

## Chapter-31

### Ministry of Cultural Affairs

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Culture plays a pivotal role in building an ideal society. Ministry of Cultural Affairs is working to uphold country's glorious cultural heritage in literature, fine arts, music, drama and all other forms of culture so as to ensure a society by promoting and heightening the excellence, removing religious bigotry. The business of this ministry includes preservation of archaeological sites, promoting folk culture, pure music and performing arts, proliferation of Rabindra-Nazrul songs, arrangement of seasonal cultural fairs and motivating people for using public libraries etc. Ministry of Cultural Affairs exerts persistent effort to exercise and promote a healthy cultural trend. Different activities are also been implemented in restoring and excelling the culture of ethnic groups along with the greater community's expansion and achieving excellence in culture.
- 1.2 According to the direction of Article 23, 23 (A) and 24 of the Constitution of People's' Republic of Bangladesh Ministry of Cultural Affairs has been working relentlessly to develop and disseminate the delicacy of national language, literature, art, music, drama and other creative forms of arts and preservation of non-communal and democratic heritage of Bengali culture.
- 1.3 The traditional view towards women has been changed for various activities implemented by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs (MoCA). As a result, the possibility of access to equal opportunities for both women and men in the process of economic development of the country has been established. The principles stated in the 'National Cultural Policy 2006' are as follows:
- ❖ Upholding history of thousand years' struggle of this land, language movement and glorious liberation war, respecting and tolerating religious faiths of all classes and communities living in Bangladesh;
  - ❖ Preventing the degeneration of our national culture, and coordinating cultural activities and its development along with the overall economic development of the country;
  - ❖ Undertaking an all-out efforts for immaculate growth, publicity and promotion in all aspect of culture;
  - ❖ Ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage and its development of all ethnic communities living in this territory.

## **2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry**

- ❖ Formulation and implementation of laws, rules and policies on cultural issues;
- ❖ Collecting, preserving, displaying, conducting research, publishing, developing and nourishing of the cultural heritage, anthropology, artifacts of liberation war and contemporary arts and culture;
- ❖ Identifying the archaeological sites of the country and excavating, preserving and displaying;
- ❖ Protecting copyright of the creative works;
- ❖ Establishing, expanding and developing public and private libraries;
- ❖ Conducting research and publications on the language, culture and heritage;
- ❖ Celebration of events, such as-International Mother Language Day on 21 February, awarding Ekushey Podok, birth anniversaries of Rabindranath and Nazrul, Bengali New Year on 1<sup>st</sup> Boishakh;
- ❖ Framing cultural agreement with different countries, exchange of cultural programs and expanding international cooperation.

## **3.0 Strategic objectives of the Ministry and their Relevance to Women's Advancement and Rights**

### **3.1 Expansion and development of native culture including mother language:**

Establishment and expansion of fine art academies at the district and upazila levels and preservation, expansion and development of folklore and culture etc. widen the scope for a significant number of women to learn about art and culture. It creates employment opportunities for women along with the psychological development of women. Women are participating in the infrastructure development projects of the ministry. It generates employment opportunities for poor women. These will impact positively on women's intellectual development and socio-economic condition. Insolvent women cultural activists are also being dignified by availing financial assistance both in their family and society.

### **3.2 Upholding the tradition of thousand years, history, religious faith and spirit:**

Renovation, preservation and development of the archaeological sites would attract tourists which will lead to creating employment for the local community. If the number of tourists increases, local community will enjoy the benefits of additional income. Participation of women in these programmes will consolidate their socio-economic status in the society. Participation in fairs including training on different branches of art and culture and cultural activities contribute in mental development

and creating employment opportunities. These activities will be conducive to women employment.

- 3.3 Building knowledge-based society:** By getting access to public and private libraries for reading including their participation in infrastructural development of libraries, brings positive impact on mental development, intellectual capability and socio-economic condition of the women.
- 4.0 Roles of the Ministry for Women's Advancement and Rights**
- 4.1 Arranging different programmes for expansion, conservation and development of indigenous cultures and mother language:** Training and workshops are arranged to uphold, promote and develop for the people irrespective of class, profession and gender including women in the areas of art, literature and culture i.e. music, dance, performing arts, fine arts etc. At the same time, a significant number of women can opt for the opportunity to learn and practise all sorts of art and culture. This practice widens the outlook of our women which is positively impacted on their mental and socio-economic growth. In addition, participation of women in various occasions including Bangla New year is notable. This gives them an opportunity to be financially benefitted as well as helps them to grow mentally to a substantive level.
- 4.2 Taking initiatives for increasing libraries and reading habits:** To increase education and reading habits among people, initiatives have been taken for establishing public and private libraries at upazila and district levels, and for modernizing established libraries. In order to increase students' reading habit Directorate of Public Libraries arranges book reading competition throughout the country. Moreover, the facilities for research and reference libraries have been increased for students and other users by providing E-book facilities. As a result, reading habits of people is growing which is helping in contributing knowledge- based society.
- 4.3 Establishing museums and giving wide publicity to Begum Rokeya's literary works for encouraging women's education:** Initiatives are being taken to carry out research on the life and literary works of Begum Rokeya, collect, preserve, publish and translate her works at national and international level so that women can know the life and literary works of Begum Rokeya, learn lessons from her life and can contribute to the national development. At the same time, a museum is being established where a collection of Begum Rokeya's history of fighting spirits and various elements of folk culture will be preserved so that backward women can learn more about her life and can inspire others for learning.
- 4.4 Opportunities for income generation:** A sizeable number of women indigent artists are being financially benefitted by receiving '*allowances for indigent artists*'. Besides,

female artists working in the cottage industry are getting access to income opportunities through the marketing of their own products.

- 4.5 **Conservation, expansion and development of indigenous cultures and mother languages:** Since the FY 2014-15, two hundred and eighty seven books on Bangla language, literature research and development have been composed and published. Besides, the participation of women is comparatively larger in festivals like Amar Ekushey Book Fair, Victory Day, Independence Day, the birth and death anniversary of intellectuals and accomplished personalities, Rabindra-Nazrul Jayanti, Bangla Noboborsho and month-long arts and crafts fair etc. Women are financially benefitted by active participation in these programs that makes women confident and psychologically vigorous.
- 4.6 **Upholding the tradition of thousand years' heritage, history, religious faith and spirit:** The Department of Archaeology is creating employment opportunities for the poorer community and women through proper preservation and development of archaeological sites for attracting tourists. Participation of women in the infrastructural development supports them for creating self-employment and contributes to consolidate the socio-economic condition of women.
- 4.7 **Knowledge based society:** Establishment, extension and development of libraries are going on at the district and upazila levels. Women are participating in these infrastructural development activities. Besides, with increased access to reading in libraries, women are mentally growing which will inspire them to actively participate in the national development process.

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

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Benefits for Women's Advancement
1	2	3
1.	Promotion of national art and culture and preservation and development of the mother language	In recent times inclusion of women in the lists of recipients of 'EKUSHEY PADAK' is noteworthy. Women along with men are getting opportunities to write-that plays an important role in their empowerment. Besides, women participation is large in numbers in the festivals like Amar Ekushey Book Fair, Victory Day, Independence Day, the birth and death anniversary of intellectuals and accomplished personalities, Rabindra-Nazrul Jayanti, Bangla Noboborsho, and in the month long arts and crafts fair etc. held every year at home and abroad. By participating in various festivals women are being financially benefitted and their self-confidence is boosted.

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Benefits for Women's Advancement
1	2	3
2.	Preservation and development of national heritage, culture and history	Women directly contribute to Bengali culture, literary works, music, dramas and have also greatly contributed to the liberation war. To highlight their contribution distinctly, activities for developing and preserving Bengali history are in progress. A rich archive will be set up to preserve the documents on struggle for education of Begum Rokeya and her movement for women's rights so that the disadvantaged women can get inspiration by learning from the life and works of Begum Rokeya and inspire others to learn.
3.	Establishment, expansion and development of libraries and book distribution	The reading habits of people including women will grow through the services provided by the libraries extended up to districts level, by which the country will proceed towards self-reliance through human resources development.

## 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
Ministry Budget	576	131	22.81	627	120	19.1	510	175	34.29	385	118	30.8
Development	260	65	24.99	301	30	10.02	220	119	54.22	108	49	45
Operating	316	66	21.01	326	90	27.5	290	56	19.18	276	70	25.23

Source: RCGP database

## 7.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement:

- ❖ In the last three years, eight talented women were awarded Ekushey Padak for their outstanding contribution in the field of culture. Through this, the women in the cultural field will advance further with confidence and work for the welfare of the country. Besides, in the last three years, 1,283 women cultural workers were provided with grants. As a result, it will have a positive impact on poverty reduction of the women cultural workers. Along with poverty reduction, this grant will play an important role in increasing women's self-confidence and social dignity.
- ❖ In the past three years, about 1 crore 48 lacs and 10 thousands readers were provided with reader and reference services from Directorate of Archives and Public Libraries and public libraries spread over up to district level. Among them a significant number were women readers. Along with men, the habit of reading

of women is being developed -which enables Bangladesh to become a self-reliant nation.

- ❖ In the last three years, 3,959 cultural programs were organized, including training given to about 2,368 people in the culture, music, dance, drama, fine arts and language of small ethnic groups. In the cultural practice of the small ethnic group, the rate of participation of women is higher than men; therefore, women's progress and social establishment is being easier by implementing these activities.
- ❖ National and seasonal cultural events are organized regularly. In 64 districts, drama plays on 'dream and revolt (Swapno o Droho)' and cultural fairs are organized every year. Every year, there are more women's participation in celebrating Amar Ekushey Gronthomela, Bijoy Utshob, Swadhinata Utshob, birth and death anniversary of the prominent scholars, the birth anniversary of the Rabindra and Nazrul festival, the Bengali New Year festival and month-long arts and crafts etc. fairs. As women are financially benefited by participating in various festivals, this participation is also playing a great role in the development of women mentally.
- ❖ A good number of women cultural activists are included in the delegations sent to different countries under cultural agreements. There, they avail the opportunities to demonstrate their talent and efficiency-which extends the global outlook of women.

### **Indomitable Women**

Miss Nurunnahar is a resident of Birkatihari village at Hossainpur upazila in Kishoreganj district. From the early years, she was passionate about music. She used to earn a little by singing in various events in the village. In a family of hardship, she could help the family even if it was little. Suddenly, she became victim of a road accident and since then she became unable to sing regularly.

As a result, it was not possible to help the family like what she could do before. She was informed by the Upazila Nirbahi Officer that grants were given to the poor artists from the Ministry of Culture Affairs. She applied to the Deputy Commissioner, Kishoreganj. Her application was sent to the Ministry of Culture Affairs with recommendation. According to the 'Policy for granting Allowance to the Insolvent Cultural Workers', the ministry distributes allowance to the not well-off cultural workers for the betterment of living standard. On the request of Miss. Nurunnahar, it was decided to pay a monthly allowance of two thousand one hundred taka. She receives two thousand and one hundred taka monthly to taking twenty five thousand taka annuly . This help was a blessing in her life. She was cured by taking regular medical care. Besides, she teaches music to little boys and

girls of the village. Now there is no poverty in her life. She is contributing to the development of local culture.

## 8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Formulating a code of conduct or professional guidelines or self-censorship arrangement to prevent gender insensitive approaches in cultural arena. If necessary, National Cultural Policy, 2006 will be further amended in this regard.
- ❖ Introducing appropriate preventive laws to stop broadcasting programs that incites violence against women;
- ❖ Taking specific target-oriented activities for publicity and dissemination of writings and creative works of prominent woman writers and cultural activists of literary and cultural realm and adopting various development projects;
- ❖ Setting up of libraries throughout the country and creation of woman-friendly environment at the libraries to establish a knowledge-based society;
- ❖ Taking initiatives for publicity to remove family and social barriers against participation of women in cultural activities;
- ❖ Making arrangement for training of girls at the school level so that they can take part in cultural activities.
- ❖ Taking steps to contribute to different branches of art including music, dance, drama and fine arts for the elevation and proper development of the cultural elements for the development of women through the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy;
- ❖ Taking steps in various literary studies and research programs to make women's contribution in language and literature through Bangla Academy;
- ❖ Adopting various programs/projects to promote cultural activities across the country for the development of women;
- ❖ Providing grants to the helpless and impoverished women artists.