

Chapter-11

Ministry of Social Welfare

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 One of the key objectives of women development is to secure women's political and economic rights. Poverty is pointed out as the main challenge of women advancement. According to economists, poverty is multidimensional. As a matter of fact gender and poverty is deeply inter-linked. The government has under taken different activities to solve this problem.
- 1.2 As per Article 15 (d) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 'It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to attain a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people through planned economic growth, with a view to securing its citizens right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases'. Apart from that 'National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), Perspective Plan, 7th Five-year Plan, and other policy documents, emphasize providing social protection for old people, small ethnic communities, disabled persons, destitute women and children.
- 1.3 The government has increased the coverage and the rate of allowance of different social safety-net programs. In Bangladesh, all social safety-net programs are classified under four broad heads: a) to increase capacity of the ultra-poor through monetary transfer; b) to ensure self-employment through micro-credit programs; c) to distribute food grain at lower price in order to ensure food security of the poor and d) to provide education, healthcare facilities and training with an aim to increase the capacity of the poor to change their economic status. In every sector women will get priority.
- 1.4 The policies that have taken in the past for inclusive growth ensures poverty reduction at a satisfactory pace. The aim of social safety net programs is to make these more target oriented so as to ensure value for money. The 'National Social Security Strategy (NSSS)' has been formulated. For implementation of NSSS several projects have been taken such as 'Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) and 'Strengthening Public Financial Management for Social Protection (SPFMSP)'. This sort of project will enhance social protection system and that will also ensure gender parity.
- 1.5 The Ministry of Social Welfare largely helps the destitute and disadvantaged irrespective of religion, caste and gender. However, women, as the backward section of the society get priority in all the initiatives of the ministry. Moreover, Ministry of Social Welfare is working for securing rights and privileges of the autistic

and disabled girl child through mass communication, autism awareness program, installation of disabled girl-child friendly structure in the educational institutions, extension of housing facilities for poor girl child at upazilla level and protection for the abused and orphan girl child.

2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry

- ❖ Formulate and implement policies relating to social welfare;
- ❖ Improve the standard of living of disadvantaged segments of the population;
- ❖ Facilitate registration of voluntary social service organizations;
- ❖ Provide education, training and rehabilitation services to the destitute, orphans, and helpless children;
- ❖ Provide education, training and rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities;
- ❖ Provide rehabilitation and developmental support to vagrants, juvenile delinquents and persons prone to social crimes; implementation of probation.

3.0 Strategic objectives of the Ministry and their Relevance with Women's Advancement and Rights

3.1 Equitable socio-economic development: As inclusion of 50 per cent women beneficiaries in 3 programs, interest free micro-credits for cent percent women beneficiaries in one programme is mandatory; on an average, annually 1.48 lakh women, are benefiting from enhanced social security, self-employment, education and training, and income generating activities. These women will also have opportunities to have their own capital and better access to government resources and services. This will have direct impact on women's advancement. Priority is also given to enhancing the wellbeing and rehabilitation for helpless female children. On an average, annually 8 thousand 5 hundred female children will be provided with social security through government organisations and 9 thousand by private organisations. As there is also a provision to include disabled women in all these activities, it will also help to ensure education, health, training, as well as safe shelters for them and this will, in turn, reduce their probable risk and increase their social safety.

3.2 Social protection for the disadvantaged people: Social security for about 34.27 lakh women have been ensured, as it is compulsory that 100 per cent of the beneficiaries will be comprising the widows, women oppressed by husband and distressed women and 50 per cent of the women beneficiaries will be comprising from the elderly and disabled allowances programs. As a result, social dignity and empowerment of women will be achieved and poverty risks will be reduced. Further, opportunities to have adequate accommodation, clothing, health and

nutrition for the elderly, widows, women oppressed by husband, distressed women and women with disability will also be increased. As both men and women are involved with welfare organisations, initiatives will be taken to strengthen the activities related to women advancement on a priority basis. In addition, registered welfare organizations will play a pivotal role in enhancing women's social status and participation in different forums, providing legal assistance, sharing public resources and services, preventing women from repression, child marriage and dowry.

- 3.3 **Social justice and social inclusion:** Along with the provision of education and training, safe shelters and maintenance are being provided to women who come into contact with the legal system in order to increase social security and reduce the risk of harm. Annually, 12,000 women will be provided assistance through Government/non-Government organisations to enable them to receive fair justice under the legal system and for rehabilitation into society. Through training and rehabilitation programmes, 600 disadvantaged women on an average annually and 600 adolescents will be gaining access to safe home programmes. In addition, social security support services, legal aid and fair justice will be provided to women affected by social maladies (dowry, sexual harassment, child marriage and drug addiction). Among the health service recipients, 50% are women, hence, there will be positive impact on them to ensure social security. Further, women will also be protected from the probable loss and vulnerability from the provision of health services and rehabilitation for the expectant mother, poor women and children, which have been given due priority 50% vulnerable women and women with disability patient will be ensured among the patients who will be provided with free treatment from private hospital.

4.0 **Roles and Responsibilities of the Ministry for Women's Advancement and Rights**

- 4.1 GDP growth is not the sole index of overall development. As mentioned before economic development creates wealth gap between the rich and the poor. Moreover, due to accident, natural disaster and social disorder a person or a family can lose basic capability to perform their societal responsibility and to enter job market. Since the women in our society lag behind men in almost all aspects of socio-economic life and since they are among the poorest of the poor, maintaining gender equity relating to physical and mental development of human being is not enough. Rather as disadvantaged group women should be given priority in all sorts of social protection programs. A society must ensure that all its citizens including women are able to use their full potential. MoSW implements various programs and projects to mainstream disadvantaged people into economy.
- 4.2 The goals, strategic objectives and activities of the ministry are adopted in line with the underlying principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1948; Convention on Child Rights 1989; UN Convention on Rights of Disabled Persons 2006; 7th five year plan, Perspective Plan,

National Social Welfare Policy 2005; National Policy on Disability 1995; the National Child Policy 2011, the National Women Development Policy 2011, Declaration of expansion of Social Safety-nets programme in Current Government's Election Manifesto, the Person's with Neuro-Developmental Disabilities Act, 2013; The Maintenance of Parents Act, 2013; The Children Act, 2013; The Vagrants and Homeless Person's (Rehabilitation) Act, 2011; The Special Privilege of Women in Prison Act, 2006; The Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961; The Probation of Offenders Ordinance, 1960; The Orphanages and Widows' Homes Act, 1944. These acts, rules and policies are ensuring women's advancement and right as well.

- 4.3 The following table presents the number of female beneficiaries in various programs of the Ministry of Social Welfare. Although almost all the policies relating to social safety net programs are planned to ensure gender parity, in reality the number of female beneficiaries is lower than that of the male.

Number of female beneficiaries in different safety net programs (2016-17)

Serial No.	Social Safety Net Program	Total number of beneficiaries	Number of women beneficiaries	Women beneficiaries (%)
1.	Old Age Allowance	31,50,000	15,51,06	49.24
2.	Allowances for the Widowed, Deserted and Destitute Women	11,50,000	11,50,000	100.0
3.	Allowances for the Financially Insolvent Disabled	7,50,000	3,60,300	48.04
4.	Stipend for Disabled Students	70,000	32,445	46.35
5.	Fund for the Welfare of Acid Burnt and Disables	92,274	30,118	32.64
6.	Livelihood Development of third gender, <i>bede</i> and others	36,622	Female: 15,836 Third gender: 5,774	43.27

- 4.4 Major activities of the Ministry of Social Welfare involve development of livelihood of poor, women, children and physically or mentally disabled persons. Budget allocation for each of the activities is apportioned for women development. Henceforth all the activities of the ministry one way or the other helps strengthening economic status of the women.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women's Advancement (Direct and Indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Social Protection	❖ The Ministry of Social Welfare is running a number of

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1	2	3
		<p>social safety net programs to create an effective social protection system. While under old age allowance around 31.50 lacs people receive 500 taka per month, under disable allowance 7.50 lac poor persons receive 600 taka per month. Moreover, 11.50 lacs widows, deserted and distressed women gets 500 taka per month and 36.62 thousand third gender person, bede and others get monetary allowance and stipend at differential rate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Since 50 per cent of the beneficiaries of the programs are women, it ultimately benefits 34.27 lac women. Consequently, social status and security of the women increase. Women are being empowered and graduated from poverty at the end.
2.	Interest Free Microcredit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mainstreaming poor and disabled persons through effective training and microcredit program will reduce poverty. ❖ Compulsory provision of including 50 percent women in three interest free micro-credit programs and 100 percent women in another similar programme has direct impact on empowerment, social security, self-employment, education and training, and income generating activities along with capital accumulation of 1.48 lac women.
3.	Protection of orphaned and helpless children under the Government management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The rights of the most endangered portion of the society will be secured through providing protection to orphans and endangered children in the form of accommodation, food, clothing, education, and medical treatment. ❖ As disadvantaged girls are given priority in government welfare and rehabilitation program, around 8.5 thousand girls of different government organizations and 9 thousand girls of private organizations will enjoy social protection. The children living in the organizations receive training and finally get integrated with the society. Since women with disability get priority in these programs, their education, health services, training facilities and safe accommodation will be ensured through the programmes. They will enjoy more security and will be protected from possible vulnerabilities.
4.	Protection,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ In light of the special needs of persons with disabilities,

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	development and welfare of the persons with disabilities	<p>efforts will be made to integrate them into the mainstream of society as skilled manpower by providing accommodation, education and training under special management, and supplying them assistive devices.</p> <p>❖ Disabled women are given a priority in these programs that offer education, health, training and housing. As a result they will be protected from social ills.</p>

6.0 Women's Participation in Ministries Activities and their Share in Total Expenditure

(Taka in Crore)

Description	Budget 2017-18			Revised 2016-17			Budget 2016-17		
	Budget	Women Share		Revised	Women Share		Budget	Women Share	
		Women	percent		Women	percent		Women	percent
Total Budget	400266	112019	27.99	317174	86586	27.3	340605	92781	27.24
Ministry Budget	4834	2040	42.21	4140	1726	41.7	4273	1714	40.12
Development	208	194	93.63	135	102	75.69	168	79	47.28
Non-Development	4626	1846	39.9	4005	1624	40.55	4106	1635	39.83

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the Ministry in relation to Women's Advancement and Rights

Indicator	Unit	Actual		Target
		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
1	2	3	4	5
Number of female beneficiaries in Old Age Allowance	%	48.59	49.01	49.24
Number of female beneficiaries in Interest Free Micro-credits	%	58.61	59.66	60.04

8.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

8.1 The Ministry of Social Welfare has taken a number of social safety net programs to build an effective social protection system. The MoSW administer old age allowance for around 35 lac people including 12.65 lac women and 8.25 lac poor persons under allowance for disabled program. Women constitute 50 percent of the beneficiaries of old age and disable allowance programs and 100 percent of widows, deserted and distressed women allowance program. As a result, social status and security of the women increases. They are being empowered and lifted above the poverty level. Apart from the above, women are receiving training on handicraft, wool weaving, tailoring, embroidery, cane-craft from different training centers. So far 12,466 women received training from different centre under Ministry of Social Welfare and

finally became self-employed. The trained women are providing financial assistance to their families staying at home.

8.2 Success story of Basana Bibi

Swapna Begum was born in a backward village named Shakatit in urgency family of Madati Union in Kaliganj Upazila of Lalmonirhat District. Swapna means Dreamer in English. She had to get marry with Kamal Hossain of her neighboring village Harishwar at the age of 16, even before finish her study. Poverty followed Swapna Begum like a shadow even after her marriage. In order to win the battle against poverty and for the purpose of permanently eradicate poverty from her life she travelled hundreds of places throughout the country just for better job. Sometimes at Bogra sometimes at Dhaka. In the meantime a new guest come in the family, she came back to the old village at her father's home with her husband and newborn child. Swapna Begum continues her same poor life with her family by share cropping of other villagers, animal husbandry with sharing basis and by poultry. In a hard winter morning she meet a Union Social worker Jannatul Mawa of Kaliganj Upazila Social Service Office while she was on the way for work. On the way she started to share her hardship with Social Worker. Once the way ends but her story of sadness continued. Jannatul Mawa was listening attentively the unbeatable life history of Swapna. Swapna Begum went for her workplace while it comes. Jannatul Mawa came to the office and informed the senior authority about her straggle. One of the activities of Department of Social Services is the Rural Social Services, a micro financing program. Later on Swapna Begum was brought under this program. Jannatul Mawa arranged a loan of 10,000 taka as primary fund to Swapna Begum in 2015 and advised to do poultry farming of duck as well. As suggested by the Union Social Worker, Swapna Begum bought 300 One-day-old ducklings at the rate of 25 Tk each, which costs 7,500 Tk in total. With the remaining 2,500 Tk she made a place for the ducklings with a bamboo fence beside her house. During the interval of day's work she went out in search of food near the house with ducklings. Days are passing on. Day by day the ducklings grow bigger children. 50 ducks were died by this time. After three months, she sold all of her ducks 50,000 tk. This is how she started her new journey. She extended her duck farm day by day. Now there are 500 ducks in her farm, a poultry firm with few chickens and goats. Now she is dreaming to build a cattle farm of cows. Swapna Begum has worked hard which made her self-reliance. Department of Social Services always stands beside the women like Swapna Begum who, wants to make their dream become true.

9.0 Development of last year's recommendations

Last year recommendations	Development
1. The Social Welfare Ministry must ensure equal share of women in all the programs of the ministry;	The Ministry of Social Welfare has taken various initiatives regarding ensure equal share of women in all the programs of the ministry. Old age allowances, one of the main activities where the share of women beneficiary increased from 48.59 in 2014-15 fiscal year to 49.24 in 2016-17 fiscal year. Share of the women beneficiary are increasing all other activities as well.
2. The ministry should continue communication with concern educational institutions so as to ensure disable girl friendly educational structure;	Special needs of disabled and girls are being highly considering in construction of new buildings. National Disability Complex is one of such special needs sensitive building which is under construction.
3. Establishment of 'Daycare Center' for the working women in all large offices under the Ministry of Social Welfare;	A Day care centre has ben established in Department of Social Services Head Quarter at Agargoan, Dhaka. About 10 kids and their service holder mother getting the service of the day care centre.
4. Digitize all social safety net related services;	Initiatives are taken for build a integrated software for Social Safety nets program beneficiaries. www.bhata.gov.bd is an example of this type of initiatives. All the information of 31.80 lac Social Safety Net beneficiary already been entered in this data base and it will continue till entire beneficiary included in the system.
5. Introduction of senior citizens' corner in the public hospitals and health complexes with special consideration for senior women citizen;	Ministry has been taken initiatives regarding senior citizens' corner in the public hospitals and health complexes with special consideration for senior women citizen. Hopefully from 2017-18 fiscal year it would be introduce in some hospitals in Dhaka.

Last year recommendations	Development
6. Social protection facilities for orphan and socially abused girl should be extended;	New eight government children homes are under construction in current year and construction of other 19 homes for children are in plan for next year. There are 11 Sheikh Russell Training and Rehabilitation Centre are being established in different cities for the development of street children. Ministry is planning to extend these training and rehabilitation centre in all the 19 old district head quarters. Ministry also running 6 safe homes for women and socially abused girl in 6 divisions.
7. To provide training to physically challenged women so that employment opportunities could be increased for them.	Women and Persons are highly encouraged for training admission in all the training centres under ministry of social welfare. In 2014-15 fiscal year 14,885 persons have skill development training from Urban Community Development's Skill training centers where women was 5,897 and persons with disabilities was 75 person. In fiscal year 2016-17 Total trainee was 18435, women 6491 and persons with disabilities 81.

10.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Ministry of Social Welfare should take initiatives for Goal 5 and Target 5.4 of SDGs as Lead Ministry for Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- ❖ The Social Welfare Ministry must ensure equal share of women in all the programs of the ministry;
- ❖ The ministry should continue communication with concern educational institutions so as to ensure disable girl friendly educational structure;
- ❖ Establishment of 'Daycare Center' for the working women in all large offices under the Ministry of Social Welfare;
- ❖ Digitize all social safety net related services;

- ❖ Introduction of senior citizens' corner in the public hospitals and health complexes with special consideration for senior women citizen;
- ❖ Social protection facilities for orphan and socially abused girl should be extended;
- ❖ To provide training to physically challenged women so that employment opportunities could be increased for them.