

Chapter-12

Ministry of Labour and Employment

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Job creation is the main driving force for poverty alleviation. So it is urgent to create employment opportunity of able manpower in Bangladesh. According to the Labour Force Survey 2017, the number of economically workable population over 15 years in 2017 was 63.4 million, of which 60.7 million are employed, making the unemployment rate 4.3%. Each year more and more people are entering into the labour force. 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. This makes it imperative that job creation should be the first priority of this ministry. This ministry also ensures that labour has adequate social security; children are not employed in hazardous work, and ensure peaceful labour relations etc. The Seventh Five Year Plan (2016-20), emphasizes the need for higher productivity and decent jobs and higher income. The ministry is therefore focusing on structural change of the labour market to encourage the work force to shift from the less productive agriculture and informal sectors to the high productive manufacturing and formal sectors.

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 labourers, through socio-economic development of labour, create a skilled work force and increase employment and productivity.

2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry

- ❖ To formulate, update and implement labour laws;
- ❖ To ensure compliance of labor law and other rules and regulations related to labour and employment;
- ❖ To eradicate child labour;

- ❖ To take steps for welfare of women workers;
- ❖ To ensure occupational health and safety;
- ❖ To ensure education, welfare and social security to the labourers;
- ❖ To create skilled manpower and scope of employment
- ❖ To register trade unions, resolve labour conflicts and fix and implement minimum wages;
- ❖ To work with the ILO and other international organizations in labour and manpower management;
- ❖ To provide skill development and employment oriented training both in government and non-governmental sectors;

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

- 3.1 **Developing work environment in the industries and ensuring welfare:** Labourers working in the tea gardens and garments are getting sufficient training and health services as these centers are located in industry intensive areas. This in turn is having a positive impact on women's advancement.
- 3.2 **Additional Employment through Creation of Efficient Manpower:** Equal opportunity is being provided to women in the training centers to participate in capacity building which in turn is empowering them and increasing their capacity in decision making.
- 3.3 **Eradication of hazardous child labour:** Both female and male children are employed in hazardous works. Through informal education and skill development training, the female child labourers is being given an opportunity to develop skills which will enable them to get decent jobs.
- 3.4 **Social safety of the labourers:** According to Section 234 of the Labour Act, Bangladesh Labor Welfare Fund has been set up under the Ministry of Labor and Employment for the welfare of a large number of workers and their families engaged in large number of institutional and informal sectors of the country. If any workers engaged in institutional and informal sector become unable physically and emotionally permanently due to accident, face deaths due to accident, transportation and funeral of dead bodies, financial support for treatment of fatal disease, maternity welfare of women workers working in the informal sector, financial incentives as acknowledgement of special skills, educational scholarships and other Kind of financial grants is being provided from welfare fund. A total of

1438 workers of different levels from different institutional and informal sectors have been given financial assistance of Tk 8,24,20,000 / - (eight crore twenty-four lakh twenty thousand) from the deposit of Bangladesh Workers Welfare Fund upto FY 2017-2018 . On the other hand, a large number of people are employed as domestic workers in Bangladesh. About 90% of whom are women. The government is sincerely looking forward to protect the interests of this large group of people engaged in domestic work. To this end, a policy has been adopted by the Ministry of Labor and Employment, titled "Domestic Workers Safety and Welfare Policy, 2015". The rights of domestic workers and their social security are being ensured by formulating and implementing this policy. Now, the domestic workers are recognized as workers and they are duly regarded. The policy has important guidelines for determining the wages of domestic workers. It is expected that by effective implementation of this policy, the interests of domestic workers in Bangladesh and their social welfare will be ensured.

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 in the country 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 financially they are not being 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 in 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 In the National Labour Policy, 2012, provisions have been made to address wage discrimination along with assurance of equal wages and rights for 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, for the welfare of women workers such as women's rest room, child day care centre's etc. Salaries of the garment workers have been raised from Tk. 3,000 to Tk. 5,300. Higher wages, allowances and benefits have been fixed and are being implemented in other sectors too. 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 "Child Labor Management in Hazardous Employment in Bangladesh" project under the Ministry of Labor and Employment, one lakh child laborers were made operational 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 The Labor and Employment Ministry is working as Lead Ministry for implementing Goal 8 of Sustainable Development Goals. Various steps are being taken to implement different target of Goal 8's i.e target 8.6, 8.7 and 8.8 (to abolish all types of child labor, to ensure decent work environment and to ensure equal wages for male and female for the same work).
- 4.5 Four industry-related educational institutions (IRI) Under this Ministry, located in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi, workers, owners and labour leaders are given orientation training on labour laws, labour administration, labour rights and owners' duties and responsibilities and other labour relevant matters. Through these trainings, female workers are becoming aware of their rights. Various training and workshops are being arranged for awareness building regarding empowerment of women and labour rights of women workers working in export-oriented garments and leather industries. During July / 2017 to March / 2018, trainings were imparted among 9,104 workers of 04 IRIs and 29 labor welfare centers at the cost of 1,10,00,000 (1 crore). It is expected that it will be possible to train at least 12,000 workers will be trained in the coming FY 2018-2019. Five day long Training (for workers and employers) and four weeks long training (for workers, employers and concerned officers and employees) is continuing at four IRRIs and 29 Labor Welfare Centers (LWC). In the five days training, specially RMG related IRI's training, the number of women workers ranges from 60% to 80%. On the other hand, in the four weeks training program, the number of women workers ranges from 40% to 50%. Especially, various activities are continuing for ensuring empowerment and welfare of women workers in the RMG and tea industry sector. In 2017, the total number of workers in this industry is approximately 1,05,000.
- 4.6 In the FY 2017-18, free medical care is provided between workers and workers' families. Through 29 Labor Welfare Centers (LWC) under the Department of Labor free medical care is provided between the workers and workers' families. The

number of medical services received from 29 LWC (July / 16-March / 17) in the FY 2017-2018 is as follows:

- ❖ Total workers are 54,549.
- ❖ Number of women workers 37,093
- ❖ Number of male workers is 17,456.

4.7 In the FY 2017-18, budget allocation for only medical services (for medical purchase) of 29 LWC is TK.40 lakhs. Medical services are being provided in labor welfare centers. About 60% to 80% of the medical service recipients are women workers. If these centers are modernized, then delivery of services and medicines according to the needs of the workers will be more successful.

4.8 Provisions for reservation of specific number of seats for women (must have at least 10% of female members) in the Executive Committee of the Trade Union is made in the Labour Law.

4.9 For women's advancement, the following laws and policies have been formulated/amended by the Ministry of Labour 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, 2013 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"> ❖ 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. ❖ Various steps have been taken to ensure workers' security and welfare services including health and decent work in

Sl. No.	Priority spending sector/programmers	Impact on women's development (Direct and Indirect)
		<p>order to increase production of industries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 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. ❖ This department basically continues to work for establishing Rights of women workers through inspection, according to the Bangladesh labor Law-2013, such as, living wages, work environment, maternity leave of woman workers, Day-care centre establishment, managing of washroom and occupational health security and safety are ensured. At present, 4310 numbers of day-care centre have been established in different factories all over country. Total 4060 numbers of women have been provided maternal opportunity that amounts to TK. 19,39,84,445 working in different factories all over country up to April-2018.
2.	Creation of Skill Manpower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ National Strategy Paper for promotion of Gender Equality in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2012 has been formulated. According to this strategy, to increase female participation in formal TVET institution by at least 60% from the present 24% by 2020 as well as increase female employment by 30%, taking of an action plan in different TVET institution is in progress. Recently, through a circular by the Technical Education Board, quota reservation for female enrollment has been increased from 10% to 20%. ❖ A total number of 168 meetings/workshops/seminars have been held to create the employment opportunity through skill development and 8421 participants were present among which approximately 10% were female. ❖ Organizing workshop on Gender Equality: With the participation of different public and private stakeholders, to increase gender equality in TVET program, 07 (seven) workshops has been arranged. Participants were oriented on the National Gender Strategy and aligned with that strategy, individual action plan by Department of Women Affairs, Department of Youth Development, has been formulated. The action plan will be implemented by the concerned authorities. ❖ Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) are also involved in providing skills development training and employment for women.

Sl. No.	Priority spending sector/programmers	Impact on women's development (Direct and Indirect)
		<p>'Center of Excellence for Leather and Leather Goods' (COEL) has taken various training programs for increasing women employment. Besides, with the help of BGMEA and ILO 'Center of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industry' has also been established where garments workers especially women can take part in various types of trainings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A 'Gender Working Group' has been reconstituted comprising of the representatives from 22 ministries and 27 departments in a bigger scale, Present working group has identified their roles and responsibilities by holding regular meetings which they will gradually implementing in their respective organizations. ❖ 'Gender Focal Point' has been selected in 22 ministries and 27 departments related to TVET programs. The Gender Focal Points, holding regular meetings have identified their roles and responsibilities and upon discussion with their senior authority will implement them in their respective organizations. ❖ Women representatives have been included in the Skill Development Advisory Committee to ensure participation of women at the divisional level. ❖ To assess the inclusion of women in TVET sector, a research titled 'Women in Non-traditional trades: A skill Gap Analysis' has been completed. ❖ Initiative has been taken to establish 'Job Counseling Cell' in all TVET institution to provide guidance and support for jobs particularly for women. Job placement cells will be established in women technical training centers under DTE and BMET. ❖ To provide gender responsive facilities and safe and secured environment, "Workplace Anti-harassment" policy is on the process of finalization and approval.
3.	Eradication of Child Labour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ 18-month long informal education and 6-month long skill development training in 9 trades are being conducted to address the issue of hazardous child labour. Every month Tk. 160 per trainee is paid as stipend. To create self-employment, 50% of trainee is provided with equipment as per their trade at the end of training. ❖ 27,468 female child workers have received informal education as well as skill development training. Self-

Sl. No.	Priority spending sector/programmers	Impact on women's development (Direct and Indirect)
		<p>employment in safe working environment has been created for female child workers. As a result of providing stipend during training to the child laborers engaged in hazardous work, the poor trainees benefited by gaining skill as well as finance.</p> <p>❖ Eradication of Hazardous Child Labour in Bangladesh (4th phase) Project has been taken up at an estimated cost of Tk. 10489.33 Lakh to be implemented during July 2017-June 2020. Stated objective of the project is eradication of hazardous child labour from the country and specific target of the project is to facilitate withdrawal of 75,000 children engaged in hazardous occupations by providing non-formal education and vocational training to ensure a safe and decent life to them. The training will last for 65 months and will get a monthly allowance of Tk.500.00 during the period. The program will cover 46 city corporations/ municipalities /upazilas in 20 district of the country.</p>

6.0 Women's Share in Ministry's Total Expenditure

(Taka in Crore)

Description	Budget 2018-19			Revised 2017-18			Budget 2017-18		
	Budget	Women Share		Revised	Women Share		Budget	Women Share	
		Women	percent		Women	percent		Women	percent
Total Budget	464574	136938	29.48	371495	86169	23.2	400266	112019	27.99
Ministry Budget	227	95	41.7	193	59	30.76	263	167	63.50
Development	116	48	41.35	100	17	17.32	168	157	93.45
Operating	112	47	42.07	93	42	45.29	95	10	10.53

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		
		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
1	2	3	4	5
Development of Working environment in factories and establishment	number	6985	3565	3565
Skill Development		3324	3650	3705
Eradication of Child Labor		-	-	-

(3rd phase of Stopping Child Labor Project ended in 30th June 2014. The fourth phase is expected to start in July 2017.)

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. 3,000 and re-fixed at Tk. 5,300. Considering the importance of fixing reasonable wages for workers, the Government has re-fixed the minimum wage for garment workers including 36 non-government industrial sectors. Arrangements have been made for conveyance, medical and food allowances. For the first time, yearly 5% increment of salary has been arranged for garments workers. This will play a direct role in the women's development as reasonable wages for workers have been determined.
- 8.2 Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiative Project (Estimated Cost: 326 Crore financed by World Bank) is being implemented for poverty alleviation of the lagging northern districts by providing training and employment to poor semi-literate young women in the RMG industry having employment potential. Poor semi-literate young women of five lagging districts of greater Rangpur (Rangpur, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Nilphamari and Lalmanirhat) are the beneficiaries of the project. Self-reliance and empowerment of these women, among others, are the much coveted objectives of the project.
- Three dormitory-cum-training centers have already been established in Dhaka, Chittagong and Ishwardi EPZs. A total of 10,800 (Ten thousand eight hundred) poor young women will be trained in garments trade. Until August 2017, 1531 women were trained and 342 already got jobs.
- 8.3 Various steps have been taken to formulate and implement the Domestic Workers' Safety and Welfare Policy, 2015. Three Dormitory cum training centers have been set up in 5 acres of space each at the side of the Export Processing Zone of Dhaka, Chittagong and Ishwardi under 'Construction of Labor Welfare Center with working-class hostel and 05-bed hospital facilities at Narayanganj Port and Kalughat, Chattogram Project'. A total of 10,800 (Ten thousand eight hundred) poor young women will be trained and job placement for them to be made in three years. Already training of 1st and 2nd batch has been completed and training of 3rd batch has already been commenced. In the meantime, a project has been taken for the construction of a professional health hospital in Chasara, Narayanganj only for the workers' health care. It is hoped that through the above program, workers and women will be able to increase their safe and healthy housing and their social empowerment.
- 8.4 About 80% of workers working in the garment industry in Bangladesh are women. Some parts of these women workers are sometimes victims of violence. Moreover, they are not aware of their reproductive health. The Ministry of Labor and

Employment, under "Changing Gender Norms of Garment Employees" project has been provided special training to women workers, factory managers and owners for awareness building regarding gender, prevention of violence and prevention of reproductive health. Again, under "Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing Violence against Women at Workplace training is providing on gender violence, sexual and non-sexual harassment of women at workplace and safe working environment for women workers. Under the Ministry of Labor and Employment, UNFPA under its funding, women workers have been given awareness training by implementing the project titled "Promotion of Reproductive Health, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Garment Sector" from January 2006 to December 2011.

- 8.5 Job oriented and professional training programs have been taken through National Skills Development Council (NSDC) under the MoLE so that the trained persons can have self-employment opportunities at home and abroad. Special initiatives have been taken through NSDC to train up female professionals in the country. Besides, the MoLE used to work closely with the MoWCA at the time of formulation of women-friendly labour policies.

9.0 Recommendations for Future Activities:

Serial No.	Recommendations of Previous year	Progress
1.	To ensure decent working environment and health services for women working in local industries;	Initiative has been taken to ensure decent working environment and healthcare in various industries including garments.
2.	To provide stipends to encourage women to take technical education and training;	Stipends giving activities are continuing.
3.	To ensure reasonable wages at all levels for women workers;	Minimum wage of all garments workers irrespective to man and women has been raised to 5,300.00 from 3,000.00
4.	To create conducive environment for women's participation in all industrial sectors;	Out of 33 conventions of ILO, 7 conventions were ratified by Bangladesh and it has emphasized 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, for the welfare of women workers such as women's rest room, child day care centers etc.
5.	To make women more skillful through training;	Through the 04 (four) IRI and 29 labour welfare center department of labour trained the workers specially women workers in RMG sector. In the five

Serial No.	Recommendations of Previous year	Progress
		days training programs, the number of women workers are 60-80%. On the other hand the number of women in four weeks training are 20-30%.
6.	To take effective steps to eradicate wage discrimination in informal sector between male and female workers;	In National Labour Policy, 2012, provisions have been made to address wage discrimination along with assurance of equal wages and rights for women workers. In the various industrial sectors a minimum wage has been fixed and also ensures that where there is no discrimination in wages among male and female workers.
7.	To strengthen Labour Welfare Centers more to play a role to improve women's health and quality of nutrition;	Through the 29 labour welfare centers (LWCs) under the Directorate of Labor, workers and their families are provided health services with free of cost. From July 2016 to March 2017, total number of workers who received medical services from those 29 LWCs was 44,557 among them 33,220 workers were female.
8.	To take effective steps for secure shelters and accommodation for women at the work place;	For the accommodation of female workers and to ensure their safety, dormitories are to be built in bandar, Narayangonj and kalurghat, Chittagong. Moreover initiative has taken to build accommodation for women in various Labor welfare centre including Tongi, Tejgaon and Narayangonj.
9	To provide technical and market oriented training for women's employment to the upazila level.	Skills development training and employment process for women through the Industries Skills Council (ISC) is running. The Center for Excellence for Leather Goods (COEL) has undertaken a number of training programs for women's employment. Besides, Center of Excellence for Bangladesh Apparel Industries has been established with the help of BGMEA and ILO, where garments workers, especially women, can take various types of training.
10	To prepare and analyze gender gaped data in labor manpower.	National Skill Development Council (NSDC) has taken initiative to generate gender gaped data through survey.
11	To increase the maternity leave of women workers from four months to six months according to Bangladesh Labor Act-2006.	Maternity leave of women workers has been increased from four months to six months.