

Chapter-14

Local Government Division

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Article 59 and 60 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh describes the local government system of Bangladesh. The priorities of Local Government Division are to ensure good governance at local level and decentralize the power through strengthening the local government institutions with a view to bringing dynamism in the rural economy and the balanced development of all regions. To achieve the economic development, construction/reconstruction/maintenance of roads, bridges/culverts are going on which will facilitate easy transportation of agricultural inputs and products. Construction of growth induced infrastructure like growth centers, rural haats and bazaars, women's market sections, and shelters for cyclone/flood will enhance the benefit of public service delivery to rural poor and women. Through the implementation of these activities 4.97 crore person days employment opportunities were created of which 43.65 percent represents the employment of female workers.

1.2 Ensuring safe drinking water facilities for all through the development of different water supply sources, rehabilitation and preservation of underground and surface water and increasing the facilities of hygienic sanitation system is one of the important goal of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For this reason, safe drinking water supply and sanitation facilities for the development of public health are also the priority of the Government. Reducing dependence on underground water to the surface water supply has been emphasized. At present coverage of water supply and sanitation has been increased up to 87% and 99%. Initiatives to achieve hundred percent sanitation coverage and providing free-low sanitary latrine has been encouraged. Safe water, sanitation and hygiene facilities all influences women from both physical and social perspectives. Therefore, to achieve this goal the actual share of women needed to be determined. Thus Government is putting relentless efforts to end discrimination through improvement of water and sanitation facilities.

2.0 Major Functions of the Division

- ❖ Manage all matters relating to local government and local government institutions;
- ❖ Construct, maintain and manage Upazilla, union and village roads including the roads and bridges/culverts of towns and municipal areas;

- ❖ Develop, maintain and manage growth centres and hats-bazaars connected via Upazilla, union and village roads;
- ❖ Manage matters relating to drinking water;
- ❖ Develop water supply, sanitation and sewerage facilities in rural and urban areas;
- ❖ Finance, evaluate and monitor local government institutions and offices/organizations under Local Government Division;
- ❖ Develop, maintain and manage small scale water resource infrastructures within the limit determined by the government
- ❖ Enactment of Law, promulgation of rules and policies related to local government.

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

- 3.1 **Consolidation of Good governance at local level:** Training will be arranged for a minimum of 15,581 women representatives to enhance their efficiency and awareness. Incentives and priority will be given to women to encourage their participation in the development activities of different projects which would contribute to women's advancement.
- 3.2 **Rural Infrastructure Development:** Women are employed in Rural infrastructure development projects as maintenance workers. As a result, their social and family status will be enhanced. Employment opportunities and decision taking power of women will be increased through their active participation in the plantation committee. Women entrepreneurs will be able to enhance their income levels through facilities such as women's corners in the markets and their families will be benefited. Women-friendly flood and cyclone shelters will be built. Almost all construction projects have the obligation to build toilets for women creating a women-friendly environment and thus will enhance women's interest in the work.
- 3.3 **Socio-economic development of women:** Female workers will be given priority for employment on projects related to road maintenance, tree planting and care, and earthen road construction. It is expected that employment opportunities will be generated for approximately 1 lakh women. As a result, their participation in the labour market and other income generating activities will be enhanced. Their socio-economic status will be improved with increasing incomes.
- 3.4 **The impact of the development civic facilities:** Distributing safe water and sanitation facilities as free or at low cost will create the facility of 40 lac women to get government service which will help improving women's performance by

ensuring good health and nutrition of women. Ensuring safe water supply will reduce the time spent by women in water collection from distant places and in turn will increase time available for other economic activities. In addition, repair and maintenance of water sources, training and deployment are expected to create employment opportunities for 1.25 lakh women caretakers who will improve public assets. As a result, their status in the family/society also will be enhanced. Ensuring availability of safe drinking water to 45 lakh women will free them from water-borne diseases and harmful effects of arsenic.

3.5 Use, expansion and equitable distribution of small scale water resources: Inclusion of women in the Water Management Somobai Samity (co-operative society) will ensure female participation in decision making and improve their social status. About 95,000 women are trained and given loan through micro-credit associations. As a result their participation in income generating activities will increase through creating opportunities for escalating their self-reliance.

3.6 Planned environmentally friendly urbanization: Participation of women in various urban infrastructure development programs is ensured through guidelines and that will help increase their incomes. Regular lawn meetings and rallies will enable women to become aware of healthy living through disposing of waste using nearby dust bins or municipal vans, the use of sanitary latrines, the importance of safe water, the benefits of tree planting around family yards, and of registrations of births, deaths and marriages.

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

4.1 The Local Government Division has adopted the equal opportunity and equal rights policy as a strategy through implementing several activities. The strategic objectives and the programs of the Local Government Division have improved participation of women in economic activity. Enhanced skills and awareness has also paved the way to incorporate women into the mainstream economy. These in turn affected the advancement of women:

- ❖ **Women Empowerment:** One third of the Female candidates are elected directly from the public voting. Women-friendly development planning at the local level and the foundations for social movement for women rights is enhanced. After being elected women representatives are getting the opportunity to develop their skills through training. Inclusion in the decision making process will increase the social status of women.

- ❖ **Developing Women Entrepreneurship:** Construction of women market sections in growth centers and village *hats* and *bazaars* has created a congenial atmosphere for developing women entrepreneurship and fostering greater

economic participation of women. 4386 women entrepreneurs will be able to enhance their income levels through facilities from such women market sections.

- ❖ **Safe Water Supply and Sanitation Facilities:** By ensuring safe water supply and sanitation facilities for women, collecting water from distant places and difficulty from inadequate latrine facilities is eliminated and that time is spent at those activity can be saved and utilize for productive economic activities. Harassment of women due to the lack of toilets will be minimum and social security is established. Availability of separate toilets for female students in educational institutions ensures their presence which in turn ensures women's rights and gender equality. For this participation of women will be increased at all the level. Again women who are facing social unacceptability as a victim of many prevailing prejudices in arsenic affected areas will get some relief .This will increase the status of women in various income generating activities.
- ❖ **Rural Infrastructure Development and Employment Opportunities for the Women:** Women representation in all tiers of local government institutions provides the scope to ensure pro-women development policies. Direct involvement of women representatives in implementation of development activities has given a greater role for the women. There is a specific provision for employing women labourers in construction and maintenance of rural roads and infrastructures which will almost create 2.00 crore person-days' employment opportunities especially for women. As a result participation of women in the workforce has increased substantially.
- ❖ **Activities of Labor Contracting Societies:** The provision of employing landless and destitute women in development activities through Labour Contracting Society (LCS) has been introduced with an aim to avoid middlemen's activities and to ensure proper wages for the women workforce. The LCS women are engaged in maintenance and development of rural infrastructures. They are also taking part in construction of women market section in *haats* and growth centers.
- ❖ **Small Scale Water Resources Management:** Local beneficiaries are involved in the management of small scale water resources. One third positions of the water resources management committee are reserved for women. Besides, a maintenance subcommittee is also formed with one-third women members. Participation of women in water resources management helps eradicate poverty.
- ❖ **Primary Health Care in Urban Areas:** Primary Healthcare Services is being provided in City Corporations and municipalities through 38 mother-care

centers, 145 primary healthcare centers and 276 satellite clinics under Urban Primary Health Care Services Delivery Project (UPHCSDP) of the Local Government Division. The important services provided under this project are dealing with congenital diseases, providing child-care, controlling of contaminated diseases, supporting oppressed women, providing general medical services and undertaking behavioral changes.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas of Local Government Division and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority spending sector/programmers	Impact on women's development (Direct and Indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Strengthening governance at local level and providing necessary assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Female candidates are elected directly from the public voting. Training will be arranged for women representatives to increase their efficiency and awareness. Thus women are being able to participate more in the development activities of different projects. ❖ The elected women representatives of local government bodies are able to create general awareness regarding women's rights. They are also contributing to establish women friendly development policies.
2.	Ensuring safe water supply and sanitation facilities for all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Safe water supply will reduce the time spent by women in water collection freeing up time for other economic activities. Water source repair and maintenance training to women caretakers will improve the opportunities to maintain public property. As a result, their status in the family/ society will be increased. ❖ The inclusion of elected women members at ward level in the water source site selection committee will empower women in local society. ❖ Lack and insufficiency of nearby toilets are main factors for which women are being discriminated. Ensuring safe water supply and sanitation facilities will reduce these discrimination and increase social security. ❖ Sufficient number of Toilets will be available in all educational institutions and other places. Therefore participation of women in all sectors will increase. ❖ The water source site selection committee in the ward level has elected female members and caretakers which will increase women empowerment.

Serial No.	Priority spending sector/programmers	Impact on women's development (Direct and Indirect)
1	2	3
		❖ Better health of a woman and her family will be ensured through learning and implementing knowledge of hand washing, use of safe water and sanitation. This would help in building a healthy nation.
3.	Rural infrastructure development and small scale water resources development and management	<p>❖ Employment opportunities of about 2.00 core person days will be created for female workers through development and maintenance of rural infrastructure. This will raise the income of these female workers and ultimately their status both in society and family will be increased. Besides, women's active participation in the afforestation committee will enable them in taking decisions and create women's employment.</p> <p>❖ Women have a corner in market place and this will create a total of 4825 women entrepreneurs which in turn will help Income generation of those families. Again 1,57,850 women got training and micro credit loan from water management cooperatives societies. As a result, women participation will be increased in income rising activities.</p>
4.	Improvement of civic amenities in rural and urban areas	❖ Better health care services have increased the living standards of the poor urban women. Compulsory birth registration will improve the availability of statistics on women. Birth registration will establish the legal rights of women and will help to prepare age-based development planning including the prevention of child marriage.

6.0 The total budget of the Ministry of Women Development expenditure

(Taka in Crore)

Description	Budget 2017-18			Revised 2016-17			Budget 2016-17		
	Budget	Women Share		Revised	Women Share		Budget	Women Share	
		Women	percent		Women	percent		Women	percent
Total Budget	400266	112019	27.99	317174	86586	27.3	340605	92781	27.24
Ministry Budget	24674	11804	47.84	22253	9281	41.71	21326	8803	41.28
Development	21525	10474	48.66	19407	8144	41.97	18548	7742	41.74
Non-Development	3150	1330	42.23	2847	1137	39.93	2778	1061	38.2

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Achievement of Key Performance Indicator (KPIs) of the Local Government Division in relation to Development of Women in the last three years

Serial No.	Indicators	Unit of Measurement	2014-15 Actual	2015-16 Revised Target	2016-17 Revised Target
1.	Employment of poor	lac person-days'	650	660	670
2.	Construction of Bazar sections for women	Number	34.00	10.00	10.00

8.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

- ❖ Under the project titled 'Urban Primary Health Care Services Delivery Project', primary Healthcare Services are being provided in 11 City Corporations and 4 municipalities through 38 maternal-care centers, 145 primary healthcare centers, and 276 satellite clinics. This project is dealing with congenital diseases, providing child-care, controlling of communicable diseases, supporting oppressed women, providing general medical services and undertaking behavioral changes in urban slum areas.
- ❖ Haor Infrastructure and Livelihood Improvement Project is being implemented with the aim to improve livelihood of haor people through development of infrastructure and training. Women's well-being is a priority concern of the project. A total of 4.5 million person-days' work is created under this project of which 1.5 person-days are for women. This project also gives livelihood protection to 62530 women beneficiaries. From small scale water resources cooperatives societies 57750 women got training and micro credit. As a result, woman participation will be increased in income increasing activities.
- ❖ Rural Roads Maintenance has been implemented as a safety net and social protection program. The latest one is Rural Employment and Road Maintenance Program (Phase-II) (RERMP-II). Under the project 90960 km of rural kancha road is maintained through the year. A total of 59180 rural poor women have been trained for employment and income generating work. A total of 664 lac person-days' work is created under this project.

Struggle and success story of Faizunnesa

Faizunnesa was born in Mathabanga village of Imampur union under Gazaria upazilla of Munshigonj district. Due to poverty she was a victim of child marriage. She was living hand to mouth along with her children due to lack of income of her husband. Few years of her marriage, her husband was died. She became helpless and was searching for a job to maintain her family. In 2014, she joined as a women labor in the Rural Employment and Road Maintenance Program (Phase-II). She saved 3000 taka from her daily wages of 150 taka and bought a sewing machine. At the leisure period,

she did tailoring and earned 600 to 700 taka per month. She took the training of domestic animal farming as part of income generating activities related training provided by the project and bought a cow. Now she can maintain the education expenditure of her two children and lead a solvent life. In future, she dreams to lead more solvent life by using mandatory saving of 73000 taka under the project.

9.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Employment opportunities should be increased for female agricultural workers through providing assistance to female agricultural entrepreneur at local level to ensure increased participation of women for achieving food security. There is ample scope for undertaking necessary actions to preserve women's rights and to make their working environment more favorable for women. It is necessary to engage elected female representatives of the union parishad to remove the wage discrimination for female workers in agricultural works at local level.
- ❖ It is necessary to ensure participation of women in a great number for implementing the programs of construction/reconstruction/maintenance of roads, bridges/culverts and tree planting at upazila, union and village levels to increase the women employment.
- ❖ Steps should be taken to engage female members of union parishad to supervise the female agricultural workers while receiving the government subsidies.
- ❖ The area of training should be expanded for women representatives to increase their efficiency and awareness. As a result they can play an effective role in decision making process.
- ❖ At the time of election, women friendly environment should be ensured. Awareness building activities should be carried out to ensure political right and voting right for women.
- ❖ Elected female representatives of upzila and union parishad and female community police should be engaged in VGD works.
- ❖ Both males and females should be engaged in the committee for water and sanitation in slums and union level and public toilets for women should be built.
- ❖ Specialize training to induce employment and income is given to women to increase their participation in income generating activities.
- ❖ To ensure woman labor engagement in pond excavation and pond re-excavation work.
- ❖ Help Women to play vital role in tubewell site selection and maintenance.
- ❖ Provide user-friendly sanitation facilities for disable girls.