

## Chapter-19

### Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Chittagong Hill Tracts (Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari districts) are well-known as the aesthetic and green-charming areas of Bangladesh. Various tribals and non-tribals populations have been living in the CHT region for ages. Eleven different tribal ethnic communities and Bengali live in Chittagong Hill Tracts. These communities belongs to distinct cultural identities, are also an indispensable part of the main-stream population of the country. Since independence of Bangladesh, and as per constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the government has been implementing various development projects undertaken for accelerated socio-economic development of the people living in these three districts through the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs. Some of these include supplying safe drinking water, development of pisciculture, improvement of healthcare services, construction and development of climate change tolerant agricultural infrastructure, development of tourism, eradication of poverty, women's advancement and overall socio-economic development of the people living in this region. In addition, other programs, focusing on the comprehensive development of this region, include development and expansion of educational institutions for children's access to quality education, providing technical education and training to young men and women, providing financial assistance to different tribal/ non-tribal communities on their festivals and on special days for the conservation of their own language and culture, establishment and development of social welfare institutions, development of sports and culture, construction of physical infrastructure and construction and maintenance of religious institutions, etc.
- 1.2 Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs has been created in accordance with the provisions of the Peace Accord signed on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1997 to ensure overall development of Hill Tracts region. This ministry is committed to establishing equal rights and opportunities and equitable distribution of resources among the citizens of this region as guaranteed in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Women constitute more than 50% of the beneficiaries of the projects and programs implemented through this ministry. In addition, the ministry has undertaken some specific programs and projects targeting the women-folk of Chittagong Hill Tracts region.

#### 2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry

- ❖ Implementation of CHT Peace Accord: Undertaking programmes with the objective to bring about development on socio-economic condition and uphold

the social customs, culture and language of tribal/non-tribal people living in the CHT areas;

- ❖ Supervision and coordination of all development activities: Communication with International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and all relevant Government agencies, International Agency, Donor Agency and Development partners
- ❖ Coordination among all relevant Government agencies in order to preserve the environmental and geo-physical characteristics of CHT area;
- ❖ Conduct and coordinate activities related to social safety net, relief, rehabilitation and dealing with crisis situations arising from any calamity in the CHT areas;
- ❖ Provide secretariat services to Council Committees and other special committees/commission formed for development of CHT;
- ❖ Supervision and monitoring of NGOs activities in the CHT areas.
- ❖ Development of biodiversity and eco friendly tourism in CHT.
- ❖ Enact Hill tracts related law, rules, and regulation.

### **3.0 Strategic Objectives of the Ministry and their Relevance with Women's Advancement**

- 3.1 Improving quality of life for CHT People:** The role of women in CHT is imported for enhancing the standard of living. Traditionally the women in CHT are hard working. Setting up tubewells in remote area, supply of pure drinking water, providing health service and awareness building on clean environment will create more opportunities for women in development. Labour-hour of women members of a family is being saved as a result of ensuring healthcare services through mobile clinic and supply of pure drinking water in the inaccessible hilly areas. Technical education and vocational training is provided to women. Moreover, continued effort to eradicate women unemployment through establishing small industry and handicrafts is still going on.
- 3.2 Preserving the language and culture of different tribe's people in CHT:** Increased number of tribal children will be able to receive education as a result of the inclusion of 11 tribal language courses in the primary school text-book curriculum. 19 schools in 6 upazillas and school committees have been established in order to provide financial assistance for learning mother language where adequate facilities are absent. Educational opportunities for tribal/non-tribal female children will expand as a result of introduction of multi language curriculum. Further, income of the

tribal/non-tribal women is increasing as a result of conservation and marketing of products and inputs used by the tribal/non-tribal people.

#### **4.0 Role of the Ministry in Women's advancement and protections of rights**

- 4.1 Development of communication and power sector infrastructure, distribution of micro-credits to the people of hilly areas, creation of ancillary marketing facilities for agricultural products in Chittagong Hill Tracts region have created income-generating opportunities for women, enabling them to enhance their income. Moreover, the micro-credit programme targeting the women (40%) will enhance women's self-employment opportunities and empowerment. Through 3800 Para Kendro (Community based service proving center), health & nutrition services, education and supply pure drinking water are being provided to 1,56,435 families of 3 Hill districts. 1692 para workers have been provided training on mushroom cultivation, bee-keeping, ginger processing and medicinal plant cultivation. 390 para women workers have been provided training on healthcare services so that they can provide health-care services in the remote areas and benefit themselves financially.
  - 4.2 Providing healthcare services, distribution of free text books and other educational materials, immunization programme, and services for eradication of malnutrition of children etc are contributing to increase literacy rate and productive people. Infant mortality rate is decreasing as a result of targeted health-care services for children along with the health-care services provided to their mothers. Besides, women's participation in the income-generating activities in the labour market is increasing as a result of increasing opportunities for education of female children.
  - 4.3 Technical education and various vocational training programs targeting the women (50%) are creating more employment opportunities for women in Chittagong Hill Tracts region, enabling them to earn more.
  - 4.4 Several projects funded by the UNDP, the UNICEF and ADP are being implemented directly under the supervision of the ministry for reducing labor of women in water preservation and use, providing maternity healthcare and bringing down mortality rate, and preventing diseases related to malnutrition and feces. So far, girls' empowerment and child protection project has been implemented in 335 para centers, 62392 children birth have been registered and another project involving children's labor and physical empowerment, and child protection has been implemented.
- #### **5.0 Priority Spending Areas/programs and its impact on women development:**
- 5.1 There is no separate budget allocation for the women. But 3,400 women are working as para worker under the CHT Comprehensive Social Development Project of the CHT Development Board, and another 4,000 under a project of the UNDP

CHTDF. The government is providing different services to improve the living standard of the CHT people. But it is hard for the MOCHTA to collect information on the actual number of people both men and women being benefited. The MOCHTA has identified five high priority sectors. The benefits of women from the programs are given below:

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Development of climate change resilient frastructure in CHT areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Because of the geographical location, general communication system of Chittagong Hill Tracts areas is not smooth as that of the plain areas. Emphasis has been given on the target-based communités and climatechange resilient infrastructures.</li> <li>❖ Development of climate change resilient communication infrastructure will bring more benefit for female than male people through creating opportunities in various activities for them.</li> </ul>
2.	Extension of climate change resilient agricultural and non-agricultural activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Considering the geographical characteristics of the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, it is possible to ensure overall economic development by constructing growth centers besides implementation of extensive target-based programs.</li> <li>❖ Extension of climate change resilient agricultural and non-agricultural programs will encourage backward section of women-folk of Chittagong Hill Tracts to participate in economic activities.</li> </ul>
3.	Primary and technical education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Providing educational facilities to children, and trainings on income-generating activities for the unemployed, and organizing seminars and workshops on poverty reduction, development of environment and agriculture, local government, social development, gender issues, rural education, healthcare, nutrition, rural economy and management will all contribute towards women's advancement.</li> </ul>
4.	Basic Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Because of diffrent geographical characteristics in Chittagong Hill Tracts areas, special programs need to be undertaken to prevent unusial diseases and to provide health-care services for women and children in the remote areas. Providing health-care services through</li> </ul>

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
		mobile clinics and ensuring fresh drinking water will help the women save their labour-hour.
5.	Culture	❖ More tribal/non-tribal children will get access to primary education as a result of inclusion of eleven tribal/non-tribal languages in the curriculum of primary school text book. Moreover, marketing facilities for tribal/non-tribal women's products and inputs used by them will increase employment opportunities of the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts, enabling them to increase their earnings.

## 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	1309	931	71.14	1243	452	36.35	1150	856	74.43
Development	989	755	76.31	914	177	19.36	849	607	71.50
Operating	320	177	55.16	329	275	83.57	301	249	82.72

Source: RCGP database

## 7.0 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the Ministry in relation to Women's Advancement and Rights

Performance Indicators	Unit of measurement	Actual		
		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Rate of women literacy in CHT	%	56	57	61
Small and handicraft training in CHT	Number	713	750	750

## 8.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

**8.1** In the CHT, people of 11 ethnic groups are involved in jhum cultivation and every member of a family including children and elderly members, specially the women, work in the jhum fields, which is a significant characteristic of jhum cultivation. Several development schemes are being implemented in the CHT for overall advancement which include cluster village development programs, rehabilitation and assistance. As a result, women empowerment is increasing.

## 8.2 Success Stories:

### **Knowing self-defense techniques a substantial intrinsic skill that reasonably help building self confidence among CHT girls**

Jacy Chakma, a 17 years old college student is a prominent personality for her Karate/ martial art skills in Rangamati hill district. She has won the bronze medal in the national level Karate tournament in 2015. Now she is preparing herself for achieving her dream to grab the black belt on Karate and she is fully confident to achieve this target in near future.

Before learning martial art, Jacy was only an ordinary school going girl as she never got the opportunity to discover her capacity and hidden strength. Compared to today, initially she was introvert and shy by nature, her voice was low, her body language was hesitant and inflexible. She possessed really poor self-esteem lacking target and concentration. She was always looked down by her peers and friends for her poor social skills.

It was an intensive one-month long practical training on martial art which really helped her improve her mental strength and confidence. This training provided her a great opportunity to interact with diverse ethnic groups, promoting a greater understanding of different ethnicities and cultural practices. This was a special opportunity for her and other participants to make more friends. On completion of this training, she got special space in her family and her peer circle and now they treat her differently. In her own words "Of course, proudly speaking, this month long martial art training has influenced me to win bronze medal in the national karate tournament which was held on the occasion of Independence Day 2015. Many thanks to UNDP for giving such life changing opportunity for girls like us. Frankly speaking, the training has contributed positively to my life and provoked me to set personal target with commitment and passion." says Jacy with confidence.

–In recent years, there has been an alarmingly growing trend of violence against women and girls across the CHT. Considering the post conflict settings, the CHT is pertinent to facing different forms of rights violation and sexual abuses against the girls and women. Such violence against women and girls does not only take place in the interior but in the urban periphery. This type of incidences often trigger some unwanted local communal tensions and clashes among the different communities in CHT and further contribute to incite disputes, frustrates peace and loss of mutual trust and confidence at local level.

It is true that rape and sexual violence against girls and women are serious concern worldwide and self-defense training has become very popular to help in improving the scenario. The practice of martial arts has grown significantly in recent decades globally as not only part of sports but also as essential requirement of personal safety and security. Taking this into account a project of MoCHTA, SID-CHT, UNDP regularly provides intensive Martial Art Training to school and college girls that eventually helps them to be physically, , mentally, spiritually stronger and more confident.

The best positive outcome is now that Jacy is skilled enough to work as an associate master trainer in Martial Art training organized by SID-CHT project, UNDP and her bold presence and showcase of skills definitely inspire the other girl's participants.

Martial Art Training for girls also provides a platform for breaking gender stereotypes and creates a space for girls to engage in physical

activity. In fact, the Sports for Peace Program of SID-CHT remains one of the few free of cost opportunities for children from diverse ethnic communities of CHT to engage in formative sports. ”

## 9.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ In order to create self employment opportunities for entire women 650 sewing machines will be provided in FY2018-19. Initiatives for various technical, vocational and market oriented training for tribals/nontribals women should continue;
- ❖ Making special efforts for marketing of women entrepreneurs' products in upazilas, districts and in the capital city; Arranging loans from government/non-government banks without collateral for disabled and tribal/non-tribal women;
- ❖ Appointment of tribal/non-tribal trainers and officials in Chittagong Hill Tracts during training period and loan disbursement time
- ❖ Provisions should be made for tribals and non-tribal women: Introducing quota system in education and training; Providing education allowance; Providing technical and vocational training; teaching in their mother language and creating more opportunities for training related to income-generation.
- ❖ Providing student scholarship including construction of school-college hostels for increasing participation of girl children through mainstream educational activities alongside provision for primary learning in mother language for each tribe/non-tribe.
- ❖ In the 2018-19 financial year 6,000 women will be provided with maternity services through mobile clinics, resulting in reduction of child mortality rate and malnutrition;
- ❖ In addition to ensure the safety of women's food and nutrition, women should be protected from adverse effects of environmental degradation and climate change;
- ❖ Empowerment of women in education, employment and decision making will be ensured;
- ❖ During recruitment in the vacant position, women should given priority.