modifying public buildings, roads, and spaces to be physically accessible. 7) Accessible Transport: Ensuring public transportation systems are usable for persons with physical and sensory disabilities. 8) Access to Information and Communication (ICT): Promoting accessible websites, digital tools, and "talking books". 9) Social Protection and Safety Nets: Managing disability allowances and insurance programs. 10) Women with Disabilities: Addressing the specific double-discrimination faced by women and girls. 11) Children with Disabilities: Protecting the rights and development of children with disabilities. 12) Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change: Ensuring disability-inclusive responses during floods, cyclones, and other disasters. 13) Justice and Legal Protection: Providing free legal aid and ensuring fair treatment in the legal system. 14) Participation in Cultural and Sports Activities: Promoting inclusion in recreation, arts, and competitive sports. 15) Self-Help Organizations (SHOs): Supporting organizations led by persons with disabilities to strengthen their advocacy. 16) Public Awareness and Sensitization: Reducing social stigma through nationwide media and community campaigns. 17) Research and Data Collection: Improving the Disability Information System (DIS) to ensure accurate policy planning. 18) National Coordination and Monitoring: Oversight of all 18 areas by the committees established under the 2013 Act.

Title	National Action Plan for Persons with Disabilities (Strategic Roadmap for a Disability-Inclusive Bangladesh (2026–2030)[29]
Year Implemented	2026–2030
Overview	A roadmap through 2030 aligned with the SDGs. It is linked to the 9th Five-Year Plan and the National Social Security Strategy (hereinafter referred to as "NSSS"). It shifts from a "charity-based" model to a "rights-based, system-wide inclusion" model, with the following four pillars: • Decent Work & Social Protection: Expanding allowances and formalizing employment quotas. • Inclusive Education: Strengthening community support for students with disabilities. • Accessible Infrastructure: Enforcing physical accessibility standards in new public works. • Digital Inclusion: Bridging the digital divide via accessible government platforms. The following measurable targets have been established to achieve concrete results: 1) Education Targets: Transition from special education to inclusive education • Enrolment Increase: Aiming for a 30% increase in the enrollment of children with disabilities in mainstream primary and secondary schools by 2030. • Accessible Infrastructure: Ensuring 100% of new government school buildings are constructed with ramps, accessible toilets, and tactile flooring. • Teacher Training: Training at least 50,000 primary school teachers on inclusive pedagogy and basic sign language. • Digital Learning: Providing accessible digital versions (Braille, audio, or "talking books") of all national textbooks from Class 1 to Class 10. 2) Employment and Livelihood Targets: Strictly enforce existing quota systems and expand opportunities for entry into the private sector • Public Sector Quota: Strict enforcement of the 1% quota for persons with disabilities in Class I and II government jobs, and the 10% combined quota (with orphans) for Class III and IV jobs. • Private Sector Incentives: Offering tax rebates to private companies where at least 10% of the total workforce (or 25 persons) are persons with disabilities.

[29] Based on State Party's Reports. Although the original plan is not available online, this section is based on interviews with support organizations conducted as part of this study. (Interview with Mr. Nazmul Bari of the Centre for Disability in Development on March 19, 2026.

	• Vocational Training: Ensuring 5% of seats in all government Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) centers are reserved for disabled students. • Self-Employment: Distributing micro-credits and small business grants to 100,000 entrepreneurs with disabilities through the National Disability Development Foundation (JPUF). 3) Monitoring of Targets • Disability-Inclusive Budgeting: Requiring each ministry to specify a "disability tag" in their annual budget to show exactly how much money is spent on these goals. • Real-time Dashboard: Developing a digital tracking system to monitor the employment status of Suborno Nagarik Card holders in real-time.

Title	National Strategic Plan for Neurodevelopmental Disorders[30]
Year Implemented	2016–2021
Overview	A comprehensive plan to support persons with neurodevelopmental disorders[31]. The draft plan was proposed by the U.S.-based Institute of Community Inclusion (ICI) and the Japanese NGO Shuchona Foundation.

Title	National Mental Health Strategy[32]
Year Implemented	2020–2030
Overview	This involves establishing comprehensive mental health policies and setting goals aligned with the SDGs, encompassing initiatives across multiple sectors, including poverty, nutrition, human rights, gender, children, youth, suicide prevention, substance abuse, facility and infrastructure development, information systems and research, and finance.

2-3. Measures on Disability[33]

1) Healthcare

Status of Legislative Framework

The 2019 National Disability Action Plan focuses on prenatal checkups and early screening for disabilities in newborns to facilitate early detection and prevention, with

[30] https://www.inclusivedevpartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/National-Strategic-Plan-for-NDDs-Bangladesh.pdf (Accessed: 23 March 2026)

[31] The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), published by the American Psychiatric Association and serving as one of the international standards for diagnosing mental disorders, renamed “developmental disorders” as “neurodevelopmental disorders” in its 2013 revision. In this study, the term “developmental disorders” is used.

[32] https://nimh.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Bangladesh-National-Mental-Health-Strategic-Plan-2020-2030.pdf (Accessed: 23 March 2026)

[33] Based on the State Party’s Report (2017), Parallel Port (2019, 2020, 2022), and strategy documents and progress reports from relevant ministries, as well as evaluation reports from partner donors.

the goal of ensuring access to inclusive medical and rehabilitation services.

In the National Health Policy of 2008, the prevention of visual impairment was explicitly mentioned for the first time. The 2011 National Health Policy[34] set the goal of achieving universal health coverage for all. Since 1998, the "National Health, Nutrition, and Population Sector Development Program (hereinafter referred to as "HPNSP")" has been implemented through a Sector-Wide Approach (SWA) supported by multiple donors.[35] has been implemented since 1998 through a multi-donor Sector-Wide Approach. In line with the 2011 National Health Policy, the Third HPNSP (2011–2016) aimed to provide high-quality, equitable health services and improve access to healthcare, particularly for the poor. Specific disability-related measures included strengthening neonatal care and early diagnosis, as well as promoting early detection and care for mental health and hearing impairments. The Fifth HPNSP (2024–2029) aims to expand high-quality health, nutrition, and population services and to strengthen the systems and governance necessary to improve efficiency and equity.

Regarding mental health, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare commissions research on ASD and neurodevelopmental disorders and maintains a registry of persons with neurodevelopmental disorders at health centers nationwide. The Ministry houses the National Academy for Autism & Neurodevelopmental Disorders, which has developed training modules on ASD and neurodevelopmental disorders for basic training courses.

The Concluding Observations point to a lack of meaningful consultation and effective participation by organizations of persons with disabilities (hereinafter referred to as "OPD") in the process of formulating health policies and programs (including the new health policy currently being developed by the State Party).

Health Status

In Bangladesh, health status has improved significantly, with increased life expectancy and declines in maternal and infant mortality rates, as well as in infectious disease incidence. The proportion of deaths due to neonatal disorders, a traditional leading cause of death, decreased by 19.3% over the 10-year period from 2013 to 2023[36].

[34] http://app.mohfw.gov.bd/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=74&Itemid=92&lang=en (Accessed: 19 March 2026). No new national policy has been approved since then.

[35] https://data.gffportal.org/sites/default/files/country-review/SIP%20Final_5th%20HPNSP_12%20June%202023.pdf (Accessed: 23 March 2026)

[36] Institute for Health Matrix and Evaluation. Bangladesh (www.healthdata.org/bangladesh). (Accessed: 19 March 2026) According to this report, neonatal disorders were the fourth leading cause of death in 2013 and the third leading cause of death in 2009.

However, as of 2023, it remained the fourth leading cause of death, showing little change from its fourth-place ranking in 2013 and third-place ranking in 2009. According to the 2021 National Survey on Persons with Disabilities, the causes of functional impairments are diverse. Reports on causes are often provided not only by individuals with disabilities themselves but also, in particular, by mothers and caregivers. The leading cause is congenital factors (41.09%), followed by diseases and illnesses (36.35%), falls (12.27%), and traffic accidents (5.53%). The percentage of respondents citing illness as the primary cause was higher among women (41.38%) than men (32.79%), while the percentage citing traffic accidents was higher among men (8.20%) than women (1.77%). By age group, younger generations are significantly more likely to cite congenital factors, whereas older adults are more likely to cite illness.

Availability of Medical Services

In Bangladesh, the provision of medical services varies significantly by region; special support measures are planned for areas with limited access, and efforts are underway to address disparities in services for persons with disabilities, the elderly, ethnic minorities, women, children, and residents of remote areas. While medical treatment at public medical institutions is, in principle, free of charge, patients often seek care at private hospitals at their own expense due to insufficient service capacity and low quality.

Institutions specializing in rehabilitation for persons with disabilities include an orthopedic hospital in Dhaka, orthopedic units established at medical university hospitals nationwide, hospitals specializing in leprosy, vocational rehabilitation centers for persons with physical disabilities, and over 100 Integrated Disability Service Centers (hereinafter referred to as "IDSCs")—operated by district hospitals, Upazila health centers, and the Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation—have been established across all 64 districts and are managed by the government. IDSCs provide physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, hearing tests, vision tests, counseling, and referral services free of charge. In addition, several orthopedic and prosthetics/orthotics-related institutions, as well as training centers for persons with visual impairments and persons with intellectual disabilities, are operated by the private sector and volunteer organizations. Regarding Hansen's disease, there are more than 2,500 self-help groups run by persons living with Hansen's disease[37].

[37] https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/ntds/leprosy/global-consultation-on-global-leprosy-strategy-2021-2030/14-disability-care-bangladesh.pdf (Accessed: 23 March 2026)

Access to Healthcare Services

The government and numerous NGOs provide community-based health services and rehabilitation. For example, with support from the WHO, the Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (hereinafter referred to as "CRP") was established in 1979 and provides medical care, rehabilitation, and support services. In addition, community health workers trained in ASD and developmental disabilities in accordance with WHO guidelines conduct screening and therapeutic education in rural areas. There are plans to provide online physical, occupational, speech, and psychological therapy services to persons with disabilities in remote areas using IT equipment.

However, according to the parallel report by CRPD Platform-Bangladesh (2020), despite the fact that Annex 3 of the National Health Policy-2011 states that the Government of Bangladesh will focus on addressing the health issues of the poor, the socially vulnerable, the elderly, and persons with physical and mental disabilities, healthcare providers have not received training on disability issues, and in most medical facilities, appropriate medical services are not available, making effective access to medical services difficult. Persons with hearing impairments are unable to receive medical services due to a lack of sign language interpretation services, and persons with physical disabilities are unable to access services because medical facilities are not physically accessible. The Concluding Observations point out the insufficient allocation of budgetary resources for training medical professionals to understand the needs of persons with disabilities within the healthcare system.

Assistive Devices

Regarding assistive devices, the Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation operates a distribution program. Through service support centers in all districts nationwide[38], the Foundation provides assistive devices, including prosthetics, tricycles, walkers, standing aids, wheelchairs, and white canes, free of charge. The parallel report by CRPD Platform-Bangladesh (2020) states that this support is insufficient to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Public and private companies design and manufacture mobility aids and assistive devices, and mobility aids are available to a limited extent in the domestic market. However, the quality of domestically produced goods is not necessarily high, and imported goods are more expensive than domestic ones and available only through the private sector.

[38] Protibondhi Seba O Sahajjo Kendro (PSOSK) https://psosk.gaibandha.gov.bd/ (Accessed: 23 March 2026)

Health Insurance

Discussions on establishing a public health insurance system to provide universal coverage began in 2012. From 2015 to 2018, with support from the German government, a pilot program[39] was launched targeting households living below the poverty line in impoverished areas near Dhaka. Participants were provided with health cards; the government covers the premiums, and there are no out-of-pocket costs for receiving services. The goal is to achieve universal health coverage by 2032, with plans to increase the government's share of medical costs to 70%[40]. However, significant implementation challenges remain, including securing funding, human resource shortages, and inadequate oversight mechanisms. In 2025, a partnership was formed with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to continue building a system that focuses on disability and gender issues.

In addition, the country has positioned the achievement of Universal Health Coverage (hereinafter referred to as "UHC") as a national strategy and formally signed the National Health Compact at the UHC High-Level Forum in December 2025[41]. The country aims to improve the UHC service coverage index from 54 to 65 by 2030, increase the rate of births attended by a health professional from 70% to 80%, and raise the rate of pregnant women receiving multiple micronutrient supplementation from 0% to 80%.

2) Education[42]

Status of Legislative Framework

The Government of Bangladesh has enshrined the right to education for all citizens, regardless of disability, in Article 28(3) of the Constitution and the Compulsory Primary Education Act (1990). The National Education Policy[43], formulated in 2010, aims to guarantee the right to equal education for children with disabilities and, in addition to addressing the need for special education, mentions special considerations regarding the participation of children with disabilities in vocational and technical education. Regarding higher education, such as at universities, the policy only addresses the prohibition of discrimination against students with physical disabilities.

[39] Shyasthyo Surokhsha Karmasuchi (SSK) http://oldweb.heu.gov.bd/shasthyo-shurokhsha-karmasuchi/ (Accessed: 23 March 2026)

[40] Health Economics Unit, MoHFW (2012) Expanding Social Protection for Health Towards Universal Coverage, Health Care Financing Strategy 2012–2032 http://oldweb.heu.gov.bd/pdf/Health%20Care%20Financing%20Strategy%202012-2032.pdf

[41] https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/0273f33ab6ee48c5d842108b9b55c789-0140022025/related/National-Health-Compacts-Bangladesh.pdf (Accessed: 19 March 2026)

[42] Based on the State Party's Reports.

[43] https://file-chittagong.portal.gov.bd/files/www.lakshmipur.gov.bd/files/f97d6b95_2046_11e7_8f57_286ed488c766/National%20Education%20Policy-English%20corrected%20_2_.pdf (Accessed: 23 March 2026)

In line with the 2010 National Education Policy, efforts have been made to enact an Education Act that incorporates inclusive education principles. The first draft bill was prepared in 2012 but was not enacted. After several revisions, the 2026 draft (Bengali version)[44] has been made public; however, as of this study, it has not yet been enacted.

Enrollment Status

According to the 2021 National Survey on Persons with Disabilities, 54% of children and adults with disabilities aged 5 to 24 are not receiving formal education. The enrollment rate for basic education in this age group is 23%, for secondary school 18%, and for high school 1.6%. The enrollment rate for basic education among the general population exceeds 97%, indicating a significant disparity.

The proportion of women (62%) not receiving formal education is higher than that of men (49%), and it is higher in rural areas (56.14%) than in urban areas (48.82%). None of the individuals with ASD, speech impairments, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, or multiple disabilities are enrolled in higher education. There is a positive correlation between household wealth and enrollment in higher education; as household wealth increases from low to high levels, the proportion of persons with disabilities who have received higher education rises. (0.21% of the poorest households and 4.93% of the wealthiest households have received higher education.) The literacy rate for persons with disabilities is 54%, compared to 79% for the general population.

Regarding the school environment, a State Party's Report (2012)[45] clearly states that all newly constructed schools must be designed to be accessible, including ramps accessible to children with physical disabilities, and that restrooms specifically for students with disabilities must be installed on every floor.

Inclusive Education

The Compulsory Primary Education Act, enacted in 1990, established basic education as compulsory for all children. The 2013 Children's Act[46] explicitly stipulates children's rights and prohibits discrimination. The Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act of the same year defines inclusive education as "the provision of equal education to students with disabilities in all schools in Bangladesh. Educational institutions shall not refuse admission to children with disabilities for any reason." Under the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP), a joint initiative of the Government of

[44] https://drive.google.com/file/d/16Cij26uX60KdJwsRtm3fYScSIKVpR80o/view (Bengali) (Accessed: 16 March 2026)
[45] *Ibid.*
[46] https://www.unicef.org/bangladesh/sites/unicef.org.bangladesh/files/2018-07/Children%20Act%202013%20English.pdf (Accessed: 23 March 2026)

Bangladesh and multiple donors, all teachers in public schools have undergone training in inclusive education. The Fourth PEDP[47] in 2018 aimed to ensure that children with special educational needs or disabilities could receive basic education in public schools. In 2019, a Combined Special Education Policy on Disability was formulated, setting the goal of mainstreaming children with disabilities through both special education and inclusive education. Due to the limited number of special education schools, many children are enrolled in regular classrooms. For children with visual impairments, the Integrated Education Programme for persons with visual impairments is implemented in regular classrooms across all 64 districts, enabling them to learn alongside their peers. Under this programme, children with visual impairments learn in the Braille system. Braille books are printed at the Braille Press located within the Employment and Rehabilitation Centre for the Physically Handicapped. The implementation of inclusive education is primarily carried out with support from development partners such as the United Nations Children's Fund (hereinafter referred to as "UNICEF") and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (hereinafter referred to as "UNESCO")[48].

Special Schools

Special education schools fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Welfare. Government-run elementary-level special education schools for children with disabilities include boarding schools for children with visual impairments, hearing impairments, and physical disabilities, as well as vocational training centers for children with physical disabilities. In addition, there are 62 schools for children with intellectual disabilities and 11 schools for children with ASD. These programs are established under the Disability related Coordinated Special Education Regulation of 2009 and are operated by the Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation. The National Center for Special Education in Dhaka provides residential special education for children with hearing, visual, and intellectual disabilities, as well as those with ASD.

There are numerous NGOs, private schools for children with disabilities, integrated schools, and inclusive education schools, with thousands of children with disabilities enrolled. Since 2010, the government has provided financial support to approximately 60 of these schools that serve children with intellectual disabilities and children with ASD.

Regarding the above situation, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

[47] https://dmwatch.com/publication/the-fourth-primary-education-development-program/ (Accessed: 23 March 2026)
[48] The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was a major donor for inclusive education for children with disabilities, but it ceased operations in 2025. No further details were available in this study.

has raised the following concerns:

- There is an overreliance on segregated education and special education (including the 2019 Special Needs Education Policy) rather than the development of inclusive education.
- There is a lack of learning materials in accessible formats, such as Braille, sign language, and Easy Read versions, for persons with visual, hearing, intellectual, and/or psychosocial disabilities.
- There is a lack of accessible transportation and school buildings.
- Insufficient training for professionals in the education system on Braille, sign language, and Easy Read versions.
- The level of individualized support and reasonable accommodations provided to students with disabilities is insufficient.
- There is a lack of sufficient budget allocation for the promotion of inclusive education.
- There is a lack of systematic data collection, disaggregated by gender and type of disability, on the number of children with disabilities enrolled in the education system.
- There is a lack of statistical data on the number of elementary school students, particularly in rural and remote areas.

3) Gender

Status of Legislative Framework

The National Women's Development Policy, formulated in 2008, included provisions regarding women with disabilities for the first time. In line with the ratification of the CRPD, the policy was revised in 2011 to include provisions on the rights of women with disabilities[49]. There are relevant laws targeting women with disabilities, such as the "National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children 2018-2030," the "Prevention of Women & Children Repression Act (2000, 2003),", and the "Amendment Bill 2020," among others, are relevant laws targeting women with disabilities.

Status of Women with Disabilities

It has been pointed out that the current situation of women with disabilities in Bangladesh is characterized by limited access to education, healthcare, and employment. According to the Bangladesh National Review for "Beijing+25 (2019)," which assessed progress toward gender equality based on the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, women with disabilities face more complex forms of discrimination and social

[49] https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/bgd149160.pdf（Accessed: 24 March 2026）

prejudice due to the intersectionality of their gender and disability. In addition to opportunities for social participation in areas such as education, healthcare, and employment, their access to married life and domestic support is lower compared to that of men. As women's sphere of activity in public spaces expands, gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and crime are creating a climate of insecurity. Despite the establishment of laws promoting gender equality and the existence of support programs, women's activities in public spaces are not considered safe.

According to the 2022 Labor Force Survey, the labor force participation rate for persons with disabilities was only 22.54%, with 32.22% for men and 11.34% for women. The employment rate (employment-to-labor-force ratio) for the working-age population aged 15 and older, including persons with disabilities, stands at 22.17% nationwide, but it is 31.73% for men and only 11.12% for women.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has raised the following concerns.

- Women and girls with disabilities face persistent, compound, and intersectional discrimination based on gender, age, and/or ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds.
- The Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act, enacted in 2013, and the National Women's Development Policy, formulated in 2011, have not been revised to include the rights of women and girls with disabilities who belong to marginalized minority groups. No comprehensive programs have been established to protect their rights.
- Laws and policies have not been revised to mainstream the rights of women and girls with disabilities. Laws permitting divorce on the grounds of disability, as well as restrictions on the rights and responsibilities of parents with disabilities and on the right to adoption, remain in place. Discriminatory family and social practices include forced abortions, forced sterilization, forced medical and psychiatric interventions, and involuntary psychiatric hospitalization targeting women with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual and/or psychosocial disabilities, as well as women affected by leprosy.
- Significant barriers exist that prevent organizations representing women with disabilities from fully and effectively participating in all decision-making processes in all aspects of life.

4) Vocational Training, Employment, and Work

Status of Legislative Framework

The first Labor Act was enacted in 2006, establishing comprehensive provisions regarding employment conditions, minimum wages, working hours, and safety standards. It also included provisions on maternity leave and stipulated maternity benefits. The law has been amended in 2013, 2018, and 2023, strengthening the protection of workers' rights to align more closely with ILO international standards. In 2013, following the Rana Plaza collapse, the law was amended to prioritize workplace safety, strengthen trade union rights, and improve workers' welfare, stipulating that no person with a disability may be employed in hazardous workplaces. Organizations where female employees account for 20% of the workforce must include at least 10% female members on the labor union's executive committee, and it was stipulated that no behavior that violates women's dignity is permitted, regardless of a female worker's position or status.

The 2023 amendments included, for the first time, provisions on the employment of persons with disabilities (Part X – Employment of Persons with Disabilities)[50]. As part of the government's responsibilities, the amendments stipulate that the Ministry of Labor and Employment must promote employment opportunities for persons with disabilities and provide special incentives to employers who hire them. The amendments outline key considerations for employment contracts with persons with disabilities, prohibit termination of employment due to the onset of a disability, and provide for training and retraining for employees with disabilities and their employers. Female workers are now entitled to take a total of 16 weeks (120 days) of leave, 8 weeks before and 8 weeks after childbirth, at a time convenient to them, and the conditions for forming labor unions have been relaxed. Additionally, employers are required to take measures to address the safety, health, accessibility, and welfare needs of employees with disabilities. On the other hand, if an employee or prospective employee has a disease or physical disability that prevents them from performing work of the quantity and quality that justifies payment of the minimum wage, that person may apply for a work permit at a specific wage rate lower than the minimum wage stipulated by the Act.

Status of Employment

Since 2012, the Government of Bangladesh has set a 10% quota for orphans and persons with disabilities in civil service positions at levels 1 through 4. A 1% quota is allocated for executive-level positions. The quota system has not been introduced in the private sector.

[50] https://natlex.ilo.org/dyn/natlex2/natlex2/files/download/116766/Labour%20Act%202023.pdf (Accessed: 24 March 2026)

According to the government's Labor Force Survey (2022)[51], the proportion of young persons with disabilities in Bangladesh who are neither in employment nor in education (64%) is significantly higher than that of young persons without disabilities (43%). The unemployment rate is higher than that of persons without disabilities. Based on the framework of the International Conference of Labor Statisticians[52], the distribution of the Bangladeshi labor force by disability status and gender shows that out of a total labor force of 59,682,000, 686,400 (1.15%) are persons with disabilities. Of these, 559,610 are men (1.19% of the male labor force), and 126,790 are women (0.99% of the female labor force). These figures indicate that the participation rate of persons with disabilities in the labor market is very low, with this trend being particularly pronounced among women. In terms of wages, workers with disabilities often receive lower pay than other workers performing the same tasks, particularly in manual labor. Estimates suggest that the economic loss resulting from the underemployment of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh amounts to approximately US$1.18 billion annually (1.74% of Bangladesh's GDP)[53].

In response to this situation, the Bangladesh Employers' Association, in collaboration with the ILO, has produced a leaflet promoting the employment of persons with disabilities, featuring case studies of companies, such as those in the garment industry, that have hired workers with disabilities. By showcasing the employment opportunities and working conditions at companies that were early adopters of hiring persons with disabilities, the initiative aims to encourage other companies to follow suit. Employment opportunities are expanding across sectors ranging from cosmetics, apparel, and pharmaceuticals to banks, mobile phone companies, call centers, and outsourcing firms. However, 52.1% of persons with disabilities are employed in the agricultural sector, with women accounting for 66.0% of this group. Overall, 12.8% of persons with disabilities are employed in the formal sector, with 15.7% of men and 3.1% of women in this category[54]. All others are engaged in the informal sector.

Vocational Training

The National Technology Development Policy (2011)[55] was formulated through a collaborative effort among government agencies, including the Ministry of Education, which oversees TVET and skills training, employer organizations, worker organizations,

[51] Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics/UNPRPD/ILO (2025) Disability Insights from Labor Force Survey: DILFS 2022
[52] International Conference of Labor Statisticians (Accessed: 24 March 2026)
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] *Ibid.*
[55] https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms_113958.pdf (Accessed: 26 March 2026)

private training institutions, and NGOs. It established a single regulatory framework to standardize quality assurance and was intended to play a key role in achieving the national goal of becoming a middle-income country by 2021. The policy includes mainstreaming persons with disabilities across all government training programs, providing reasonable accommodations, and developing inclusive training curricula. It mandates that 5% of enrollment in all skills development programs be reserved for persons with disabilities. The key government agencies responsible for vocational training include the National Skills Development Authority (under the Prime Minister's Office), the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor and Employment, the National Center for Training and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (under the Ministry of Social Welfare), and the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology. Collaboration with NGOs supporting persons with disabilities and OPDs is being promoted in the implementation of training. A 5% quota for persons with disabilities has also been established in public and private-sector general TVET institutions (polytechnic centers, technical training centers) overseen by the Technical Education Commission under the Ministry of Education, and the ILO is supporting the Technical Education Bureau in improving access to assistive devices and reasonable accommodation[56]. At the national level, 51.8% of training providers for persons with disabilities are government agencies, followed by NGOs (23.2%) and other institutions (12.5%). The government has also launched microfinance initiatives to enable persons with disabilities who have received a certain level of training to start small-scale income-generating enterprises. These programs are implemented through government-operated banks, providing access to group loans for persons with disabilities.

According to the Labor Force Survey (2022), only 0.21% of persons with disabilities were receiving vocational training. Regarding training content, the top category for men was agriculture crop production and preservation (28.0%), followed by ready-made garments (19.7%), and third was computer training (18.5%). For women, the top category was non-crop agriculture activities (27.3%), followed by health and paramedical services (27.1%), and ready-made garments (20.2%). The current Technical Development Action Plan 2022-2027[57] sets as its goals improving access to vocational training for persons with disabilities and providing such training through outreach.

[56] https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms_543298.pdf (Accessed: 26 March 2026)
[57] https://objectstorage.ap-dcc-gazipur-1.oraclecloud15.com/n/axvjbnqprylg/b/V2Ministry/o/office-nsda/2024/12/cca9cbc127544ee2957295223e37acf4.pdf (Accessed: 26 March 2026)

5) Social Security and Disability Welfare Services

Status of Legislative Framework

The NSSS[58] was formulated in 2015 to provide social security for all citizens and reduce poverty. With the goal of reforming the social security system, it identified nine priority issues, focused on extremely low-income groups as the primary targets for social security expansion, and positioned persons with disabilities as a core target group. To implement the NSSS, the UNDP and the Australian Government are implementing the Social Security Policy Support (hereinafter referred to as "SSPS") program. Twenty-five ministries and agencies are involved in implementing the NSSS, and efforts are being made to integrate programs across the life cycle.

In addition, as part of policies and action plans that include persons with disabilities, the National Food Policy (2006)[59] and the National Food Policy Plan of Action (2008–2015)[60] aim to improve the livelihoods of persons with disabilities and to promote their employment and social participation in rural areas[61]. In addition, the National Children Policy 2011[62] aims to protect children's rights in accordance with the CRPD and to expand the scope of initiatives to include children with disabilities and children with special needs.

Service Provision

Disability allowances are provided based on information from the National Disability Survey. The Department of Social Services conducts outreach through workers active at the grassroots level nationwide. This effort aims to identify persons with disabilities who are often left out of the social security system, particularly those living in extreme poverty, and connect them to services. Workers visit all households to collect basic information, and persons with disabilities identified are asked to visit an identification center. At these centers, trained doctors and rehabilitation workers conduct detailed assessments of the disability and issue of National Disability Cards. According to the final review of NSSS Phase II[63], from fiscal year 2020/21 to 2025/26, the number of persons eligible for disability benefits increased by 95%, and the number eligible for old-age benefits

[58] https://socialprotection.gov.bd/national-social-security-strategy-nsss/ (Accessed: 26 March 2026)
[59] https://socialprotection.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/National-Food-Policy-2006-.pdf (Accessed: 26 March 2026)
[60] https://objectstorage.ap-dcc-gazipur-1.oraclecloud15.com/n/axvjbnqprylg/b/V2Ministry/o/office-fpmu-mofood/2024/12/4c02746d67154b97b2e49bd96cb237f2.pdf (Accessed: 26 March 2026)
[61] Ministry of Food (2021) Bangladesh National Food and Nutrition Security Policy, Plan of Action 2021-2030.
[62] https://childsocialprotection.gov.bd/public/upload/policy_files/202105240620National%20Children%20Policy%202011%20English.pdf (Accessed: 26 March 2026)
[63] https://www.rapidbd.org/final-review-of-the-national-social-security-strategy-nsss-and-action-plan-phase-ii-2021-2026/ (Accessed: 26 March 2026)

increased by 38.6%. The review notes that while gender sensitivity, social protection, and social protection in urban areas were systematically promoted, governance, coordination, monitoring, and institutional capacity were significantly strengthened.

However, research analyzing access to social protection for persons with disabilities indicates that only a fraction of persons with disabilities are registered in social protection programs, suggesting that utilization of the system has not yet become widespread[64]. A policy brief by Research and Policy Integration for Development (hereinafter "RAPID"), a domestic private policy research institute, clearly points out that social protection coverage for persons with disabilities is insufficient[65]. One factor contributing to this low coverage is limited access to information. It has been reported that information regarding social protection programs has not been sufficiently disseminated, and many persons with disabilities and their families are unaware of the existence of these programs or how to apply for them[66]. In addition, the World Bank points out that social stigma surrounding disability remains strong in Bangladesh, and that the cultural context in which disability is perceived as a source of shame or punishment is a factor that causes persons to hesitate to disclose their disability or utilize the system[67].

These challenges are also recognized at the policy level. A review of SSPS programs identifies a lack of awareness regarding disability and stigma as barriers to program utilization and thus prioritizes strengthening inclusion through awareness-raising activities and outreach[68].

The review also highlights structural challenges such as underreporting of disabilities, exclusion from comprehensive lifecycle social protection programs, and limited coverage in urban areas. Furthermore, an analysis by RAPID suggests that these challenges stem from a lack of integrated data systems and inadequate beneficiary selection mechanisms, underscoring the need for a more robust data infrastructure and flexible policy responses. Additionally, it is noted that policy commitments alone are insufficient, and operational strategies that address access barriers, social norms, and the digital divide at the practical level are essential[69].

[64] Rahman, M., Rana, M.S., Rahman, M.M., and Khan, M.N. (2024) *Exploring access to social protection by persons with disabilities in Bangladesh*.
[65] RAPID (2025) *Policy Brief: Persons with Disabilities in Bangladesh: Addressing Gaps in Data, Social Protection, and Employment Accessibility*.
[66] Rahman et al. (2024)
[67] World Bank (2019) *Program Brief: Allowances for the Financially Insolvent Disabled*.
[68] https://socialprotection.gov.bd/2024/11/social-protection-framework-for-persons-with-disabilities-in-bangladesh-draft/ (Accessed: 26 March 2026)
[69] RAPID (2025)

6) Transportation and Urban Development (including accessible urban planning)

Status of Legislative Framework

The Law on the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection (2013), in accordance with the CRPD, guarantees that persons with disabilities have equal access to all public facilities and services, including physical infrastructure, transportation, communication, information, and ICT, on an equal basis with others. It also stipulates that 5% of seats on public transportation, such as buses, must be reserved for persons with disabilities. Under the SSPS, holders of the National Disability Card are eligible for services such as a 50% discount on train and bus tickets. The National Building Code, first enacted in 1993, underwent its second revision in 2017 in line with the CRPD and the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act (2013), incorporating the concept of universal design. Audible traffic signals have been introduced in the capital, Dhaka, and are gradually being rolled out to other cities. The Dhaka City Building Construction Rule (2008) requires that, as members of the committee responsible, representatives from OPDs serve during the design phase to incorporate universal design principles. The regulations stipulate that areas, from parking lots to lobbies, must be designed with universal design in mind, and that at least one accessible restroom must be provided on each floor. In Dhaka, the installation of ramps and other accessibility features is underway at the National Museum, the Parliament Building, the National Stadium, the University of Dhaka, and many other private buildings.

Regarding transportation and mobility, the National Policy on Transport Inclusion (Road Transport Act, 2018)[70] has been formulated. The railway connecting the capital, Dhaka, and the second-largest city, Chittagong[71], is designed according to universal design standards.

Current Status of Accessibility

Although the Government of Bangladesh is promoting the installation of ramps in public buildings, universities, and many other private buildings, physical accessibility has not yet improved, and this remains a major barrier for persons with disabilities in accessing services[72].

In the Concluding observations, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern regarding barriers faced by women and children with disabilities, particularly in rural areas, as well as refugees, in accessing, using, and

[70] http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/act-1262.html?lang=en (Accessed: 26 March 2026)
[71] The official name is Chattogram.
[72] According to the Parallel Port (2020) by CRPD Platform Bangladesh

maintaining mobility aids, assistive devices, assistive technologies, and services (including accessible transportation and infrastructure) necessary for personal mobility, in relation to accessibility (Article 9), liberty of movement and nationality (Article 18), and liberty of movement (Article 20), and made the following recommendations.

- Remove barriers to access so that persons with disabilities can obtain high-quality mobility aids, assistive devices, assistive technologies, and services (including accessible transportation and infrastructure) at affordable prices, and provide the necessary information and training regarding their use and maintenance.
- Create an environment where persons with disabilities can obtain assistive devices from overseas through tariff reductions, and continue to develop means for manufacturing and repairing such devices at affordable prices in consultation with the OPDs.
- Formulate and implement a national strategy on accessibility. This will promote access for persons with disabilities, including refugees, to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications technology (including ICT and systems), and other facilities and services in both urban and rural areas.
- Ensure the effective implementation of existing policies and regulations on accessibility, particularly the 2013 Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, and establish monitoring mechanisms to measure progress with the full and effective participation and consultation of the OPD.

7) Information Accessibility

Regarding information accessibility, the state-run Bangladesh TV and several private broadcasters have introduced sign language support services in their news programs. These programs not only ensure information accessibility for sign language users but also raise public awareness of persons with disabilities and of sign language. The National ICT Policy 2018 and the Right to Information Act, 2009[73] are disability-inclusive policies that specifically guarantee access to information for persons with visual impairments. Efforts to improve the accessibility of information and communication technologies are also underway, with the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology having formulated the Digital Service and Web Designing Guidelines for Inclusive Accessibility 2022[74]. The "Access to Information (hereinafter referred to as “a2i”)” was launched in 2006 with the Cabinet Office and the Information and Communication

[73] http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/upload/act/2021-11-17-11-22-38-37.-The-Right-to-Information-Act-2009.pdf (Accessed: 26 March 2026)

[74] https://ictd.gov.bd/pages/notices/69414b39c4774958d7b560af (Accessed: 26 March 2026)

Technology Bureau of the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology serving as implementing agencies, with support from the UNDP. The initiative aims to build a non-discriminatory, inclusive society through the appropriate use of information technology. Under the principle of "Leaving No One Behind," a2i expanded its scope of activities and priority areas, and in 2020, it was renamed "Aspire to Innovate."

In the Concluding Observations, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities expressed concern regarding freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information (Article 21), particularly regarding the barriers faced by women and children with disabilities, as well as refugees, in rural areas when accessing, using, and maintaining mobility aids, assistive devices, assistive technologies, and services (including accessible transportation and infrastructure) necessary for personal mobility.

- Bangladeshi Sign Language is not sufficiently recognized as the official language of the deaf community. The number of trained sign language interpreters used in judicial proceedings and public events is limited.
- Particularly in rural and remote areas, there is a shortage of information in accessible formats for persons with disabilities, such as Braille, Easy Read, tactile communication, accessible multimedia, and documents, audio, human-read-aloud services, and augmentative and alternative communication methods, means, and formats (including accessible information and communication technologies).
- There is a shortage of accessible private and public websites, as well as subtitles, sign language interpretation, and audio descriptions for television programs, to meet the needs of persons with hearing, visual, and low vision impairments.
- There is a lack of funding to provide training to sign language interpreters and other professionals on the application of Braille, Easy Read formats, tactile communication, accessible multimedia, and other augmentative and alternative communication methods, means, and formats.

8) Disaster Risk Management

In Bangladesh, a disaster-prone country, the Standing Orders on Disaster (2010, 2019)[75] have been established, outlining specific activities for responding to persons with disabilities, from disaster preparedness through to the occurrence and aftermath of a disaster. The National Disaster Management Plan, led by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, has included consideration of socially vulnerable groups since

[75] https://www.preventionweb.net/files/18240_sodapprovedbyndmb.pdf?startDownload=true, https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/government-people-s-republic-bangladesh-standing-orders-disaster-2019 (Accessed: 26 March 2026)

the 2008 Plan (2008–2015)[76], with persons with disabilities designated as a target group. Considering difficulties in accessing support during evacuation and at evacuation sites, specific plans were formulated. The 2015 Plan[77] established a section titled "Disasters and Persons with Disabilities," which explicitly stated the need to gather all relevant information, including the gender and type of disability, of persons with disabilities during the disaster prevention phase to appoint representatives of persons with disabilities in all regions, and to design infrastructure established during disasters to be accessible to persons with disabilities and the elderly. The 2016 Plan[78] explicitly stated, as one of its eight objectives, the guarantee of inclusion for socially vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, in all plans and programs.

Bangladesh is a place of refuge for Rohingya refugees registered as such, as well as many unregistered Myanmar nationals, including many persons with disabilities. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (hereinafter referred to as "UNHCR"), the International Organization for Migration, and humanitarian aid organizations such as Humanity & Inclusion (hereinafter referred to as "H&I") provide services to them.

A parallel report (2020**)** by the international NGO PRDH (Planète Réfugiés-Droits de l'Homme) and the Paris Institute of International Relations (Institut des Hautes Études Internationales) raises the following concerns regarding disaster preparedness and responses for persons with disabilities.

- All information regarding evacuation shelters should be provided to persons with disabilities and distributed in appropriate, accessible formats tailored to each type of disability, particularly for those with hearing and visual impairments.
- Disaster volunteers have not received specialized training to communicate with all persons with disabilities. The government does not have an accessible information provision system for persons with hearing and speech impairments.
- The 2019 Disaster Regulations, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, recognize the participation of persons with disabilities and OPDs, but implementation has been very limited.
- Equal and safe access for persons with disabilities to disaster response centers should be guaranteed.
- Physical accessibility should be ensured, and training on how to support persons

[76] https://www.preventionweb.net/files/9472_NationalPlanforDisastermanagement.pdf?startDownload=true
[77] https://lpr.adb.org/resource/national-plan-disaster-management-draft-2021-2025-bangladesh (Accessed: 26 March 2026)
[78] https://reliefweb.int/report/banglaesh/bangladesh-national-plan-disaster-management-2016-2020-building-resilience-sustainable-human-development (Accessed: 26 March 2026)

with disabilities should be provided to those in charge.

- A needs assessment should be conducted for each type of disability regarding disaster risk management.
- Include persons with disabilities in disaster risk management and humanitarian assistance. Accessibility audits of refugee and internally displaced person (IDP) camps should be conducted with the participation of persons with disabilities
- Persons with disabilities should be included in disaster risk management and humanitarian assistance. Accessibility audits in refugee camps should be conducted in consultation with persons with disabilities.
- Water supply points, sanitation facilities, and distribution sites should be established near shelters that accommodate persons with disabilities, and access to these facilities should be improved.
- Training for local-level organizations on emergency preparedness and response should be ensured, and persons with disabilities should be included in these efforts.

3. International Treaties and International Cooperation

3-1. Status of Implementation Following Ratification of the CRPD[79]

Bangladesh ratified the CRPD in 2007 and the Optional Protocol in 2008. It submitted its initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in April 2017, and the Committee issued its Concluding Observations in October 2022. The deadline for the next State Party's Report is December 2029.

The Concluding Observations noted the following points as positive developments:

- The State party is temporarily hosting more than 1.1 million Rohingya refugees, and there is a large number of persons with disabilities among them.
- The enactment of the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act (2013) and the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Rules (2015)
- The translation of the Convention into Bangla, the official language of Bangladesh, and the development of a child-friendly version of the Convention
- Adoption of the Neuro-Developmental Disability Protection Trust Act in 2013
- Formulation of the strategic action plan for neuro-developmental disorders, 2016-2030
- Establishment of the ASD Resource Center

On the other hand, aside from the matters mentioned in 2-3, concerns have been expressed particularly regarding the following points.

- Particularly in rural and remote areas, prejudice, stigma, stereotypes, the use of derogatory terms, and discrimination are widespread against persons affected by leprosy, women and girls with disabilities, and persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities.

The Committee strongly requests the following.

- Involve civil society organizations, particularly OPDs, in the preparation of the State Party's Reports.
- Widely disseminate the Concluding Observations in accessible formats, including sign language, national and minority languages, and easy-to-read versions, to NGOs, OPDs, persons with disabilities themselves, and their families, and publish them on the government's human rights website.

Of the issues and recommendations raised by multiple civil society organizations in

[79] https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/ (Accessed: 15 March 2026)

the parallel report[80], those concerning health care, education, employment, accessibility, access to information, and gender are mentioned in 5. Barriers and Needs Faced by Persons with Disabilities. Regarding issues in other areas, these include "Equality and non-discrimination," "Awareness-raising", "Right to life", "Equal recognition before the law," "Access to justice," "Liberty and security of person," "Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment", "Freedom from exploitation, violence, and abuse," "Protecting the integrity of the person," "Respect for the home and the family," "Participation in political and public life," "Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure, and sport," "Statistics and data collection," and "National implementation and monitoring."

3-2. Status of Implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty

Bangladesh acceded to the Marrakesh Treaty in September 2022. Prior to the adoption of the Marrakesh Treaty, relevant domestic legal frameworks and policies included the Right to Information Act (2009) and the National ICT Policy (2009). While the Right to Information Act was enacted to explicitly ensure the availability of accessible information, policies were also formulated to ensure that ICT is equitable and inclusive for persons with disabilities. Although Bangladesh enacted a Copyright Act in 2000, it does not include exemption provisions allowing books and publications to be printed in accessible formats (Braille, audio) or ICT policies to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

The parallel report by CRPD Platform-Bangladesh (2020) makes the following observations regarding access to copyrighted works for persons with visual impairments.

- Legal information and awareness-raising materials should be provided in accessible formats, such as Braille, large print, simple language, and sign language, through print, electronic media, and accessible websites.
- The Copyright Act (2000) should be amended to include exemption clauses allowing books and publications to be printed in accessible formats (Braille, audio) and information and communication technology policies to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

3-3. Initiatives on Disability Issues within SDG-related Policies

According to the SDG Indicator Database of the United Nations Statistics Division,

[80] Several parallel reports have been submitted. ① CRPD Platform-Bangladesh (2022), ② The National Level Advisory Committee (2022), ③ Human Rights Watch (2022), ④ Jatiyo Trinomul Pratibandhi Sangstha (2020), ⑤ Planète Réfugiés-Droits de l'Homme and the Institut des Hautes Études Internationales (2020), ⑥ CRPD Platform-Bangladesh (2019), ⑦Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (2019), ⑧The Leprosy Mission Bangladesh and Protibondhi Nagorik Shangathaner Parishad (2019)

under Indicator 1.3.1 "Proportion of the population covered by social protection systems," the proportion of persons with severe disabilities receiving disability benefits stood at 43.5% as of 2021, representing a significant improvement from 18.6% in 2015[81]. The percentage of primary schools with access to facilities and teaching materials designed for students with disabilities also improved, rising from 20.4% in 2020 to 48.9% in 2024.

In 2017, 2020, and 2025, the Government of Bangladesh submitted Voluntary National Reviews (hereinafter referred to as "VNRs") to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum, in which it reported on its progress toward achieving the SDGs and the implementation of related policies. The third VNR report (2025) is titled "Realizing the Rights and Accessibility of Persons with Disabilities." While constitutional protections for persons with disabilities exist, the report assesses that they face systemic barriers in accessing healthcare, education, employment, and opportunities for civic participation, which runs counter to the SDGs of "leaving no one behind. "Due to inadequate inclusive design and infrastructure, persons with disabilities continue to face challenges in accessing public services, and the lack of digital services further exacerbates the situation. To address these issues, the report states that it is essential to mandate universal design in public infrastructure and provide specialized training for healthcare professionals. In the education sector, marginalized groups, such as children with disabilities and indigenous students in underdeveloped regions, are not sufficiently included, and efforts to ensure equitable access to education remain extremely difficult. Inequalities in the labor market persist, with a gender pay gap and sluggish wage growth. In 2023, women's incomes were lower than men's in most sectors. The disparity is particularly pronounced among older women, with women aged 65 and over earning 70% less than men of the same age. In 2022, the employment rate for persons with disabilities aged 15 and over stood at a mere 27.29%. Regarding legislative reforms, the report states that efforts should focus on ratifying the Optional Protocol to the CRPD and securing local budgets for disability programs.

3-4. Ratification of and Initiatives regarding Other International Treaties related to Disabilities and Development

The Government of Bangladesh ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1984. The most recent Concluding Observations were issued in 2016. These observations noted that, despite previous commitments, the Government of Bangladesh had not taken measures

[81] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/dataportal/countryprofiles/ (Accessed: 27 March 2026)

to withdraw its reservations regarding the comprehensive obligation to eliminate discrimination under Article 2 of the Convention and the reservation regarding equality in marriage and family relations under Article 16(1)(c) and recommended that it take measures to withdraw these reservations within a specific timeframe. In response, the Government of Bangladesh submitted an additional report in 2020[82]. While it has determined the most suitable approach for its legal framework and socio-institutional context, it recognizes the need to implement measures to achieve the expected results. Noting that awareness of intersectionality is gradually increasing, it reports that it has introduced quota systems at various levels and is making gradual progress toward enacting such legislation.

The Government of Bangladesh ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990. The most recent Concluding Observations were issued in 2020. These observations express concern that the 2013 Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act does not provide adequate protection for persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls, persons with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, and persons affected by leprosy, and that the concept of disability does not fully align with the human rights-based model of disability. They recommend revising the Act to align laws, policies, strategies, and action plans with the Convention.

In addition, the Government of Bangladesh has not ratified the Convention concerning Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities (ILO Convention No. 159)[83], an international treaty that calls on States to formulate and implement national policies to ensure that persons with disabilities receive appropriate vocational rehabilitation and have access to employment opportunities on an equal basis with others.

3-5. International Cooperation on Disability[84]

- The Japanese Government[85]

<Technical Cooperation Project>

- Dhaka Road Safety Project (2021–2025)
- Social Participation of Persons with Disabilities (Country-Focused Training) (2023, 2024)

[82] Information received from Bangladesh on follow-up to the Concluding Observations on its 8th periodic report (2922) (https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3891290?ln=en&v=pdf) (Accessed: 27 March 2026)

[83] Convention on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Persons with Disabilities), entered into force in 1985

[84] Project names are listed exactly as they appear in the original text. However, this does not apply in cases where there is no English name or the English name is unknown.

[85] Based on the JICA Country Project List (https://www.jica.go.jp/activities/schemes/partner/kusanone/country/project/laos.html) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Country Commitment Information (https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/data/zyoukyou.html).

- Volunteer Dispatch

<Grant Aid>

- Fourth Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP4) (2018–2023), Third Primary Education Development Plan (2022–2017), Second Primary Education Development Plan (2004–2010), Primary Education Development Plan (1998/99)
- Medical and Protection Support for Refugees from Myanmar on Bhashanchar Island and Plan to Strengthen Security Measures in Cox's Bazar District (in partnership with UNHCR) (2022, 2023, 2025)
- Food and Nutrition Support for Displaced Persons from Myanmar on Bhashanchar Island and Agricultural Infrastructure Improvement Plan for Host Communities in Cox's Bazar District (in partnership with WFP) (2022, 2023, 2025)
- Project to Address Gender-Based Violence and Provide Maternal and Child Health Support for Refugees from Myanmar on Bhashanchar Island and Host Communities in Noakhali District (in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UaNFPA)) (2022, 2024)
- Comprehensive Livelihood Support Program for Refugees from Myanmar and Host Communities on Bhashanchar Island and in Cox's Bazar District (in partnership with UNICEF) (2022, 2023, 2024)

<Loan Project>

- Chottogram-Cox's Bazar Road Improvement Project (2023)
- Dhaka Urban Transport Improvement Project (2013–, 2016–, 2018–, 2020–, 2022–)
- Southern Chittagong Regional Development Project (2022)

<Grand Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Project>

- Construction Project for a Rehabilitation Facility for the Poor and Persons with Disabilities in Polishar District (2017)
- Construction Project for a Rehabilitation Facility for Persons with Disabilities in Mouro Bazar District (2019)

- Other donors

<International organization>

ILO

- Decent Work Country Programme for Bangladesh (2022–2026)[86]

UN Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)

- UN Joint Collaboration to Accelerate Implementation of the CRPD and Disability-Inclusive SDGs

UN Women

- Gender responsive analysis of existing legislation and gaps in implementation for

[86] https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40asia/%40ro-bangkok/%40ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms_857815.pdf (Accessed: 23 March 2026)

disability inclusion, capacity building of government and civil society organizations in CRPD implementation (2022-2023)[87]

Asian Development Bank

- Accessible Assistive Technology for Promoting Health, Well-being, and Gender Equality in South Asia (2023–2026)

<Bilateral Aid>

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

- "Shobai Miley Shikhi Activity (Everyone Learns Together)" (2022–2026) [88]

Government of Canada & ILO

- Bangladesh Skills for Employment and Productivity Project (2013–2019) [89]

<International NGOs>

H&I

- Support for Rohingya refugees and natural disaster prevention initiatives, with a focus on refugees with disabilities. Activities include capacity building for outpatient departments (OPDs), economic inclusion programs for persons with disabilities, legal support, support for disability resource centers, and community-based rehabilitation (CBR).

Sightsavers

- Conducts projects related to cataract treatment and the rights of persons with disabilities.

Leonard Cheshire Disability

- Projects related to health, education, livelihoods, technical training, self-employment, and rights advocacy

International Red Cross

- Provides support for medical rehabilitation.

CBM

- Provides support for disability-inclusive measures during emergencies such as disasters.

The Nippon Foundation

- Support for the Bangladeshi government's "Zero Leprosy by 2030 Initiative."

[87] https://www.impactpool.org/jobs/847529 (Accessed: 23 March 2026)
[88] https://bd.usembassy.gov/28832/ (Accessed: 15 March 2026)
[89] https://www.ilo.org/projects-and-partnerships/projects/bangladesh-skills-employment-and-productivity-b-sep (Accessed: 26 March 2026)

4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities

4-1. Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

The OPDs in Bangladesh serve as a platform for drafting the CRPD parallel report, with 50 member organizations. This platform submitted the parallel report in 2022. Their areas of focus are diverse, including awareness-raising, education, health, skills development, and legal support, and they have opportunities to express their views on the formulation of relevant government policies, strategies, and action plans. Funding often relies on grant programs from international organizations and international NGOs.

Name of Organization	Overview
Bangladesh Protibandhi Kallyan Somity (BPKS) https://bpksbd.org/	Established in 1985. An organization dedicated to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. It implements comprehensive rights programs, including empowering OPDs.
Bangladesh Disabled Development Trust (BDDT) https://bddt.org/	An organization dedicated to supporting persons with disabilities, carrying out activities in areas such as human rights, education, employment, and rehabilitation. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it provided emergency assistance, including distributing relief supplies.
Center for Services and Information on Disability (CSID) https://www.csid-bd.com/	Established in 1997. With a focus on the rights of children and adults with disabilities, the organization implements a range of programs in education, health, employment, and other areas.
Society of the Deaf and Sign Language Users (SDSL) https://www.facebook.com/societyofthedeafandsignlanguageusers	Established in 2008. An organization of sign language users that carries out various activities related to rights.
Visually Impaired People's Society (VIPS) https://vipsbd.org/	Established in 2005. An OPD dedicated to the empowerment of persons with visual impairments.
Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF) https://www.facebook.com/p/Women-with-Disabilities-Development-Foundation-WDDF-100064501283904/	Established in 2007. An organization led by women with disabilities. Carries out activities related to the rights, education, health, and employment of women with disabilities.

4-2. Disability Support Organization

Name of Organization	Overview
Access Bangladesh Foundation https://www.accessbangladesh.org/	Established in 2008. Implement projects in education, employment, health, and community empowerment.

ActionAid Bangladesh https://actionaidbd.org/	Implement employment-related projects, such as initiatives to foster role models for young persons with disabilities in the corporate sector.
ADD Bangladesh (Action on Disability and Development Bangladesh) https://www.facebook.com/ADD.international.Bangladesh/	Working to train 25 disability rights activists across 64 districts nationwide.
Assistance for Blind Children http://assistblindchildren.com/	Since the 1980s, the organization has been implementing Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) programs with support from Sightsavers and the European Union (EU).
Bangladesh Blind Mission https://bbm-bd.org/	Together with its local partner, CDD, it carries out activities focused on training leaders with disabilities.
Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust https://blast.org.bd/	An organization established in 1993 that aims to improve access to the legal system for the poor and marginalized.
Bangladesh Protibondhi Foundation https://www.bpfbd.org/	Established in 1984. An organization dedicated to promoting the independence and well-being of children with disabilities. Its areas of activity include education, health, rehabilitation, and employment.
Centre for Disability in Development (CDD) https://cdd.org.bd/	Established in 1996. An organization working in partnership with 350 government and non-governmental organizations to create a world that is inclusive of persons with disabilities.
Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed https://www.crp-bangladesh.org/	Focuses primarily on providing medical and rehabilitation services, while also emphasizing advocacy and networking.
Disabled Child Foundation https://www.facebook.com/dcf05/	Established in 2005. An organization that carries out activities related to the human rights of children and adults with disabilities.
Disabled Rehabilitation and Research Association https://www.drra-bd.org/	Established in 1993. An organization working to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Its main activities include health, education, and employment.
Impact Foundation Bangladesh https://impactfoundationbd.org/	Established in 1993. An organization aiming to free persons from disability and poverty. It focuses on the health sector.
Manusher Jonno Foundation https://www.manusherjonno.org/	Established in 2002. An organization that carries out various activities related to the human rights of marginalized people, including those with disabilities.

National Council of Disabled Women https://ncdwbd.org/	A national organization whose main activities include strengthening and networking among women's disability groups, awareness-raising, and technical training.
National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled www.nfowd.net	A national disability think tank was established in 1991. With the aim of protecting and promoting the rights and interests of persons with disabilities, it advocates with the government for the formulation of national policies and the enactment of relevant laws. It has approximately 400 members. It serves as a board member of the Jatiyo Protibondhi Unnayan Foundation and the National Council of Social Welfare. It is a member of the Asia-Pacific Forum of Persons with Disabilities and is an accredited NGO regarding the CRPD.
National Grassroots and Disabilities Organization https://ngdobd.org/	A network of 100 grassroots organizations supporting persons with disabilities, active in 23 provinces. Its purpose is to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities, and it has 250,000 members.
Society for Education & Inclusion of the Disabled https://seidbd.com/	Established in 2003. An organization engaged in activities related to the rights of children and adults with disabilities. Its primary focus is on persons with ASD, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, and intellectual disabilities.
Society for the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled https://swid.org.bd/page?id=17	Established in 1977. A support organization for persons with intellectual disabilities, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, and communication and behavioral disabilities.
Youth Power in Social Action https://ypsa.org/	Established in 1985. An organization working toward a society free from poverty for all people, including those with disabilities.

5. Barriers and Needs Faced by Persons with Disabilities[90]

5-1. Barriers to and Needs regarding Healthcare Services

In Bangladesh, there is a lack of systems and facilities that allow persons with disabilities to receive healthcare services with peace of mind. Regarding services for women and girls with disabilities, there is a particular shortage of services and information related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as HIV/AIDS prevention. The Health policies do not incorporate medical services for persons with disabilities, particularly women with disabilities. There is also a shortage of accessible hospitals and health centers for persons affected by leprosy, as well as for migrants and refugees with disabilities. Given these circumstances, it has been pointed out that the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare must strictly comply with the provisions of the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act (2013) and develop a monitoring system to ensure the maintenance of high-quality healthcare services for persons with disabilities and, in particular, to ensure that low-income individuals with disabilities have access to free healthcare.

On the other hand, to ensure that patients with disabilities have access to all hospitals, maternity and diagnostic centers, medical institutions, and community clinics, it is necessary to establish accessible medical facilities that guarantee accessibility and facilitate communication, in compliance with the National Building Construction Rule (2008) and the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection Act. In addition, the need for specialized training for healthcare professionals regarding the treatment of persons with disabilities has been highlighted. It is necessary to include disability issues in medical education curricula and program syllabus to communicate with patients with hearing or speech impairments through the training of sign language interpreters to provide training on the treatment of individuals with disabilities requiring special attention, such as those with spinal cord injuries; to address legal obligations regarding the care of persons with disabilities, and to foster empathetic behavior and a positive attitude. The need to train and enhance the capabilities of medical professionals to provide appropriate medical care to pregnant women with disabilities and to implement precautions and preventive measures to prevent the onset of disabilities during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period has also been highlighted.

5-2. Barriers to and Needs regarding Education

In the education of children with disabilities, low enrollment rates and dropout rates,

[90] Based on multiple parallel reports.

due to the children's functional impairments, parental indifference, and financial difficulties, are major challenges. There is also a significant disparity in enrollment rates between boys and girls. The rate of children with disabilities not attending school is significantly higher than that of children without disabilities, and their progression rates to secondary and higher education are also low. In some cases, effective and sufficient learning is difficult due to teachers' lack of understanding of disabilities or of teaching skills, a lack of reasonable accommodations in schools, and a shortage of appropriate teaching materials and ICT tailored to students' needs. The low accessibility of school facilities has been pointed out. According to an interview with a support organization[91], outreach-based learning support is being piloted for children with disabilities who have difficulty commuting to school, and the organization hopes to expand this initiative to other regions.

Furthermore, discrimination, prejudice, and stigma against persons with disabilities are said to be deeply entrenched in Bangladesh, and disability registration has not progressed sufficiently. Additionally, education policy aims to promote the education of children and adults with disabilities through both special education and inclusive education. Due to the limited number of special education schools, some children attend regular schools. To implement the government's vision of inclusive education, it is necessary not only to provide instruction tailored to individual needs, along with the financial support and implementation systems to sustain it, but also to change public attitudes.

5-3. Barriers to and Needs regarding Employment

In the employment sector, the overwhelmingly low labor participation rate among persons with disabilities is a major challenge, as is the disparity between men and women. The majority of both men and women are employed in the informal agricultural sector. To achieve an effective transition from education and vocational training to employment, it is necessary to ensure enrollment in and completion of basic education. According to interviews with support organizations[92], although a quota system for persons with disabilities is stipulated for admission to vocational training schools, it is often not met.

Although a 10% quota system for persons with disabilities and orphans has been established for civil service positions, it has been noted that the quota is not being adequately met and that monitoring of progress toward it is insufficient. Reasonable accommodations to meet the individual needs of persons with disabilities are not

[91] Interview with Mr. Nazmul Bari of the support organization Centre for Disability in Development (March 19, 2026)
[92] Interview with Mr. Nazmul Bari of the support organization Centre for Disability in Development (March 19, 2026)

sufficiently provided at all stages, including admission, employment examinations, and employment. Although the Act on the Persons with Disabilities Rights and Protection prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in the employment sector, various forms of discrimination, such as in job assignments and wages, continue to occur even after employment, and no measures have been taken to ensure remedies for such discrimination. Furthermore, there are no legal provisions to protect employees with disabilities from workplace harassment. It has been pointed out that there is a need to clarify legal penalties for employer violations, increase compensation, which is currently insufficient, and establish awareness-raising initiatives to promote greater awareness among employers. There is also a need to establish a database to track the proportion of persons with disabilities employed in both the public and private sectors.

5-4. Barriers to and Needs regarding Transportation

Regarding transportation, legal frameworks and the implementation of universal design in infrastructure are gradually progressing, starting from major cities. However, in most regions, including rural and remote areas, accessible transportation services are not in place, and the means of transportation available to persons with disabilities are extremely limited. This not only restricts access to healthcare and education but also limits employment opportunities. It is expected that a system will be established in which OPDs participate from the planning and design stages and jointly monitor the implementation of laws, strategies, and action plans. The Parallel Report highlights the publication of monitoring reports on accessibility-related laws, the implementation of training for public officials on accessibility for persons with disabilities, the promotion and guarantee of the production and availability of high-quality assistive mobility devices in the domestic market, and the expansion of accessibility-related laws from urban to rural areas.

5-5. Barriers to and Needs regarding Information Access

Regarding information accessibility, there is a gap between legal frameworks and actual conditions, resulting in situations where persons with disabilities cannot access necessary information. There is a shortage of accessible information, such as sign language interpretation, Braille, and plain language, leading to communication difficulties across various settings, including healthcare, education, complaint handling, and the judicial system. Due to a shortage of sign language interpreters, a lack of accessible information and communication technologies, and insufficient budgets, adequate support is not being provided, particularly in rural and remote areas.

Additionally, information support tailored to specific types of disabilities is also inadequate. Limited access to information means that information regarding systems and services does not reach persons with disabilities themselves, resulting in situations where they are unable to utilize their legal rights and support systems even when they exist. To realize the principle of "leaving no one behind" as outlined in national ICT policies and the Information Rights Act, effective information support is urgently needed.

5-6. Barriers and Needs regarding Gender

Regarding support for women with disabilities, there is a growing recognition of the need to understand the situation through the lens of the intersection of disability and gender and to implement appropriate support measures. In Bangladesh, stereotypes and stigma surrounding disability, as well as discrimination and inequality stemming from being a woman, are considered deeply entrenched. The CEDAW Concluding Observations recommend the amendment of discriminatory laws and family laws, as well as the prompt adoption of legislation criminalizing all forms of sexual abuse, including within marriage. In the CRPD Concluding Observations, gender sensitivity, discrimination against women and girls, and the prohibition of abuse are cited in the general principles and in the concerns and recommendations covering nearly all areas. Legislative development and amendments may take time. While opportunities for policy-making and social participation are limited, making it difficult to reflect the voices of women with disabilities, there is a strong call to realize the rights of women and girls with disabilities by uniting self-advocacy groups and support organizations to gradually build opportunities for participation in decision-making processes.

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