Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Commitment Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

The Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman started the process of uplifting the women status by establishing equal rights of women with men in all spheres of the state and of public life as constitutional obligation under Article-28.

The Government of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has undertaken various steps to ensure women and children development in Bangladesh. Through her Vision 2021 and 2041 a momentum has been created for taking forward Bangladesh to a middle and high income level respectively.

The 7th Five Year Plan (2016-2020) of the Bangladesh government, considers women's engagement in political and economic activities as a cross-cutting issue and one of the main drivers of transformation.

UN Women awarded 'Planet 50:50 Champion' and Global Partnership Forum awarded 'Agent of Change Award' 2016 to Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Present government is committed to attaining the sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of gender equality and empowering women as well as implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action.

Bangladesh has already substantially achieved the MDG3 as it has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education at the national level, among other successes of the MDGs.

Bangladesh has been working relentlessly to ensure women's overall development by ensuring their equal and active participation in the mainstream socio-economic activities and removing the various impediments to their empowerment.

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
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Important Initiatives of Women Empowerment in Bangladesh

1. Gender Responsive Budgeting:

Since 2009 the gender responsive budget has been formulated by the Government of Bangladesh for ensuring the participation of women in various programmes. At present all the ministries adopted gender responsive budgeting and are made accountable towards spending their allocation for economic and social empowerment of women. Allocation for women development is Tk. 1,12,019 crore which is 27.99 percent of total budget Tk 4,00,266 crore in 2017-18 fiscal year.

2. Political Empowerment of Women:

- Honorable Prime Minister, Government of the Republic of Bangladesh is woman.
- Speaker of the National Parliament is women. She has been elected Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.
- Opposition Leader, Deputy Leader of the house, five Members in the Cabinet are women.
- One Whip, two Chairmen and many members of Standing Committees in the Parliament are women.
- 22 women were elected in the National Parliament. Number of reserved seats for women in the National Parliament is 50. A total 72 women are the members of the National Parliament.
- One of two elected Vice-Chairman must be a woman at Upazila level.
- 1/3 of the seats of Union parishad, municipality and City Corporation are kept reserved for women.
- Political parties must reserve at least 33% positions of all committee for women as per law.
- A prominent female politician has been elected as Mayor of the Narayanganj City Corporation.
- Women Development Forum has been formed to enhance the capacity of elected women representative at upazila level.

3. Administrative Empowerment of Women :

- Presently twelve women are Secretaries and seventy two women are Additional Secretaries in the Central Administration.
- A number of High court and appellate division Judges and District Judges are women.
- A number of Ambassadors are women.
- Women are posted in the Field level Administrative capacities as Deputy Commissioner & Superintendent of Police and Upazila Nirbahi Officer.
- Many women are appointed in the Armed Forces (Army, Navy & Air Force), police forces and different cadre services.
- The Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University and Pro-Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University are women.
- Human Rights Commission consists of a Chairman, a regular member and five women honorary members.
- Information Commission consists of three members of which one is woman.
- 10% Quota for Gazetted and 15% for non-gazetted post are reserved for women.
- 60% women quota is reserved for Primary school Teachers.
- Armed Police Battalion (APBN-11) formed of 371 women personnel.
- Two Female Police Units (FPUs) are sent to the UN Peace Keeping Missions in Haiti and DR Congo.

13. Institutional Mechanism for Women's Development:

- National Council for Women and Children Development (NCWCD) led by Hon'ble Prime Minister is a platform of 50 members.
- Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) is working as a lead Ministry for the development of women and children.
- WID Focal Point mechanism has been created in all ministries to monitor women issues.
- National Coordination Committee to prevent women and Children trafficking.
- Acid Cases Monitoring Cell has been formed.
- Established 54 Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal across the country.
- Six months maternity allowance with full benefit.
- Included mother's name with the father in all administrative process.

14. Sports and Women:

- Women Cricket Team achieved One Day Status in 2011.
- Women Cricket Team achieved Silver Medal in Asian Games 2011.
- Mabia Akhter earns gold medal in women's weightlifting in South Asian Games 2016.
- Swimmer Mahfuza Khatun Shila won the second gold medal in the 12th South Asian Games 2016.
- Women Football Team won the Asian Football Confederation under 14 Regional Championship 2016.
- Nishat Mazumder and Wasfia Nazreen the two prominent women climbed the highest peak of the Mount Everest.

15. Digital Bangladesh:

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy 2009 focuses on gender as a cross cutting theme for a number of areas.
- Basic ICT Literacy Training for Women course are organized for 20,000 female professionals.
- About 9000 female participants got training on 'Top up Foundation Skill Training Course' under ICT division.
- Under the National Mobile Application Development Awareness & Capacity Building Programme, about 1000 women in grassroots level received training.
- Under 'One Family One Woman: Empowering Women through ICT' project, about 20,000 freelancer will be expected to become entrepreneur in ICT service sector.
- Access to Information (A2I) Programme of Prime Minister' Office established 4547 Union Digital Centres (UDC) where women contributed as an entrepreneur.
- Digitization of 8500 rural post offices under Post e-Center for Rural Community" project. About 2000 women entrepreneurs are working in post e-centers.
- 'Tothyo Apa': 263,329 women received training and information regarding health hazards, child marriage, violence against women, employment related information, legal support, and digital services spending USD 1.63 million.
- Ministry of Science and Technology provided 3044 fellowship on masters and scientists to women.

4. Economic Empowerment of Women:

- 4 million women are contributing a lot in Readymade Garments (RMG) sector.
- Ministry of Labor and Employment trained 10,800 female garment workers.
- Bangladesh Bank is providing collateral free loan up to Tk. 2.5 million for women entrepreneurs.
- Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) disbursed Tk 3939 crore to the women entrepreneurs.
- Bangladesh Bank allocated 15% of the funds of the refinancing scheme for women.
- Women entrepreneurs dedicated desk established in every bank and non-bank financial institutions.
- Micro Credit Disbursement Policy facilitated women entrepreneurs to borrow Tk 50 Thousand.
- 10% Industrial plots and 10% of small entrepreneurs fund are preserved for women entrepreneurs by the Bangladesh Bank.
- Women entrepreneurs having a small capital are getting support through distributing loan among the volunteer Women Associations.
- To promote women entrepreneurship an initiative called "Joyeeta" has been established in 2011. Now it is established as Joyeeta Foundation.
- Cafe Joyeeta rehabilitated the women victims of trafficking.
- Searching Joyeeta (victorious) in five categories initiated to award successful women throughout the country.
- Sonar Tory, Angona and Unmesh are established as sales and display centres to promote women entrepreneurs.
- An amount of Tk. 10-15 thousand is being distributed among 0.148 million distressed women with of 5% service charge in all 64 districts.

5. Life Skill Training for Women Development:

- Women receive sewing, computer and beautification Training at Shaheed Sheikh Fazilatunnesa Mujib Training Academy, Gazipur.
- Women receive horticulture, fisheries and livestock etc. integrated trades training for 3 months in Village Women Agriculture Training Centre, Savar.
- Food processing, beautification, embroidery, sewing, mobile phone servicing, nursery / kitchen gardening, etc. are taught in 64 district offices of the DWA.
- In 34 districts 3 months long training is organized for the women on Information Technology.
- Residential Training for women on self-employment at Begum Rokeya training center, Mymenshing, Dinajpur Training Centre and Bagerhat Training Centre.
- Non-Residential Training programmes are organized at 136 upazila offices of the Department of Women Affairs for distressed women.
- Vocational Training on tailoring, block and embroidery training are organized at the National Training and Development Academy, DWA.
- Basic computer and ICT Training is being imparted in 64 District Computer Training Centre of Jatiyo Mohila Shangshta (JMS). Cyber-Cafe is operated in 10 districts.
- Poor, unemployed & vulnerable women receive Training on sewing, embroidery, soap & candle making, binding, packaging and mobile engineering in 46 Training Centers of JMS.

6. Education of Women:

- 7.81 million poor students are getting stipend that reduced dropout of which 50.4% are girls.
- Tk 8802 million is distributed as stipend among the students from class ix to degree level in which 75% are female.
- Enrollments ratio of girl in primary schools is 50.7%, in secondary level is 53.77 % and in higher secondary level is 47.38 %, in madrassas level is 54.01%.
- School meal programme is introduced for more than 2.84 million children.
- Tk. 999.50 million is distributed as stipends among 0.16 million female students at degree level.
- Tuition Fee and Education materials are distributed at Higher Secondary Education level.
- New free education materials distributed among 10.81 million students.
- Increased admission rate (99.64%) at Primary School Level.
- Introduced compulsory Primary Education up to Class viii.
- Increased female student rate (60%) at Medical College Level.
- Introduced government autistic School in the City to ensure education of poor autistic student. 11 special schools for the children with autism are running all over the country.
- Established Asian Women University and 4 Polytechnic Institutes for Women.

7. Health of Women:

- Maternal Mortality Ratio 176 (per 100,000 live birth) (world bank 2016)
- Adolescent birth rate (per 1000 girls): 83, Crude Death Rate (per 1,000 population): Total: 5.1(SVRS 2016)
- Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population): Total: 18.7, Rural: 20.9, Urban: 16.1 (SVRS 2016)
- Total Fertility Rate: (per women of 15-49 years):Total: 2.1, Rural: 2.38, Urban: 1.68 (SVRS 2016)
- Net reproductive rate (per women of 15-49 years): Total: 1.0, Rural: 1.10, Urban: 0.80 (SVRS 2016)
- Contraceptive prevalence rate (%) 62.1 (SVRS, 2015)
- Birth attended by skilled health personnel (%): 42.1 (BDHS 2014),
- Antenatal care coverage (at least 4 visits):31.2 (BDHS 2014)
- Community Clinic:13,300 and 80% of the clients are women and children.
- Established 100 bedded specialized Diabetic, Endocrine and Metabolic Hospital for women and children in Dhaka.
- Established 150 bedded specialized Cardiac Hospital for women and children.
- Established women friendly hospital at 28 health facilities.
- Introduced Maternal Health Voucher Scheme in 53 upazilas in 41 districts and provided maternal health benefits to 1,174,868 women between 2007 and 2015. In fiscal 2014-2015, a total of 145,900 women were benefitted.
- 22.5 million Women are receiving nutritional service through strengthening Community based nutrition programme.
- Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) program has been introduced in 10 districts, which has shown good impact in reducing maternal and neonatal deaths.
- Emergency Antenatal care is provided to 2.89 million pregnant mothers through upazila health complex and 97 Women and Children Welfare Centres.
- Awareness programme on prevention of biased attitude, development of reproductive health, family planning, gender and development / HIV / AIDS etc. through Radio and Television.
- Established 24/7 dedicated health call centers (16263) "Shaystho Batayan" or "Health Window" to provide medical consultations, ambulance reservation and health information service all free of charge.

8. Women and Poverty Alleviation:

- Poverty reduced from 38.4% to 22.4%.
- About 0.18 million families rehabilitated with tk. 90.86 millions in Shelter Project.
- 7.5 million Families benefitted from One House One farm Project.
- 87,346 landless families provided with 40,100 acres of government agricultural land.
- Established 36 cluster villages in 102 Upazilas of 49 Districts for rehabilitation of 6202 landless families.
- 252 cluster villages were built and 10650 women were rehabilitated.
- 11,298 Landless families are rehabilitated in 19,903 acres land besides the river banks.
- Pucca houses built for 50 thousand rootless and homeless people in Coastal areas.
- 1845 women are permanently awarded with land and building houses under Cluster Village Project.
- Sewing Machines are being distributed to the distressed and helpless women for self-employment.
- Haor infrastructure and livelihood improvement project gives livelihood protection to 59530 women beneficiaries.
- Rural Employment and Road Maintenance Programme provided jobs for 59180 rural destitute women.
- Fair price Card System introduced for 25 lakh extremely poor families where women headed families are given priority.
- Food grains are sold to the poor women at a nominal price through Open Market Sales Programme.

9. Social Security and Social Empowerment of Women:

- At present 12.65 lakh poor, widow and distressed women received allowance at the rate of Tk. 500 a month and 36.62 thousand third gender persons and other marginalized groups get monetary allowance and stipend at differential rates.
- Under Vulnerable Group Development Programme 10 lakh women receive 30 Kg. food grains for ensuring food security.
- Around 6 lakh pregnant mothers and children receive an allowance of Tk. 500 per month for cycle of 2 years for ensuring nutrition.
- A total of 2.00 lakh lactating mothers receive an allowance of Tk. 500 per month for cycle of 2 years for ensuring food security.
- Around 35.00 lakh old age persons received allowance at the rate of Tk 500 per month, among them, 50% of beneficiaries are women.
- Around 8.25 lakh disabled persons received allowance at the rate of Tk. 700 per month with 50% women beneficiaries of it.
- 94 Child Day care centers are set up for children of low income working women.
- 8 Working Women Hostels are established to ensure safe residence.
- Residential Hostel for Garments women workers are under construction at Ashulia of Dhaka and Nalitabari.
- 379 Adolescent Clubs have been established in 44 Upazila for social awareness on early marriage, prevention of dowry, etc. and 4,880 clubs in upazilas, pouroshava and union is underway.

10. Acts and Policies:

- Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000.
- Legal Aid Services Act, 2000.
- Special Privilege for Women Prisoners Act, 2006.
- Mobile Court Act, 2009.
- Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2009.
- Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act, 2010.
- Acid Crime Prevention (Amended) Act, 2010.
- Vagrants and Shelter less Person (Rehabilitation) Act, 2011.
- Human Trafficking (Deterrence and Suppression) Act, 2012.
- Children Act, 2013.
- Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) Act, 2014.
- National Women Development Policy 2011.
- National Education Policy 2010.
- National Child Labor Elimination Policy 2010.
- Industrial Policy 2010 for Industrial Development of Women Entrepreneurs.
- National Children Policy 2011.
- National Health Policy 2011 for ensuring Health of Women and Children.
- Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development Policy 2013.
- The Maintenance of Parents Act, 2013.
- National Plan of Action to implement National Women Development Policy.
- National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and Children 2013-2025.
- Bangladesh National Strategy for Maternal Health 2015
- National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking 2015-2017
- Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017
- National Strategy for Adolescent Health 2017
- Gender Equity Strategy 2014 and Gender Equity Action Plan 2014-2024

11. Rehabilitation and Legal Aid for Women Victims:

- Violence against Women Prevention Cell in divisional headquarters.
- Temporary shelter for women victims of violence where they can stay up to six months with two children below 12 years.
- A legal aid cell established to support victim of violence at JMS head office.
- Safe custody for women and children prisoners in Gazipur District.

12. Prevention of Women Oppression:

- 9 One-Stop Crisis Centers established in Public Medical College Hospitals.
- 40 One-Stop Crisis Cells at district general hospital and 20 One-Stop Crisis Cell at upazila health complex to provide services for women and children victims.
- National Forensic DNA Profiling Laboratory in Dhaka and seven Divisional DNA Screening Laboratory established in divisional level.
- National Trauma Counseling Centre to provide psychosocial counseling to the women and children victims.
- 8 victim support centres established in divisional headquarters.
- National Toll Free 24 hours Helpline 109 for women and children victims of violence.
- National Database on Violence Against Women and Children has been established.

International Recognition and Worth Mentioning Awards of Bangladesh

- UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) awarded CERES' medal to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in recognition to her fight against hunger in 1999.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received MDG Award from United Nations for reducing child mortality by 50 percent in 2010.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina awarded with "Gold Medal" in 2011 by the Dauphin University, Paris for her contribution to the women empowerment.
- International Telecommunications Union (ITU) awarded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her innovative idea to use ICT in 2011 and ICT Sustainable Development Award in 2015.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received Rotary Peace Award 2013 for the reduction of child mortality, polio eradication and UN Peacekeeping Mission.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received a memento of "Tree of Peace" from UNESCO for promotion of girls' and women's education in 2014.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received "South-South" Award in 2011 and 2013 from UN for her success in poverty alleviation and reduction in maternal mortality rate through ICT.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won the 'Champions of the Earth' award in the Policy Leadership category from UNEP in 2015.
- World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index 2015 report indicates continued progress of Bangladesh in tackling gender disparity in economic participation, education, health and political empowerment and ranked 64 out of 145 countries.
- Bangladesh is one of the top ten nations to have reduced gender inequality by political empowerment of women and toppled all other SAARC countries.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been honored with the "Global Diversity Award" in 2011 and 2012 by House of Commons of UK for her contribution in increasing awareness on reconciliation of democracy, visionary leadership, good governance, human rights, regional peace and facing challenge of climate change.
- According to MasterCard's Index of Women's Advancement 2015, Bangladesh has made significant progress in women's employment. Since 2009, the country has gained more than 80 points in overall employment, making particular improvements in such aspects as regular employment, female participation in workforce, tertiary education enrolment and women in leadership.
- UN Women awarded 'Planet 50:50 Champion' and Global Partnership Forum awarded 'Agent of Change Award' 2016 to Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Websites: www.mowca.gov.bd/ www.dwa.gov.bd/ www.jms.gov.bd
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