

Chapter-19

Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Chattogram Hill Tracts (Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari districts) are well-known as the aesthetic and green-charming areas of Bangladesh. Various tribals and Bangali populations have been living in the CHT region for ages. These communities belong to distinct cultural identities, are also an indispensable part of the main-stream population of the country. Since independence of Bangladesh, and as per constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the government has been implementing various development projects undertaken for accelerated socio-economic development of the people living in these three districts through the Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs. Some of these include supplying safe drinking water, development of pisciculture, improvement of healthcare services, construction and development of climate change tolerant agricultural infrastructure, development of tourism, eradication of poverty, women's advancement and overall socio-economic development of the people living in this region. In addition, other programs, focusing on the comprehensive development of this region, include development and expansion of educational institutions for children's access to quality education, providing technical education and training to young men and women, providing financial assistance to different tribal/ non-tribal communities on their festivals and on special days for the conservation of their own language and culture, establishment and development of social welfare institutions, development of sports and culture, construction of physical infrastructure and construction and maintenance of religious institutions, etc.

1.2 Ministry of Chattogram Hill Tracts Affairs has been created in accordance with the provisions of the Peace Accord signed on 2nd December, 1997 to ensure overall development of Hill Tracts region. This ministry is committed to establish equal rights and opportunities and equitable distribution of resources among the citizens of this region as guaranteed in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Women constitute more than 50% of the beneficiaries of the projects and programs implemented through this ministry. In addition, the ministry has undertaken some specific programs and projects targeting women of Chittagong Hill Tracts region.

2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry

- ❖ Implementation of CHT Peace Accord: Undertaking programmes with the objective to bring about development on socio-economic condition and uphold

the social customs, culture and language of tribal/non-tribal people living in the CHT areas;

- ❖ Supervision and coordination of all development activities: Communication with International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and all relevant Government agencies, International Agency, Donor Agency and Development partners
- ❖ Coordination among all relevant Government agencies in order to preserve the environmental and geo-physical characteristics of CHT area;
- ❖ Conduct and coordinate activities related to social safety net, relief, rehabilitation and dealing with crisis situations arising from any calamity in the CHT areas;
- ❖ Provide secretariat services to Council Committees and other special committees/commission formed for development of CHT;
- ❖ Supervision and monitoring of NGOs activities in the CHT areas.
- ❖ Development of biodiversity and eco friendly tourism in CHT.
- ❖ Enact Hill tracts related law, rules, and regulation.

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

3.1 Improving quality of life for CHT People: The role of women in CHT is important for enhancing the standard of living. Traditionally the women in CHT are hard working. Setting up tubewells in remote area, supply of pure drinking water, providing health care services and awareness building on clean environment will create more opportunities for women in development. Labour-hour of women members of a family is being saved as a result of ensuring healthcare services through mobile clinic and supply of pure drinking water in the inaccessible hilly areas. Technical education and vocational training is provided to women. Moreover, continued effort to eradicate women unemployment through establishing small industry and handicrafts is still going on.

3.2 Preserving the language and culture of different tribes in CHT: Increased number of tribal children will be able to receive education as a result of the inclusion of 11 tribal language courses in the primary school text-book curriculum. 19 schools in 6 upazillas and school committees have been established in order to provide financial assistance for learning in mother language where adequate facilities are absent. Educational opportunities for tribal/non-tribal female children will expand as a result of introduction of multi language curriculum. Further, income of the tribal/non-tribal

women is increasing as a result of conservation and marketing of products and inputs used by the tribal/non-tribal people.

4.0 Role of the Ministry in Women's advancement and protections of rights

- 4.1 Development of communication and power sector infrastructure, distribution of micro-credits to the people of hilly areas, creation of ancillary marketing facilities for agricultural products in Chattogram Hill Tracts region have created income-generating opportunities for women, enabling them to enhance their income. Moreover, the micro-credit programme targeting the women (40%) will enhance women's self-employment opportunities and empowerment. Through 4000 Para Kendro (Community based service proving center), health & nutrition services, education and supply pure drinking water are being provided to 1, 56,456 families of 3 Hill districts. 1703 para workers have been provided training on mushroom cultivation, bee-keeping, ginger processing and medicinal plant cultivation. 4000 para women workers have been provided training on healthcare services so that they can provide health-care services in the remote areas and benefit themselves financially.
- 4.2 Providing healthcare services, distribution of free text books and other educational materials, immunization programme, and services for eradication of malnutrition of children etc are contributing to increase literacy rate and productive people. Infant mortality rate is decreasing as a result of targeted health-care services for children along with the health-care services provided to their mothers. Besides, women's participation in the income-generating activities in the labour market is increasing as a result of increasing opportunities for education of female children.
- 4.3 Technical education and various vocational training programs targeting the women (50%) are creating more employment opportunities for women in Chittagong Hill Tracts region, enabling them to be empowered.
- 4.4 Several projects are being implemented directly under the supervision of the ministry for reducing labor of women in water preservation and use, providing maternity healthcare and bringing down mortality rate, and preventing diseases related to malnutrition and feces. So far, girls' empowerment and child protection project has been implemented in 335 para centers, 62,400 children birth have been registered and another project involving children's labor and physical empowerment, and child protection has been implemented.
- #### **5.0 Priority Spending Areas/programs and its impact on women development:**
- 5.1 There is no separate budget allocation for the women. But 3,400 women are working as para worker under the CHT Comprehensive Social Development Project of the CHT Development Board, and another 4,000 under a project of the UNDP

CHTDF. The MOCHTA has identified five high priority sectors. The benefits of women from the programs are given below:

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Development of climate change resilience infrastructure in CHT areas	❖ Development of climate change resilience communication infrastructure will bring more benefit for female than male people through creating opportunities in various activities for them.
2.	Extension of climate change resilience agricultural and non-agricultural activities:	❖ Extension of climate change resilience agricultural and non-agricultural programs will encourage backward section of women of Chattogram Hill Tracts to participate in economic activities.
3.	Primary and technical education	❖ Providing educational facilities to children, and trainings on income-generating activities for the unemployed, and organizing seminars and workshops on poverty reduction, development of environment and agriculture, local government, social development, gender issues, rural education, healthcare, nutrition, rural economy and management will contribute toward women's advancement.
4.	Basic Health Services	❖ Because of different geographical characteristics in Chattogram Hill Tracts areas, special programs need to be undertaken to prevent unusual diseases and to provide health-care services for women and children in the remote areas. Providing health-care services through mobile clinics and ensuring fresh drinking water will help the women save their labour-hour.
5.	Preservation of indigenous heredity and culture	❖ More tribal/non-tribal children will get access to primary education as a result of inclusion of eleven tribal/non-tribal languages in the curriculum of primary school text book. Moreover, marketing facilities for tribal/non-tribal women's products and inputs used by them will increase employment opportunities of the people of Chattogram Hill Tracts, enabling them to increase their earnings.

6.0 Women's Share in Ministry's Total Expenditure

(Taka in Crore)

Description	Budget 2019-20			Revised 2018-19			Budget 2018-19			Actual 2017-18		
	Budget	Women Share		Revised	Women Share		Budget	Women Share		Actual	Women Share	
		Women	percent		Women	percent		Women	percent		Women	percent
Total Budget	523190	161247	30.82	442541	136036	30.74	464573	136938	29.48	321861	88441	27.48
Ministry Budget	1194	568	47.53	1361	780	57.33	1309	930	71.03	789	72	9.08
Development	841	502	59.69	1018	718	70.51	989	754	76.19	757	62	8.14
Operating	353	66	18.56	344	63	18.28	320	176	55.11	32	10	31.29

Source: RCGP database

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

Performance Indicators	Unit of measurement	Actual		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Rate of women literacy in CHT	%	56	57	60
Small and handicraft training in CHT	Number	713	750	754

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ In order to create self employment opportunities for entire women 660 sewing machines will be provided in FY2019-20. Initiatives for various technical, vocational and market oriented training for tribals/nontribals women will be continued;
- ❖ Making special efforts for marketing of women entrepreneurs' products in upazilas, districts and in the capital city;
- ❖ Arranging loans from government/non-government banks without collateral for disabled and tribal/non-tribal women;
- ❖ Appointment of tribal/non-tribal trainers and officials in Chittagong Hill Tracts during training period and loan disbursement time
- ❖ Provisions will be made for tribals and non-tribal women: Introducing quota system in education and training; providing education allowance; providing technical and vocational training; teaching in their mother language and creating more opportunities for training related to income-generation.
- ❖ Providing student scholarship including construction of school and college hostels for increasing participation of girl children through mainstream educational activities alongside provision for primary learning in mother language for each tribe/non-tribe.

- ❖ In the 2019-20 financial year, 5600 women will be provided with maternity services through mobile clinics, resulting in reduction of child mortality rate and malnutrition;
- ❖ In addition to ensure the safety of women's food and nutrition, women should be protected from adverse effects of environmental degradation and climate change;
- ❖ Empowerment of women in education, employment and decision making will be ensured;
- ❖ During recruitment in the vacant position, women should be given priority.