

Chapter-35

Ministry of Environment and Forest

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) is working to ensure adoption and mitigation capacity of the country to face disasters and disasters triggered by global climate change. The ministry is focusing on ensuring a sustainable environment for the present and future generations of the country through initiatives for increasing forest land, developing forest and conserving bio-diversity.
- 1.2 In the light of the implementation of the purpose of current government's Vision 2021, Delta Plan 2100, implementation of the Seventh Five-Year Plan and the Prime Minister's whole-hearted encouragement and guidance the ministry is working. To ensure environmental sustainability is one of the vital Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) declared by the United Nations. Under this program, 10 special programs have been identified, and significant progress has achieved regarding these activities. Various programmes/activities have been announced under the SDGs to continue the sustainable economic development of our country. Reduction of the climate change risk, conservation of forest and prevention of desertification etc. activities are directly related with Ministry of Environment and Forests. Government aim is to achieve the sustainable economic development through the implementation of these programs. On the basis of the existing policies, rules and regulations Ministry of Environment and Forests has been working extensively along with the concerned.
- 1.3 Forests play an important role in maintaining environmental eco-system and promoting socio-economic development. The government has given special emphasis on preserving environment through the amendment of Article 18(A) of the Constitution. The forest sector contributes 1.72 percent to GDP of the country and about 2 percent of the total population of the country directly or indirectly depends on the forest for their livelihood through various forest resource based trades and activities- such as wood based industries, wood seasoning and sawing, furniture making, nursery plantations, honey collection, and forestation. A large number of people in Sundarban and its adjacent areas depend on the Mangrove forest for their livelihood. In case of distress due to climate change, women are found to be more vulnerable than men. For instance, in drought prone and coastal areas, women and children have to spend more time and energy to collect drinking water and wood for cooking.

2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry

- ❖ Conservation and improvement of the quality of the environment and its quality including control of environmental pollution;

- ❖ Adaptation and implementation of appropriate clauses contained in different regional and international conventions, agreements, and protocols relating to environment, forestry and wild life;
- ❖ Research and training relating to forestry and environment issues;
- ❖ Plantation of trees, creation of new forest areas, extraction of re-generated forest resources, implementation of social forestry programmes and classification of plants ;
- ❖ Conservation, expansion and development of both Government and private forest resources, and preparation of a forest inventory;
- ❖ Conservation of wild life and bio-diversity, promotion of eco-tourism (environmentally friendly tourism) and establishment of sanctuaries and eco-parks;
- ❖ Maintenance of botanical gardens, and conducting surveys to identify and conserve plant species;
- ❖ Extraction of forest resources, establishment of forest resource-based industries, and marketing of the products produced in those industries.

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

- 3.1 **Mitigating the adverse effects of climate change:** Climate change adversely affect agriculture and water resources which makes women and children particularly vulnerable. Adaptation and mitigation programmes have been formulated by the MoEF to address climate vulnerabilities and to reduce the risk of health hazards. Women as a group will benefit from these programmes. Women also benefit from employment opportunities as they are included in technician's training program on reducing gas emissions from refrigeration which is responsible for the depletion of the ozone layer. These interventions have helped to improve women's social status.
- 3.2 **Conservation and sustainable management of forest resources:** Different training programs for the people involved in social forestation increase their awareness of and contribute to the creation of forest resources. Women get opportunities for self-employment and income generation as they get involved in participatory plantation and training, distribution of different fruits, wood and medicinal saplings for homestead gardening.
- 3.3 **Control of Pollution:** As women form 50percent of Bangladesh's population, interventions to address the impact of climate change including control of pollution has a positive impact on women's health and employment opportunities.
- 3.4 **Conservation of biodiversity:** In the participatory biodiversity preservation activities, 50percent participants are poor and destitute women. Furthermore, in local

planning committees 30percent of the representation is reserved for women. These initiatives are indirectly helping to improve income and social status of the women.

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

4.1 To face the challenges of climate change, government has developed Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, 2009, created the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF) with own financing. The government has also enacted the Climate Change Trust Act, 2010. The following notable issues relating to women's development are included in Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan - 2009:

4.2 First thematic area of BCCSAP 2009 is food security, Social protection and health security. Women's related programmes are included in first thematic area. Following projects have implemented under this thematic area where health security of women and children have been ensured through safe drinking water. One project has been completed and another is on going.

| SL. No. | Projects Name | Implementing Agency | Estimated Cost (in Lakh Taka) |
|---------|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. | Supply of safe drinking water and social protection for women and children living in vulnerable situation due to environmental hazards. | Department of Women and Children Affairs | 300.00 |
| 2. | Social protection of women and children living in disaster prone areas due to climate change. | Department of Women and Children Affairs | 500.00 |

4.2 It is mandatory to mention what the project will play in the welfare of women and children, in Article 19 of the Scheme Table of the Climate Change Trust.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

| Serial No. | Priority spending Area/Program | Impact on women's advancement (Direct and Indirect) |
|------------|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 1. | Mitigation of the adverse effects of climate change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Through the Community Based Adaption to Ecologically Critical Area through Pro-biodiversity Observation and Social Protection Project in Sylhet and Cox's bazar 2187 man and 884 women members are included in the village conservation group. ❖ In the training program for technicians on emission of ozone gas from refrigerators, women have been included. Different adaptation and mitigation activities will benefit women's health, create employment and increase their income. |

| Serial No. | Priority spending Area/Program | Impact on women's advancement (Direct and Indirect) |
|------------|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. | Preservation of forest resources and sustainable management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Of the total representatives to be selected for wildlife survey in Chittagong Hill Tracts, 80 percent will be women under the project implemented by Bangladesh Forest Research Institute. 20 percent women will be employed in preparation of Cement Based Particle Board. ❖ About 30 percent of women are beneficiaries in the forest preservation programs under participatory social forestation projects. Of the total earnings obtained from sale proceeds of the forest resources, 45-55 percent is distributed to women beneficiaries. Moreover, there is a provision that 2 out of 5 members in the committee will be women to ensure women's participation and ensure women are also in decision making positions. ❖ Under Social Afforestation Programme, Tk. 261.15 crore has been distributed among 1 lakh 33 thousand 80 beneficiaries of whom 30 percent are women. This will enhance their economic empowerment and social status. |
| 3. | Pollution Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Women account for half of the total population of the country; different programs in this area will have positive impact on women's general and reproductive health. ❖ A joint venture programme, Development of Marketing of Environment Friendly Cooking has been taken in collaboration with the Department of Environment, Deutsche Gesellschaft International Zusammenarbeit (GZI) and Indian Government. This programme is financed by Bangladesh Climate Change Trust Fund (BCCTF), GZI and Indian Government. Under this programme around 1 million environment friendly cookers (Bondhu Chula) have been installed in 64 districts to protect women and child from indoor air pollution. ❖ Government have been taken initiative to install different types brick kiln which are energy efficient, environment friendly and modern kiln to control air pollution from brick kiln. Draft Solid waste management rules-2017 have been prepare. Half of our populations are women so that any interventions to address the pollution control that has a positive impact on women's and children health. |

| Serial No. | Priority spending Area/Program | Impact on women's advancement (Direct and Indirect) |
|------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. | Biodiversity conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Provision for participation of 50 percent ultra-poor and destitute women has been ensured in 39 Integrated Protected Areas (PA) Co-management project and they have been involved in participatory biodiversity preservation activities. Also, 30 percent women's representation has been ensured in local project planning committee. Again, under the Biodiversity Conservation and Eco-tourism Programme employment opportunity of 10 lakh man-months has been created out of which 30 percent of the beneficiaries are women. ❖ All these activities create opportunities for women's employment and income generation and access to government resources and services. This will increase their social status. ❖ Female officials and representatives from different organization have been participated at biodiversity related workshops and training program. In this regard, female representative's presence is 30%. |

6.0 Women's Share in Ministry's 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 | 1121 | 309 | 27.57 | 1851 | 262 | 14.17 | 1034 | 303 | 29.37 |
| Development | 585 | 198 | 33.83 | 356 | 157 | 44.19 | 415 | 198 | 47.77 |
| Non-Development | 536 | 111 | 20.73 | 1495 | 105 | 7.01 | 619 | 105 | 17.04 |

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

7.1 Success of the Ministry

- ❖ Women's participation has been ensured in the training programs for technicians on emission of ozone gas from refrigerators. This will create job opportunities and reduce the risk (disasters) and health hazards.
- ❖ Under Social Afforestation Programme, Tk. 261.15 crore has been distributed among 1 lakh 33 thousand 80 beneficiaries of which 30 percent are women. This effort is enhancing their economic empowerment and social status.

- ❖ In 39 Integrated Protected Areas, 50 percent of the beneficiaries have been selected from ultra-poor and destitute women who are involved in participatory biodiversity preservation activities. Also, 30 percent women's representation has been ensured in local project planning committee. Again, under the Biodiversity Conservation and Eco-tourism programme, 10 lakh man-months of employment opportunity has been created of which 30 percent are women.
- ❖ Under the Community based Adaptation to Climate Change through Coastal Afforestation Project, 12,708 beneficiaries involved in social afforestation programme have been trained in tree plantation, nursery development and other related activities of which 45percent beneficiaries are women. This programme has created employment opportunity for women.
- ❖ Climate Resilient Participatory Afforestation and Reforestation Project is being implemented by Bangladesh Forest Department. Under this project, 25,332 persons will be included as beneficiaries of which 40percent beneficiaries are women.

7.2 Success of program for Destitute Women

- ❖ Mossamat Hamida Begum is a landless housewife. She used to work as a housemaid in other houses to earn her living. She became beneficiary of 1.19 hectare of social forestry areas under Chakchandira Mouja of Dhamoirhat upozilla in Naogaon District under Social Forest Division of Rajshahi in 1991-1992. After becoming a beneficiary, she nurtured and looked after plants of her allotted area properly along with her family and works.
- ❖ She received benefit of 6 lac 88 Thousand 5 hundred taka as her share after selling the trees of her allotted areas through auction in 2014-2015. She has planned to spend the money on her children's education, family development, buying new lands and properties and build a new house. Now Mossamat Hamida Begum has been able to be a successful and self-reliant woman in the society due to the support of the social forestry activities implemented by the Forest Department and became a unique example of women empowerment in the society through forestry activities.

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ The Ministry of Environment and Forest has prepared Bangladesh Climate Change and Gender Action Plan to ensure social safety and women's empowerment. The actions taken to achieve this and ensure women's ownership rights which are clearly spelt out in the guidelines for implementing the action plan;

- ❖ Government needs to take an impact assessment study on the effect of employment and migration of the urban and rural women due to climate change. Moreover, there is a need to carry out a research on local adaptation strategy to adjust with the changed environment;
- ❖ There is a need for specific strategies to reduce gender based inequality in adaptation and mitigation programmes;
- ❖ Gender issues need to be aligned with all the related policies, strategies and activities of this Ministry;
- ❖ Honoring women who have made outstanding contribution to the preservation of environment on every World Environment Day;
- ❖ There need to ensure the participation of women in the local management body of environment and pollution control;
- ❖ The MoEF and the Ministry of Women Children Affairs collectively need to set up a steering committee to ensure the equal participation of women in the policy and activities related to preservation and management of environment;
- ❖ Deployment of women should be stopped in the industries which has serious health hazards and creates environmental pollution and to promote alternative employment opportunities for the women;
- ❖ There needs to take initiative for the further extension of employment opportunities for the women in the local offices of Environment and Forest Department;
- ❖ Ensuring at least 40 percent representation of women in Department of Environment and local committees of forest department.