

Chapter-38

Road Transport and Highways Division

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Development of transport and communication infrastructure is a major precondition for achieving sustained and accelerated growth. Development of transport and communication sector has been considered top priority in order to achieve higher growth in the national budget. To this end, Road Transport and Highways Division is committed to build up sustainable highway network, and modern, safe and affordable road transport system. In Bangladesh, a modern and well-planned road transport and communication system contributes directly in ensuring equal distribution and marketing of goods, reducing production cost, increasing competition in industrial sector, expanding foreign trades, urbanization and keeping the price level of commodities at a tolerable level. Road Transport and Highways Division is putting relentless efforts on building up efficient and effective road transport system to ensure sound economic growth of the country. At present, 22,302 km road network of different category is prevailing under this Division. In the fiscal year 2017-18, around 142 projects have been implementing, out of which 22 projects are planned to be completed for the better communication system. With the improvement of the road communication system, peoples' communication become easier and transport costs are declining, businesses are expanding, and employment opportunities are being generated, industries are expanding and, above all it contributes directly or indirectly for changing women's condition in reducing poverty.
- 1.2 Road Transport and Highways Division is working not only for the improvement of domestic communication system, but also has taken various initiatives to connect Bangladesh with the regional and international road connectivity. As part of these initiatives, passenger and freight services are extended in different international routes. With continuous regular repair, maintenance, development and expansion of road network, Road Transport and Highways Division has been working relentlessly to introduce and operate digital system in transport system, in order to ensure road safety, and to reduce traffic congestion. Besides, the process of implementing mass rapid transit system (MRT and BRT) in the capital and its surroundings has already been started. The mass population of the country, men and women alike, is benefiting from this better communication system. As a result of the improvement and expansion of the district roads, male-female farmers can now sell their farm products more easily at fair prices which in turn help them to improve their socio-economic status along with the standard of living. As a result, all women including the poor are increasingly involving themselves in the economic activities. This is also

helping them to get essential services like education and healthcare more easily. Due to the expansion of road networks, access to Upazilla/Growth centers has become easier for rural population. These have been resulted in an increase in production, marketing and investment. As a result, the standard of living of the entire population including women has improved.

2.0 Major Functions of the Division

- ❖ To maintain, repair and renovate the road networks
- ❖ To improve and expand international, national highways, regional highways and district roads
- ❖ To adopt and accomplish projects for constructing new roads and bridges which are nationally important from economic perspective
- ❖ To introduce and develop modern digital motor vehicle management and control system
- ❖ To ensure road safety
- ❖ To introduce and develop integrated modern mass transport system
- ❖ To extend bus service in domestic and international routes
- ❖ To develop and expand road networks and modern mass transport system through Public Private Partnership (PPP)

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

- 3.1 Ensuring Development, Expansion and Maintenance of Highway Network:** Women have been involved in the repair, maintenance and development of international, national and regional highways. As a result, women at every level are becoming self-reliant. Marketing of goods produced by rural women will also become quick and easier.
- 3.2 Modernization of Motor Vehicle Management System:** With the introduction and expansion of modern digital motor vehicle management and control system, women will get opportunity to work in these ICT centers.
- 3.3 Ensuring Road Safety:** It is widely accepted that women and children are the serious victim of any accident. Therefore, women will be most benefitted from road safety arrangement.

- 3.4 Introduction and Expansion of Integrated Mass Rapid Transit System:** Women can travel to office and other work places as required number of seats are reserved in every transport for women. Thus economic activities of women will increase.
- 3.5 Expansion of Passenger and Cargo Services in Domestic and International Routes:** Women can easily travel to foreign countries like men which create opportunities for women to participate in social and economic activities.
- 4.0 Relevance of the Roles and Responsibilities of the Division for Women's Advancement and Rights**
- 4.1** At present, road transport has emerged as the single largest transport mode in terms of passenger and freight transport in the country. Road transport system is playing greater role in employment, rural development, poverty alleviation, reduction disparity in rural and urban life and overall economic development through development of quick and safe communication infrastructure and introduction of modern mass transport system. According to the strategic policy of the government, Road Transport and Highways Division have determined its own policies, strategies, objectives and activities and priority areas. To achieve these goals, easing communication between town and village including reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance, improvement and expansion of roads, ensuring road safety, affordable services to all including women and poor have been given highest priority. Though gender related matters are not clearly mentioned in the documents such as Revised Strategic Transport Plan (RSTP), National Land Transport Policy, Road Master Plan, National Integrated Multi Modal Transport Policy (NIMTP) pro-women steps remain in the activities of this Division.
- 4.2** Women are employed in the ongoing maintenance, repair, renovation, and development of district, national, regional, and international highways. As women's employments are generated they become self-sufficient, activeness increases, sales and marketing of the products of village women become easier. Besides, the following pro-women activities are also contributing to the development of women:
- ❖ Introduction of BRTC bus services exclusively for women;
 - ❖ Reserve seats for women in BRTC buses;
 - ❖ Introduction of counter-based bus services on local routes; which makes the collection of tickets and riding in the buses comfortable for women;

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Benefits for Women's Advancement

Priority Spending Area/Programs	Benefits for Women's Advancement (Direct and Indirect)
1. Improvement and Expansion of Highway Network	Employing women in reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance of national and regional highways and roads development, especially in maintenance and rehabilitation is rising. For this women's employment opportunities are generated and they become self-sufficient, their activeness increases, sales and marketing of the products of village women become easier.
2. Introduction and Expansion of Integrated Mass Transport System	Employment opportunities for women will increase if integrated mass transport system is available for all. Women can also get desired benefits by staying at home after introduction of the e-ticketing system.
3. Modernization of Motor Vehicle Management system	Women can get access of ICT center and they will be empowered if digital motor vehicle management and control process are introduced and expanded.
4. Ensure Road Safety	Road safety measures will reduce amount of accidental injuries to women and children.

6.0 Women's Share in Division's Total Budget

(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	24380	7408	30.39	20880	3424	16.4	19697	5535	28.10
Development	20817	6817	32.75	17317	2793	16.13	16820	5068	30.13
Non-Development	3563	591	16.6	3563	631	17.71	2877	467	16.23

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

- ❖ Employment of women in reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance of national and regional highways development, especially in ongoing projects of Roads and Highways Division are increasing. Moreover, with up-gradation of the existing national highways into four lanes, construction of new national highways, bridges, construction of new regional and district roads etc. road network has been expanded to every corner of country. As a result, women can travel easily and safely to their work place and service centers.

- ❖ The constraints and obstacles prevailing in the road communication for the advancement of the women have been trying to remove by earmarking of seats in the bus, introduction of bus exclusively for women and with other initiatives are expanded. Presently, 18 Women Bus Services are running in various routes of Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur district. Training on denting, painting, welding and driving are provided to 2,114 women among 57,430 trainees through 3 Training Institutes and 16 BRTC Training Centers within 2009 to 2017.
- ❖ Under the supervision of BRTA, residential training course has been introduced in order to train women driver with the assistance of government and private training centers since 2012. As a result, about 14,886 women (professional 511 and non-professional 14,335) received driving licenses after completing the driving course successfully by 30 June 2017.
- ❖ Decision has been taken to appoint female driver and conductors for BRTC Bus Service.
- ❖ Provision for paying car tax and fees through Credit and Debit Cards has been introduced, so that women could pay those from residence.
- ❖ E-Ticketing provision would ensure that women could buy BRTC Bus ticket from residence.

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ Increase of special bus service and reserved seats for women in both public and private transport.
- ❖ Ensure ticket quota for women in all short and long distanced bus services. Establish separate ticket counters for women so that they can buy the tickets comfortably.
- ❖ Construction of separate toilets and waiting room for women so that they could feel easy and comfortable during their waiting time in the bus station.