

Chapter-11

Ministry of Social Welfare

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 It is impossible to reduce socio-political-economic inequality if the qualitative change of social development does not advance as well as the economic development in the same time. In terms of Bangladesh, women are far more poor than men. This poorness is not just economic; in most cases, social, state and in some cases at spatial levels too. Especially women are the poorest of the poor in empowerment. Ensuring effective participation of women in decision making is still a big challenge. The government has taken various initiatives to face the challenge. We want our state and society to be engendered. It is possible to reduce discrimination between wealthy and poor from our family and society by reaching the benefits of development to the women of Bangladesh.
- 1.2 As per Article 15 (d) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 'It shall be a fundamental responsibility of the State to attain a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people through planned economic growth, with a view to securing its citizens right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases'. Apart from that 'National Social Security Strategy (NSSS), Perspective Plan, 7th Five-year Plan, and other policy documents, emphasize providing social protection for old people, small ethnic communities, disabled persons, destitute women and children.
- 1.3 The government has increased the coverage and the rate of allowance of different social safety-net programs. In Bangladesh, all social safety-net programs are classified under four broad heads: a) to increase capacity of the ultra-poor through monetary transfer; b) to ensure self-employment through micro-credit programs; c) to distribute food grain at lower price in order to ensure food security of the poor and d) to provide education, healthcare facilities and training with an aim to increase the capacity of the poor to change their economic status. In every sector women will get priority.
- 1.4 Bangladesh is currently in second place among the Asian countries in gender equality. Bangladesh has got first place among all the countries in South Asia. This information has emerged in the Global Gender Equity Report of the World Economic Forum (WEF) published in 2018. The policies that have been taken in the past for

inclusive growth ensures poverty reduction at a satisfactory pace. The aim of social safety net programs is to make these more target oriented so as to ensure value for money. The 'National Social Security Strategy (NSSS)' has been formulated. For implementation of NSSS several projects have been taken such as 'Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) and 'Strengthening Public Financial Management for Social Protection (SPFMSP)'. This sort of project will enhance social protection system and that will also ensure gender parity.

- 1.5 The Ministry of Social Welfare largely helps the destitute and disadvantaged irrespective of religion, caste and gender. However, women, as the backward section of the society get priority in all the initiatives of the ministry. Moreover, Ministry of Social Welfare is working for securing rights and privileges of the autistic and disabled girl child through mass communication, autism awareness program, installation of disabled girl-child friendly structure in the educational institutions, extension of housing facilities for poor girl child at upazilla level and protection for the abused and orphan girl child.

2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry

- ❖ Formulate and implement policies relating to social welfare;
- ❖ Improve the standard of living of disadvantaged segments of the population;
- ❖ Facilitate registration of voluntary social service organizations;
- ❖ Provide education, training and rehabilitation services to the destitute, orphans, and helpless children;
- ❖ Provide education, training and rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities;
- ❖ Provide rehabilitation and developmental support to vagrants, Children conflict with law and contact with law and persons prone to social crimes; implementation of probation and other aftercare services.

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

- 3.1 **Equitable socio-economic development:** As inclusion of 50 percent women beneficiaries in 3 programs, interest free micro-credits for 100 percent women beneficiaries in one programme is mandatory; on an average, annually 1.13 lakh women, are benefiting from enhanced social security, self-employment, education and training, and income generating activities. These women will also have opportunities to have their own capital and better access to government resources and services. This will have direct impact on women's advancement. Priority is also given to enhancing the wellbeing and rehabilitation for helpless female children. On

an average, annually 8 thousand 750 female children will be provided with social security through government organisations and 12 thousand 500 by private organisations. As there is also a provision to include disabled women in all these activities, it will also help to ensure education, health, training, as well as safe shelters for them and this will, in turn, reduce their probable risk and increase their social safety.

- 3.2 **Social protection for the disadvantaged people:** Social security for about 46.80 lakh women have been ensured, as it is compulsory that 100 per cent of the beneficiaries will be comprising the widows, women oppressed by husband and distressed women and 50 per cent of the women beneficiaries will be comprising from the elderly and disabled allowances programs. As a result, social dignity and empowerment of women will be achieved and poverty risks will be reduced. Further, opportunities to have adequate accommodation, clothing, health and nutrition for the elderly, widows, women oppressed by husband, distressed women and women with disability will also be increased. As both men and women are involved with welfare organisations, initiatives will be taken to strengthen the activities related to women advancement on a priority basis. In addition, registered welfare organizations will play a pivotal role in enhancing women's social status and participation in different forums, providing legal assistance, sharing public resources and services, preventing women from repression, child marriage and dowry.
- 3.3 **Social justice and social inclusion:** Along with the provision of education and training, safe shelters and maintenance are being provided to women who come into contact with the legal system in order to increase social security and reduce the risk of harm. Annually, 16 thousand 500 women and girl will be provided assistance through Government/non-Government organisations to enable them to receive fair justice under the legal system and for rehabilitation into society. Through training and rehabilitation programmes, 600 disadvantaged women on an average annually and 600 adolescents will be gaining access to safe home programmes. In addition, social security support services, legal aid and fair justice will be provided to women affected by social maladies (dowry, sexual harassment, child marriage and drug addiction). Among the health service recipients, 50% are women, hence, there will be positive impact on them to ensure social security. Further, women will also be protected from the probable loss and vulnerability from the provision of health services and rehabilitation for the expectant mother, poor women and children, which have been given due priority 50 percent vulnerable women and women with disability patient, will be ensured among the patients who will be provided with free treatment from private hospital.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of the Ministry of Social Welfare for Women's Advancement and Rights

- 4.1 GDP growth is not the sole index of overall development. As mentioned before economic development creates wealth gap between the rich and the poor. Moreover, due to accident, natural disaster and social disorder a person or a family can lose basic capacity to perform their societal responsibility and to enter job market. Since the women in our society lag behind men in almost all aspects of socio-economic life and since they are among the poorest of the poor, maintaining gender equity relating to physical and mental development of human being is not enough. Rather as disadvantaged group women should be given priority in all sorts of social protection programs. It is necessary to build such a society where women will be able to use their full potential. MoSW implements various programs and projects to mainstream disadvantaged people into society and economy.
- 4.2 The goals, strategic objectives and activities of the MoSW are adopted in line with the underlying principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1948; Convention on Child Rights 1989; UN Convention on Rights of Disabled Persons 2006; 7th five year plan, Perspective Plan, National Social Welfare Policy 2005; National Policy on Disability 1995; the National Child Policy 2011, the National Women Development Policy 2011, Declaration of expansion of Social Safety-nets programme in Current Government's Election Manifesto, the Person's with Neuro-Developmental Disabilities Act, 2013; The Maintenance of Parents Act, 2013; The Children Act, 2013; The Vagrants and Homeless Person's (Rehabilitation) Act, 2011; The Special Privilege of Women in Prison Act, 2006; The Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961; The Probation of Offenders Ordinance, 1960; The Orphanages and Widows' Homes Act, 1944. These acts, rules and policies are ensuring women's advancement and right as well.
- 4.3 The following table presents the number of female beneficiaries in various programs of the Ministry of Social Welfare. Although almost all the policies relating to social safety net programs are planned to ensure gender parity, in reality the number of female beneficiaries is lower than that of the male.

Number of female beneficiaries in different safety net programs (2018-19)

Serial No.	Social Safety Net Program	Total number of beneficiaries	Number of women beneficiaries	Women beneficiaries (%)
1.	Old Age Allowance	40,00,000	19,44,480	48.62
2.	Allowances for the Widowed, Deserted and Destitute Women	14,00,000	14,00,000	100.0
3.	Allowances for the Financially Insolvent Disabled	10,00,000	4,23,800	42.38

Serial No.	Social Safety Net Program	Total number of beneficiaries	Number of women beneficiaries	Women beneficiaries (%)
4.	Stipend for Disabled Students	90,000	41,904	46.56
5.	Fund for the Welfare of Acid Burnt and Disables	97,112	32,106	33.06
6.	Livelihood Development of <i>hijra, bede</i> and other under privileged groups	71,650	Female: 23,486 Hijra: 7,650	43.45

4.4 Major activities of the Ministry of Social Welfare involve development of livelihood of poor, women, children and physically or mentally disabled persons. Budget allocation for each of the activities is apportioned for women development. Henceforth all the activities of the ministry one way or the other helps strengthening economic status of the women.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women's Advancement (Direct and Indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Social Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The Ministry of Social Welfare is running a number of social safety net programs to create an effective social protection system. While under old age allowance program around 44.00 lacs people receive 500 taka per month, under disable allowance 15.45 lac poor persons receive 750 taka per month. Moreover, 17.00 lacs widows, deserted and distressed women get 500 taka per month and 86.00 thousand hijra, bede and other under privileged groups get monetary allowance and stipend at different rates. ❖ Since 50 per cent of the beneficiaries of the programs are women, it ultimately benefits 47.23 lac women. Consequently, social status and security of the women increase. Women are being empowered and graduated from poverty at the end.
2.	Interest Free Microcredit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mainstreaming poor and disabled persons through effective training and microcredit program will reduce poverty. ❖ Compulsory provision of inclusion of 50 percent women in three interest free micro-credit programs and 100 percent women in another similar program has direct impact on empowerment, social security, self-employment,

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women's Advancement (Direct and Indirect)
1	2	3
		education and training, and income generating activities along with capital accumulation of 1.13 lac women.
3.	Protection of orphaned and helpless children under the Government management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ The rights of the most endangered portion of the society will be secured through providing protection to orphans and endangered children in the form of accommodation, food, clothing, education, and medical treatment. ❖ As disadvantaged girls are given priority in government welfare and rehabilitation program, around 8 thousand 750 girls of different government organizations and 12 thousand 500 girls of private organizations will enjoy social protection. The children living in the organizations receive training and finally get integrated with the society. Since women with disability get priority in these programs, their education, health services, training facilities and safe accommodation will be ensured through the programmes. They will enjoy more security and will be protected from possible vulnerabilities.
4.	Protection, development and welfare of the persons with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ In light of the special needs of persons with disabilities, efforts have been made to integrate them into the mainstream of society as skilled manpower by providing accommodation, education and training under special management, and supplying them assistive devices. ❖ Disabled women are given a priority in these programs that offer education, health service, training and housing. As a result they will be protected from social risks.

6.0 Women's Participation in Ministries Activities and their Share in 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	6881	3535	51.38	5584	2700	48.36	5593	2715	48.54	4747	2342	49.33
Development	326	203	62.15	245	124	50.41	254	139	54.75	182	94	51.36
Operating	6555	3333	50.84	5339	2577	48.26	5339	2576	48.25	4565	2248	49.25

Source: RCGP database

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

Indicator	Unit	Actual		Target
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
1	2	3	4	5
Number of female beneficiaries in Old Age Allowance	%	49.24	47.62	48.62
Number of female beneficiaries in Interest Free Micro-credits	%	60.04	60.10	61.00

8.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

8.1 The Ministry of Social Welfare has taken a number of social safety net programs to build an effective social protection system. The MoSW administer old age allowance for around 40 lac people, 14.00 lac widow and 10.00 lac poor persons under allowance for disabled program. Women constitute 50 percent of the beneficiaries of old age and disable allowance programs and 100 percent of widows, deserted and distressed women allowance program. As a result, social status and security of the women increases. They are being empowered and lifted above the poverty level. Apart from the above, women are receiving training on handicraft, wool weaving, tailoring, embroidery, cane-craft from different training centers. A Total of 23,309 trainee have received training from 80 skill development training centers under this ministry in 2017-18 fiscal year, out of which 9,323 persons that means about 40 percent are women. The trained women are providing financial assistance to their families staying at home.

8.2 Success story

Robust Rehana- Woman's Success Story

Poverty and Physical Challenge could not be obstructed in Rehana Begum's life. Rehana Begum, a disabled person of Shibpur of Alampur union of Khetlal upazilla of Joypurhat district, is a unique example of winning physical challenge. Although born in a very poor family, Rehana is a successful woman in life. From zero now she has a beautiful house, pond filled up with fishes, farm filled up with poultry, chicken and goat. Landless Rehna Begum's success story of life struggle has spread across the country. Success, as well as many awards have been received by her. The last received award was Best Small Entrepreneur City Award with three hundred thousand taka.

She grew up in the needy family with 8 siblings. Being a physically challenged person she could never be married! Such thoughts sometimes made her frustrated. In the midst of economic emancipation, she got *Fazil* degree by her own will-power. After got *Fazil* degree, she was roaming from door to door for a job. But she was frustrated with not getting a job. So, one day she contacted with local social service office for disability allowance. Later on with assistance of Upazila Social Welfare Officer she formed an

organization called 'Disabled Welfare and Rehabilitation Association' in 2004 with other disabled women of her locality. As a person with disability she also apply for interest-free micro credit of 10,000 (ten thousand) taka from social services office. The 1st time she keeps some ducks in small scale. With a small amount of capital, it was tough to achieve her expected success. Later, she got support from other public and private officials, through reciprocity training and loans, Rehana Begum achieved rudimentary success by cultivating fish in pond, duck farm, chicken farm and goat farm. In collaboration with the Social Welfare Office, she received a one-acre Khas land from the government as a disabled landless person. Her two kids are now in good school. Renowned disabled woman Rehana is now a model of development and self-reliance.

9.0 Progress on Recommended Activities in the Previous Year

Sl. No.	Recommendations	Progress
1	2	3
1.	According to the targets mentioned in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) "target 5.4, Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate" Ministry of Social Welfare encouraged to promote it.	Initiatives have been taken to organize workshops to increase its promotional activities by the Social Welfare Ministry to promote the Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate, according to the target 5.4 mentioned in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
2.	The Social Welfare Ministry must ensure equal share of women in all the programs of the ministry;	The Ministry of Social Welfare has taken various initiatives regarding ensure equal share of women in all the programs of the ministry. The data of 52.00 lakh beneficiaries is being analyzed, where inclusion of women is 48.62% in the elderly, 100% for the widow, 42.78% in the disabled allowances. Women's participation in all programs is gradually increasing.
3.	The ministry should continue	Special needs of disabled and girls are being

Sl. No.	Recommendations	Progress
1	2	3
	communication with concern educational institutions so as to ensure disable girl friendly educational structure;	highly considering in construction of new buildings. Construction of Hostels for the visually impaired children (Girls 6 and Boys 5 and 20 hostels expansions) is in progress.
4.	Digitize all social safety net related services;	Initiatives are taken for building an integrated software for Social Safety net program beneficiaries. www.bhata.gov.bd is an example of this type of initiatives. All the information of 52.00 lakh Social Safety Net beneficiary have already been entered in this data base and it will continue till entire beneficiaries included in the system.
5.	Introduction of senior citizens' corner in the public hospitals and health complexes with special consideration for senior women citizen;	Ministry has been taken initiatives regarding senior citizens' corner in the public hospitals and health complexes with special consideration for senior women citizen.
6.	Social protection facilities for orphan and socially abused girl should be extended;	New 8 government children homes are under construction in current year and construction of other 19 homes for children are in plan for next year. There are 13 Sheikh Russell Training and Rehabilitation Centre are being established in different cities for the development of street children. Ministry is planning to extend these training and rehabilitation centre in other 19 old districts. Ministry also running 6 safe homes for women and socially abused girls in 6 divisions.
7.	To provide training to physically challenged women so that employment opportunities could be increased for them.	Women and physically challenged women are highly encouraged for training admission in all the training centres under ministry of social welfare.

10.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Ministry of Social Welfare should take initiatives for Target 5.4 of SDGs as Lead Ministry to recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.
- ❖ To undertake new projects aimed at improving the reproductive health awareness of disabled women;
- ❖ Performing research on the evaluation and impact of the ongoing activities and projects adopted by the Ministry of Social Welfare and the development of the programs based on the results of the research and the results obtained for the public;
- ❖ Acquisition of special programs or projects aimed at improving the lives of small ethnic women;
- ❖ Taking initiatives to ensure the government's various facilities and facilities for the disabled women and disclosure of information to the disable peoples;
- ❖ Taking initiatives to ensure that disabled children and girls are considered to be involved in the construction of educational infrastructure;
- ❖ Increasing campaign activity to ensure the social inclusion of people of the hijra community;
- ❖ Preparation of an integrated and standard indicator for evaluating or monitoring the results or impact of ongoing activities or projects adopted in women's development;
- ❖ Expansion of coverage for the protection of orphan children and the victims of social crimes;
- ❖ Enhance the inclusion of disabled women in existing training programs to create employment opportunities for disabled women.