

'Ensure economic emancipation of marginalised communities'

DU Correspondent

Speakers at a programme yesterday demanded equal rights of the members of the communities and opportunities in all sectors, including education, in a bid to develop their living standards.

They called on the government to ensure economic emancipation and empowerment of the members of the communities to remove their age-old misery and suffering.

Representatives from Dalits, Harijans (untouchables), Hijras (hermaphrodites), Disabled and other marginalised communities said they are repressed and have been facing discrimination for eras in society, though they have been providing some important services. They said this at a programme organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and its associate bodies at the National Press Club in the city marking the World Dignity Day on Saturday.

A total of 45 students of different communities who have come out SSC and HSC examinations successfully with Grade Point Average (GPA) A+ and A this year were also honoured at the programme.

Dipali Das of Bangladesh Dalit Parishad said members of the Dalit community have been bearing the main burnt of discrimination for years.

Pinki Shikder, a member of Badhan, an organisation working for Hijra community, said Hijras are deprived of their basic human rights.

"We want our dignity like others in the society," Pinki demanded.

Milan Das, director of Parittran, an organisation of Dalits, demanded separate quota for the students of Dalit community in higher education.

Nirmal Chandra Das, secretary general of Bangladesh Harijan Oikya Parishad, said the families of 11 freedom fighters in Harijan community do not get any facilities like those of other freedom fighters in the country.

Though the members of Harijan communities have been clearing cities and towns years after years, they never find permanent jobs in the institutions, he said, adding that they have been living in their colonies in inhuman conditions.

Speaking as the special guest, Chairman of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed stressed the need for framing a law to remove miseries and discrimination against the members of marginalised communities.

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak Speaking as the chief guest termed the present government a friendly one for marginalised communities, saying: "I am not ready to hear the news of repression and discrimination against you people."

Moderating the function, Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF, congratulated the awardees for achieving good results in public examinations in spite of living in various crises.

The members of the marginalised communities have the constitutional rights of receiving equal rights, she added.

Earlier in the morning, members of the communities brought out a colourful procession in the city.

Mosharraf Hossain of Action on Disability and Development (ADD), Dr Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University and Jahurul Alam of Jatiya Protibandhi Forum expressed their solidarity with the programme.



Students of marginalised communities pose for photograph with Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Shaheen Anam and Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed at a programme at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Photo: STAR