

Chapter-42

Posts and Telecommunications Division

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At present world Telecommunication and Information Technology are the most useful instruments for socio-economic development of a country. The responsibility of Posts and Telecommunications Division is to deliver quality post and telecommunication services to the door-step of mass people at affordable price without difficulty by using modern ICT facilities. This division is playing an important role in poverty reduction, eliminate gender discrimination, proper distribution of wealth and disseminate basic citizen services to all and everywhere as a consequence of getting dynamism in economic activities through ensuring speedy and undisrupted transaction of information. At the same time, its contribution to revenue collection is significant. In the gross domestic production, contribution of this sector at constant price is 3.41 percent in FY 2012-13. In vision 2021 and Seventh Five Year Plan emphasis has been given to raise economic growth through investment augmentation and to build investment friendly infrastructure for employment creation, notably emphasis specified towards development of telecommunication sector. In this aspiration Posts and Telecommunication Division has been given their relentless effort to ensure reliable and standard post and telecommunication services at reasonable price exploiting modern technologies and institutional development. The advancement of this technology plays very significant role in the development of industry, culture and economic development as well as to enhance GDP growth of the country.

2.0 Major Functions of the Division

- ❖ To establish, administer and maintain telecommunication network throughout the country;
- ❖ To establish, administer and maintain postal services infrastructure throughout the country;
- ❖ To provide telecommunication and postal services;
- ❖ To determine fees, charges, tariffs in telecommunication and postal sector;
- ❖ To provide Post Office Savings Account and Postal Life Insurance services;
- ❖ To formulate draft of different laws, rules and policies relating to telecommunication and postal sector, then implementation and monitoring;

- ❖ To provide liaison, contract making and protocol with different countries and international organizations on Post and Telecommunication related matters

3.0 Strategic objectives of Posts and Telecommunications Division and their Relevance for Women's Advancement and Rights

3.1 Provide modern telecommunication services and its expansion: Extended telecommunication services at affordable price will increase availability of telephone and internet supports/logistics for women. This will increase opportunities in education and health care services for women, creates congenial working environment in the workplaces for working women and increase women's participation in economic activities finally by getting access and communicating in IT database awareness and women empowerment will go up simultaneously. This will obviously raise the social status of women..

3.2 Modernization of postal services, expansion and diversification of ICT based postal service: Efficient and affordable postal services will make the communication and commodity mobilization activities easier for women. Savings Bank facilities will encourage women's affinity for savings which will help their economic security in personal and family life. Besides, through electronic money transfer service monetary transaction for women will be easy and speedy. Again carrying money and making payment by postal cash card will increase liberty and security of women in cash transfer.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Posts and Telecommunications Division for Women's Advancement and Establishment of Rights:

4.1 Policies and Functions of Posts and Telecommunications Division: The contribution of this division in the advancement of women has been significant by way of promoting their spontaneous mobility, connectivity and access to information. In this regard, two things may be highlighted, which are mentioned below:

- ❖ **Gender development issues in Policy Documents of the Division:** National Information and Communication Technology Policy 2009 set its mission as ensuring social justice for women, equal-opportunity and equal-participation through optimal use of information and communication technology. 'Social equity' has been set as the prior strategic theme in that policy document. Removing economic disparity and digital divide has been prioritized with the broader aim of mainstreaming disadvantaged population, specifically of 4 categories: (a) low-income groups, (b) minority communities, (c) women and (d) the disabled. This policy sets an action plan that includes strategy for reducing gender disparity in IT education and IT related professions. At the same time,

this plan emphasizes on the establishment of 'e-commerce centers' that will help expanding the market for women led small industry.

- ❖ **Impact of functions of the Division on women's development:** Providing telecommunication services at the door-step of the marginalized section of the population will ensure free flow of economic, political, social and legal information to all communities. This will play significant role in the empowerment of women and consolidate their rights and social status. Besides, modern and efficient postal service at affordable price has positive impact on the personal, social and economic communication of the whole population including women. At the same time, it generated dynamism in the national economic activities. Consequently number of new women entrepreneur is raising continuously.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Increase telecommunication services	As half of the population women along with men will get benefit by overall positive impact in economy of the country gained through improved telecommunication services. Besides, these improved services will ensure better and broader scope and access to education and health services for women. This will make women's easy entrance to labor market, will reduce daily working hours and provide better working environment resulting enhancement of women's skill. Introduction of new technology in telecommunication sector will also enable women to use advanced technology. Women's personal communication will be easier which will contribute to their security and empowerment. Full-time communication through mobile phone will enhance family's sense of security about their girls, which will in turn enhance women's participation in education and job. Moreover, new communication technology will broaden the creative space for women, and will increase women's involvement in wide range of new economic activities consequently.
2.	Automation of postal services	Modern and efficient postal service will positively impact upon personal, social and economic connectivity of the whole population including women. Improved postal service will enhance monetary transaction and communication carried by women labour. 20% quota is being maintained as vehicle driver in postal service.

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
3.	Improvement of existing postal services and introduction of new updated services	Post E-centers will open the door for channeling information and services to the grass root level women those are the victims of economic and gender disparity. At the same time, diversified initiatives of existing services will open up opportunities for the inclusion of new demands from women entrepreneurs.

6.0 Women's Share in the Division's Total Expenditure

Women are not the direct beneficiary of the activities/projects of this division. Women are enjoying the benefits from the success activities/projects of this division as half of the total Bangladeshi population. So budget is not allocated separately for women development in this division.

(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	2523	825	32.68	2904	999	34.39	2514	733	29.14
Development	1441	792	54.95	1861	967	51.94	1534	703	45.8
Non-Development	1082	33	3.04	1042	32	3.06	980	30	3.08

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

- ❖ Over the past few years, women have got the opportunity to participate in the global economy, using modern and high speed internet services in the cities, Upazillas and even in Union level through implemented/implementing projects under Post and Telecommunication Division.
- ❖ With the introduction of ICT based communication system, the opportunity to access education and healthcare services has increased; expanded training on ICT has creating a congenial working environment in the work place; overall, these have contributed to the development of human rights as well as security of women in family and society.
- ❖ Number of service centers of different mobile operators is increasing continuously, where most of the employees are women. As a result, employment opportunity of women is increasing.

- ❖ Due to the concerted initiatives of this Division during the last three years, the number of mobile subscribers have extended from 11.68 crore to 12.598 crore and internet subscribers from 3.93 to 6.724 crore. As a result, tele-density in the last three years has improved from 76.20% to 83.03 % and internet density from 25.09% to 41.52%. To ensure increase in the use of internet and make its prices affordable, bandwidth charges have been reduced. At present around 100 percent area of the country has come within the coverage of telecommunication network enabling women to conduct business activities from home.
- ❖ Mobile Money Order, Postal Cash Card and Mobile Banking have been introduced. Under 'Mobile Money Order', digital based services are being provided from 8,500 Post Offices, and 'Postal Cash Card' service has been also introduced by PQS in 8,500 post offices.
- ❖ Posts and Telecommunications Division is playing an important role in establishing e-governance. Tele talk Bangladesh has achieved wide-ranging success in e-education, e-public health, e-voting, district e-service, disaster management, e-billing and high speed communication network. Women's participation is higher than men in e-public health and e-commerce.
- ❖ Reserving one laptop in the newly started post-e centers of 8,500 post offices has been targeted for the benefit of rural women. Till now 17,000 entrepreneur is being created through post-e centers, among them half are women
- ❖ As a help line, Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has allocated 10921 short code so that Ministry of Women and Children Affairs can accept information and suggestion to prevent violence against women and children. Any person can get assistance connecting this number. Measures are being taken to make the number Toll Free.
- ❖ Project has been taken to ensure security of overall digital services including security of women and children.

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Arrange necessary measures for promoting the interests of women while employing new technology.
- ❖ Encourage women's participation in the establishment and maintenance of telecommunication network, provision of telecommunication services and postal services, and management related different activities of Post and Telecommunications.

- ❖ Encourage and give preference to women entrepreneurs to work with post-e-centers and similar e-centers.
- ❖ Action may be taken to educate women to create awareness for personal safety and security in using the internet.
- ❖ Action may be taken to enact law to protect harassment and intensive monitoring to ensure security for women in internet using.