

Chapter-9

Ministry of Agriculture

1.1 Introduction

1.1 Agriculture plays an undeniable role in achieving the overall growth of the national economy. About 45.1 percent of the labor force is directly or indirectly dependent on the agricultural sector. Socio-economic improvement of the country is impossible without the development of this sector. This sector also plays an important role in attaining food security, improving the quality of living for the increasing population of the country as well as creating employment. This is why Government emphasizing on the overall improvement of the agriculture sector. The main aim of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is to develop a self-sufficient and sustainable agricultural system through increasing agricultural productivity and modernization of agriculture marketing by adopting, inventing and transferring new technologies to ensure food security and reduction of poverty in accordance with the Seventh Five Year Plan, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the National Agriculture Policy. In continuation of the ongoing development assistance and incentives in agricultural productivity the ministry is providing 30 percent cash incentives on the import of agricultural produces and 20 percent rebate on the electricity bills on agro-based industries and irrigation system. Moreover, Government has revised the interest rate to 4 percent from earlier 8 percent of the loan to increase the production of peas, mustard seeds and spices.

1.2 The emancipation of peasants and laborers, and agricultural and rural development stipulated in Articles 14 and 16 of Part I of the Constitution, fosters the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture along with other organizations associated with agriculture sector through agricultural revolution. The fundamental responsibility of the MoA, along with other institutions in agriculture sector, is to free the working population, peasants and labourers from all forms of exploitation and transforming the rural areas through agricultural revolution in order to minimize the disparity in the standard of living between towns and villages. The concerted efforts of the MoA in performing its responsibilities are reflected in the achievement of self-sufficiency in food.

1.3 Major functions of the Ministry

- ❖ Agricultural research and education program;
- ❖ Agricultural extension and training;
- ❖ Production, standardization, certification, preservation and distribution of quality seeds;
- ❖ Soil survey, examination of the quality of soil and recommendations;

- ❖ Preservation and marketing of agricultural products;
- ❖ Agricultural support and rehabilitation;
- ❖ Collection, distribution, innovation, procurement and management of agricultural inputs and machinery;
- ❖ Minor irrigation programs.

2.0 Relevant Policies of the Ministry

2.1 National Agriculture Policy, 2013

About half of the total population of our country is female. It is essential that more females should enter into government service and join the labour force in agriculture. Since women have ample scope to contribute to agricultural growth, to increase the involvement of women meaningfully in agricultural development and related income generating and human development activities, the activities of the Government will be the following:

- ❖ Woman's Empowerment: Necessary assistance will be provided to woman's skill development activities to ensure food and nutrition within the family. Woman's participation in decision making process in agricultural management will be encouraged. Efforts will be made as well, to ensure equal rights for women in management of and access to agriculture inputs;
- ❖ Participation in production and marketing: Government will encourage participation of poor women in rural areas in agricultural production, especially in agro-processing and agri-business so that they can improve their economic condition. Initiatives will be taken to enhance woman's technological empowerment in agriculture. Woman's participation in agricultural production will be made simpler and facilitated through establishing their rights to access in agricultural technology. Government will also take steps to encourage woman's participation in various agricultural extension works such as training, farmers gathering and workshops;
- ❖ Creating opportunity to earn: Government will provide credit to women farmers along with other farmers in agriculture activities like homestead gardening, post-harvest activities, production and preservation of seeds, nursery, bee keeping, food processing, etc. Micro-credit facilities will also be extended to women in small scale agricultural processing, storage and preservation and efforts will be made to eradicate the wage difference between men and women.

3.0 Ministry Specific Policy Directives in relation to Woman's Advancement

3.1 National Woman's Development Policy, 2011

- ❖ To establish equal rights for men and women in areas of state and public life in the light of the Constitution of Bangladesh;
- ❖ To ensure full and equal participation of women in the mainstream socioeconomic development;
- ❖ To bring up women as educated and skilled human resources;
- ❖ To recognize appropriately woman's contribution in socio-economic spheres;
- ❖ To innovate and import technology favoring the interest of women and discourage those activities against the interest of the women;
- ❖ To provide support services essential for the development of women.

3.2 Seventh Five Year Plan

Women are crucial in transformation of agricultural products into food and nutritional security in Bangladesh. Gender based inequalities all along the food production chain must be reduced and the active engagement of women at all levels of decision making is absolutely necessary to attain food and nutritional security. Women will require access to information, credit and other business development services in order to capitalize on the new market opportunities along with changing or emerging value chains. Capacity building is required to ensure that women remain active and assure important positions in leadership and decision making in economic organizations. Special policies and provision are often required to ensure that women have control over important income generating activities:

- ❖ Developing women friendly technology and business environment;
- ❖ More women participation in market transaction;
- ❖ Capacity development of women for small-scale entrepreneurship;
- ❖ Collective action and market linkages;
- ❖ Supporting homestead agricultural value addition strategies;
- ❖ Recruit more women agricultural workers and increase their participation in the technology innovation;
- ❖ Protection of women and children from health hazards during agricultural operation

4.0 Strategic Objectives and Activities of the Ministry of Agriculture in relation to Woman's Advancement

Serial No.	Medium-Term Strategic Objectives	Activities
1	2	3
1.	Increase production and productivity in the crop sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Promotion of innovated varieties and technologies among the farmers through training, publications and exhibitions/fairs/rallies/seminars/workshops; ❖ Provision of e-agriculture information services; ❖ Increasing awareness about food value and nutrition through publications, meetings and workshops.
2.	Increase supply and affordability of agricultural inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Supply of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs at administered prices; ❖ Procurement of irrigation machinery and facilitating its easy availability; ❖ Expansion of minor irrigation coverage by encouraging optimal use of surface water, and increasing the area of arable land by reducing water logging and submergence; ❖ Encouraging private sector participation in the production and development of seeds through meetings, seminars, fairs and technology transfer;
3.	Development and maintenance of agricultural land resource based management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Extension of soil test facilities to Upazila and Union levels; ❖ Popularize among the farmers the use of organic fertilizer, green fertilizer and microbe fertilizer.
4.	Support in supply, processing and effective marketing of agricultural products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Publicity and preservation of information on agricultural marketing and development; ❖ Development and maintenance of market infrastructure and provide other supports; ❖ Provision of technological support and technical assistance to agricultural entrepreneurs and encouraging them to invest in agro-processing and agri-business; ❖ Coordination between concerned public and private departments/institutions for expansion of marketing facilities of agricultural products.

5.0 Identifying the Gender Gaps in the Activities of the Ministry and Addressing the Issues

5.1 The following gender gaps have been identified in the activities of the Ministry:

- ❖ Although quota system has been introduced in government jobs to empower women, woman's participation in government policy making positions has not been commensurate. An analysis of the statistics of male and female officials working in different organizations under the Ministry of Agriculture in 2017-18 fiscal year shows that only 10.50 percent of officers and 11.32 percent of staffs are women;
- ❖ Woman's participation in agriculture management is low and they also lag behind in the areas of management of agricultural inputs and its access;
- ❖ There is lack of regular collection, preservation and publication of information about the contribution of women farmers; it is necessary to form organization of women agriculture workers;
- ❖ There is no reflection of highlighting the role of women in agriculture in film/documentaries and not all textbooks contain woman's contribution in agriculture;
- ❖ There is no minimum wage law for women laborers in agriculture to ensure minimum wage of women workers in agriculture on the basis of equal wage for the same job;
- ❖ It is necessary to apply women friendly modern agricultural technologies and make them available to women farmers;
- ❖ Insufficiency to consider gender issue in all development projects/ programs and activities of the ministry of agriculture.

5.2 Strategies to remove the gender gap:

- ❖ Steps have been taken to extend credit facilities to women in agriculture activities to ensure their empowerment;
- ❖ Multi-faceted training on agriculture activities is imparted to women in order to transform them into educated and skilled workforce;
- ❖ Ministry of Agriculture is supporting the establishment of agricultural farms and agro-based industries through woman's participation to free the womenfolk from the curse of poverty;
- ❖ Ministry of Agriculture is appropriately rewarding women in different areas alongside with men for their contribution in social and economic sphere;

- ❖ Actions are being taken to ensure a supportive environment so that men and women can share equal responsibility in household affairs and productive activities;
- ❖ Woman's contribution in agriculture and their commendable entrepreneurial activities are highlighted in the media to build positive image of women. Initiatives are being taken to enhance the activities media organizations to make them more gender friendly. These are also telecast in various agriculture related programs.

6.0 Woman's Participation in Ministry's Activities and their Share in Ministry's Total Expenditure

6.1 Statistics of males and females working in Department/Office/Organization under the Ministry

Male and Female Employment Structure by Department/Agencies

	Officers				Staff			
	2017-18		2016-17		2017-18		2016-17	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Administration								
Secretariat	90	18	91	18	69	23	72	24
Department of Agricultural Extension	158	10	159	6	192	52	191	47
Project Implementation Wing	6	0	3	0	19	5	18	4
Field Services Division	413	45	411	15	1219	200	1222	193
Plant Protection Department	59	10	62	4	185	55	182	52
Cash Crop Division - Tobacco & Jute	7	4	7	4	27	10	30	8
Food Crops Division	87	10	90	5	1065	65	965	55
Agricultural Education & Training	122	48	110	40	411	62	390	115
Upazila Agriculture Office	1650	70	1648	63	14897	1546	14591	1470
Seed Certification Agency	98	33	77	9	173	24	151	12
Cotton Development Board	64	10	58	9	549	42	363	33
Agricultural Information Service	26	1	25	1	159	23	151	20
Department of Agricultural Marketing	34	8	25	7	351	58	379	57
Soil Resource Development Institute	133	34	127	28	309	51	304	52
Total (percent)	2947 (90.7)	301 (9.27)	2893 (93)	209 (7)	19676 (88.74)	2216 (11.26)	19009 (90)	2142 (10)

6.2 Statistics of beneficiaries in ministry activities:

- ❖ Department of Agriculture Extension has trained 1099220 farmers on modern technology of which 12.94 percent are women;
- ❖ Department of Agriculture marketing has trained 29,780 farmers in the past three years. About 420.00 crore taka loans have been disbursed among 46,324 entrepreneurs (women entrepreneurs 45 percent).
- ❖ A Number of 21,875 woman entrepreneurs have been created by the Bangladesh Agri-Business Development Project and some other Projects.

6.3 Woman'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	13915	6353	45.66	10319	4339	42.05	13604	6707	49.30
Development	1959	804	41.06	1587	450	28.36	1893	949	50.13
Operating	11956	5548	46.41	8733	3889	44.54	11711	5758	49.17

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Success of MoA in Promoting Woman's Advancement

7.1 Impact of Medium Term Strategic Objectives on Women Development

Increased production and productivity in the crop sector: The participation of the female members of the farm families are increasing in the process of increasing productivity of food grain. This in turn creating more opportunity for women to be involved in the production of high value crops. As a result, employment opportunity would be created for women and this will further increase the access of women and children to nutritious food. Targeted activities in agriculture such as cultivation of fruits and vegetables in the homestead, programmes related to crop expansion, production and preservation of seeds will create employment opportunities for them, which will increase their income and elevate their social status.

Increased supply and affordability of agricultural inputs: Increase in the agricultural production has offered opportunity to women to involve them agriculture. This will create employment opportunity for women.

Development and maintenance of agricultural land resource based management: Woman's involvement in producing compost and organic fertilizer will create employment opportunities for them and increase their income.

Support in supply, processing and effective marketing of agricultural products.: Increased participation of women in target-oriented agro-processing and agri-business has created employment opportunities for them. These are increasing woman's share in the labor market and enhancing their social status and establishing their rights in government property and service.

7.2 Ministry's Success in Promoting Woman's Advancement

- ❖ In almost all the families, woman's participation in agricultural activities is increasing. The involvement of women in the production of high value crop and food grain will create employment opportunity for them and this will further increase the access of women and children to nutritious food. Targeted activities in agriculture such as fruits and vegetables in homestead, production and preservation of seeds will create employment and income opportunities for women and elevate their social status. Woman's involvement in the production of compost and organic fertilizer will create employment opportunities for them and increase their income.
- ❖ Farmers of 64 districts of Bangladesh are planting mushrooms, and a total of 38,085 women are participating in mushroom-based income generating activities promoted by National Mushroom Centre, Savar and other 16 sub-centers across the country. Under Northwest Crop Diversification Project, a corner for women has been marked in 60 growers' markets and 15 wholesale markets. Furthermore 3,000 women who are belongs to the groups formed by various projects of Department of Agriculture Marketing, have been trained up in the field of agri-Marketing. These are increasing woman's participation in labor market. This will elevate their social status and establish their right in public property and services.
- ❖ Women make a significant contribution in the production of crops and the Ministry of Agriculture recognizes its importance adequately. A large number of women scientists are receiving higher education and training at home and abroad from different projects and programs of the ministry. Apart from this, employment opportunities have been created for a large number of women through training about seed production and preservation, cultivating vegetables and fruits in homesteads, processing and preservation of fruits and vegetables, under different projects and programs, as well as core research activities of the research organizations under the Ministry. As a result, a large number of women are getting motivated to participate at different stages of production, and are making significant contribution in agricultural production.

7.3 Woman's Non-wage Labour in Agriculture:

In agriculture, women are contributing significantly at different stages of crop production. Women are actively participating in production and preservation of

seeds, processing and preservation of crops, cultivating vegetables and fruits in homesteads, etc. But, these non-wage activities of the women are not properly recognized. It is necessary to recognize these non-wage activities of the women properly in social and economic sphere.

Success story of a woman in Agriculture:

Successful and self-reliant Begum Saleha Iqbal is a successful woman working in. She started roof gardening in 1997 with just 5 pots of Chrysanthemum flowers. At present, she is producing various types of flowers and vegetables including marigold, pomegranate, rose, jasmine and orchids in her roof garden of 2200 sq ft. Her roof garden grows, amaranth, okra, cucumbers, tomatoes, coriander leaves, cauliflowers, green chilies, wax jambu, guava, mango, papaya, dragon fruits, lemon etc. are among these vegetables, fruits and flowers. She has inspired and encouraged the local people by distributing different kinds of vegetables, and flowers produced on the roof to her friends and acquaintances after meeting own needs. Having encouraged by her, many people in the area including her relatives have made roof top gardens, a pollution free environment which contributes to create an environment in the urban areas.

In recognition to her effort for popularizing the rooftop gardening system as a woman entrepreneur, Begum Saleha Iqbal received a silver medal "Cultural Award" in the 14th National Urban Awards.

8.0 Obstacles to achieve targets related to Woman's Advancement and Rights

- ❖ Women engaged in agriculture work are not recognized as farmers.
- ❖ Inadequate supply of agricultural input, training and low interest credit facility.
- ❖ Lack of marketing facilities for agricultural products.
- ❖ Lack of women friendly environment in markets.
- ❖ Inadequacy of necessary technical support and agriculture support services.

9.0 Progress on Recommended Activities in the Previous Year

Serial No.	Recommendations	Progress
1	2	3
1	Ensure that women are recognized as farmers.	The process to recognize women as farmers is ongoing.
2	Introduce input cards for female farmers	Farmers received credits under second

Serial No.	Recommendations	Progress
1	2	3
	(like male farmers), ensure opportunity to open an account with a minimum deposit, provision of training, access to agriculture credit, ensuring the availability of other existing facilities;	crop diversification project and 60 percent of the recipients were women. Women entrepreneur have been trained in receiving and managing loan.
3	Provide women with training on production and storage of seeds, cultivation and preservation of mushroom, planting seedlings and saplings, horticultural seed development, homestead gardening, production of bio and compost fertilizer, preservation and marketing of vegetable and fruits. Supply women with microcredit and create employment opportunities for them;	A large number of women are involved in cultivating vegetables at homestead, processing as well as preservation of vegetables and fruits under the research activities in different agriculture research institutes under B.A.R.C. Women cultivators are encouraged to involve in the programme for production and preservation of jute seeds.
4	Create women-friendly environment to facilitate marketing of agricultural products, and develop and expand woman-friendly environment in the existing and new markets;	Community groups comprising of at least 30 percent women members have been formed association to facilitate marketing of agriculture products under the second crop diversification project. Under this project a total of 159000 women have been trained on market conditions, value addition, and commodity prices.
5	Improve the socio-economic condition of poor and destitute women living in flood, drought, saline-prone areas and coastal regions. Support these women by supplying agricultural inputs, and providing training and credit support with low interest rates as a part of post-natural disaster rehabilitation.	As part of post-disaster rehabilitation program supply of free agriculture inputs, training and credit at low interest rates are continuing.
6	In the aim to involve more women in agro-processing and agri-business, provide support to develop women as entrepreneurs, provide training and loan support with low interest rates to create employment opportunities.	Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) has trained 10,99,220 women in technology of crop production, comprehensive pest management, post-harvest preservation and management of crops and marketing. For involving woman's in Tk. 420.00 crore have been agri-business and agro disbursed to 46,324

Serial No.	Recommendations	Progress
1	2	3
		processing in large numbers, entrepreneurs for development training and loan with low of agri-business. Among them interest rate could be provided 45% are women entrepreneur, to create entrepreneurship and to create employment. Women workers have been trained in small and cottage industry based jute products.
7	Consider gender issue in all developmental projects and programs of the Agriculture Ministry	Gender issues are actively considered while adopting development projects in the Ministry of Agriculture. Second crop diversification project has developed Gender Equality Strategy Paper for the Department of Agricultural Extension that has been published in September, 2016.
8	Provide all types of agricultural support services to women so that they are able to undertake homestead cultivation activities in an effective manner.	DAE and research institutions are providing technical support, training, and financial assistance for cultivating vegetables and fruits at homesteads.

10.0 Proposal for future activities

- ❖ To take steps/initiatives to come forward to the development of agricultural activities for ensuring the economic empowerment of women;
- ❖ To impart multi-farious training to women on agricultural activities in order to transform them into educated and skilled workforce;
- ❖ To support the establishment of agricultural farms and agro-based industries by Ministry of Agriculture through woman's participation to free the womenfolk from the curse of poverty;
- ❖ To reward women in different areas alongside men for their contribution in social and economic sphere by Ministry of Agriculture;
- ❖ To take action to ensure a supportive environment so that men and women can share equal responsibility in household affairs and productive activities;
- ❖ To highlight woman's contribution in agriculture and their commendable entrepreneurial activities in the media to build up positive image of women. To take initiatives to enhance the activities of the media organizations for making

the latter more gender friendly. To telecast all these through various agriculture related programs.