

Chapter-40

Ministry of Shipping

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The history, economy, society and culture of Bangladesh have been formed and developed based on rivers since the ancient era. The narrative of joy and sorrow and success of the people of this riverine country has also been centered on hundreds of rivers flowing through its land. Once, these rivers were the predominant modes of transport and driving forces of the economy. Therefore, as the dependable mode of shipping, the importance of the river is immense. Chittagong, Mongla, Payra sea ports and land Ports are the significant partners of the development of Bangladesh. Through these agencies, Ministry of Shipping is actively engaged in establishing an integration of internal trade with international trade. The Ministry of Shipping is responsible for contributing to the economy of Bangladesh by conservation of navigability of the rivers and management of the sea and river ports and landing stations.
- 1.2 Shipping is regarded as one of the most important modes of transport in Bangladesh. This mode is globally admired as it is relatively less risky, affordable and environmentally friendly compared to other conventional transportation systems. The transportation cost per kilometre per ton cargo is Tk. 2.50 by railways and Tk.4.50 by roads; while inland waterways cost less than Tk. 1.0 to ship the same amount of goods per kilometre.
- 1.3 In Bangladesh, 225 million passengers and 25 million vehicles are operated annually by ferry, coastal vessels and cargo services on its inland waterways. Sixty percent of the country's total import-export is traded through Chittagong and Mongla ports. In addition, water transportation system is only the mode of communication for the people of the coastal areas of the country. In order to expand bilateral and multi-lateral foreign trade, 23 land ports of the country have been playing pivotal role under the leadership of the Ministry of Shipping.

2.0 Major Functions of the Ministry of Shipping

- ❖ Management, development and maintenance of river-ports, seaports and land-ports;
- ❖ Maintenance, conservation and development of beacon lights and lighthouses on coastal routes and installation of buoys and PC ports on inland river routes;
- ❖ Formulation, execution and updating of laws/acts, rules and regulations relating to ports, shipping and maritime affairs;

- ❖ Ensuring safety of inland water transportation and providing maritime and marine services;
- ❖ Maintenance and development of navigability of inland and coastal waterways;
- ❖ Management, control, survey and registration of mechanized marine vessels, providing maritime education and training, issuing certificates and licenses;
- ❖ Control of pollution generated by marine vessels on inland waterways and in maritime boundary of Bangladesh; and
- ❖ International and bilateral matters relating to shipping and mercantile marine.

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

- 3.1 Modernisation of seaports, development of channels and enhancement of skills and improvement in quality of services:** The implementation of this strategic objective will reduce the cost of import and export of the country and increase the quality of services. Price will be saved in the production and marketing of products; and domestic and foreign investment will increase. With the generation of new jobs, new employment opportunities will be created for women. Besides, the volume of import-export and movement of citizens have been increased in the neighbouring countries through 23 land ports. It has increased the possibility of availing better services for women.
- 3.2 Overall development and expansion of shipping system:** Due to navigability and accessibility to the domestic waterways, access to labour market has become easier for women and opportunities for income generating employment has also been created. The movement of women through waterways is increasing as the transport costs are comparatively cheaper than the other modes and the system is women friendly.
- 3.3 Development and maintenance of inland waterways and expansion of inland water transport system:** In order to make the country's existing sea transport system more dynamic, initiatives for developing new commercial fleet have been taken. Opportunities for massive employment were generated through creating skilled manpower in the maritime sector. Opportunities for women's employment have also been created in this arena.
- 3.4 Expansion of export and import activities through development of physical infrastructures at land ports:** The volume of import-export and movement of citizens have been increased in the neighbouring countries through 23 land ports. It has increased the possibility of availing better services for women.

4.0 Role of the Ministry of Shipping in developing Women and establishing their Rights

- 4.1 Due to the overall development of the country's navigational system, the pace of economic activity is increasing in the country, the trade is expanding and new employment opportunities are being created. The field of women's involvement in economic activities is also being expanded. On the other hand, the convenience and safe mobility of the women is being ensured and their connectivity in the society is also being deep rooted. Although there is no specific direction written in different policy documents of the ministry for women development; their involvement is ensured in the activities of the ministry and its attached departments.
- 4.2 Female cadets are being admitted alongside the male cadets in the Marine Academy. In other Marine Institutes, women are also receiving training with men. Under the Ministry of Shipping, women are working in different organizations and training institutes. In addition, women are also participating in all other activities including highly risky and heavy activities in shipping. Women are taking part in education and performing official tasks as well as working in the hospitals, schools, colleges, educational institutions of Chittagong and Mongla Port. Separate toilets have been provided for women in the shipping ministry and in each of its organizations. Safe stairs and pontoons have been set up women to climb and descend to and from the vessels. Spacious seats, healthier toilets, safe drinking water and emergency healthcare facilities are also arranged in the ships and other vessels. In the infrastructure of river ports, seaports and land ports, rest houses, drinking water facilities and separate toilet facilities have been ensured for women. Besides, steps were taken including on-line ticketing system to reduce the harassment of women in getting access to services in the water transportation sector.
- 4.3 In order to ensure the security of women in inland water transportation system, Ansar has been deployed throughout the day in ferry and launch services and in landing stations. The highest priority is being given to rescue women and children in the rescue operation. The ministry has taken up the modern and technologically new rescue vessels ship procurement project which will have a positive impact on accidental safety of children and women.
- 4.4 Due to the continued development of the navigability of the waterways through the supervision of the ministry, the developed waterway system as well as improved water supply, increased irrigation facilities, and expanded fisheries are contributing to the overall development of the environment. In addition to improving the quality of life, opportunities for women participation in economic activities have increased.

Besides, women workers are directly benefitted from the opportunities for employment generated through river excavation and dredging activities.

- 4.5 Due to the development of waterways around Dhaka city, the quality of water and the river bank areas has improved, which will have a positive impact on mother and child health. Special seats have been kept reserved for women, in the ongoing circular waterway service vessels of Dhaka city, which will enable women to move smoothly.
- 4.6 In order to provide information related to timing of arrival and departure of the vessels of different routes, the rate of freight bookings and fare rates in different terminals; initiatives have been taken. The activities of various organizations under the ministry have been computerized. This will lead to an increase in the mobility of service delivery in the shipping industry and increase the opportunities of employment for women.

5.0 Priority Spending Areas and Programmes of the Ministry of Shipping and their Impact on Women's Advancement

Serial No.	Priority Spending Areas/Programmes	Impact on Women's Advancement (Direct or Indirect)
1	2	3
1.	Development and maintenance of inland waterways and important channels	In the dry season, the employment of women workers in different developmental activities will be created to ensure navigability of channels to keep continuous transportation services in the internal waterways and the port channel. Due to the development of waterways, the women population will be benefited by the river route. Access to the labour market will be easier because it will be accessible to and convenient for the women transport through the internal waterways. Besides, opportunities for income generating activities for women will be created.
2.	Maintenance and development of infrastructure facilities for water transport	The maintenance of the physical facilities of river ports and waterways and employment generation of women workers will be ensured. As a result, the transportation system will be safe and hassle free due to the increased rate of entry of women in the labour market.
3.	Modernisation of seaports and improvement of shipping system	Modernization of sea ports and development of transport system will lead to the expansion of export-oriented industries (especially the garment industry) for lead time benefits and increase the opportunities for women's employment. Besides, women will be capable of facing the challenges of natural hazards, due to the rapid supply of

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1	2	3
		necessary food items during disasters.
4.	Seafarers' Training	Female cadets were recently included in the Marine Academy's sailor training program. This has opened the scope for direct access of women to the honourable and high-income professions in Maritime sector. Moreover, in general the women of the respective families are indirectly benefited due to the increase in the income of the sailors.
5.	Infrastructural Improvement of Land Port Stations	With the development of the infrastructure of the land ports, the import-export has increased with the neighbouring countries. In this case, the rate of employment of women has increased.

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's Share		Revised	Women's Share		Budget	Women's Share	
		Women	percent		Women	percent		Women	Percent
Total Budget	464574	136938	29.48	371495	86169	23.2	400266	112019	27.99
Ministry Budget	3537	1903	53.81	2906	310	10.66	2732	1167	42.72
Development	2905	1896	65.27	2353	283	12.03	2185	1141	52.22
Non-Development	632	7	1.16	552	27	4.86	547	26	4.75

Source: RCGP database

7.0 Achievements of the Ministry of Shipping in developing Women and establishing their rights

- ❖ Increasing import and export in the ports has an impact on women's development in the country. Particularly contributing to the expansion of the garment industry by providing improved port services, employment opportunities for a large number of women have been created;
- ❖ With the introduction of Pre-Sea Female Cadet Training (20 women of 220 participants) from the academic year 2012 in Marine Academy, opportunities of employment for women in the international arena have been created to improve the development of sea transportation system. Women cadets are getting very good access to training in a pleasant environment due to the construction of female hostels in Marine Academy;
- ❖ As the transportation costs in the water ways are lesser than other modes, the mobility of women through the internal waterway is increasing, which impacts on women's development.

8.0 Recommendations for Future Activities

- ❖ A separate waterway service, like 'Female Bus Service', can be introduced for women in all routes, where large number of working women commute every day;
- ❖ Women can be employed in various areas of opportunity by identifying those in the conservation of navigability, development, expansion and maritime trade management;
- ❖ The standard of passengers' service and the security of women passengers should be improved so that the waterway transportation system can be women-friendly; and
- ❖ The Ministry of Shipping, the Department of Shipping, Marine Academy and the Shipping Corporation of Bangladesh can continue striving in order to create job opportunities for female cadets (nautical engineering).