

Chapter-31

Ministry of Cultural Affairs

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Culture plays a pivotal role in building an ideal society. Bangalees, as a nation are different. Bangladesh evolved as a country through a bloody war incepting from the language right movement by means of cultural upsurge. The nation soon adopts its own cultural identity. Ministry of Cultural Affairs is working to uphold country's glorious cultural heritage in literature, fine arts, music, drama and all other forms of culture so as to ensure a society by promoting and heightening the excellence, removing religious dogma. The ministry has undertaken specific and target based activities to promote our home-grown culture creating an environment of using scientific knowledge, generosity and humanity. Specific actions have also been taken to preserve archaeological sites, promote folk culture, pure music and performing arts, proliferation of Rabindra-Nazrul songs, arrangement of seasonal cultural fairs and motivating public for using public libraries etc. Ministry of Cultural Affairs has a persistent effort to promote a healthy cultural trend. Different activities are also been implemented in restoring and excelling the culture of ethnic groups along with the greater community's cultural expansion and excellence.
- 1.2 According to proclamation of vision 2021 of present culture friendly government and constitutional obligation under Article 23, 23 (A) and 24 Ministry of Cultural Affairs has been relentlessly working to proliferate presentation of non-communal and democratic trend of Bangla culture and also develop our national language, literature, art, music, drama and other creative forms of arts.
- 1.3 The Ministry of Cultural Affairs (MoCA) has been implementing various activities for the cultural restoration and development of smaller ethnic communities in accordance with cultural manifestation and excellence of the greater community. Various activities have been undertaken by the Ministry that has changed the traditional view towards women. As a result, the possibility of attaining equal treatment for both women and men in the process of economic development of the country is becoming noticeable. The main principles stated in the 'National Cultural Policy 2006' are the following:
 - ❖ Upholding history of thousand years' revolution of this land, language movement and glorious liberation war, respecting and tolerating religious faiths of all classes and communities living in Bangladesh;

- ❖ Preventing the degeneration of our national culture, and coordinating cultural activities and its development along with the overall economic development of the country;
- ❖ Undertaking an all-out efforts for immaculate growth, publicity and promotion in all aspect of culture;
- ❖ Ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage and its development of all ethnic communities.

2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry

- ❖ Formulation and implementation of policies on cultural issues;
- ❖ Collecting, preserving, publishing and nourishing development of the cultural heritage and anthropological artefacts of the Liberation War and contemporary period;
- ❖ Identifying the archaeological sites of the country and excavating, preserving and displaying those;
- ❖ Protecting copyright for the creative works;
- ❖ Establishing, expanding and developing public and private libraries;
- ❖ Undertaking research and publications on the language, culture and heritage;
- ❖ Celebrating various events nationally, such as, 21st February the International Mother Language Day, awarding 'Ekushey Podok', birth anniversaries of Rabindranath and Nazrul and Bengali New Year;
- ❖ Undertaking cultural treaties with different countries, exchange of Cultural Programs and expanding cooperation in the international arena.

3.0 Strategic objectives of the Ministry and their Relevance to Women's Advancement and Rights

- ### **3.1 Expansion and development of native culture including mother language:**
- Establishment and expansion of fine art academies at the district and upazila levels and preservation, expansion and development of folklore and culture etc. widen the scope for women to learn about art and culture. Infrastructure development activities in the cultural field also create employment opportunities for women. These will impact positively on women's intellectual development and socio-economic condition. Insolvent cultural activist women are also being regarded with the financial support both in their family and society.

- 3.2 **Upholding the tradition of thousand years, history, religious faith and spirit:** Renovation, preservation and development of the archaeological sites would attract tourists which will lead towards creating employment for the local community. Participation of women in infrastructural development programmes has consolidated their economic position in the society. Cultural activities are helping women in mental development and empowering them in society.
- 3.3 **Building knowledge-based society:** Women are actively participating in the infrastructural development of public and private sector libraries. Further, women will get access to books and newspapers in these libraries to improve their intellectual capability and socio- economic condition.
- 4.0 **Roles of the Ministry for Women's Advancement and Rights**
- 4.1 **Arranging different programmes for expansion, conservation and development of indigenous cultures and mother language:** Training and workshops are arranged for people from all level, profession and gender including women in the areas of music, dance, performing arts, fine arts etc. to uphold, promote and develop our art, literature and culture as a whole. At the same time, a significant number of women can opt for the opportunity to learn and practice all sorts of art and culture. This practice widens the outlook of our women which is positively impacted on their mental and socio-economic growth. Participation of women in various occasions including Bangla New year is greater. This gives an opportunity for them to be financially strong as well as help them grow mentally to a substantive level.
- 4.2 **Taking initiatives for increasing libraries and reading habits:** To increase education and reading habits among people, initiatives have been taken for establishing public and private libraries at upazila and district levels, and for modernizing established libraries. In order to increase students' reading habit Public Libraries arranged book reading competition throughout the country. Moreover, the facilities for research and reference libraries have been increased for students and other users by providing E-book facilities. As a result, reading habits among people is expected to grow and human resources will be developed through library services which will help in building knowledge based society.
- 4.3 **Establishing museums and giving wide publicity to Begum Rokeya's literary works for encouraging women's education:** Initiatives are being taken to, carry out research on the life and literary works of Begum Rokeya, collect, preserve, publish and translate her works at national and international level so that women can know the life and literary works of Begum Rokeya, learn lessons from her life and can contribute to national development. Moreover, in order to learn more about Begum

Rokeya and motivate others to learn lessons from her life, a museum will be established where a collection of Begum Rokeya's immortalized history and various elements of folk culture will be preserved.

- 4.4 **Opportunities for income generation:** A sizeable number of impoverished artists are being financially benefitted by *allowances for impoverished artists*. Besides, female artists working in the cottage industry are getting income opportunities through the marketing of their own products.
- 4.5 **Conservation, expansion and development of indigenous cultures and mother languages:** Printing and publication works of 287 books have been done since FY 2014-15. Besides, the participation of women is comparatively larger in festivals like Amar Ekushey Book Fair, Victory Day, Independence Day, the birth and death anniversary of intellectuals and accomplished men, Rabindra-Nazrul Jayanti, Baishakhi-Nabanno. Women are financially benefitted and mentally strengthened through their active participation in these programmes.
- 4.6 **Upholding the tradition of thousand years' heritage, history, religious faith and spirit:** The department of archaeology is creating employment opportunities for the poorer community and women through proper preservation and development of archaeological sites for tourists. Participation of women in the infrastructural development supports them through self-employment and empowers them both socially and economically.
- 4.7 **Knowledge based society:** Establishment, extension and development of libraries are going on at the district and Upazila levels. Women are participating in this infrastructural development process. Besides, with increased access to reading in libraries, women are mentally growing which will motivate them to actively participating in the national development of the country.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Benefits for Women's Advancement
1	2	3
1.	Promotion of national art and culture and preservation and development of the mother language	In recent times inclusion of women in the lists of recipients of 'EKUSHEY PADAK' is noteworthy. Women along with men are getting opportunities to write. This will play an important role in their empowerment. Besides, women participation is large in numbers of festivals like Amar Ekushey Book Fair, Victory Day, Independence Day, the birth and death anniversary of intellectuals and accomplished men, Rabindra-Nazrul Jayanti, Baishakhi-Nabanno, and in the

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1	2	3
		month long arts and crafts fair etc. held every year at home and abroad. By participating in various festivals women are financially benefited and develop self-confidence.
2.	Preservation and development of national heritage, culture and history	Women directly contribute to Bengali culture, literary works, music, dramas and have also greatly contributed to the liberation war. To highlight their contribution distinctly, activities for developing and preserving Bengali history are in progress. A rich archive will be set up to preserve the documents of the struggle for education of Begum Rokeya and her movement for women's rights so that the downtrodden women can draw inspiration by learning from the life and works of Begum Rokeya.
3.	Establishment, expansion and development of libraries and book distribution	The reading habits among the people will grow through the library services provided by the libraries extended up to districts level, by which the country will proceed towards development of its human resources and establishment of a self-reliant nation.

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	510	176	34.53	396	112	28.25	417	157	37.65
Development	220	120	54.46	113	39	34.73	196	126	64.29
Non-Development	290	56	19.41	283	73	25.65	221	31	14.03

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement:

- ❖ Reading and reference services have been provided to 1 crore 79 lakh 43 thousand and 645 readers in the last three years through the public libraries located at district levels. At the same time, a total of 3,88,250 books have been collected for these libraries. On the occasion of National Victory Day, Independence Day, Intellectuals Martyr Day, Bengali New Year and the birth and death anniversary of Bangabandhu, a total of 1213 book reading competitions have been organized. As a result, the reading habits of women as well as, human resources are being developed alongside men. This is enabling Bangladesh to move forward in becoming a self-reliant nation.

- ❖ In the last three years, about 4,721 people have been trained in culture, music, dance, drama, fine arts and literature at the cultural institutes of ethnic groups where, about 255 cultural functions have been arranged. It is worth mentioning that women have outnumbered males in participating in ethnic cultural functions, which is promoting the advancement of women and the establishment of women's rights.
- ❖ During last 3 years, 1970 national and seasonal cultural competition/programs were arranged throughout the country. The play *Swapno and Droho* was staged in 64 districts. Different cultural fairs were organized. The participation of women is comparatively larger in festivals like Amar Ekushey Book Fair, Victory Day, Independence Day, the birth and death anniversary of intellectuals and accomplished men, Rabindra-Nazrul Jayanti, Baishakhi-Nabanno, and month long arts and crafts fair etc. held every year at home and abroad. By participating in various festivals women are financially benefited and are being mentally developed.
- ❖ On the assignment of implementing cultural treaties, women in significant number are sent to delegates. There, they avail the opportunities to exhibit their talent and efficiency.

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Formulating a code of conduct or professional guidelines to prevent gender insensitive approaches in cultural arena;
- ❖ Introducing appropriate preventive laws to stop broadcasting programs that incites violence against women;
- ❖ Taking specific target-oriented activities in the publicity and dissemination of writings and creative works of prominent woman writers and cultural activists of literary and cultural arena;
- ❖ Setting up libraries all over the country and creating woman-friendly environment at the libraries to establish a knowledge-based society;
- ❖ Taking initiatives for publicity to remove family and social barriers against participation of women in cultural activities;
- ❖ Making arrangement for training of girls at the school level so that they can take part in cultural activities.