

## Chapter-17

### Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Bangladesh is known as one of the most disaster prone countries in the world. The country faces wide range of natural disaster due to its geographical position, soil structure and geological condition. Around 135 million People of this country have been affected by natural disaster in last 2 decades. According to the World Risk Report, 2016, Bangladesh is the 5<sup>th</sup> most disaster risk prone countries in the world out of 171 countries that are reviewed. Though the people have the instant capacity to return back from disaster but the position of Bangladesh is at risk due to lack of infrastructure and capacity of long term adaptation. Increasing number of natural disasters due to global climate change is also affecting the country like many other countries. Poor people, mainly women, elderly and children become the main victim of disaster. A large number of people fall into unbearable sufferings by losing their lives and assets. The extent of sufferings can be kept low by ensuring optimum level of disaster preparedness. For this reason, disaster preparedness has to be ensured. The number of casualty and wounded people would be less if the rescue operation can be carried out timely and carefully. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief provides shelter and supplies food, clothes, water etc. to the affected people during the time of disaster. The ministry distributes money and supplies food to the poor people round the year and imparts vocational training to them in order to make them permanently self-reliant. Moreover, the ministry plays an important role to ensure uninterrupted communication and better living standard by constructing small bridges and culverts, kucha road, toilets and by mud-filling of the playgrounds of schools, colleges and other institutions. The ministry is playing an important role to reduce disaster risk. It also takes post disaster rehabilitation programmes and implements various social safety net programmes. It also builds physical infrastructures like flood shelters and cyclone centers in coastal belts, small bridges and culverts in the rural areas etc. The ministry also procures equipment to rescue earthquake and other disaster victims.
- 1.2 The preparedness of the government institutions and due to consciousness of the people the risk of flood and cyclone has reduced considerably in Bangladesh. The multi dimension steps like urban resilience programmes and the risk of climate change has taken. It is worldwide accepted that in managing disaster Bangladesh is now role model in the world. The honorable prime minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina has honored with the highest environmental accolade of the United Nations, in recognition of Bangladesh's far-reaching imitative to address climate change by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as one of the 'Champion of the Earth' in policy leadership category.

- 1.3 The long term vision of the Government in disaster management is to reduce the vulnerability of people, especially the poor, to natural, environmental and manmade disasters, to a tolerable and humanly reasonable level. It also seeks to establish a capable emergency disaster response system to combat large scale disasters. To reach these goals, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief is working to upgrade the traditional post disaster response and relief work to a system of overall risk reduction management. At the same time, one of the major tasks of this ministry is to alleviate poverty and to generate employment for the ultra poor during periods of unemployment. For these reasons Bangladesh has become a successful example in the world in combating disaster.
- 1.4 Beneficiaries are selected on the basis of gender in various projects of this ministry. Gender equity is promoted through some programmes that give women priority. Women and children are considered as the most vulnerable to disasters and that's why they are given priority in disaster management and the distribution of relief goods. In some cases, women are not only the beneficiaries but also involved with implementing activities through government initiatives. Besides this, some social safety net programmes like Test Relief (TR), Food for Work (FFW), and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) are being implemented with a special focus on women.

## **2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry**

- ❖ Formulation and implementation of laws, policies and action plans for disaster risk reduction, emergency response and disaster management;
- ❖ Preparation of policies and plans for urgent humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation programmes, preparation and preservation of all social safety net programmes;
- ❖ Preparation of disaster risk reduction plans, undertaking activities for training and research, and coordination, monitoring and evaluating activities among local, regional and international development partners;
- ❖ Providing humanitarian assistance to ensure food security through the preparation and implementation of Food for Work (Rural Infrastructure Development); Rural Infrastructure Maintenance (Test Relief, TR), VGF, GR, and other related programmes;
- ❖ Ensuring employment for the ultra-poor during the lean period of the year to reduce poverty and vulnerability;
- ❖ Coordinating the use and distribution of emergency food aid and other humanitarian assistance received from abroad;
- ❖ Implementing programmes related to refugee affairs and co-ordinating between national and international agencies.

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

3.1 The strategic objectives to reduce the risks of disaster especially for the poor and the vulnerable to a manageable level by way of strengthening the overall capacity of disaster management and their relevance to woman's advancements and rights are as follows:

- ❖ **Institutionalizing disaster management system, creation of professionalism and increasing the capability:** In disaster prone areas, the capability of women to face natural disasters has been enhanced due to their involvement in disaster awareness activities and livelihood training. As a result, poverty and disaster risks are reduced.
- ❖ **Construction of infrastructure to reduce disaster risks:** An effective transport system plays a supportive role in rescuing people especially women and children during disasters. The lives of women and children are also saved at shelters provided during floods and cyclones. The overall benefits of communication and transport accelerate women's advancement.
- ❖ **Reducing the sufferings and disaster risks for vulnerable people:** At least 30percent of the beneficiaries are women under targeted and women friendly programmes. As the poor and destitute women are getting preferential employment, their income is increasing and their access to food is improving. Women, children and handicapped people are taken to the safe shelters on a priority basis at the beginning of any serious disaster and they are given food and medicines. As a result, their social security and capacity to face disasters are being strengthened.

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

4.1 One of the major functions of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief is disaster risk reduction, response to the emergency, the formulation of laws relating to disaster management, the implementation of policies and action plans. It has formulated the National Plan for Disaster Management 2016-2020 in 2016 and Disaster Management Act, 2012 with an objective for overall development in disaster management where women related issues have been identified.

4.2 The Directorate of Disaster Management has initiated a facilitator's guidebook titled 'Practicing Gender & Social Inclusion in Disaster Risk Reduction' which intends to provide thorough outlines for analyzing and managing the risk situations of the most vulnerable groups in Bangladesh by capturing their own voices. The guideline enables the disaster professionals to increase the level of awareness and the response capacities of local communities to the potential and frequent natural disasters, as well as to reduce the effects of these frequent disasters on the most

vulnerable groups. This guidebook provides guidance for disaster professionals in Bangladesh on carrying out risk management and emergency response programmes by unfolding the ways to target the most vulnerable categories in the process.

4.3 This ministry has extended the following priority activities to create opportunities for women:

- ❖ **Social safety net program:** The safety net programs like Employment Generation Programme for the Poorest (EGPP), Food for Work (food grains & cash), T.R. Programme and V.G.F. Programme play important roles to increase availability of food to the extreme poor during slumps and disaster periods. Most of the beneficiaries of these programmes are poor women. Besides this, at least 30 percent of total number of employment is allocated to the extremely poor women under the EGPP.
- ❖ **Construction and maintenance of Flood and Cyclone Centers:** During disasters citizens especially women and children take shelter at Flood and Cyclone Centers which are children and women friendly.
- ❖ **Disaster risk reduction program in disaster prone areas:** Women are being involved in awareness building activities concerning disasters which improve their skills. To reduce the loss both to lives and properties, community empowerment, capacity building, response management activities are also being undertaken. Women and children are taken to the safe shelters when there are disaster warnings. Medicines are being distributed to them. As a result, disaster risk of women and children is being reduced which enhances their overall social and economic status.
- ❖ **Construction of physical infrastructure:** Better communication and transportation systems especially in rural and coastal regions are conducive for women's development as they help to reduce the impact of disasters and promote economic development. Uninterrupted communications systems are essential to rescue people specially women, children and elderly persons during disasters. Women benefit directly and indirectly through the construction of Flood and Cyclone Shelters, Cyclone tolerant houses, village connecting roads (*pacca*), small culverts/bridges and other physical infrastructure in disaster prone areas.
- ❖ **Procurement and maintenance of searching and rescuing vehicles and equipment:** This Ministry procures different search and rescue vehicles/equipment to combat disasters which play important roles to save lives and property during disasters. This equipment helps to save lives of women and children.

## 5.0 Priority Spending Areas for Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority Spending Area/Programs	Impact on Women's Advancement (Direct and Indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Expansion of social safety net programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ The Employment Generation for Programme for the poorest (EGPP) of this ministry is a women focused programme. The total allocation in this program in FY 2016-17 was 1,650 crore taka. At least 33percent beneficiaries of this programme are destitute and poor women who are being empowered through this program as their income is increasing. In the first phase of FY 2016-17 the percentage of women beneficiaries rose to 45 percent.</li> <li>❖ In the post disaster period, women are given priorities as per policy while selecting the beneficiaries for food and other aid. Women are provided with food grain, cash money, biscuits etc. As a result they get better nutrition.</li> </ul>
2.	Construction of small bridges, culverts and Flood and Cyclone Shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Improved road and transport network helps all affected people especially women and children during the disaster. Women and children are benefitted directly and indirectly through flood and cyclone shelters. Moreover, many women are employed in these construction works every year. For example, around 4.5 lac women is expected to be employed in this year in the construction of small bridges and culvert project</li> <li>❖ Similarly, 3.72 lac women have been employed in the 117 cyclone shelter and 255 flood shelter construction project. In the coming five years, more women will be employed in the various construction projects of the ministry</li> <li>❖ The planning Commission conducted a study in 1993 and recommended to construct 6,000 cyclone shelters in the coastal region. Currently, the number of cyclone shelters is 3,886. Directorate of Disaster Management has constructed 117 multipurpose cyclone shelters which have benefitted a large number of women and children.</li> <li>❖ To reduce water logging in the rural roads and to improve the rural road network the ministry has constructed 13600 small bridges and culverts (12/15 matter) across the country. In the current fiscal year, the ministry will construct 5646 bridges and culverts in the plain lands and 196 bridges and culverts in the hilly areas which will employ 7.00 lac women.</li> </ul>

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1	2	3
3.	Procurement and maintenance of search and rescue vehicles and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Procurement of search and rescue vehicles and equipment that play important roles in saving lives and properties during disasters will benefit people, especially women and children.</li> <li>❖ Under the project titled 'Procurement of Equipment for Search and Rescue Operation on Earthquake and Other Disaster (Phase II)', various equipment worth taka 158 crore will be procured which will benefit women and children.</li> </ul>
4.	Risk reduction training, research and awareness programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Since women are considered to be the most vulnerable in any disaster, they will benefit from the risk reduction programmes and training. Provisions of safe drinking water have been made for the women and children under CDMP (Phase-2) project. Women are trained in non-farm livelihood in the disaster affected areas. Under the project, a total of female 61,654 volunteers will be trained. Out of them 10,000 will be trained as CPP volunteers and 8,000 will be trained as Fire Service and Civil Defense volunteers.</li> <li>❖ 350 officials from Titas Gas, Armed Forces Division and Fire Service and Civil Defense have been trained on GIS system so that they can respond in emergency situation during disaster more efficiently. 30 percent of the trainees are women.</li> <li>❖ 1,400 district, upazila and union disaster management committee members from 15 districts have been trained in the current fiscal year under Harmonized Training Module. Many of these trainees are women.</li> <li>❖ Under the ECRRP-D1 project, 1,900 officials from 38 districts have been trained in disaster management a considerable number of whom are women</li> <li>❖ Under a separate initiative disaster management training has been provided to coastal disaster management volunteers and urban destitute women.</li> </ul>
5.	Emergency Cyclone Recovery and Restoration Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ In the areas devastated by cyclone Sidr, citizens especially women were trained on emergency evacuation and operating rescue equipment. Rescue equipment worth Taka 45.37 core has been procured which will enhance their capacity to response during such cyclone in future. Women are greatly benefited from this effort.</li> </ul>

Serial No.	Priority Spending Area/Programs	Impact on Women's Advancement (Direct and Indirect)
1	2	3
6.	Rural Infrastructure Development (Food for Work, FFW) Program	❖ Under the Rural Infrastructure Development (Cash for Work, KABITA) Program a total of 1435 core taka distributed in FY 2016-17. Around 30 percent of the beneficiaries are women.
7.	Rural Infrastructure Maintenance (Test Relief, TR) Program	❖ Under the Rural Infrastructure Maintenance (Test Relief, TR) Program a total 1281 core taka have been distributed in FY 2016-17. Around 30percent of the beneficiaries are women.
8.	Emergency Humanitarian Aid	<p>❖ Under this program 14.685 crore taka and 44.89 thousand bundles of corrugated iron sheets has been distributed among 22.575 thousand poor and destitute families to build their homes in FY 2016-17. In addition, 15.36 lakh blankets are also distributed. Most of the beneficiaries of these are women.</p> <p>❖ Under VGF programme of Department of Disaster Management 70% coverage expended for women.</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	8853	4540	51.28	8947	4101	45.84	8005	5780	72.2
Development	2986	1421	47.57	3467	1327	38.29	2598	1867	71.86
Non-Development	5867	3119	53.17	5480	2774	50.61	5408	3913	72.36

Source: RCGP database

## 7.0 Key Performance Indicator (K.P.I) of the Ministry in relation to Woman's Advancement and Rights in the last three years

Indicators	Unit of Measurement	Actual Achievement		
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1	2	3	4	5
Woman Beneficiaries of social safety net programme (Employment generation programme for the poorest)	Number (Lakh person month)	6.87	6.90	6.93
Women Volunteer for Cyclone Preparedness	Number in thousand	8.00	8.50	8.95

## **8.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement**

- ❖ Under the Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (C.D.M.P.) phase-ii project, 203 households have been rehabilitated by constructing disaster resilient houses in two disaster resilient villages in Sutarkhali union under Dacope upazilla in Khulna District. As a result of this, the women of these families, who had been staying on embankments after Cyclone Aila have been given the opportunity to live a decent and secure life. Moreover 260 households in the urban areas have also been rehabilitated; all of these efforts have enhanced their development and rights;
- ❖ Sanitary latrines have been installed under C.D.M.P. and 203 k.m. of water pipelines have been installed with C.D.M.P. and G.I.Z. support in the coastal belt of the country. These have helped the women in the areas by reducing their workload and can now spend more time engaging in productive activities;
- ❖ 2,000 improved ovens have been supplied to rural women, helping them to cope with disaster situations as well as easing their household activities;
- ❖ So far, 26,000 urban volunteers and 6,540 Cyclone Preparedness Program) volunteers have been trained. One fifth among them are woman who positively indicates their enthusiasm for social service, thus improving their social status.

## **9.0 Recommendations for Future Activities**

- ❖ Ensuring the Social Safety Net for women for their economic empowerment so that they can recover from disasters;
- ❖ Expanding the coverage of the poorest women in the social safety net, and continuing the allowances for widow and destitute women, old age allowances, disabled persons allowances and Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) for poor women;
- ❖ Taking special initiatives for the safety and security of women and girls during the pre-disaster period and preparing them for disaster recovery by awareness building training and initiatives;
- ❖ Rehabilitating women and children made destitute as a result of river-erosion and other natural disasters;
- ❖ Taking proper preparedness to ensure the safety of women by giving their safety the highest priority during disaster preparedness and post disaster rehabilitation;
- ❖ Giving proper importance for raising the capacity of women to recover in a post disaster emergency situation and helping them not only by relief materials but also with psycho-social assistance;

- ❖ Taking initiatives to ensure that the food distribution activities during emergency post disaster period fulfills the needs of women;
- ❖ Giving priorities to health issues of women during post disaster period like the demand for their food;
- ❖ Involving the people in disaster stricken communities to address the well-being of the destitute women during the pre- and post- disaster period;
- ❖ Taking institutional arrangements for the education, treatment, training and rehabilitation for the disabled women;
- ❖ Ensuring that relief goods address the needs of lactating mothers, and breast-feeding children, and the reproductive and hygienic needs of women more generally;
- ❖ The government should engage women as equal partners in disaster risk management and also include women's organizations in broad-based community disaster coalitions.
- ❖ Project of construction and implementation of Mujib Killa have been taken in the costal and flood prone area. By implementing this project the life of poultry and cattle firming by the women can be saved and they will be economically solvent.
- ❖ Project of construction and implementation of ware house have taken for storage of relief goods in every district in the country. By implementing this project it will be easy to distribute of relief goods for the women.