

Chapter-28

Information and Communication Technology Division

1.0 Introduction

1.1 In the modern world Information and Communication Technology is being used as the key instrument for human development. In all sectors like research, education, agriculture, business, medicine, even in personal life at home and outside, technology has a great influence. Uses of technology are also increasing in Bangladesh gradually. With a view to become a middle income country by implementing the ideas of Vision 2021 declared by the government, the Information and Communication Technology Division is establishing internet connectivity throughout the country, developing human resources, establishing e-governance and also developing the ICT industry. The Vision 2021 visualizes a Bangladesh where the use of modern technology would be the driving force of the economy. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division has been set up mainly for achieving the targets of UN declared sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, implementing 7th Five Year Plan, graduating to middle income country by 2030 and establishing Digital Bangladesh in the light of Vision 2021. Therefore, ICT Division is relentlessly striving to improve socio-economic condition of the people of Bangladesh by ensuring universal access to information technology, through development of ICT and research, successful application and the expansion of digital management.

1.2 To cope up with the technology based modern world, both the government and non-government sector must have to rely on information and communication technology. ICT Division is using the ICT sector to achieve a balanced socio-economic development and to bring a positive change in its citizen's life pattern. Though the contribution of ICT sector in the sector-wise GDP growth analysis is intangible, yet almost every economic sector is inseparably linked with the development of IT sector.

2.0 Major Functions of the Division

- ❖ Supporting various ministries and agencies through the implementation of e-governance, e-infrastructure;
- ❖ Conduct publicity to reach ICT services at people's doorstep;
- ❖ Formulate various laws, policies and strategies relating to ICT Division;
- ❖ Creating a guideline (roadmap) for the benefit of ICT services in commercial purpose;

- ❖ Coordinate between various ministries and organizations regarding ICT related issues;
- ❖ Implement the recommendations of Digital Bangladesh Task Force;
- ❖ Promote and update various IT activities through survey, designing and research; and
- ❖ Take initiatives to involve Bangladesh in all sorts of activities relating to the development of Information and Communications Technology in the international arena.

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

- 3.1 Strengthening e-Governance structure:** Providing internet networking and broad band facilities to different ministries/divisions, establishing e-Centers for providing internet facilities and flow of information at District and Upazila level will be ensured through the initiatives taken for strengthening e-Governance structure. Though, these activities do not have direct impact on the development of women, they will be indirectly benefitted significantly by getting easy access to information using internet facilities.
- 3.2 Expansion and awareness acceleration on ICT education for human resource development:** ICT skilled manpower are being made by imparting IT training upto the root level through establishment of IT training institution at District and Upazila level. Training is also being conducted for the skill development of IT professionals suitable for local and international ICT markets. Steps have been taken to provide training and to create public awareness in the use and application of digital signature in ICT. This will open vast scope for capacity building on ICT for both men and women. Skill development will lead to enthusiasm for self-employment of women. As a result empowerment, skill development and participation of women in income generating activities will increase.
- 3.3 Development of ICT infrastructure:** Different sectors of ICT have been developed in order to create women entrepreneurs with a view to improve socio-economic condition of women. The development of ICT industry is being done by arranging different events like: Digital World, BPO Summit, High School Programming, ICT Expo and Job Fair for skilled people. For the expansion of the scope of ICT in commercial use infrastructural facilities, viz. high-tech park, IT village, software technology park etc. will be established. Infrastructural development activities of ICT will generate direct employment opportunities for women including poor people.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of ICT Division for establishing Women's Advancement and Rights

4.1 The main objective of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Division is to take the country to a new height of excellence, building a new "Digital Bangladesh" identity by strengthening ICT sector. "National Information and Communication Technology Policy 2015" was formulated for proper implementation of information and communication technology sector related activities in order to successful attainment of visions of Digital Bangladesh. The main objectives of this policy are as follows:

- ❖ Create highly education and skilled human resources in information and communication Technology sector;
- ❖ Encourage higher education and research work in ICT;
- ❖ Encourage local level and sustainable technology development and innovation in ICT;
- ❖ Poverty reduction and employment generation by using Information and Communication Technology;
- ❖ Creating public awareness in using ICT;
- ❖ Providing incentives in ICT section;
- ❖ Ensuring social justice, gender equality, equal opportunities and equal participation for people with disabilities and special assistance as required;
- ❖ To achieve higher Productivity through the use of ICT in all sectors of the economy including agriculture and small, medium industries;
- ❖ Use of ICT to expand the scope of quality education across the country, ensuring Computer literacy at all levels of education, encouraging creativity through appropriate research and development, generating merit and integrating ICT in our daily life;
- ❖ Development of world-class professionals to take the opportunities of local and international markets;
- ❖ To ensure the development of ICT based software industries and services to meet domestic and global demand, increase revenue from foreign trade and investment and reduce import dependency;
- ❖ Ensure standard health services for all citizens through innovation in ICT sector;
- ❖ Ensure Internet-telecom connectivity for all citizens;

- ❖ Ensure effective steps in the management of environment friendly green technology, safe waste management, reducing preparatory time for disaster and climate change by using ICT.

4.2 National Information and communication policy 2015, Bangladesh High-Tech Park Authority Act, 2015 and Information Technology (Certification Authority) Rules, 2010 to introduce digital signature have been formulated. ICT Division has taken noteworthy initiatives under the medium term strategic objectives for developing and expanding of ICT infrastructure, ensuring the right of all for easy access to country's information system, building ICT capacity for the youth, establishing e-government by delivering e-services to all throughout the country;

4.3 It is expected that, by the successful Implementation of the vision and objectives of the National ICT Policy, it is possible to build a committed Digital Bangladesh by 2021. In order to improve the socio-economic conditions and create employment Opportunities for women, ICT Department has undertaken various priority programs. Those programs will create direct and indirect opportunities for women:

- ❖ In order to develop ICT industry, Bangladesh High-Tech Park Authority is offering various training on ICT for graduate pass students and professionals. In the meantime, 6,418 People have been trained under the support to development of Kaliakoir High-Tech Park project, 21% of them are women. Moreover, Bangladesh High-Tech Park Authority have taken a policy decision to appoint 30% women workers in every High-Tech Park in Bangladesh.
- ❖ In the High-Tech Park, private IT companies are encouraged to give preference in appointing women workers. Women entrepreneurs are given preference in allotment of spaces in multi-tenant building in High-Tech Park and women are also given priority in getting rooms in dormitories. According to the Private Software Technology Park Guidelines, there is a provision to keep Baby Day Care Center in every High-Tech Park/Software Technology Park.
- ❖ Over the last few years, economic growth rate of Bangladesh is above 6.5% but nearly 40 million of people are living below the poverty line and almost half of them are women. The goal of the 7th five-year plan is to achieve growth through partnership in Poverty reduction and social empowerment. About 7 million People are working in ICT sector, of them only 30% are women. ICT division has taken a 'She Power' project to empower women through Information Communication Technology (ICT).
- ❖ The main objective of the project is to empower women and eliminate poverty through providing training on ICT, encourage one lakh rural women in 3 years provided with laptops, servers and storage facilities and to take ICT as a career for women. Under this, project 10,500 women will be provided in three categories – Freelancer to entrepreneur, IT service provider, Call Center Agent. Three levels of

training will be provided. In each category, the successful completion of 1st level will be provided tk 3,000, tk 4,000 for 2nd level and tk 20,000 for 3rd level to purchase laptops.

- ❖ In Bangladesh, women's rights are being abused in many ways through cyber-crime. Especially young girls who are relatively inexperienced and new to the cyber world are the main target. This attack on women leads to loss of their professional wellbeing fear of security and mischief.
- ❖ Awareness can prevent can prevent the cyber-attack. 'Cyber Security Consciousness Workshop' can strengthen women to fight against cyber-crime. The vision of Digital Bangladesh will be achieved if we can ensure a safe and creative cyber world for women. In that context, the eighth to 10th grade students of 100 schools and colleges will be selected to participate in this workshop.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority spending Area	Benefits for women's advancement (Direct and Indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Ensuring Cyber Security	Steps have been taken to protect defamation of the women in the cyber world, i.e. facebook and other forms of social media. Necessary investigation reports are being produced before the cyber tribunal regarding the online defamation of women.
2.	Use of Digital Signature	ICT skilled and trained women entrepreneurs and officials will be able to use digital signature properly in their banking, e-Filing and e-Documentation processes.

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	2681	566	21.12	3479	255	7.34	3974	539	13.56
Development	2468	562	22.78	3270	244	7.46	3784	528	13.95
Non-Development	213	4	1.87	209	11	5.4	189	11	5.82

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Success of ICT department in promoting establishing women's development and rights:

- ❖ Development of 34,000 human resources under 'Leveraging Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for Growth, Employment and Governance' Project has been targeted, as 50% of total population women will be benefited by this project.

- ❖ With the help of JICA proposed by BCC, 20 people were given 3 months training under the project of 'Improve efficiency of IT engineers suited to Japanese IT sector' and 17 people have already been employed in Japan, of them 3 are women.
- ❖ 23,608 people took training at BKIITC of BCC and 6 divisional headquarters Centers from 2015-16 to 2017-18 (March) amongst them 20% are women. A job fair was organized for ICT-trained disabled people from 2015 to 2018 (March) and about 400 people were employed, out of them 31 were women.
- ❖ Establishment of computer lab in various educational institutions in 64 districts, Multimedia classrooms and digital content initiatives has been taken by ICT Division.
- ❖ Establishment of e-Governance: As a part of establishment of e-Governance, 18,059 government offices have been covered under fiber optic connectivity at district and upazila levels.
- ❖ Establishment of National Data center and cyber center: 129 specialized labs have been set up in different universities/educational institutions in our country.
- ❖ Fairs and Promotional Activities: Digital and innovation fairs and internet fairs are being organized by Government and private sectors. Potential women entrepreneurs are taking benefit from participating in these activities. There is a separate arrangement for women.
- ❖ Employment Generation: 25,000 People were trained in 2017-18 to achieve online outsourcing skills under 'Learning and Earning' project. 14,360 women got training under 'Bari Bose Borolok' project. 2512 people have been trained under the 'Freelance to Entrepreneur' development program. Amongst them, 217 were women.

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Enacting new law and amendment of the existing law in ICT field to achieve targets that serve interest of women;
- ❖ Provisions can be made to include women members in different project committees to increase the participation of women in the implementation and administration of different projects implemented by the ICT Division;
- ❖ In different projects, arrangements can be made to provide specific opportunity/benefit for women. Women can be included in all types of ICT oriented activities in order to promote impact and capacity of women group;

- ❖ Quota system can be introduced for women in all IT related trainings;
- ❖ Incentives can be provided to attract women in ICT related training and in ICT industry for the expansion of ICT based education;
- ❖ On an average, more than fifty percent of the beneficiaries of social safety net related programmes are women. The use of ICT in the administration and management of those activities will be more advantageous for easy release of those services. This will directly bring advantage for women by reducing hassle in getting social safety net related benefits.