

Chapter-12

Ministry of Labour and Employment

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Job creation is the main driving force for poverty alleviation. According to the Labour Force Survey 2010, the number of economically workable population over 15 years in 2010 was 56.7 million, of which 54.1 million are employed, making the unemployment rate 4.5%. Each year more and more people are entering the labour force. At present, the labour force stands at 77.0 million. This makes it imperative that job creation should be the first priority of this ministry. This ministry also ensures that labour has adequate social security; children are not employed in hazardous work, and ensure peaceful labour relations etc. The Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-20), emphasizes the need for higher productivity and decent jobs and higher income. The ministry is therefore focusing on structural change of the labour market to encourage the work force to shift from the less productive agriculture and informal sectors to the high productive manufacturing and formal sectors.

1.2 In the light of Article 15, 25, 38 and 40 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and according to ILO conventions, the Government is determined to take steps to make labour policies more responsive to labour welfare. For this, the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) has taken a range of pragmatic steps to implement the promises made in the Election Manifesto, 2014 and the Vision-2021 to fulfill the basic needs of workers, alleviate poverty rapidly, empower women, create employment and skilled manpower, fix minimum wages by taking into account of the inflation and growth rate and eradicate hazardous child labour. These steps are expected to improve the welfare of labourers, through socio-economic development of labour, create a skilled work force and increase employment and productivity.

2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry

- ❖ To ensure education, welfare and social security to the labourers;
- ❖ To create skilled manpower and scope of employment through training and effective labour administration;
- ❖ To register trade unions, resolve labour conflicts and fix and implement minimum wages;
- ❖ To formulate labour laws, implement and eradicate hazardous child labour;

- ❖ To work with the ILO and other international organizations in labour and manpower management;
- ❖ To provide skill development and employment oriented training both in government and non-governmental sectors.
- ❖ To ensure compliance of labor law and other rules and regulations related to labour and employment.
- ❖ Ensure occupational safety and security including eradication of child labour.

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

- 3.1 **Developing work environment in the industries and ensuring welfare:** Labourers working in the tea gardens and garments are getting sufficient training and health services as these centers are located in industry intensive areas. This in turn is having a positive impact on women's advancement.
- 3.2 **Additional Employment through Creation of Efficient Manpower:** Equal opportunity is being provided to women in the training centers to participate in capacity building which in turn is empowering them to take advantage of employment opportunities.
- 3.3 **Eradication of hazardous child labour:** Both female and male children are employed in hazardous works. Through informal education and skill development training, the child labourers is being given an opportunity to develop skills which will enable them to get decent jobs.
- 3.4 **Social safety of the labourers:** The social safety and economic security of women are ensured through different social, economic and safety net programmes including maternity allowances, educational stipends etc.

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

- 4.1 According to the census conducted by the Bureau of Bangladesh Statistics in 2011, around half of the total population of the country is women. It is impossible to accelerate development unless there is an inclusive growth and all sections of the population benefit from development. As per "Labour Force Survey-2010" there were 17.2 million female workers aged over 15 in the country in 2010. Of them 16.2 million were employed. The percentage of unemployed female labourers was 5.8 which is much higher compared to unemployed men. Most of the women work within their families or in the informal sector either without any wages or for meager amount of wages. Due to women's unpaid work and the fact that they do

not bring money home, their status remains weak. MoLE conducts various programs concerning capacity building, employment opportunities, and welfare services for the female workers. Besides, 4 industry-related educational institutions (IRIs) also provides training to labourers, owners and labour leaders on the topics of labour laws and related matters. This has enabled female workers to become more aware of getting equal opportunities. Three dormitory cum training centre at three EPZs have been established with the financial support of the World Bank for capacity building of female workers.

- 4.2 In the National Labour Policy, 2012, provisions have been made to address wage discrimination along with assurance of equal wages and rights for women workers. Out of 33 conventions of ILO, 7 conventions were ratified by Bangladesh and it has emphasized to uphold the rights and esteem of the women workers. Special provisions have also been made in Sections 93, 94 and 95 of Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, for the welfare of women workers such as women's rest room, child day care centre's etc. Salaries of the garment workers have been raised from Tk. 3,000 to Tk. 5,300. Higher wages, allowances and benefits have been fixed and are being implemented in other sectors too. As a result of these activities, employment opportunities for women have increased and widened in scope, which helps in women's advancement as well as the country's economic development.
- 4.3 In 4 industry-related educational institutions (IRI) situated in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi, workers, owners and labour leaders are given orientation training on labour laws, labour administration, labour rights and owners' duties and responsibilities and other labour relevant matters. Through these trainings, female workers are becoming more conscious about their rights and at the same time their scope of employment are widening. Through the 04 (four) IRI and 29 labour welfare center, department of labour trained the workers specially women workers in RMG sector. In the five days training, the numbers of women workers ranges from 60% to 80%. On the other hand, in the four weeks training program, the number of women workers ranges from 20% to 30%. Involvement of women workers in the Tea sector is much higher than any other sector. The number of the workers in this sector is approximately one lac and five thousand only.
- 4.4 The allocation of budget in the FY 2016-17 for training purpose is one crore taka and it is estimated around one crore and ten lakh taka in FY 2017-18. The allowance for workers of this training is Tk.150 per-day. About 9,104 workers and employees have trained through 4 IRI and 29 labour welfare centre from July 2016 to March 2017. It is expected that 12,000 workers and employees will be trained in the FY 2017-18.

- 4.5 Through the 29 labour welfare centre, workers and their families are provided health services with free of cost. From July 2016 to March 2017, there were 44,557 patients who have been given healthcare services and among them 33,220 workers were female and 11,337 workers were male.
- 4.6 In the FY 2016-17, the figure of budget for health services in department of labour is forty lacs taka. It is estimated at Tk Forty four lacs in the year 2017-18. The number of female workers receiving medical services from labour welfare centre is about 60 to 80%. It would be possible to provide more coverage as well as high quality service if more allocation is given to modernize the labour welfare centers.
- 4.7 The importance of training for female workers is prioritized in department of labour so that women can engage themselves in economic activities at home and abroad. Equal opportunities also ensured to female workers in their training with compare to male workers. In National labour policy 2012, the importance is also given on equal wages for women.
- 4.8 Department of labour has taken different welfare initiatives for the development of female workers. For the accommodation of female workers and to ensure their safety, dormitories are to be built in bandar, Narayangonj and kalurghat, Chittagong in coming years. Moreover, Hospitals regarding occupational and health safety for workers will be built to facilitate the health and other services in Tongi and Narayangonj.
- 4.9 For women's advancement, the following laws and policies have been formulated/amended by the Ministry of Labour and Employment:
- ❖ In order to update the Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 the Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Act, 2013 has been enacted. The rules under this Act has completed in 2015. Provisions for ensuring maternity welfare facilities for female workers and provisions for rationale behavior towards female workers have been made to maintain proper working environment.
- 4.10 Ministry of Labour and Employment enacted the "Domestic Worker's Protection & Welfare Policy 2015" by following the ILO convention on domestic workers in order to ensure their rights and privileges. The right and welfare of the domestic worker will be protected by establishing the above rules.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Sl. No.	Priority spending sector/programmers	Impact on women's development (Direct and Indirect)
1.	Implementing Labour	❖ Directorate of Inspection for Factories and Establishments has been

Sl. No.	Priority spending sector/programmers	Impact on women's development (Direct and Indirect)
	Welfare and Compliance in Industry	<p>upgraded to a Department and increased its manpower to supervise whether the law and rules for labour welfare are implemented properly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Various steps have been taken to ensure workers' security and welfare services including health and decent work in order to increase production of industries. ❖ Various steps have been taken to ensure the welfare of workers and ensure compliance in industries through Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments and Labour Directorate. This is also benefiting women workers. ❖ This department basically continues to work for establishing Rights of women workers through inspection, according to the Bangladesh labor Law-2006, such as, living wages, work environment, maternity leave of woman workers, Day-care centre establishment, managing of washroom and occupational health security and safety are ensured. At present, 4091 numbers of day-care centre have been established in different factories all over country. Total 12,733 numbers of women have been provided maternal opportunity working in different factories all over country up to February-2017. Apart from these, this department continues to initiate inspection activity for ensuring equal work and remuneration for women workers. There is also equal privilege for woman for creating skilled labor power. Household workers safety Law-2015 has been imposed for woman labors served in household activities. Almost 40 lakh workers are working in RMG sectors most of whom are women.
2.	Creation of Skill Manpower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ National Strategy for promotion of Gender Equality in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2012 has been formulated. According to this strategy, to increase female participation in formal TVET institution by at least 60% from the present 24% by 2020 as well as increase female employment by 30%, taking of an action plan in different TVET institution is in progress. Recently, through a circular by the Technical Education Board, quota reservation for female enrollment has been increased from 10% to 20%. ❖ A total number of 168 meetings/workshops/seminars have been held to create the employment opportunity through skill development and 8421 participants were present among which approximately 10% were female. ❖ Organizing workshop on Gender Equality: With the participation of different public and private stakeholders, to increase gender equality in TVET program, 06 (six) workshops has been arranged. To organize the workshops and seminar, a total amount of tk. 4(four) lac has been spent with the financial help of BSEP project under ILO .The participants were oriented on the National Gender Strategy and

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		<p>aligned with that strategy, an action plan has been formulated by Department of Women Affairs, Department of Youth Development, etc. The action plan will be implemented by the concerned authority.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) are also involved in providing skills development training and employment for women. 'Center of Excellence for Leather and Leather Goods' (COEL) has taken various training programs for increasing women employment. Besides, with the help of BGMEA and ILO 'Center of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry' has also been established where garments workers especially women used to take various types of training. ❖ A 'Gender Working Group' has been reconstituted comprising of the representatives from 22 ministries and 27 departments in a bigger scale. The working group has identified their roles and responsibilities by holding regular meetings which they will gradually implementing in their respective organizations. ❖ 'Gender Focal Point' has been selected in 22 ministries and 27 departments related to TVET programs. The Gender Focal Points, holding meetings has identified their roles and responsibilities and upon discussion with their senior authority will implement them in their respective organizations. ❖ Women representatives have been included in the Skill Development Advisory Committee to ensure participation of women at the divisional level. ❖ To assess the status and inclusion of women in TVET sector, a research titled 'Women in Non-traditional trades: A skill Gap Analysis' has been completed. The total expenditure of this research is Tk. 2 (two) lakh. ❖ Initiative has been taken to establish 'Job Placement Cell' in all TVET institution to provide guidance and support for jobs particularly for women. Job placement cells will be established in women technical training centers under DTE and BMET. ❖ To provide gender responsive facilities and safe and secured environment, "Workplace Harassment" policy is on the process of finalization and approval.
3.	Eradication of Child Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 18-month long informal education and 6-month long skill development training in 9 trades are being conducted to address the issue of hazardous child labour. Every month Tk. 160 per trainee is paid as stipend. To create self-employment, 50% of trainee is provided with equipment as per their trade at the end of training. ❖ 27,468 female child workers have received informal education as well as skill development training. Self-employment in safe working

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		<p>environment has been created for female child workers.</p> <p>❖ Eradication of Hazardous Child Labour in Bangladesh (4th phase) Project has been taken up at an estimated cost of Tk. 10489.33 Lakh to be implemented during July 2017-June 2020. Stated objective of the project is eradication of hazardous child labour from the country and specific target of the project is to facilitate withdrawal of 75,000 children engaged in hazardous occupations by providing non-formal education and vocational training to ensure a safe and decent life to them. The training will last for 65 months and will get a monthly allowance of Tk.500.00 during the period. The program will cover 48 city corporations/ municipalities/upazilas of the country.</p>

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	263	167	63.48	290	188	64.78	308	151	49.16
Development	168	157	93.04	214	180	83.99	203	141	69.54
Non-Development	95	10	10.9	76	8	10.94	105	10	9.83

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) of the Ministry in relation to Women's Advancement and Rights in last three years

Indicator	Unit	Actual		
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1	2	3	4	5
Development of Working environment in factories and establishment	number	4720	6985	3565
Skill Development		3100	3324	3650
Eradication of Child Labor		-	-	-

8.0 Achievements of the Ministry in Women's Advancement

8.1 Considering the importance of fixing reasonable wages for workers, the Government has re-fixed the minimum wage for garment workers including 36 non-government industrial sectors. The minimum wage for garment workers has been raised from Tk. 3,000 and re-fixed at Tk. 5,300. Arrangements have been made for conveyance, medical and food allowances. For the first time, yearly 5% increment of salary has been arranged for garments workers. Around 4.00 million male and female workers are employed in garments industry. Of them 80% are female workers. This will play a

positive role in the women's development as reasonable wages for workers have been determined.

- 8.2 Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiative Project is being implemented for poverty alleviation of the lagging northern districts by providing training and employment to poor semi-literate young women in the RMG industry having employment potential. Poor semi-literate young women of five lagging districts of greater Rangpur (Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Nilphamari and Lalmanirhat) are the beneficiaries of the project. Self-reliance and empowerment of these women, among others, are the much coveted objectives of the project.

Three dormitory-cum-training centers have already been established on five acres of land each near Dhaka, Chittagong and Ishwardi EPZs. A total of 10,800 (Ten thousand eight hundred) poor young women will be trained and job placement for them to be made in three years. Already training of 1st and 2nd batch has been completed and training of 3rd batch has commenced.

- 8.3 Besides, more than 2.00 million poor housemaids will be provided employment in exchange for reasonable wages and with necessary social security. The project named "Promotion of Reproductive Health, Reproductive Rights, Gender Equality, and Prevention of HIV/AIDS in Tea Plantation Community" has been implemented under the supervision of MOLE. Through this project, various activities have been conducted to raise consciousness about health, reproductive health including HIV/AIDS among the working laborers in 62 tea gardens in Sylhet.

- 8.4 At the initiative of MOLE the project named "Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing Violence against Women at Workplace" financed by Spanish Government has been implemented by the ILO during January 2010 to December 2012 period. Through this project, awareness trainings has been imparted about sexual and non-sexual harassment of women at work, secured decent work environment for women workers and employees and reduced incidents of violence against women workers. Under the supervision of Ministry of Labour and Employment, the UNFPA financed the project. The project titled as "Promotion of Reproductive Health, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Garment Sector" has been implemented and through this project, female workers had been awarded awareness training during January 2006 to December 2011 period.

- 8.5 Job oriented and professional training programs have been taken through National Skills Development Council (NSDC) under the MoLE so that the trained persons can have self-employment opportunities at home and abroad. Special initiatives have been taken through NSDC to train up female professionals in the country. Besides, the MoLE used to work closely with the MoWCA at the time of formulation of women-friendly labour policies.

- 8.6 40 Lakh labour are working in the garments sector of Bangladesh and out of them, 80% are women. They need to aware of their reproductive health. So the labour and employment ministry has taken a project titled as “Changing Gender Norms of Garment Employees” with 5.20 crore taka financial assistance of United Nations population fund for building up awareness in Gender issues, protecting from atrocity and giving ideas about reproductive health to the woman labourers, owners and manager of the mill and factories through BGMEA which has implemented the project within December 2016.
- 8.7 Domestic workers protection and welfare rules-2015 has been promulgated for the first time in the history of the country. The right and welfare of the domestic workers will be protected by establishing the above rules.

Lakshmi Mondal wife of Radhakanto Mondal is living at village- Kanaimari, post-Shelabunia, upazila-Mongla, district-Bagerhat. She is a maid servant and her husband is a rickshwa puller. She is an ultra-poor and it was very difficult for her to bear the livelihood, educational and other expenses of her two daughters. As a result, she used to get quite depressed due to her fear as when to stop her children’s education. At that time, Worker’s Welfare Foundation under Ministry of Labour and Employment brought a ray of hope when it gives 1,00,000/- (One Lac) taka for educational assistance to her daughter Mousumi Mondal who is currently a final year BDS student at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College, Dhaka. Lakshmi Mondal is thankful to the Worker’s Welfare Foundation, Ministry of Labour and Employment for the financial support which lifted her from vulnerable circumstances. Now she can plan to continue further higher studies for her daughters.

9.0 Recommendations for Future Activities:

Serial No.	Recommendations	Progress
1.	To ensure decent working environment and health services for women working in local industries;	Initiative has been taken to ensure decent working environment in various industries including garments.
2.	To provide stipends to encourage women to take technical education and training;	Stipends are giving through different programs in IRI’s (Industry related educational institutions).

Serial No.	Recommendations	Progress
3.	To ensure reasonable wages at all levels for women workers;	Salaries of the garment workers have been raised from Tk. 3,000 to Tk. 5,300
4.	To create conducive environment for women's participation in all industrial sectors;	Out of 33 conventions of ILO, 7 conventions were ratified by Bangladesh and it has emphasized the rights and esteem of the women workers. Special provisions have also been made in Sections 93, 94 and 95 of Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, for the welfare of women workers such as women's rest room, child day care centers etc.
5.	To make women more skillful through training;	Through the 04 (four) IRI and 29 labour welfare center department of labour trained the workers specially women workers in RMG sector. In the five days training programs, the number of women workers are 60-80%. On the other hand the number of women in four weeks training are 20-30%.
6.	To take effective steps to eradicate wage discrimination in informal sector between male and female workers;	In National Labour Policy, 2012, provisions have been made to address wage discrimination along with assurance of equal wages and rights for women workers. In the various industrial sectors a minimum wage has been fixed and also ensures that where there is no discrimination in wages among male and female workers.
7.	To strengthen Labour Welfare Centers more to play a role to improve women's health and quality of nutrition;	Through the 29 labour welfare centre's, workers and their families are provided health services with free of cost. From July 2016 to March 2017, total number of workers among whom health services are provided are 44,557, among them 33,220 workers were female and 11,337 workers were male.
8.	To take effective steps for secure shelters and accommodation for women at the work place;	For the accommodation of female workers and to ensure their safety, dormitories are to be built in bandar, Narayangonj and kalurghat, Chittagong. Moreover initiative has taken to build accommodation for women in various Labor welfare centre including Tongi, Tejgaon and Narayangonj.

Serial No.	Recommendations	Progress
9.	To take steps for providing technical and job-oriented training at upazila level in order to create employment for women;	Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) are involved in providing skills development training and employment for women. 'Center of Excellence for Leather and Leather Goods' (COEL) has taken various training programs for increasing women employment. Besides, with the help of BGMEA and ILO 'Center of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry' has also been established where garments workers especially women will take various types of training.
10.	To generate gender classified data in case of labour force and analyze those data;	National Skills Development Council (NSDC) has taken initiative to have gender classified data through different surveys.
11.	Introducing six month maternity leave for women labourers instead of four months maternity leave in accordance with Bangladesh labour Law 2006.	Already incorporated by amending the labor Law 2006.