

Chapter-38

Road Transport and Highways Division

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Planned Development of Transport and Communication Infrastructure is a major pre-condition of sustainable development and accelerated growth of a country. A modern and well-planned road transport and communication system contributes directly in ensuring equal distribution and marketing of goods, reducing production cost, increasing competition in industrial sector, expanding foreign trades, urbanization and keeping the price level of commodities at a tolerable level. To this ends in view, Road Transport and Highways Division is putting relentless efforts for building up an efficient and effective road transport system to ensure sound economic growth of the country. At present, 22,302 km road network of different category is prevailing under this Division. 178 projects are being implemented in the fiscal year 2018-19, out of which 28 projects are planned to be completed for the better communication system. With the improvement of the road communication system, peoples' movement become easier and transport costs are declining, businesses are expanding, employment opportunities are being generated, industries are expanding and, above all it contributes directly or indirectly for changing women's position and reducing poverty.
- 1.2 Road Transport and Highways Division is working not only for the improvement of domestic communication system, but also has taken various initiatives to be connected with the regional and international highway network. As part of these initiatives, passenger and freight services are extended in different international routes. With continuing regular repair, maintenance, development and expansion of road network, Road Transport and Highways Division has been working insistently to introduce and operate digital system in transport system, to ensure road safety, and to reduce traffic congestion. Besides, the process of implementing mass rapid transit system (MRT and BRT) in the capital and its surroundings has already been started. The mass population of the country including men and women are getting benefited from better communication system. As a result of the improvement and expansion of the district roads, male-female farmers can now sell their farm products more easily at fair prices and cheaper costs which in turn help them to improve their socio-economic status along with the standard of living. As a result, all women including the poor ones are increasingly involving themselves in the economic activities. This is also helping them to get essential services like education and health more easily. Expansion of road networks at the hilly and remote areas

which enabling access to Upazila/Growth centers has become easier for rural population. These have been resulted in an increase in production, marketing and investment. As a result, the standard of living of the entire population including women has improved.

2.0 Major Functions of the Division

- ❖ Maintenance, repairing and renovation of the highways network;
- ❖ Improvement and expansion of national, regional highways and district roads;
- ❖ Adoption and accomplishment of projects for construction of new highways which are economically important;
- ❖ Introduction and development of modern digital motor vehicle management and control system;
- ❖ Ensure road safety;
- ❖ Introduction and development of integrated modern mass transport system;
- ❖ Expansion of bus services in domestic and international routes;
- ❖ Encourage project implementation through Public Private Partnership (PPP) in Roads and transportation sector.

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

- ❖ **Ensure development, expansion and maintenance of existing highway networks:** Women are engaging in the repair, maintenance and development work of national, international and regional highways. As a result, employment opportunity will be expanded for women at every level and thereby they become self-reliant. Marketing of goods produced by rural women will also become quick and easier.
- ❖ **Modernization of digital motor vehicle management system:** With the expansion of modern digital motor vehicle management system, women are getting opportunity to run ICT centers which is empowering them. It is helping in marketing as well as getting appropriate price of goods produced by rural women.
- ❖ **Ensure Road Safety:** Women and children are the prime victim of a family of any accident. Therefore, women will be the most beneficial of road safety arrangement.
- ❖ **Introduce and Expansion of Mass Rapid Transport System:** 9 seats in Bus and 6 seats in Minibus will be reserved for women in both public and private bus

behind the driving seat. It will make travel easy and comfortable for women which will expand opportunities for women to participate in social and economic activities.

- ❖ **Expansion of Passenger and Freight transport Services in Domestic and International Routes:** Along with men, women can travel abroad at lower cost. As a result, social and economic activities of women are increasing.

4.0 Relevance of the Roles and Responsibilities of the Division for Women's Advancement and Rights

4.1 At present, road transport has been emerged as a single largest transportation mode in terms of passenger and freight transport in the country. Road transport system is playing greater role in employment, rural development, poverty alleviation, reducing disparity in rural and urban life through development of quick and safe communication infrastructure and introduction of modern mass transport system. According to the strategic policy of the government, Road Transport and Highways Division have determined its own policies, strategies, objectives and activities and priority areas. To achieve this goal, easing communication between town and village including reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance, improvement and expansion of roads, road safety measures, affordable services to all including women and poor have been given highest priority. Though gender related matters are clearly reflected in the documents such as Revised Strategic Transport Plan (RSTP), National Land Transport Policy, Road Master Plan, National Integrated Multi Modal Transport Policy (NIMTP) pro-women steps remain in the activities of this Division.

4.2 Women are employed in the ongoing maintenance, repair, renovation, and development of national, international, regional, and district highways. So employment opportunities of women are increasing. As a result they will become self-sufficient, more empowered. Expanded modern road communication infrastructure will make sales and marketing of the products produced by village women easier. Road safety measure will help the women community as the road accidents primarily cause both women and children. Besides, the following pro-women activities are also contributing to the development of women:

- ❖ Introduction of BRTC bus services exclusively for women;
- ❖ Reserve seats for women in all buses including BRTC buses;
- ❖ Introduction of counter-based bus services on local routes; it made the buying of tickets and riding the buses easier for women.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas of the Division and its impacts on Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Improvement and Expansion of Roads Network	Employing women in reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance of national and regional highways and roads development, especially in maintenance and rehabilitation work is rising. For this women's employment opportunities are generated and they become self-sufficient, more empowered, sales and marketing of the products of village women become easier.
2.	Introduction and Expansion of Integrated Mass Rapid Transport System	Employment opportunities for women will increase if integrated mass rapid transport system is available for all. Women can also get desired benefits staying at home after introduction of the e-ticketing system.
3.	Expansion of digital Motor Vehicle Management	Women can get access of ICT center and they will be empowered if digital motor vehicle management and control process are introduced and expanded.
4.	Ensure Road Safety	Road safety measure will reduce the incidence of accidental injuries to women and children.

6.0 Women's Share in Division'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
Division's Budget	29274	12734	43.5	23486	10615	45.2	24380	7405	30.37	19298	6529	33.83
Development	25163	12214	48.54	19803	10161	51.31	20817	6814	32.73	15882	5903	37.17
Operating	4111	520	12.65	3684	454	12.32	3563	591	16.58	3416	626	18.34

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Success of the Division in Promoting Women's Advancement

- ❖ Employing women in reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance of national and regional highways development, especially in ongoing projects of Roads and Highways Division, they are becoming self-reliant. Moreover, with up gradation of the existing national highways into four lanes, construction of new national highways, bridges, construction of new regional and district roads etc. road network has reached in every corner of country. As a result, women can travel easily and safely to their work place and service centers.

- ❖ The constraints and obstacles prevailing in the road communication for the advancement of the women have been trying to remove by earmarking of seats in the bus, introduction of exclusive bus for women and with other initiatives but the achievements will take time to be visible. Presently, 20 Women Bus Services are running in various routes of Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur district. Training on denting, painting, welding and driving are provided to 2741 women among 67621 trainees through 4 BRTC training centers and 15 driving training institution between 2009 and 2018.
- ❖ Under the supervision of BRTA, residential training course has been introduced in order to train women driver with the assistance of government and private training centers since 2012. As a result, 32,473 women received driving licenses after completing driving courses successfully by 30 June 2019.
- ❖ Decision has been taken to appoint female driver for BRTC Bus Service. Female conductors have already been appointed in BRTC Bus service.
- ❖ Female officers are increasingly get appointment as Executive and Sub-Divisional Engineer at the field offices of Roads and Highways Directorate.
- ❖ Provision for paying car tax and fees through Credit and Debit Cards has been introduced, so that women could pay those from their residence.
- ❖ E-Ticketing provision would ensure that women could buy BRTC Bus ticket from their residence.

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Increase special bus service in different routes for women;
- ❖ Increase reserved seats for women in each public and private bus;
- ❖ Ensure ticket quota for women in all short and long distanced bus services.
- ❖ Establish separate ticket counters at bus stations for women;
- ❖ Construction of separate toilet and wash room for women;
- ❖ Arrange separate waiting room for women in bus stations.