

## Chapter-42

### Posts and Telecommunications Division

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At present world *Telecommunication and Information Technology* are the most useful instruments for socio-economic development of a country. The responsibility of Posts and Telecommunications Division is to deliver quality post and telecommunication services to the door-step of mass people at affordable price and convenience by using modern ICT facilities. This division is playing an important role in poverty reduction, eliminating gender discrimination, proper distribution of wealth and disseminate basic citizen services everywhere through ensuring quick Communication of information. In 2016-17 Fiscal year, Contribution of this division to GDP is equivalent to 11.25% from “Transportation, Preservation and Communication” Sector and 6.68% of the aggregate growth. Keeping abreast the establishment of ‘Vision-2021’ and 7-five year Plan, priorities have been given to developing investment friendly infrastructure especially in telecommunication sector eventually impacting on economic growth and employment. Apart from this, Bangladesh has started Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) implementation formulated by the United Nations in the social, economic and environment balanced development within 2016-2030 period. Amongst the 169 targets of SDG, these is only one lead (17.6.2) target, 2 co-lead targets (9.c, 17.8) and another 5 (1.5, 5.b, 8.10, 17.18.1, 7.18.2) are as supporting divisions. The objective of these eight targets is to render ensuring safety measure during disaster period by means of technology, women empowerment by using technology, coverage area rate, use of fixed internet broadband, increase of internet use at personal level, data collection etc. Keeping these objectives into consideration, post and telecommunication Division is working hard to ensure post and telecommunication services at affordable price through the application modern technologies and institutional development.

#### 2.0 Major Functions of the Division

- ❖ To establish, operate and maintain telecommunication network throughout the country;
- ❖ To establish infrastructure, operate and maintain for postal service throughout the country;
- ❖ To provide telecommunication and postal services;
- ❖ To determine fees/charges/tariffs of telecommunication and postal service;
- ❖ To provide Savings and life insurance services through post offices;
- ❖ To formulate Law, Circular and rules relating to Post and Telecommunication;

- ❖ To maintain liaison, execute contract and comply protocol with other countries and international organizations related with a Post and Telecommunication.

### **3.0 Strategic objectives of Posts and Telecommunications Division and their Relevance for Women's Advancement and Rights**

**3.1 Provide modern telecommunication services and its expansion:** Expansion of telecommunication services have enabled women to easier accessibility of telephone and internet services which paves away for education and health services widened for women create a work-friendly environment, enhance economic engagement for them and access to huge data/information and communication would enhance awareness as well as women empowerment.

**3.2 Modernization of postal services, expansion and diversification of ICT based postal service:** Efficient and affordable postal services will make the communication and commodity mobilization activities easier for women. Savings Bank facilities will encourage women's affinity for savings which will help their economic security in personal and family life. In addition, the electronic money transfer service will make women's financial transactions faster and easier. Besides, the payment of cash through the postal cash card and payment is advantageous, thereby increasing the independence and security of women in financial transactions. Bangladesh post Office has collected 118 different types of cars under 'Strengthening Postal Transport System' Project. For managing 118 cars, there are opportunities to recruit 20% female drivers, out of which 13 women drivers have been recruited. This process will continue in future.

### **4.0 Roles and Responsibilities of Posts and Telecommunications Division for Women's Advancement and Establishment of Rights:**

**4.1 Policies and Functions of Posts and Telecommunications Division:** The contribution of this division in the advancement of women has been significant by way of promoting their mobility, connectivity and access to information. In this regard, two things may be highlighted. First, issues on women's development in the policy decision documents and second is the impact of defined activities of this division on the development of women:

**4.2 Gender development issues in Policy Documents of the Division:** National Information and Communication Technology Policy 2009 sets its mission as ensuring social justice for women, equal-opportunity and equal-participation through optimal use of information and communication technology. 'Social equity' has been set as the prior strategic theme in that policy document. Removing economic disparity and digital divide has been prioritized with the broader aim of mainstreaming disadvantaged population. This policy sets an *action plan* that includes strategy for reducing gender disparity in IT education and IT related professions. At the same

time, this plan emphasizes on the establishment of 'e-commerce centers' that will help expanding the market for women led small industry.

**4.3 Impact of functions of the Division on women's development:** Providing telecommunication services at the door-step of the marginalized section of the population will ensure free flow of economic, political, social and legal information to all communities. This will play significant role in the empowerment of women and consolidate their rights and social status. Besides, modern and efficient postal service at affordable price has positive impact on the personal, social and economic communication of the whole population including women. At the same time, it generated dynamism in the national economic activities.

4.4 SDG target 5.b is directly linked with women empowerment through their participation in the use of ICT. Post and Telecommunication Division is playing an assisting role with Ministry of women and children Affairs by means of modernizing the telecommunication system, reducing bandwidth price, building ICT infrastructure at the grass-root level and separate telecom and mobile phone services for women.

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

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women Development (direct/indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Modernization and expansion of telecommunication services	Women along with men will be benefited from overall economic growth of the country gained through improved tele-communication services. Besides, these improved services will ensure better and broader scope and access to education and health services for women. This will make women's easy access to labor market, will reduce working time and provide better working environment resulting enhancement of women's skill. Introduction of new technology in tele-communication sector will also enable women to use advanced technology. Women's personal communication will be easier that will contribute to their security and empowerment. Full-time communication through mobile phone will enhance family's sense of security about their girls, which will in turn enhance women's participation in education and job. Moreover, new communication technology will broaden the creative space for women, and will increase women's involvement in wide

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		range of new economic activities consequently.
2.	Automation of postal services	Modern and efficient postal service will positively impact upon personal, social and economic connectivity of the whole population including women. Improved postal service will enhance monetary transaction and communication carried by women labour.
3.	Service process upgradation of postal Department and introducing contemporary new services.	Post e-centres will create opportunities in rendering information and services to poor women who lag behind because of economic and gender disparity. At the same time, diversification initiatives of existing services will open up opportunities for the inclusion of new demands from women entrepreneurs.

## 6.0 Women's Share in the Division'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	3384	892	26.35	1747	335	19.18	2523	825	32.70
Development	2381	888	37.3	779	297	38.11	1441	792	54.96
Non-Development	1003	4	0.35	968	38	3.94	1082	33	3.05

Source: RCGP database

## 7.0 Success in Promoting Women's Advancement

- ❖ Over the past few years, women have got the opportunity to engage themselves in the global economy, using modern and high speed internet services in the cities, Upazillas and even in Union level through implemented and ongoing projects under Post and Telecommunication Division.
- ❖ With the introduction of ICT based communication system, the opportunity to access education and healthcare services has been increased; expanded training on ICT has been creating a congenial working environment in the work place; overall, these have contributed to the development of human rights as well as security of women in family and society.

- ❖ Number of service centers of different mobile operators is increasing continuously, where most of the employees are women. As a result, employment opportunity of women is increasing.
- ❖ Due to the concerted initiatives of this Division during the last three years, the number of mobile subscribers have extended to 13.66 crore. This is followed by an increase in the number of internet subscribers to 7.33 crore. As a result, tele-density in the last three years has improved to 87.32% and internet density to 45.29%. The number of 3G-subscribers is now 4.97 crore. To ensure increase in the use of internet and make its prices affordable, bandwidth charges have been reduced. At present around 100 percent (99.47 %) area of the country has come within the coverage of telecommunication network enabling women to conduct business activities from home.
- ❖ Mobile Money Order, Postal Cash Card and Mobile Banking have been introduced. Under 'Mobile Money Order', digital based services are being provided from 8,500 Post Offices, and 'Postal Cash Card' service has been introduced in 8,500 post offices.
- ❖ Posts and Telecommunications Division is playing an important role in establishing e-governance. Tele talk Bangladesh has achieved wide-ranging success in e-education, e-public health, e-voting, district e-service, disaster management, e-billing and high speed communication network. Women's participation is higher than men in e-public health and e-commerce.
- ❖ One laptop in the newly started post-e centers of 8,500 post offices has been set as a target to benefit the rural women. The number of woman counts half of the 17,000 entrepreneurs created from these post e-center.
- ❖ Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has allocated 10921 short code as a help line, so that Ministry of Women and Children Affairs can get information and engage itself to prevent violence against women and children.
- ❖ Cyber threat Detection and Response Project has been taken to ensure security of overall digital services including security of women and children.

## **8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities**

- ❖ To Arrange necessary measures protecting the interests of women in using newer technology;
- ❖ To encourage women participation in the establishment and maintenance of telecommunication network, provision of telecommunication and postal

services, and management related different activities of Post and Telecommunications;

- ❖ To encourage and giving women entrepreneurs preference to work with post-e-centers and similar e-centers;
- ❖ To undertake educational programs so as to create awareness among women about their individual security and alertness.
- ❖ To establish a strong monitoring system in order to prevent violence and harassment against women and to ensure security to them in view of that, BTRC is to launch a special hotline for women as 'One Point Solution Centre'.