

ACTIVITY REPORT OF T.V TALK SHOW ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

A Talk show on the rights of Women with Disabilities was held on 3rd December, 2015 on International Day of Persons with Disabilities on “World this Morning - PTV World” Anchors Shahzad Khan and Maha Makhdum. To make a comparison how things were earlier and how they are today. The Guest Speakers were Mr. Atif Sheikh - Executive Director Special Talent Exchange Program, Ms. Abia Akram - Project Manager Special Talent Exchange Program/ Chief Executive National Forum of Women with Disabilities, Mr. Zulqarnain Asghar - President Potohar Mental Health Association, Mr. Fazal ur Rehman - Country Director Helping Hands. The theme of the show was “Inclusion Matters - Access and Empowerment” How things have developed and have things improved and as a society have we opened up our mind towards disability or we are still intolerant. These Talk shows are important to highlight the access needs of People with Disability and the problems they are facing.

M. Atif Sheikh said “Let me acknowledge your contribution and PTV World for highlighting this issue every year and in a way which is required, to highlight the rights based approach of persons with disabilities and inviting them on the stage to speak about their issues themselves and it is the best thing media can contribute.”

“Once we review the success and failure of our work with Persons with Disabilities we are not very much disappointed that we are going in a right direction but the pace is quite slow. At documentation level and commitment levels we have developed a lot and we have addressed Disability issue in all levels. But now we have to make a uniform effort to implement all these commitments.”

“Disability is not a disease. It’s a diversity and we have to accept it” said Mr. Atif Sheikh

Ms. Abia Akram added that “Disabled People’s Organizations are more working on the Leadership of Women with Disabilities, they are taking an initiative to empower and making them independent and mobilizing them and at the same time building their capacities as leaders so that they can advocate for themselves and speak for their rights on International level. We need to provide them sustainable long term plans with international and developed organizations so that they can provide reasonable accommodation.”

Mr. Atif Sheikh added “We need to have a Twin Track Approach – we have to empower Persons with Disabilities so that they can contribute in Development Process, on the other hand we have to desensitize the society to accept Persons with Disabilities as diversified community to modify their surroundings, infrastructures, communication and the services according to the need of everyone living in the society. Then Persons with Disabilities will be included in the mainstream.”

For Parents who are having Children with Disabilities, Abia Akram said that “They have to spare some time to take them out of their homes wherever Disabled People’s Organizations are working. Take them there. Don’t feel fear about having Girls with Disabilities out of their

homes. Everybody out there now is so sensitized and taking care of their disability and diversity so it is very convenient for them to go out and sit with people and talk about their problems and their challenges. Then they will come up as their own suggestions”

“Look Persons with Disabilities as Human Being, not things or commodities” said Mr. Zulqarnain Asghar

Mr. Fazal ur Rehman added in the discussion that “Academia should contribute in the cause and they have to make friendly environment for People with Disabilities”

There was a Video Documentary on International Day of Persons with Disabilities – 2014, “Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology”

Ms. Abia Akram told that they are working with US Embassy on a project of Women Empowerment all over the country to implement

Mr. Atif Sheikh also told about the Launch of first ever Disability rights Android Mobile App to get information about disability. The application provides complete information on the facilities available for People with Disabilities in the country including the list of education and rehabilitation centers, process of CNIC and voter registration and legislations related to PWDs etc

KEY POLICY ASKS:

- There is a need to understand and to make other persons realize that Persons with Disabilities are equal human being but their needs are different.
- There is a need to set aside the budget at national level and provincial level for People with Disabilities specially to address their problems, for their education, for their accessibility.
- Persons with disabilities need to have a position in decision making process. There should be at least one representation in Parliament represented by Person with Disability.
- Actions speak louder than words. If persons with disabilities are visible on all levels, then we can change the attitudinal barriers faced by them.
- There is a need of accuracy in data collection from Government side as well as from Disabled People’s Organizations.
- There is a need to have Central Information System, from where parents can get information about the facilities they need for their children.
- Sensitization of teachers, staff and other students is required to make Education inclusive and environment accessible.
- There is a need to engage more women with disabilities who are having same experiences so that they go and talk with Women or girls with disabilities and have peer counselling session.

PICTURES:



