

## Chapter-20

### Prime Minister's Office

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 National budget is the document of estimated annual income and expenditure of a country. Budget allocation, taxation or tax policy not only influence the life-style of people of different sphere, but also affect the life of male and female significantly. Ignoring female's contribution in the overall economy of the country, sustainable development is not possible. Adequate budget allocation is necessary for women development meaning their empowerment and economic solvency.
- 1.2 In Bangladesh context, as women are socially and economically back-warded, every Ministry/Division should maintain gender sensitivity in their budget process for streamlining women in the overall development initiatives. Considering the above circumstances, for achieving the goal of women development, Prime Minister's Office has undertaken number of initiatives like rehabilitation of landless and marginalized citizens, creating investment friendly environment through Public Private Partnership (PPP) etc.

#### 2.0 Major Functions of the Prime Minister's Office

- ❖ Provide secretarial assistance to the Honorable Prime Minister in discharging her duties and responsibilities related to political, administrative, parliamentary affairs and other related functions;
- ❖ Liaise with international organizations and execute treaties and agreements with different countries and international organizations related to the functions of the Prime Minister's Office;
- ❖ Ensure security of the Honorable Prime Minister and arrange protocol and ceremonial events for different Heads of State and Heads of Government, dignitaries and foreign delegates;
- ❖ Undertake special programs for small ethnic community living in the plain lands in order to improve their socio-economic condition;
- ❖ Rehabilitate the homeless, impoverished, poor and vulnerable families by providing ownership over homestead under Ashrayan Project;
- ❖ Coordinate with stakeholders regarding activities related to NGO Affairs Bureau;
- ❖ Coordinate matters relating to Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, Export Processing Zone (EPZ), Private Export Processing Zone and Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA).

### **3.0 Strategic objectives of the Prime Minister's Office and their Relevance with Women's Advancement and Rights**

- 3.1 Prime Minister's Office has identified the following strategic objectives that have both direct and indirect impact on women's development:

**Building a Digital Bangladesh:** The scope of employment has been created for trained entrepreneurs in the management of Union Digital Centres of whom 50 Percent of the entrepreneurs are women. Besides, women's access to private and public services and participation in the training of information technology and different forums has increased.

**Conducive investment climate:** At present women constitute about 64 Percent of the labor forces employed in different Export Promotion Zones. Women's participation in labor market as well as in income generating activities will have an impact on their empowerment and promotion of social security. Through implementation of World Bank assisted Northern Areas Reduction of Poverty Initiatives (NARPI) project, women in munga prone areas of northern districts have been employed in different industrial organization through training. Initiatives have been taken to establish economic zones in all suitable areas of the country that will create greater scope for women's employment and promotion of the quality of life and socio-economic conditions. It is mentionable that initiatives have been undertaken to establish 26 (9 Government & 17 Private) Economic Zones in different areas of the country. For the investor of the economic zones area one stop service for 17 items has been approved.

**Increase in Private Sector Partnership for infrastructure development:** Economic growth, infrastructure facilities and employment opportunities will be ensured through PPP activities. Both man and women will be the beneficiaries of PPP activities. Already the implementation of 47 projects has been started under PPP. An agreement of 1435 million US dolar has been signed between private investors and PPP Authority to implement Dhaka Elevated Express and High Tec Park at Kaliakair block 2, 3 and 5 projects.

**Transparency and accountability of NGO activities:** Different projects and programs are being implemented through NGOs. These are ensuring women's access to health services, nutrition, education, training, microcredit, legal aid and protection against torture and violence.

**Improving living standards of the marginal and small ethnic community:** The Ashrayan Project aims to provide public resources and services in joint name of economically poor husband and wife. Fifty percent of the beneficiaries of the project

are women. Distribution of public resources to women is contributing in augmenting their social security, dignity and participation in different social forum. Women's participation is ensured in large scale income generating projects undertaken for minor indigenous community living in plain land. Along with boys, girl students of the said community are being provided educational assistance. Consequently, rate of female education is getting enhanced that leads to their development.

#### **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of the Prime Minister's Office for Women's Advancement and Rights**

- 4.1 The Ashrayan Project provides women ownership in government resource which promotes their social security, dignity and pride. Land, housing, training, health and family planning services, income generating activities facilities for pure drinking water, supply of electricity, development of internal communication system, construction of community centres, construction of steps at pond, afforestation facilities have been given through this project by which women are being benefited. Besides, different development activities such as establishment of sanitary latrines, tube-wells, construction/ renovation of community centres, religious center etc. has been initiated for minor ethnic communities in plain land. These activities are promoting their quality of life, particularly of women.
- 4.2 The first-ever data-bank in Bangla "Jatiyo -Tathyakosh" ([www.infokosh.gov.bd](http://www.infokosh.gov.bd)) contains all information on agriculture, education, health, legal affairs, human rights, tourism, employment, citizens service, non-farm activities, environment, disaster management, industry and commerce, science and ICT and so on. Information is available in formats like text, animation, image, audio and video etc. Among the 10,000 different topics in the "Jatiyo e-Tathyakosh", 310 topics are related to women rights. Besides, a corner named "Jagoron" has been initiated through a2i program to prevent women violence.
- 4.3 In the 8 Export Processing Zones established in different parts of the country, 4.68 lac people have been employed, of which 64 percent are women. At least 30 percent women's participation in the Workers' Welfare Associations of Export Processing Zones has been ensured. Through a2i project, a digital center has been set up in 4,554 unions, 325 municipalities and 407 wards of the country. An average of 60 (sixty) lakh of rural people are taking various information and services every month from these centers, of whom approximately 23.4 lakh are women consumers. From the Digital Center till date (2016) 25 crore 76 lakh services (Notably birth registration, mobile banking, payment of electricity bill, computer training, online application, land record, etc.) have been provided, out of which 39 percent service

recipient are female. The digital center earns 263.6 crore taka through these services.

- 4.4 During 2009-2016, NGOs registered under NGO Affairs Bureau distributed about 10.59 crore educational inputs for facilitating education. Under Ashrayan-2 Project (July 2010 - June 2017) provision has been kept to build pucca barracks for coastal/cyclone prone areas, semi pucca barracks for other regions and specially designed houses for ethnic communities. The project has targeted to rehabilitate 50,000 landless, homeless and impoverished families from July 2010 to June 2017. During 2009-2016, 48,107 families were rehabilitated and loan facility worth tk. 26 crore was disbursed to rehabilitated families under 720 running projects. Simultaneously, trade based training was offered to the rehabilitated families for income generating activities. Electrification and tree plantation programs are also included in the project. Women, being half of the total population, are benefitting through this Project. Under development support program, 400 income generating projects such as animal husbandry, fish cultivation, computer training center, sewing training center, pan baraj, rickshaw-van, vehicle project, nursery, poultry, handloom projects, shoe making project, shrimp culture etc. were implemented in 270 Upazilas from 2009 to 2017. Majority of the beneficiaries of these projects are women. Apart from this, every year one-time education scholarship is being awarded to the small ethnic students studying at higher level from this office, of which half of the students are female.

## 5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women's Advancement (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Establish Digital Bangladesh and promote good governance by ensuring transparency and accountability	From the digital centers established at the union level, people of rural community can easily access to government forms, notices, passport-visa information, national e-information cell, agricultural, education, health, legal information, job information, citizenship certificates, public exam results and other government services. Other than the current services, measures have been taken to get services start from computer composing to admission related information of government and private schools and universities, birth registration, mobile banking, life insurance, soil testing and fertilizer recommendation and payment of electricity bill. 50% of the entrepreneurs in the digital centers are women. In 2017, 28.9 million women took services from these centers. 5,286 women have been employed in digital centers. Apart from this, local women entrepreneurs have been developed who are working as computer operators and data entry operators in various government/non-government organizations.

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women's Advancement (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
		<p>More than 7,000 women bloggers (entrepreneurs, local government and field-level representatives) solve their problems through interaction by writing on the Union Digital Center Blog (uiscbd.ning.com). A total of 40,400 women workers intended to get overseas employment in Hong Kong and Singapore have registered online from Union Digital Center.</p> <p>Through the A2i Service Innovation Fund (SIF), 12 women focused and 13 women headed projects which is one-third of the total project of SIF are in operation. Under the aforesaid Innovation Fund, preparation of several innovative projects for women safety mobile app, legal service hot number is going on.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ In order to overcome the current challenges of women in society and to create leadership among women, the women Innovation Camp- has been going on since 2016.</li> <li>❖ Skill Development programs for grassroots women have been taken up jointly by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, SME Foundation, Bangladesh Women in Technology and A2i Program. 3,000 underprivileged rural women have been trained in self-employment. Rural women are being involved in appropriate employment through skill development training, which are helping to meet the targets of SDG 5 and 8.</li> <li>❖ So far 3,567 female officers have been trained. Besides, 25 projects of women innovators have been adopted for facilitating women's participation in innovative culture.</li> </ul>
2.	Accelerating Economic Growth by Increasing Investment	<p>3.58 lakh people have been employed in Eight EPZ established for enhancing export and attracting direct foreign investment and overall development; 64% of the employee are women. In order to ensure graduation of Bangladesh into middle-income countries by 2021, the government has decided to establish economic zones for increasing industrialization, employment, production and export and has already approved the establishment of 22 economic zones in the meeting of the governing board with the chair of Hon'ble Prime Minister, of which for the establishment of economic zone of Sirajganj and Mongla, land transfer has already been done and developer has been appointed. Already, development work of 10 economic zones have been inaugurated by the Honorable Prime Minister. The economic zone will unveil a huge potential for Bangladesh, which will surely benefit the women.</p>
3.	Improve the Living Standard of poor and small ethnic community	<p>About 400 income-generating projects have been taken up from 2011-2012 to 2016-17 for the development of the small ethnic community living in the plain land. . Total beneficiaries of these projects are 1 lakh of which 50% are female. Ashrayan-2 project has been adopted for rehabilitation of 50 thousand landless-homeless, destitute and poor families. Through this project, so far 20,000 families have been provided</p>

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women's Advancement (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
		loans and training, of which 50 percent are women. Besides, 14,080 women have been rehabilitated. Land and house ownership is shared jointly with husband and wife. Every woman living in the project is a member of the registered Co-operative Society. Women are encouraged in income-generating activities. Older women are getting knowledge of literacy. So far, 1,46,393 women have been provided training and loans through the Ashrayan project. There are plans to rehabilitate 200,000 landless families and women by 2018.

## 6.0 Women's Share in Prime Minister's Office'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	2802	546	19.49	4805	1079	22.46	1458	279	19.14
Development	2314	522	22.55	4214	1053	24.99	970	255	26.29
Operating	488	24	4.98	591	26	4.44	487	24	4.93

Source: RCGP database

## 7.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

### 7.1 Success History

#### Women's empowerment through Apprenticeship Program

Runa Akter, is an entrepreneur of Latibpur UDC of Mithapukur upazila of Rangpur district. After passing HSC, she used to live a very dismal life. With the support of chairman and secretary the said UP, she started to provide services form UDC. The villagers often came to her to avail the public services. Initially, despite many problems, with her hard work and diligence she gradually became skilled at providing UDC services. Apart from government services, she also offers a number of private services. Now, her monthly income is 20 thousand taka. Runa is a successful woman at work. A2i is working to improve the condition of many rural women like Runa.

### 7.2 Women's Development through Asrayan Project (1997-2017)

- ❖ 1,90,000 landless, homeless and helpless poor women have been rehabilitated;
- ❖ About 22,500 women were rehabilitated by building houses in their own land under the project named "Houses for All";
- ❖ About 1,46,393 poor women have been provided with credit and training for income generation;

- ❖ 1,67,000 women have been awarded ownership and possession of homestead;
- ❖ Safe drinking water have been ensured through installation of around 15,000 tube wells;
- ❖ During FY 2013-2014 to 2016-17 the number of poor families that were rehabilitated are 30,500.

#### **8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities:**

- ❖ Encourage women's participation in higher levels of administrative structure.;
- ❖ To facilitate appointment of women in constitutional, administrative and policy making decision;
- ❖ To ensure 100 percent rehabilitation of poor women in the housing program as per the directions of Honorable Prime Minister;
- ❖ Ensure development and empowerment of women of small ethnic community.;
- ❖ Ensure safety of woman in Prime Minister's office and other concern offices of PMO.
- ❖ From Ashrayan-3 project, one lakh forcibly displaced Rohingya people will be rehabilitated in Vasanchar, where women will be provided with health care.
- ❖ Provide special training on negative aspects of child marriage to the Kazis (Marriage Registrars) through a program implemented under GIU, to prevent child marriage across the country.