

Chapter-38

Road Transport and Highways Division

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The prime objective of the Government is to develop a modern, well-structured, sustainable and affordable transport system. To this end, Road Transport and Highways Division is committed to build up sustainable highway network and safe road transport system. In Bangladesh, 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. Road Transport and Highways Division is putting relentless efforts for building up 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. In the fiscal year 2016-17, around 137 projects have been implementing, out of which 46 projects are planned to complete for the better communication system. With the improvement of the road communication system, peoples' communication become easier and transport costs are declining, businesses are expanding, and employment opportunities are being generated, industries are expanding and, above all it contributes directly or indirectly 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 connect with the regional and international road connectivity. 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 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 both men and women alike is benefiting 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. Due to the expansion of road networks, 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

- ❖ To maintain, repair and renovate the road networks
- ❖ To improve and expand international, national highways, regional highways and district roads
- ❖ To adopt and accomplish projects for constructing new roads and bridges which are nationally important from economic perspective
- ❖ To introduce and develop modern digital motor vehicle management and control system
- ❖ To ensure road safety
- ❖ To introduce and develop integrated modern mass transport system
- ❖ To extend bus service in domestic and international routes
- ❖ To develop and expand road networks and modern mass transport system through Public Private Partnership (PPP)

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

- 3.1 **Repair, rehabilitation, maintenance, development and expansion of existing road networks:** Women have been involved in the repair, maintenance and development of international, national and regional highways. As a result, women at every level become self-reliant. Marketing of goods produced by rural women will also become quick and easier.
- 3.2 **Introduction digital motor vehicle management system:** With the introduction and expansion of modern digital motor vehicle management and control system, women will get opportunity to work in these ICT centers.
- 3.3 **Ensuring Road Safety:** It is widely accepted that women and children are the serious victim of any accident. Therefore, women will be most beneficial of road safety arrangement.
- 3.4 **Introduce and Expansion of Mass Transport System:** Women can travel to office and other work places as required number of seats are reserved in every transport for women. Thus economic activities of women will increase.

3.5 **Expansion of Bus Services in Domestic and International Routes:** Women can easily travel to foreign countries like men which create opportunities for women to participate in social and economic activities.

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

4.1 At present, road transport is emerged as single largest transport mode in terms of passenger and freight transport in the country. Road transport system is playing greater role in employment, rural development, poverty alleviation, reduction disparity in rural and urban life and overall economic development 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 has determined its own policies, strategies, main objectives and activities and priority areas. To achieve this goal as a part of the strategy, easing communication between town and village including reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance, improvement and expansion of roads, ensuring road safety, affordable services to all including women and poor have been given highest priority. Though gender related matters are not clearly mentioned 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 district, national, regional, and international highways. As women's employments are generated they become self-sufficient, activeness increases, sales and marketing of the products of village women become easier. 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;
- ❖ Introduction of counter-based bus services on local routes; it made the collection of tickets and riding the buses easier for women.

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. | Improvement and Expansion of Roads | Employing women in reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance of national and regional highways and roads |

| Serial No. | Priority Spending Areas/Programmes | Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect) |
|------------|--|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | Network | development, especially in maintenance and rehabilitation is rising. For this women's employment opportunities are generated and they become self-sufficient, their activeness increases, sales and marketing of the products of village women become easier. |
| 2. | Introduction and Expansion of Integrated Mass Transport System | Employment opportunities for women will increase if integrated mass transport system is available for all. Women can also get desire benefits by 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 | Through ensuring road safety amount of accidental injuries to women and children will reduce. |

6.0 Women's Share in Ministry's Total Expenditure

(Taka in Crore)

| Description | Budget 2017-18 | | | Revised 2016-17 | | | Budget 2016-17 | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------|------------------------------|--|----------------|------------------------------|--|
| | Budget | Women Share Women percent | | Revised | Women Share Women percent | | Budget | Women Share Women percent | |
| Total Budget | 400266 | 112019 27.99 | | 317174 | 86586 27.3 | | 340605 | 92781 27.24 | |
| Ministry Budget | 19697 | 5535 28.1 | | 12078 | 3855 31.92 | | 10911 | 2350 21.54 | |
| Development | 16820 | 5068 30.13 | | 9403 | 3443 36.62 | | 8161 | 1946 23.85 | |
| Non-Development | 2877 | 467 16.24 | | 2675 | 412 15.41 | | 2750 | 404 14.68 | |

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Success 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. 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, 18 Women Bus Services are running in various routes of Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur district. Training on denting, painting, welding and driving are provided to 1537 women among 48,980 trainees through 17 BRTC training centers within 2009 to 2016.

- ❖ 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, about 11,300 women (professional 388 and non-professional 10,912) received driving licenses after completing the driving course successfully by 30 June 2016.
- ❖ Decision has been taken to appoint female driver for BRTC Bus Service. Female conductors have been appointed in BRTC Bus service.
- ❖ Provision for paying car tax and fees through Credit and Debit Cards has been introduced, so that women could pay those from residence.
- ❖ E-Ticketing provision would ensure that women could buy BRTC Bus ticket from residence.

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Increase of special bus service in different routes for women travelling. Increase reserved seats for the women in each public and private bus;
- ❖ Ensure ticket quota for women in all short and long distanced bus services. Establish separate ticket counters for the women so that they can easily buy the tickets.
- ❖ Construction of separate toilets, waiting room for the women so that they do not feel any problem during the waiting time in the bus station.