

## Chapter-9

### Ministry of Agriculture

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Agriculture plays an undeniable role in achieving the overall growth of the national economy. About 40.62 percent of the labor force are directly or indirectly dependent on the agricultural sector. Thus Improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the country is impossible without the development of this sector. This sector also plays an important role in attaining food security for the increasing population of the country as well as creating employment. This is why Government putting importance on the overall improvement of the agriculture sector. The main aim of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is to develop a self-sufficient and sustainable agricultural system through increase in agricultural productivity and modernization of agriculture marketing by adopting, inventing and transferring new technologies so as to ensure food security and poverty reduction in the light of the Seventh Five Year Plan, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Agriculture Policy. In continuation of the ongoing development assistance and incentives in agricultural productivity the ministry is providing 20 percent cash incentives on the import of agricultural produces and 20 percent rebate on the electricity bills on agro-based industries and irrigation system. Moreover, Government revised the interest rate to 4 percent from earlier 8 percent of the agricultural loan to increase the production of peas, mustard seeds and spices.

1.2 The emancipation of peasants and laborers, and agricultural and rural development noted in Articles 14 and 16 of Part I of the Constitution, fosters the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture along with other organizations associated with agriculture sector. The fundamental responsibility of the MoA, along with other institutions in agriculture sector, is to free the working population, peasants and labourers from all forms of exploitation, transforming the rural areas through agricultural revolution in order to minimize the disparity in the standard of living in towns and villages. The concerted efforts of the MoA in performing its responsibilities are reflected in the self-sufficiency in food.

#### 1.3 Major functions of the Ministry

- ❖ Agricultural research and education program;
- ❖ Agricultural extension and training;
- ❖ Production, standardization, certification, preservation and distribution of quality seeds;
- ❖ Soil survey and examination of the quality of soil, and recommendations;

- ❖ Preservation and marketing of agricultural products;
- ❖ Agricultural support and rehabilitation;
- ❖ Collection, distribution, innovation, procurement and management of agricultural inputs and machinery;
- ❖ Minor irrigation programs.

## **2.0 Relevant Policies of the Ministry**

### **2.1 National Agriculture Policy, 2018**

About half of the total population of our country is female. It is essential that more females enter into government service and join the labour force in agriculture. Since women have ample scope to contribute to agricultural growth, to increase the involvement of women meaningfully in agricultural development and related income generating and human development activities, the activities of the Government will be the following:

- ❖ **Women's Empowerment:** Necessary assistance will be provided to women's skill development owing to ensure food and nutrition within the family. Women's participation at agricultural education, research, extension and training will be encouraged. Efforts will be made as well to ensure equal rights for women in management of and access to agriculture inputs;
- ❖ **Participation in production and marketing:** Government will encourage participation of poor women in rural areas in agricultural production, especially in agro-processing and agri-business so that they can improve their economic condition. There will be initiatives to enhance women's technological empowerment in agriculture. Women's participation in agricultural production will be made simpler and facilitated through establishing their rights to access in agricultural technology. Government will also take steps to encourage women's participation in various agriculture extension works such as training, farmers gathering and workshops;
- ❖ **Creating opportunity to earn:** Government will provide credit to women farmers along with other farmers in agriculture activities like gardening in homestead, post-harvest activities, production and preservation of seeds, nursery, bee keeping, food processing, etc. Micro-credit facilities will also be extended to women in small scale agricultural processing, storage and preservation and efforts will be made to eradicate the wage difference between men and women.

### **3.0 Ministry Specific Policy Directives in relation to Women's Advancement**

#### **3.1 National Women's Development Policy, 2011**

- ❖ To establish equal rights for men and women in areas of state and public life in the light of the Constitution of Bangladesh;
- ❖ To ensure full and equal participation of women in the mainstream socioeconomic development;
- ❖ To bring up women as educated and skilled human resources;
- ❖ To recognize appropriately women's contribution in socio-economic spheres;
- ❖ To innovate and import technology favoring the interest of women and discourage those act against the interest of the women;
- ❖ To provide support services essential for the development of women.

#### **3.2 Seventh Five Year Plan**

Women are crucial in transformation of agricultural products into food and nutritional security in Bangladesh. Gender based inequalities all along the food production chain must be reduced and the active engagement of women at all levels of decision making is absolutely necessary to attain food and nutritional security. Women will require access to information, credit and other business development services in order to capitalize on the new market opportunities along changing or emerging value chains. Capacity building is required to ensure women's active and important positions in leadership and decision making in economic organizations. Special policies and provision are often required to ensure women's control over important income generating activities:

- ❖ Developing women friendly technology and business environment;
- ❖ More women participation in market transaction;
- ❖ Capacity development of women for small-scale entrepreneurs;
- ❖ Collective action and market linkages;
- ❖ Supporting homestead agricultural value addition strategies;
- ❖ Recruit more women agricultural workers and increase their participation in the technology innovation;
- ❖ Protection of women and children from health hazards during agricultural operation.

### 3.3 Sustainable Development Goals:

It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture to ensure zero hunger and nutritional security for every men and women. Furthermore, achieving participation equity of the women in agriculture as well as the income enhancement of the women through employment is also under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture. To achieve the SDGs, following tasks are included by the Ministry of Agriculture:

- ❖ Eradication of hunger and ensuring safe, nutritious and adequate amount of food for all, round the year, especially for the people under poverty and hunger risk;
- ❖ Removing all forms of malnutrition by 2030 through proper addressing of the needs for the adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers by 2025;
- ❖ Doubling the agricultural production and income of the limited food producing persons especially the women, indigenous people, homestead farmers plus livestock and fisheries farmers by the year 2030;
- ❖ Confirming equal rights to land, other productive resources, knowledge, financial services and market facilities;
- ❖ Creating opportunity for the value addition and non-farm employment.

### 4.0 Strategic Objectives and Activities of the Ministry of Agriculture in relation to Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Medium-Term Strategic Objectives	Activities
1	2	3
1.	Increase production and productivity in the crop sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Promotion of innovated varieties and technologies among the farmers through training, publications and exhibitions/ fairs/rallies/seminars/workshops;</li> <li>❖ Provision of e-agriculture information services;</li> <li>❖ Increasing awareness about food value and nutrition through publications, meetings and workshops.</li> </ul>
2.	Increase supply and affordability of agricultural inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Supply of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs at administered prices;</li> <li>❖ Procurement of irrigation machinery and facilitating its easy availability;</li> <li>❖ Expansion of minor irrigation coverage by encouraging optimal use of surface water, and increasing the area of arable land by reducing water</li> </ul>

Serial No.	Medium-Term Strategic Objectives	Activities
1	2	3
		<p>logging and submergence;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Encouraging private sector participation in the production and development of seeds through meetings, seminars, fairs and technology transfer;</li> <li>❖ Marketing and ginning of cotton seed.</li> </ul>
3.	Development and maintenance of agricultural land resource based management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Extension of soil test facilities to Upazila and Union levels;</li> <li>❖ Popularize the use of organic fertilizer, green fertilizer and microbial fertilizer among the farmers.</li> </ul>
4.	Support in supply, processing and effective marketing of agricultural products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Publicity and preservation of information on agricultural marketing and development;</li> <li>❖ Development and maintenance of market infrastructure and provide other supports;</li> <li>❖ Provision of technological support and technical assistance to agricultural entrepreneurs and encouraging them to invest in agro-processing and agri-business;</li> <li>❖ Coordination between concerned public and private departments/institutions for expansion of marketing facilities of agricultural products.</li> </ul>

## 5.0 Identifying the Gender Gaps in the Activities of the Ministry and Addressing the Issues

### 5.1 The following gender gaps have been identified in the activities of the Ministry:

- ❖ Women's participation in decision making on agriculture management is low and they also lag behind in the areas of management of agricultural inputs and its access;
- ❖ There is lack of regular collection, preservation and publication of information about the contribution of women farmers; Organization of women agriculture workers are also not well-formed;
- ❖ Documentaries highlighting the role of women in agriculture and textbooks containing women's contribution in agriculture are not well reflected;
- ❖ Women friendly modern agricultural technologies are not easily available to women farmers;

- ❖ Inadequate woman entrepreneurs in agriculture.

## 5.2 Strategies to remove the gender gap:

- ❖ Steps have been taken to envelop women in agriculture activities and farms development to ensure their empowerment;
- ❖ Multi-faceted training on agriculture activities is imparted to women in order to transform them into educated and skilled workforce;
- ❖ Ministry of Agriculture is supporting the establishment of agricultural farms and agro-based industries through women's participation to free the womenfolk from the curse of poverty;
- ❖ Ministry of Agriculture is appropriately rewarding women in different areas alongside men for their contribution in social and economic sphere;
- ❖ Women's contribution in agriculture and their commendable entrepreneurial activities are highlighted in the media to build positive image of women. Initiatives are being taken to enhance the relationship between women groups and media organizations to make the latter more gender friendly. These are also telecasted in various agriculture related programs;
- ❖ Steps have been taken for woman entrepreneurship development in agro processing and agribusiness through technological and technical support.

## 6.0 Women's Participation in Ministry's Activities and their Share in Ministry's Total Expenditure

### 6.1 Men and women staff ratio in the Ministry as below:

	Staff			
	2017-18		2018-19	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Administration</b>				
Secretariat	159	41	152	37
Department of Agricultural Extension	20517	2192	15719	2834
Seed Certification Agency	271	57	277	68
Cotton Development Board	613	62	525	57
Agricultural Information Service	185	24	175	25
Department of Agricultural Marketing	385	64	378	57
Soil Resource Development Institute	442	85	435	89
Bangladesh Jute Research Institute	354	59	350	61
Bangladesh Rice Research Institute	550	126	538	117
Barind Multipurpose Authority	852	41	840	41
Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture	324	35	325	46

	Staff			
	2017-18		2018-19	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Bangladesh Institute of Research and Training on Applied Nutrition	59	11	59	11
Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council	170	20	168	19
Bangladesh Wheat and Maize Research Institute	67	08	67	08
Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation	3278	285	2960	292
Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute	2221	433	2086	422
Bangladesh Sugarcrop Research Institute	256	28	251	27
<b>Total (percent)</b>	<b>30703 (89.58%)</b>	<b>3571 (10.42%)</b>	<b>25305 (85.73%)</b>	<b>4211 (14.27%)</b>

## 6.2 Statistics of beneficiaries in ministry activities:

- ❖ Department of Agriculture Extension has trained 16,45,246 farmers on modern technology among them 18.87 percent are women;
- ❖ Department of Agriculture marketing has trained 51,651 farmers on marketing management, post harvest management, supply chain, value chain development, entrepreneurship development in the past three years. Among them 15,495 are women (30%).
- ❖ A Number of 23,466 woman entrepreneurs have been created by the Department of Agriculture Marketing under various Projects and programmes.

## 6.3 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	14053	6312	44.91	12795	5740	44.86	13915	6268	45.05	9238	3606	39.04
Development	1930	390	20.2	1906	349	18.33	1959	722	36.88	1453	186	12.79
Operating	12123	5922	48.85	10889	5391	49.51	11956	5546	46.39	7785	3420	43.94

Source: RCGP database

## 7.0 Success of Ministry of Agriculture for women's development:

### 7.1 Impact of Medium Term Strategic Objectives on Women Development

- ❖ **Increased production and productivity in the crop sector:** The participation of the female members of the farming families are increasing in the process of increasing productivity of food grain. This in turn creating more opportunity for women to be involved in the production of high value crops. As a result, employment opportunity would be created for women and this will further increase the access of women and children to nutritious food. Targeted activities

in agriculture such as cultivation of fruits and vegetables in the homestead, programmes related to crop expansion, production and preservation of seeds are creating employment opportunities for them, which eventually increasing their income and elevate their social status.

- ❖ **Increased supply and availability of agricultural inputs:** Increase in the agricultural production has offered opportunity to women to involve in the agriculture. This will create employment opportunity for women.
- ❖ **Development and maintenance of agricultural land resource base management:** Women's involvement in producing compost and organic fertilizers are creating employment opportunities for them and increasing their income.
- ❖ **Support in supply, processing and effective marketing of agricultural products.:** Increased participation of women in target-oriented agro-processing and agri-business has created employment opportunities for them. These are increasing women's share in the labor market and enhancing their social status and establishing rights in government property and services.

## 7.2 Ministry's Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

- ❖ In almost all the farming families, women's participation in agricultural activities is increasing. The involvement of women in the production of high value crop and food grain will create employment opportunity for them and this will further increase the access of women and children to nutritious food. Targeted activities in agriculture such as fruits and vegetables in homestead, production and preservation of seeds will create employment and income opportunities for women and elevate their social status.
- ❖ Farmers of 64 districts of Bangladesh are planting mushrooms, and a total of 38,085 women are participating in mushroom-based income generating activities promoted by National Mushroom Centre, Savar and other 16 sub-centers across the country. Under Northwest Crop Diversification Project, women's corner has been marked in all 60 growers' markets and 15 wholesale markets. Furthermore 3,000 women who belong to the various groups formed by various projects of Department of Agriculture Marketing, have been trained up in the field of agri-Marketing. It causes increase in women's participation in labor market that eventually uplift social status as well as establish their rights in public properties and services.
- ❖ Women make a significant contribution in the production of crops and the Ministry of Agriculture recognizes its importance adequately. A large number of women scientists are receiving higher education and training at home and



abroad from different projects and programs of the ministry. As a result, a large number of women are getting motivated to participate in different stages of production, and are making significant contribution in agricultural production.

### 7.3 Women's Non-wage Labour in Agriculture:

In agriculture, women are contributing significantly at different stages of crop production. Women are actively participating in production and preservation of seeds, processing and preservation of crops, cultivating vegetables and fruits in homesteads, etc. But, these non-wage activities of the women are not properly recognized. It is necessary to recognize these non-wage activities of the women properly in social and economic spheres.

### 7.4 Success story of a woman in woman development activities of the Ministry:

#### A success story of a woman in agriculture

Shikha Rani Chakraborty, wife of Modon Mohan Chakraborty, Village & P.O.-Dhandia, Upazilla-Kolaroa, District-Satkhira is an efficient and diligent farmer. She grasps the modern agro-technologies promptly and tries to apply these in her field. She receives and disseminates different technologies such as- eco-friendly vermicompost production and utilization; production and storage of rice, wheat and mustard seeds; setting of pheromone traps; perching etc. amongst other farmers and thus significantly contributing for extension. Her such endeavors notably being impacted for the socio-economic development of the local farmers. As an agro passionate person, she has earned ample fame in her locality. Her success has meaningfully encouraged the local farmers for receiving and disseminating modern agro technologies.

'Bangabandhu National Agricultural Award-1423' Bronze Medal has been awarded to Shikha Rani Chakraborty for her outstanding contribution in agricultural development.



Award receiving from the Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

## 8.0 Obstacles to achieve targets related to Women's Advancement and Rights

- ❖ Inadequate supply of agricultural input, training and low interest credit facility.
- ❖ Lack of marketing facilities for agricultural products.
- ❖ Lack of women friendly environment in markets.
- ❖ Inadequacy of necessary technical support and agriculture support services.
- ❖ Social hindrance

## 9.0 Progress on Recommended Activities in the Previous Year

Serial No.	Recommendations pursued in the previous year	Progress
1	2	3
1	Ensure that women are recognized as farmers.	The process to recognize women as farmers is ongoing.
2	Introduce input cards for female farmers (like male farmers), ensure opportunity to open an account with a minimum deposit, provision of training, access to agriculture credit, ensuring the availability of other existing facilities;	Credit facilities were provided to farmers under second crop diversification project. 60 percent of the recipients were women. Women were trained as entrepreneurs on loan receiving and management.
3	Provide women with training on production and storage of seeds, cultivation and preservation of mushroom, planting seedlings and saplings, horticultural seed development, homestead gardening, production of bio and compost fertilizer, preservation and marketing of vegetable and fruits. Provide microcredit with lower interest rates and create employment opportunities for them;	A large number of women are involved in cultivating vegetables at homestead, processing as well as preservation of vegetables and fruits under the research activities in different agriculture research institutes under BARC. Women cultivators are encouraged to involve in the programme for production and preservation of jute seeds.
4	Create women-friendly environment to facilitate marketing of agricultural products, and develop and expand woman-friendly environment in the existing and new markets;	Community groups comprised of at least 30 percent of women members have been formed to facilitate marketing of agriculture products under the second crop diversification project. Under this project a total of 1,59,000 women have been trained

Serial No.	Recommendations pursued in the previous year	Progress
1	2	3
		on market conditions, value addition, and commodity prices.
5	Improve the socio-economic condition of poor and destitute women living in flood, drought, saline-prone areas and coastal regions. Support these women by supplying agricultural inputs, and provide training and credit support with low interest rates as a part of post-natural disaster rehabilitation.	As part of post-disaster rehabilitation program, activities like supply of free agriculture inputs, training and disbursing credit at low interest rates are continuing.
6	Owing to involve more women in agro-processing and agri-business, provide support to develop women as entrepreneurs, provide training and loan support with low interest rates to create employment opportunities.	Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has trained 310457 women in technology of crop production, comprehensive pest management, post-harvest preservation and management of crops and marketing. To develop agro-business, a total of 45,324 entrepreneurs were provided with credits of tk 420.00 crores under Bangladesh Agro-business Development Project of Department of Agricultural Marketing. Among them 45% are women entrepreneurs. Women workers involved in small and cottage industry were trained in production of multi-faceted jute products.
7	Consider gender issue in all developmental projects and programs of the Agriculture Ministry	Gender issues are actively considered while adopting development projects in the Ministry of Agriculture. Second crop diversification project has developed Gender Equality Strategy Paper for the Department of Agricultural Extension that has been published in September, 2016.
8	Provide all types of agricultural support services to women so that they are able to undertake homestead cultivation activities in an effective manner.	DAE and research institutions are providing technical support, training, and financial assistance for cultivating vegetables and fruits at homesteads.

**10.0 Proposal for future activities**

- ❖ To take steps/initiatives to come forward to the development of agricultural activities for ensuring the economic empowerment of women;
- ❖ To impart multi-faceted training to women on agricultural activities in order to transform them into educated and skilled workforce;
- ❖ To support the establishment of agricultural farms and agro-based industries by Ministry of Agriculture through women's participation and entrepreneurship development to free the womenfolk from the curse of poverty;
- ❖ To reward women in different areas alongside men for their contribution in social and economic sphere by Ministry of Agriculture;
- ❖ To take action to ensure a supportive environment so that men and women can share equal responsibility in household affairs and productive activities;
- ❖ To highlight women's contribution in agriculture and their commendable entrepreneurial activities in the media to build up positive image of women. To take initiatives to enhance the relationship between women groups and media organizations for making the later more gender friendly. To telecast these issues through various agriculture related programs.