

Press Release

Civil society urges for paving effortless and fearless pathways for the youth entrepreneurs to ensure the country's sustainable development!

Today, 5 April 2022, Tuesday, a discussion titled “**Dhaka Dialogue: Youth in Entrepreneurship- Opportunities and Challenges**” was organized by the Center for Participatory Research and Development (CPRD) in cooperation with BRAC University, Dweep Unnayan Sangstha (DUS), Manab Mukti Sangstha (MMS), People's Oriented Program Implementation (POPI), Proyas Manobik Unnayan Society, and Shushilan at the conference room of BRAC Centre Inn, Dhaka.

The introductory speech was delivered by Md. Shamsuddoha, Chief Executive of CPRD, and Dr. Manoj Roy, a lecturer at Lancaster University, the UK, delivered the keynote speech. Besides, Mr. Ayub Khan, Deputy Director, Department of Social Services, Ms. Tushar Kona Khandker, CBI Expert, Ministry of Finance, Ms. Lakhsana Lucky, Assistant Director, Department of Women Affairs, and Mr. Md. Shawkat Ali, Assistant Director, Department of Youth Development presented their views on the keynote speech and also on the challenges, opportunities and prospects of youth entrepreneurship in the country. Also, delegates, representatives, and officials of various government, non-government, and civil society organizations attended the discussion.

In the introductory speech, Md. Shamsuddoha said, “youths have a lot to contribute to the country's development drive. The past history of Bangladesh mirrors a glorious role of the youths. In this era of climate change, youths have to step forward to combat climate change and ensure sustainable development. It is time to act beyond the boundary and think out of the box. Entrepreneurial activities should march on taking into account the fact of climate change and its consequent impacts. He stressed taking into consideration the eco-friendly technologies and geo-physical environment of the country while initiating entrepreneurial activities. The people of our country have an apathy towards works. To be particular, they categorize activities based on subjective judgement, which is unacceptable; we have to treat a work as a work, he added. Addressing the attention of the policymakers, he continued that inadequacy of economic and technical supports for the youths is the greatest impediment to entrepreneurial initiatives in our country. Policy related complexities and procrastination in execution at the government and non-government offices, banks, insurance offices, and lack of a favorable environment for the development of entrepreneurship are compromising the determination, and enthusiasm of the youths for entrepreneurship.” “We need to remove all the hindrances immediately”, he maintained.

At the outset of his speech, Dr. Manoj Roy shed light on the scope, objectives and targets of the research. He said that both the opportunities and prospects of entrepreneurial activities are increasing with the passage of time. It has been found in this study that the impediments like lack of cooperation in the government and non-government institutions, infrastructural limitations, lack of financial and technical supports, corruption, and psychological barriers are dampening the speed of the progress of entrepreneurship development. There is no substitute for entrepreneurial activities for ensuring sustainable development in future. In the context of contemporary realities

and circumstances, it is evident that the enthusiasm for entrepreneurial initiatives is on rise among the youths of our country, which is a light of hope for us.

Ms. Tushar Kona Khandker said, plenty of opportunities of entrepreneurial activities are there in our country, but they are not being utilized properly. The merchandize items or services produced at the grassroot level are not being added properly to the market as well as the supply chain therein. Our efforts will go in vain if we cannot bridge the local productive system and the products with the market. A number of studies are being carried out in our country and the expert flock is contributing through their writings, but the problem is that these works and findings are not being disseminated to the mass and grassroot people.

Ms. Lakhsana Lucky pointed that, the present government of Bangladesh is working day and night under the leadership of honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. We, from the Department of Women Affairs, are providing the women entrepreneurs with financial and technical supports for entrepreneurial activities. From our observation, we have seen that there are still many sectors which are still unutilized or under-utilized but can be used for the women and youth development in our country. She stressed that ensuring an entrepreneur-friendly environment and connecting the women folk and the youth community with the entrepreneurial activities are a must to make sustainable development happen.