

## Chapter-12

### Ministry of Labour and Employment

#### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The main driving force of poverty reduction is employment generation. This is why it is important to create employment opportunity of eligible manpower in Bangladesh, one of the most densely populated countries. Each year a number of new skilled and unskilled labour forces are added to the labour market. In order to establish the foundation of an emerging economy the coming labour forces should be provided with employment. In a developing country with capacity to achieve high growth, it is imperative to create opportunity for employment and making man power skilled providing training and by increasing their productivity what will help expanding our economy. Ministry of labour and Employment is mandated to ensure employment generation as well as to enhance productivity of labour, to give them adequate social security, eradication of child labour in hazardous work, and to ensure peaceful labour relations etc. The Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-20), emphasizes the need for higher productivity and decent jobs and higher income.

1.2 In the light of Article 15, 28, 38 and 40 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and according to ILO conventions, the Government is determined to take steps to make labour policies more responsive to labour welfare. For this, the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE) has taken a range of pragmatic steps to implement the promises made in the Election Manifesto, 2014 and the Vision-2021 to fulfill the basic needs of workers, alleviate poverty rapidly, empower women, create employment and skilled manpower, fix minimum wages by taking into account of the inflation and growth rate and eradicate hazardous child labour. These steps are expected to improve the welfare of workers, through socio-economic development of labour, create a skilled work force and increase employment and productivity.

#### 2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry

- ❖ To ensure education, welfare and social safety of labours
- ❖ Creation of skilled manpower by providing training and employment generation
- ❖ To register trade unions, settle industrial and labour disputes and determine and implement the minimum wage and activities related to registration of factories;
- ❖ To formulate and enforce labour laws and eradication of child labour;

- ❖ Liaise with international organizations including ILO in labour and human resource management;
- ❖ Coordination of human resources development and work-oriented training programs at public and private levels in the country;
- ❖ To ensure compliance at factories and institutions in accordance with Labor laws.

### **3.0 Strategic objectives of the Ministry and their Relevance with Women's Advancement:**

#### **3.1 Strengthening welfare of the workers**

As labor welfare centers are located in industrial areas of the country, women workers working in different factories and industrial establishments are getting training and health services, which have a direct impact on women's development.

#### **3.2 Improvement of work environment and welfare of workers**

With the training of employees and employees, officers and employees associated with labor administration, improving the working environment for women in the factory, women's participation in social security and labor market is increasing.

#### **3.3 Improvement of the compliance related to labour**

It has been possible to ensure the safety and unrestricted movement of women working in the factories and ensuring the compliance of various institutions

### **4.0 Roles of the Ministry for Women's Advancement and Rights:**

- 4.1 According to the 2011 census conducted by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, nearly half of the country's population is women. It is impossible to accelerate the development of the country by keeping this large population behind. According to "Labor Force Survey-2017", the number of women workers who were economically active above the age of 15 years was 4.36 crore in 2017. Most women of Bangladesh employ their labour in their family or in the informal sector either without any wages or for meager amount of wages. Due to this, women's position in the family and society is not strong as they are not being financially self-sufficient. The Ministry of Labor and Employment is conducting various programs including arranging proper training for women workers to create employment opportunities for them to participate in labor market at home and abroad, and ensuring overall welfare of the of women workers. As a result, women workers at an increased rate are participating in the domestic labor market especially ready-made garments industry, side by side, they are participating in the outside labour market as well.

- 4.2 MOLE is the lead ministry of Goal 8 of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). Different steps has been taken to achieve the Targets 8.5, 8.7 and 8.8 (ensure equal pay for work of equal value, elimination of the worst forms of child labour and Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers). In the National Labour Policy, 2012, provisions have been made to address wage discrimination along with assurance of equal wages and rights of women workers. Out of 33 conventions of ILO, 7 conventions were ratified by Bangladesh and it has emphasized to uphold the rights and esteem of the women workers. Special provisions have also been made in Sections 93, 94 and 95 of Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006 (amendment 2016), for the welfare of women workers such as women's rest room, child day care centres etc. Minimum wage of the garments workers have been raised from Tk. 5,300 to Tk. 8,000. Higher wages, allowances and benefits have been fixed and are being implemented in other sectors as well. As a result of these activities, employment opportunities for women have increased and widened in scope, which helps in women's advancement as well as the country's economic development.
- 4.3 Through "Eradication of hazardous child labour in Bangladesh" project under the Ministry of Labor and Employment, 90,000 child workers were made operational able to work by providing 18 months of non-formal education and 6 months of skill development training. After the completion of training, these children are provided with necessary inputs/equipment related to the trades in which they are trained for getting them out of hazardous work and bring them back to normal life. In the 4th phase of this project, a plan has been taken to make 100,000 children skilled by providing skill development training by 2020.
- 4.4 Bangladesh Labor Welfare Foundation has been formed in accordance with Article 234 of the Labor Act, 2006 (Amended 2018). A central fund for hundred percent export oriented garments sector and a labour welfare foundation for workers of both formal and informal sectors were formed. If workers are unable to work being sick or injured due to any accident at workplace, they are provided with financial aid from these funds. Usually most of them are women. During 2017-18 a total of tk 30,94,36,639 grant was given to the garments workers from this fund. In the same year a total of tk. 7,12,35,000 was given as financial grant to the labourers from the labour welfare fund. Pregnant women workers of formal and informal both sector are given financial aid.
- 4.5 A large number of people are working as domestic help in Bangladesh, of them 90% are women. Ministry of Labor and Employment has formulated "Domestic Workers Safety and Welfare Policy, 2015". Enforcement and implementation of this policy ensures the rights of domestic workers and their social security. The domestic

workers are recognized as workers and getting workers' status. There are guidelines on how to determine the wages of domestic workers in the policy. It is expected that by implementing the effective implementation of this policy, the interests of domestic workers and their social welfare in Bangladesh will be ensured.

- 4.6 Trainings of 5 days long (for workers and employers) and four weeks long (for workers, employers and concerned officers and employees) are provided through 4 Industrial Related Institutions (IRI) and 32 Labor Welfare Centers of Labor Department under the Ministry of Labor and Employment. The number of women workers in labor education training courses and especially in garment sector labor education training is about 60% to 80%. On the other hand, the number of female workers in the 4-weeks long training courses of 4 IRIs, is about 20% to 30% of the commissioning. In the tea industry sector, the number of women workers is more than that of male workers.
- 4.7 In order to conduct two types of training courses in 4 industrial relations educational institutes and 32 labor welfare centers, allocation for the financial year was 2017-2018 and 2018-19 tk. 90,00,000. Here training allowance for all workers, including women workers, is Tk 150 per day. From July/2018 to December/2018, 5,222 workers were trained through four IRI and 32 labor welfare centers. It is expected that at the end of FY 2018-2019, the number will be at least 12,000.
- 4.8 Free medical care is provided between workers and workers' families, through 32 labor welfare centers under the Department of Labor. In the year 2018-2019 (July/2018-December/2018), a total of 39,162 people received medical services from 32 labor welfare, among them 27,729 women workers.
- 4.9 In the Executive Committee of the Trade Union, there is a provision in the labor law to implement specific seats (minimum 10% female members) for women, which are implementing the Labor Department.
- 4.10 The Labor Department is focusing on the training of women workers in order to create opportunities for women to participate in labor market abroad. About 80% of the workers working in the garment industry are women, for whom Department of Labor is conducting various training and workshops to make them sensitized and empowered about their rights. Women hostels are being constructed in Bandar, Narayanganj and Kalurghat, Chittagong for women garment workers.
- 4.11 The following acts and policies have been formulated and amended for the development of women by the Ministry of Labor and Employment:
  - ❖ According to the ILO Convention, the draft of the Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy, 2015 was made to recognize large labor groups related to domestic work as workers and to ensure their facilities;

- ❖ Bangladesh Labor (Amendment) Act, 2018 has been enacted to make Bangladesh Labor Act, 2006 time-fitted. The Labor Rules 2015 have been enacted under this Act. The provision has been made to ensure maternal welfare facilities for women workers and to ensure proper working environment, there is provision for reasonable behavior towards working women.
- ❖ For the first time in Bangladesh's history, the Domestic Workers' Protection and Welfare Policy 2015 has been enacted, implementation of which will ensure the rights and welfare of the domestic workers.

#### 5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Sl. No.	Priority spending sector/programmers	Impact on women's development (Direct and Indirect)
1.	Implementing Labour Welfare and Compliance in Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Directorate of Inspection for Factories and Establishments has been upgraded to a Department and increased its manpower to supervise whether the law and rules for labour welfare are implemented properly.</li> <li>❖ Various steps have been taken to ensure workers' security and welfare services including health and decent work in order to increase production of industries.</li> <li>❖ Various steps have been taken to ensure the welfare of workers and ensure compliance in industries through Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments and Labour Directorate. This is also benefiting women workers.</li> <li>❖ This department basically continues to work for establishing Rights of women workers through inspection, according to the Bangladesh Labor (Amendment) Act, 2018, such as, living wages, work environment, maternity leave of woman workers, establishment of day-care centre, managing of washroom and occupational health security and safety are ensured. At present, 4537 numbers of day-care centre have been established in different factories all over country till December 2018. Total 8726 numbers of women have been provided maternal benefits all over country in 2017-18 (July 17- June 18).</li> <li>❖ A guideline has formulated by the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at Workplace Project under the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments. It will be raising awareness on HIV/AIDS related issues of 5,700 tea garden labour. By this time, more than 200 tea garden</li> </ul>

Sl. No.	Priority spending sector/programmers	Impact on women's development (Direct and Indirect)
		labour have been trained on sexual and reproductive health rights, and HIV/AIDS related issues through this training.
2.	Creation of Skill Manpower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Through 4 Industry Related Institutions (IRI) training have been provided for trade union leaders, general workers, management officials and other government and non-government officials about the subjects such as- labour administration, labour management, labour law, labour quality, labour welfare, human relations, social security etc.</li> <li>❖ Training of workers on labor laws, labor health and other matters is being provided through 32 labor welfare centers.</li> <li>❖ Among the trainees 60/80% is women workers and women officials is 20/30%.</li> </ul>
3.	Eradication of Child Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Under the project titled "Eradication of Hazardous Child Labor in Bangladesh", 90,000 child labourers in 3 phases have been given 18 months of non-formal education and 9 months of skill development training in nine trades. As per the incentive, stipends have been provided at Tk. 160 per month. After the training, 50% of the child laborers have been given trade wise materials to create self-employment. Of the 90,000 child laborers, 27,468 women workers were women. As children engaging in hazardous labour are given stipend and given skill development training, they are financially benefitted.</li> <li>❖ Under the project named "Eradication of Hazardous Child Labour in Bangladesh (4<sup>th</sup> phase)" 100000 children engaged in hazardous labour will be given non formal education and skill training so that they can be restrained from the hazardous labour. This is why children engaged in hazardous labor are identified first and they are given 6 months long non formal education and 4 months long technical education. During the training each child will be paid tk. 1,000 monthly as stipend. Teachers and trainers working in the educational institutions will has salary support based on different areas. The project will be implemented in 14 city corporations of 12 districts and 2 upazilas.</li> </ul>

## 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

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
Ministry Budget	313	124	39.55	271	146	53.67	227	83	36.41	146	65	44.41
Development	198	86	43.61	163	112	68.51	116	39	34.07	64	26	40.48
Operating	115	38	32.56	108	34	31.31	111	43	38.84	82	39	47.49

Source: RCGP database

## 7.0 Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) of the Ministry in relation to Women's Advancement and Rights in last three years

Indicator	Unit	Actual		
		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
1	2	3	4	5
Development of Working environment in factories and establishment		3565	3565	2700
Skill Development	number	3650	3705	3220
Eradication of Child Labor		-	-	

## 8.0 Achievements of the Ministry in Women's Advancement

- 8.1 About 40 lakh women and men are working in the garment industry sector. 80 percent of them are women. The minimum wage for garment workers has been raised from Tk. 5,300 and re-fixed at Tk. 8,000. Considering the importance of fixing reasonable wages for workers, the Government has re-fixed the minimum wage for garment workers including 43 non-government industrial sectors. Arrangements have been made for conveyance, medical and food allowances. This will play a direct role in the women's development as reasonable wages for workers have been determined.
- 8.2 For poverty alleviation of the lagging northern districts of the country by providing training and employment to poor semi-literate young women in the RMG industry having employment potential a project named "Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiative" (Estimated Cost: 324 Crore financed by World Bank) is completed in December 2018. Through this project, construction of dormitories and training centers in three areas of the country (Dhaka, Chittagong, Ishwardi) was completed to provide employment to the youth of the country's poverty-stricken areas by providing training in garment trade. The project has been implemented for 6 years from December 2012 to December 2018. Total 9020 young women were trained and 6035 already got jobs up to December 2018.
- 8.3 90 percent of the domestic workers are women. Domestic worker safety and welfare policy-2011 has been enacted and various steps for implementation are taken. As a result, the rights of all workers, including women working as domestic help, have been protected.

- 8.4 About 80% of workers working in the garment industry in Bangladesh are women. Some of these women workers are sometimes get victims of violence. The project named "Promotional Gender Equality and Preventing Violence Against Women on Workplace" provides training on gender equality, sexual and non-sexual harassment and safe work environment for women workers in the workplace.
- 8.5 Besides, the Ministry of Labor and Employment has been working closely with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in the context of formulation of women-friendly labor policy.
- 8.6 Ministry of Labor and Employment for Women's Development Case Study about how a project has helped women improve their lives:

**A case study from the success of a project named “Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiative (NARI)”:**

This is the story of Sufia Khatun, a 20 year old woman living in Bangladesh. She got married to a 20 year old man at her age 11. In exchange of food and shelter, she used to do a lot of jobs like cooking, washing clothes, rearing cow and goat for a joint family of 15 members. She also had the responsibility to give birth to child and take care of it. Her father spent all of his savings to get her married with a person she never saw.

She had to endure tortures of her in-laws. All the time she had to work only. She did not have opportunity to get rest, sleep or entertainment. At the same time she had to bear physical tortures and underestimations from her in-laws for dowry. After the birth of a girl child without any reason she was thrown away of home along with her baby girl. Sufia returned to her father’s place as she did not have any other options to go. As she and her daughter had no other places to go she tried to commit suicide 2 times.

The campaign team of the NARI project found her when she was working as a domestic help earning 50 taka par day. Listening to her story the team proposed her to take part in a three months long training program. Besides, they said to her that she could get a job at garments factory if she passes an exam.

Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiative (NARI) is a project financed by World Bank, where employment is provided to distressed women by creating employment for the women at garments factories through skill training. For this purpose there are three training centers and three dormitories under the project. The project cost was 324.34 crore taka. After completion of the training Sufia Khatun got a job as operator in a factory at monthly salary of 8000 taka. Within 6 month she was promoted as quality operator and her salary rose to 15,000 taka. She has a bank



account where she can keep her savings. She bought 2 cows for her father. She can afford her living now and she is able to bear the expenses of her child.

#### **9.0 Recommendations for Future Activities:**

- ❖ To ensure decent working environment and health services for women working in local industries
- ❖ To provide stipends to encourage women to take technical education and training;
- ❖ To ensure equal/reasonable wages at all levels for women workers;
- ❖ To create conducive environment for women's participation in all industrial sectors;
- ❖ Eradication of all types of hazardous child labor within 2021 and all kinds of child labor by 2025;
- ❖ To take effective steps to eradicate wage discrimination in informal sector between male and female workers;
- ❖ To strengthen Labour Welfare Centers more to play a role to improve women's health and quality of nutrition;
- ❖ To take effective steps for secure shelters and accommodation for women at the work place;
- ❖ Forming anti-sexual harassment committee to ensure the safety of women in public and private workplaces;
- ❖ To provide technical and market oriented training for women's employment to the upazila level.
- ❖ To prepare and analyze gender gaped data in labor manpower.
- ❖ To develop successful women entrepreneurs, arranging for microcredit after training.