

Chapter-42

Posts and Telecommunications Division

1.0 Introduction

1.1 At present world, Telecommunication and Information Technology is one of the most important instruments for socio-economic development of a country. The main responsibility of Post and Telecommunication Division is to provide affordable, quality and international standard telecommunications and postal service through the adoption of institutional development and modern technology. This division plays an important role for eliminating poverty through rendering quick information, gender discrimination, proper utilization of assets and to ensure rendering basic services of the state through the country. At the same time, this division significantly contributes to the revenue earnings of the government. In the year 2016-17, total contribution of the division to GDP at market price was Tk 233166 crore. This amount increase to Tk 24713 crores in the fiscal year 2017-18. Therefore, GDP growth of this division is 6.67% in the fiscal year 2017-18. With the aim of building Digital Bangladesh, government plans to invest on telecommunication sector to materialize vision 2021 and 7th Five-Year Plan in order to achieve economic growth through employment friendly infrastructure development. With this target, Post and Telecommunication Division (PTD) has been working to modernize its departments and agencies through technology to provide and ensure quality post and telecommunications services at affordable cost. As a result, PTD is working for women development including creating equal job opportunities for women.

2.0 Major Functions of the Division

According to Rules of Business and Allocation of Business, the main functions of PTD are as below:

- ❖ Establish, operate and maintain telecommunication network throughout the country;
- ❖ Provide telecommunication services;
- ❖ Provide postal services;
- ❖ Supply of telecommunication equipment;
- ❖ Provide savings services through post office;
- ❖ Providing life insurance services through post office;
- ❖ Maintain liaison, execute contract and comply protocol with other countries and international organizations related with Post and Telecommunication.

3.0 Strategic objectives of Posts and Telecommunications Division and their Relevance for Women's Advancement and Rights

3.1 Modern telecommunication services, its expansion and telecommunication services with affordable price: Expansion of telecommunication services with affordable price will enable people to have easy accessibility to the telephone and internet services which create mass awareness. This widened the way of education and health services for women and to create a work-friendly environment which enhances women participation in economic activities. It helps to raise awareness of women which lead to upgrade women social status as well.

3.2 Modernization of postal services, expansion and diversification of ICT based postal service: Efficient postal services at affordable cost make communication easier for women. Postal Savings Bank is encouraging women's savings trend, which ensures women's personal and family safety. Besides this, it makes women's financial transactions fast and easy.

3.3 Enhancement of Institutional Capacity: Now a days, women are able to take part in the business sitting at home with the help of e-commerce service, logistic mail services etc. As a result, the number of women entrepreneurs is increasing day by day in online business.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Posts and Telecommunications Division for Women's Advancement and Establishment of Rights:

4.1 Post and Telecommunication Division has been playing an important role for women development especially ensuring uninterrupted mobility, connectivity and access to information. To build women as efficient human resources and to enhance women socio-economic capacity development through participating in business, job market and production process is one of the major goals of 7th five year plan. SDG Target "5.b.1 Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex" and "9.c.1 Proportion of population covered by a mobile network, by technology" is directly linked with women development.

4.2 To ensure social justice for women, equal-opportunity and equal-participation through optimal use of information and communication technology is set as mission statement of National Information and Communication Technology Policy 2009 and National Telecommunication Policy-2018. Social equity has been set as the prior strategic theme in those policy documents. Removing economic disparity and digital divide among (a) Low income people (b) minority community (c) women and (d) people with disabilities have been given priorities in those policies to make a bridge for backward sections and bringing them in the mainstream. Initiatives have been

taken to remove gender discrimination from ICT based education and ICT professional to materialize this policies.

- 4.3 Free flow of economic, political, social and legal information besides personal and family arena through rendering telecommunication service at marginalized section at their door-step have been ensured. This is playing significant role in the empowerment of women and consolidates their rights and social status. Besides, modern and efficient postal service at affordable price has positive impact on the personal, social and economic communication of the whole population including women. It also contributes to boost-up national economy as well. It is said to establish e-commerce center to expand women run small scale industries. Post and Telecommunication Division has to work directly with other ministries/organizations like Finance Division, Ministry of Women and Children Affair, and Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs to expand safety net for women, amend act for the interest of women and prepare gender sensitive budget.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Expansion of Telecommunication Service Coverage and Quality	Women along with men are benefitted from overall economic growth of the country achieved through development of the telecommunication services. Besides, these services are ensuring scope for education and health services in favor of women. These ensure women's easy access to the labor market, reduce working time and provide better working environment resulting improvement of women's skill. Introduction of new technology in telecommunication sector enables women who are half of the total population to use advanced technology. Women's personal communication is being easier which contribute to their security and empowerment. Full-time communication through mobile phone enhances family's sense of security about their girls, which in turn, enhance women's participation in education and job. Moreover, new communication technology expands the scope of creative space and innovative ideas for women. As a result, women involvement in wide range of new economic activities is increasing. Project have been taken for ensuring telecommunication and internet services for women. So, women participation on internet based activities are increasing.

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
2.	ICT based postal services	Modern and efficient postal services have been positively impacting upon personal, social and economic connectivity of the total population including women. Improved postal service especially the introduction of NOGOD enhances monetary transaction and communication of women labour.
3.	Upgradation of existing service of postal Department and introducing contemporary new services.	Post e-centers have been creating opportunities to render information and services to poor women who lag behind due to economic and gender disparity. At the same time, diversification of initiatives of existing services open up opportunities to include new demands from women entrepreneurs.

6.0 Women's Share in the 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	3461	977	28.24	2840	822	28.96	3384	891	26.33	1783	195	10.95
Development	2397	975	40.69	1846	820	44.45	2381	888	37.29	761	164	21.53
Operating	1064	2	0.2	994	2	0.21	1003	3	0.33	1023	31	3.08

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Success of Postal Department in Promoting Women's Advancement

- ❖ Over the last few years, women have got the opportunity to engage themselves in the global economy, using modern and high speed internet services in the cities, Upazillas and even in Union level through those projects which are already completed or still ongoing under this division.
- ❖ With the introduction of ICT based communication system, it enhances the services to women on education and health sector. It also helps to ensure congenial working environment for women through extended training programme. Overall, these have contributed to the development of human rights as well as security of women in their family and society.
- ❖ Number of service centers of different mobile operators is increasing continuously, where most of the employees are women. As a result, employment opportunity of women is increasing.
- ❖ Due to the intensive initiatives of this Division during the last three years, the number of mobile subscribers have extended to 15.41 crore from 11.68 crore.

This is followed by an increase in the number of internet subscribers to 9.05 crore from 3.93 crore. As a result, tele-density in the last three years has been increased to 94.65% from 76.20% and internet density to 55.58% from 25.09%. Bandwidth charges have been reduced due to more use of internet and make its prices affordable. The use of internet bandwidth was 7.5 GBPS in 2008 which at present 800 GBPS. At present telecommunication network provide coverage around 100 percent areas of the country. It enabling women to conduct business activities at home.

- ❖ Mobile Money Order, Postal Cash Card and Mobile Banking have been introduced. Digital services are being provided from 2750 Post Offices, and Postal Cash Card service has been introduced at 1346 post offices under Mobile Money Order service. These digital center and postal cash card have been used for providing allowances and other monetary support to women under social safety net programme.
- ❖ Posts and Telecommunications Division is playing an important role in establishing e-governance. Teletalk Bangladesh has achieved wide-ranging success in e-education, e-public health, e-voting, district e-service, disaster management, e-billing and high speed communication network. Women's participation is higher than men in e-public health and e-commerce.
- ❖ One laptop is preserved for the betterment of rural women in the newly started post-e centers.
- ❖ It has created opportunities to reach information to economically and socially backward women by connecting optical fiber cable and 8500 e-post center at Union level. Two entrepreneurs (one male and one female) are working in the digital information center and e-post center.
- ❖ Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has allocated 10921 shortcode as a help line to prevent violence against women and children under Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.
- ❖ Teletalk Bangladesh Ltd. has distributed 13 lakh Oporajita SIM among the women throughout the country. Women can get voice call service and high speed internet service with very low cost using OPORAJITA. As a result, gender discrimination to access internet will be reduced remarkably.
- ❖ 'Cyber Threat Detection and Response' project has been implemented to the aim of ensuring overall digital and cyber security of women and children with a view to identifying disgraceful sight for women and to remove the sight as well.
- ❖ There is a provision for recruitment of 10% female drivers under the 'Strengthening of Transportation of the Postal Department project.

- ❖ Women friendly work environment has been prevailing in this division and its subordinate departments. In this continuation, the newly build headquarter of the Postal Department has provided 'Day Care Center' with all the modern facilities.

- ❖ **Success stories**

Under the project of 'Strengthening of Transportation of the Postal Department' 109 vehicles has been purchased for the purpose of transporting postal goods across the country. While recruiting drivers of the vehicles, 11 female drivers were recruited. Currently 9 among them are working. Kakoli Begum is one of them. While discussing with her, Kakoli informed that female drivers are not given night duty and they are supposed to travel in Dhaka city and nearby areas (Narayanganj / Munshiganj / Gazipur Sadar). Driving is a challenging task. As a driver, she gets all government facilities that makes her family happy socially and economically.

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Take necessary steps for protecting the interests of women in using new technology;
- ❖ Encourage women participation in the establishment and maintenance of telecommunication network, provision of telecommunication and postal services, and management related to different activities of Post and Telecommunications;
- ❖ High speed internet connectivity will be reached in remote islands and hawar area through Bangabandhu Satellite. As a result, it will ensure the safety of women and children at the time of disaster. This will also facilitate the enhancement of social and economic status of women.
- ❖ Encourage and to give women entrepreneurs preference to work with post-e-centers and similar e-centers;
- ❖ Undertake educational programs to create awareness among women about their individual security and alertness.
- ❖ Establish a strong monitoring system and enact law to prevent violence and harassment against women.
- ❖ Find out the number of women beneficiaries and the number of women participating in various offices/activities of postal and telecommunication department;

- ❖ Make safe and women friendly work environment, separate washroom for women, safe communication system and day-care center at every offices under the division and its subordinate departments will be established.