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| **Chapter-6**  **Ministry of Women and Children Affairs** |

**1.0 Introduction**

Children are the future of the nation, the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman acknowledged this and ensured that all their rights were protected by the constitution of Bangladesh. In 1974, before United Nation created a charter on children rights, Children Act was formulated and primary education was made mandatory. That is why National Children’s Day is celebrated on his birthday, 17th March. Under the guidance of Honorable Prime Minster, Rupokolpo 2021 has undertaken all-out efforts for the welfare of children, such as , to reduce the child and maternal mortality rate, to eliminate child repression, to prevent child trafficking, to prevent and rehabilitate children from risky work, to ensure safety and security of children and to ensure child development and empowerment. One of the important tasks of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is to protect child rights and implement various programs to ensure those rights. This ministry is responsible for coordinating among different agencies of the government engaged in the welfare of children.

**2.0 Activities undertaken for the development of children in the light of National Policies and Strategies:**

| **Policy/Strategy and its brief description** | **Activities** |
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| **Children Act, 2013:**  Bangladesh has enacted this law, to implement the objectives of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which Bangladesh is a signatory. In this law, arrangements have been made for institutional initiatives to provide protection to deprived children. | * Ensure children's safety by setting up Day Care Centers ; * Set up Child Development Centers to develop children's intellectual and cultural faculties; * Establish Pre-primary Education Centers for socio-economically deprived children; * Establish District Children Complex; * Operate Support Centers in 6 divisional cities; * Establish Safe Home for women, children and adolescents. |
| **National Child Policy, 2011:**   * The government had adopted the National Child Policy in 2011. The main objective of the policy is to ensure child rights in the light of the constitution. It also mentions that children should be given priority in policies, plans, programs and national budget for the overall national development. Important aspects of national child policy are as follows: * Ensure children’s optimum development and growth by providing essential services irrespective of their age, sex, religion, occupation, social, regional and ethnic backgrounds; in the matters of rights concerning education, health, nutrition, safety, recreation and so on; * Take Initiatives to extend facilities to girl child, disabled child and child with special needs; * Create an environment and education system that will help children grow up as honest, patriotic and responsible citizens; * Arouse scientific inquisitiveness among children so that they can grow up as a generation capable of keeping pace with the demand of the nation and the world in future; * Take initiative to create congenial family environment; * Take initiative to reflect their views in any decision making process that affect the lives of the children and adolescents; * Take Initiative to make necessary legislations and provisions to materialize child rights. | * Establish Adolescent Club for ending child marriage ,ensure adolescents’ right to health care ; * Publish books and magazines for children regularly; * Provide training for cultural and intellectual development of children such as music, dance, painting, drama, recitation, guitar *tabla*, English language, computer, handwriting, chess violin and so on ; * Publish Encyclopedia, dictionary ,classics, and books on traditions and heritage for children under a well-managed programs; * Implement programs for the automation and digitization Bangladesh *Shishu* Academy library; * Provide training for improving handwriting ; * Make movies for children; * Provide Prime Minister Award to the winners of upazilla level competitions; * Create opportunities for the winners to travel abroad including Japan, India, and Turkey. |
| **Comprehensive Policy for Early Childhood Care and Development,2013:**  The important aspects of this policy are as follows:   * Provide assistance for the protection of physical and mental health of mothers during pregnancy; * Provide necessary services for safe delivery and ensure that newborn and mother are kept out of risk; * Ensure overall development of the child through providing health, nutrition and safety related services; * Ensure formal primary education for all children; * Ensure proper opportunities for children with special needs; * Ensure basic needs of orphans, disadvantaged and homeless children; * Protect all children from discrimination; * Provide non-formal education to underprivileged children. | * Continue maternity allowance program and working lactating mother support fund for poor mothers; * Rehabilitate distressed children through Child Development Centers; * Implement Life Skills Training program for development of children till five years of age; * Impliment programs for early merit development ; * Carry on Nari o Shishu saystha Unnayaner shikkha Bishayak programe; * Strengthen campaign and branding activities of the Ministry; * Carry on training and awareness building programs for parents and dropout children; * Undertake Program for health care awareness building, provide health service and ensure child education among the horijon. ( 2nd phase ) * Provide Pre-primary Early education (3nd phase ) |
| **National Social Security Strategy (NSSS):**   * The government formulated National Social Security Strategy in the year 2015. The vision of the NSSS is to build an inclusive social security system for all that effectively tackles and prevents poverty and inequality and contributes to broader human development, employment and economic growth. Five core life cycle programs have been suggested by NSSS of which one is suggested for children. The strategy advocates following programs for children: * Provide ‘child grant’ to children of poor and vulnerable family up to age 4. The grant will be limited to a maximum of two children per family to avoid adverse impact on population & management thereof. * Establish child center in every work place; * Introduce school Tiffin and stipend for orphans; * Introduce stipend for below four year children of poor families; * Provide ‘disability stipend’ for all under-18 children with disabilities; * Provide stipend for all primary and secondary school going children and adolescents belonging to poor and vulnerable households; * Introduce financial support for abandoned children; * Provide supply side interventions relating to immunization, child health care, nutrition, water supply and sanitation for outreach areas. | * Provide allowance of Tk. 2000/- through ECR (Enabling Environment for Child Right) project; * Provide pre-primary education to poor children; * Celebrate World Autism Awareness Day; * Provide study materials and conduct health awareness programs for underprivileged children; * Enhance health care, build health awareness among ‘Harijan’ women and children and ensure education for members of this community; * Provide counseling to women and children under the ‘Multi-sector Wide Program’ for prevention of violence against women; * Establish 09 One-Stop Crisis Centers, 60 One-Stop Crisis Cell, National Trauma Counseling Center, National Forensic DNA Profiling Laboratory to assist women and children victims of violence; * Establish toll-free helpline 109 for providing 24-hour service to women and children victims of torture; * Construct 150 bed hospital for women and children; And * Organize courtyard meetings, workshops, seminars for preventing child marriage, child trafficking and sexual harassment. * Prevention of oppression Against women and children Act-2000 * Shishu Academy Act-2018 * Child marriage Restrained Act-2017 * Child marriage Restrained Rules-2018 * DNA Law-2014 * DNA Rules-2018 * The Domestic violence (prevention and protection) Act-2010 * The Domestic violence (prevention and protection) Rules -2013 |
| **7th Five Year Plan:**   * One of the key objectives of the 7th Five-Year Plan is to expand essential services related to health, nutrition, education and social security for all children. The targets set forth in the plan are as follows: * Protect the rights of children and continue their development through proper implementation of government policies; * Provide health care and ensure food and nutrition security; * Ensure early care and education for all children; * Ensure an enabling environment with access to safe water, sanitation and health care for all children; * Provide support for child caregivers and parents according to their requirements; * Establish social security and social justice for the children at risks and vulnerabilities of different sorts; |
| **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**   * In the SDGs, 169 targets have been set against 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Among these ‘Goal- 5’ is closely related to Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. * The main targets under this goal are as follows: * End all forms of discrimination against women and girls; * Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls including trafficking and sexual harassment and other forms of exploitation; * Eliminate all evil practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation; * Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable/implementable legislations for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls at all levels. |

**3.0 Achievement of the last three years in terms of child budget implementations:**

* Maternity allowance has been provided to 18 lakh women under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in the last 3 years;
* Lactating mother allowance has been provided to 6 lac 30 thousand working women;
* 11 thousand 285 children were accommodated in 119 Day Care Centers;
* Temporary residency has been provided to 485 mothers and 367 children, who have been supported by the six women support programs (Dhaka, Sylhet, Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal, Chittagong);
* A total of 52110 adolescent girls have been trained through 579 clubs;
* National Action Plan 2013-25 for Prevention of Violence against Women and Children has been formulated. DNA Act-2014 has been enforced. Marriage Prevention Act-2018 and Dowry Protection Act-2017 are underway;
* Bangladesh Shishu Academy Act-2018 has passed.
* Six District Branch complexes of the Bangladesh Shishu Academy have been constructed;
* A total of 14,000 children have been provided services under the Early Learning (2nd phase) project;
* A total of 237 children received awards in the National Children's Award -2018, where 2, 61,688 children took part. ;
* Throughout the 6 child development centers (Azimpur, Keraniganj, Gazipur, Khulna, Chittagong and Rajshahi) across the country, a total of 750 poor and helpless children were provided food and lodging, with opportunities of study and treatment.

**4.0 Share of child budget in Ministry’s overall budget:**

| *(Figures in Billion Taka)* | | | |
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| **Description** | **Budget**  **2021-21** | **Budget**  **2019-20** | **Actual 2018-19** |
| MoWCA Budget |  | 37.49 |  |
| *Operating* |  | *31.01* |  |
| *Development* |  | *6.48* |  |
| Child-Focused Budget in MoWCA |  | 16.26 |  |
| *Operating* |  | *13.44* |  |
| *Development* |  | *2.82* |  |
| **Total Government Budget** |  | **5,232** |  |
| *GDP* |  | 28,859 |  |
| *Total Government Budget as % of GDP* |  | *18.13* |  |
| *MoWCA Budget as % of GDP* |  | *0.13* |  |
| *MoWCA Budget as % of Total Budget* |  | *0.72* |  |
| *Child-Focused MoWCA Budget as % of GDP* |  | *0.06* |  |
| *Child-Focused MoWCA Budget as % of Total Government Budget* |  | *0.31* |  |
| ***Child-Focused Budget as % of Ministry Budget*** |  | **43.37** |  |
| Source: Finance Division |  |  |  |

In the fiscal year 2018-19, budget allocation for the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs was 0.14 percent of GDP, which was 0.12 percent in FY 2017-18. In the FY 2018-19, 39.68 percent of the ministry budget was child-centric, which was 38.24 percent in FY 2017-18. The Ministry implemented various programs aimed at child welfare within the stipulated budget.

**5.0 Good Practice**

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| Name: Prothista Chakma. Born on 2 May 2007. Studied in Rangamati Lakers Public School and College, she became a dancer. Bangladesh Shishu Academy introduced dance classes at Rangamati district branch and opened up the opportunity for this girl to materialize her dream. As a dance artist, prothista participated in the competition conducted from the academy. Among 68 contestants she came out in flying colors and was selected as junior ambassador. Selected as a junior ambassador in July 13, 2018 Prothista Chakma proudly took part in 30th Asian Pacific Children's Convention held in Fukuoka, Japan. |

**6.0 Ministry’s Challenges to ensure child welfare**

The main challenges of the ministry are:

* Establish the Directorate of Children;
* Build child complexes in all districts;
* Employ trained manpower to prepare child budget;
* Establish kids-corners in all markets at upazilla level and at all shopping complexes in the cities;
* Build child day care centers in all districts and upazillas as per requirement and construct a legal framework for establishing day care centers in private sector.

**7.0 Child centric development plan**

| **Type of Plan** | **Action taken according to Planning** |
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| **Plan for FY 2019-20** | * Early Learning and Protection Project for the Child; * Undertake children's creativity development project; * Child's Early Care and Development Project; * Capacity building project of the Bangladesh Shishu Academy; * Construction of physical infrastructure projects in district and upazila branches of Bangladesh Shishu Academy; * Upgrade programs of Bangladesh Shishu Academy in upazila level; * Children's Television Project for Child Rights Protection; * Facilitate 450 poor children through child development centers; * Take a project with an aim of effecting mental and intellectual development of 3,00,000 children; * Establish 60 day-care Centre in 64 districts. |
| **Medium Term Plan** | * Establish a library in every union parishad complex of the country; * Adopt different development programs for the welfare of children through Shilpakala Academy; and * Bring the students of all secondary schools of the country under ‘cultural practice’ program. |
| **Long Term Plan** | * Establish Directorate of Children; * Construct child complexes in all districts; * Establish child care centers in all district and upazillas; * Set up baby corners in all police stations and shopping complexes; and * Recruit necessary manpower at the field level. |

**8.0 Conclusion:**

About one-third of the total population of Bangladesh is children. There are about 30 million children across the country that is effectively left on the streets. Regardless of the prevailing social discrimination, all children are equal to the state. Through the Early Development Program of Bangladesh Shishu Academy promises to bring all children into a solid foundation who in turn will become an asset for the country and will contribute handsomely in the development of the society. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is continuing its efforts to make a society that will be caring for children. They must be protected from torture and violence. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is directing all its efforts to achieve this goal.