

Bangladesh Report

**The Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for
Action (1995)**
**and the outcomes of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General
Assembly (2000)**

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Submitted by

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

ACRONYMS

A2I	Access to Information	DRR	Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation
ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission	DWA	Department of Women Affairs
ADP	Annual Development Program	EC	Election Commission
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution	EPI	Expanded Program on Immunization
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome	EPICES	EPI Coverage Evaluation Survey
ARV	Anti-retro Viral (drug)	EPZ	Export Processing Zone
ASPR	Annual Sector Performance Report	FI	Financial Institutions
ASA	Association for Social Advancement	FM	Frequency Module
ASK	Ain o Salish Kendra	FSNS	Food Security and Nutrition Survey
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics	FWCW	Fourth World Conference on Women
BCCSAP	Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan	FY	Fiscal Year
BCS	Bangladesh Civil Service	GDP	Gross Domestic product
BDHS	Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey	GEI	Gender Equity Index
BLAST	Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust	GPS	Government Primary Schools
BMET	Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training	GRB	Gender Responsive Budget
BMI	Body Mass Index	GS	Grameen Shakti
BNWLA	Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association	HDI	Human Development Index
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party	HIES	House Income Expenditure Survey
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)	HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee	HPSP	Health and Population Sector Program
BURO	Basic Unit for Resources and Opportunities	HNPSDP	Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Development Program
BCPC	Community Based Child Protection Committees	HNPSP	Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Program
ccGAP	Climate Change and Gender Action Plan	HRLS	Human Rights and Legal Services
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	ICS	Improved Cook Stoves
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts	ICDDR,B	International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh
CIDV	Citizens' Initiative on Domestic Violence	ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue	ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CrPC	Criminal Procedure Code	ICT	Information Communication Technology
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Child	ICTD	Information and Communication Technology Division
CSO	Civil Society Organization	IEDCR	Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research
DGHS	Directorate General of Health Services	ILO	International Labour Organization
DLAC	District Legal Aid Committees	IOM	International Organization for Migration
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic Acid	INSTRAW	International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
DSS	Department of Social Services	JMS	Jatiyo Mahila Sangastha
DPE	Department of Primary Education	LDC	Least Developed Countries
		LLDC	Land Locked Developing Countries

LGSP	Local Government Support Programme	RAB	Rapid Action Battalion
LGI	Local Government Institution	RCGP	Recurrent Capital Gender Poverty
LFP	Labour Force Participation	RDRS	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Services
LFS	Labour Force Survey	REOPA	Rural Employment Opportunities for Public Assets
MDG	Millennium Development Goals		
MJF	Manusher Jonno Foundation	RMG	Ready-Made Garments
MFI	Micro Finance Institution	RNGPS	Registered Non-Government Primary Schools
MHVS	Maternal Health Voucher Scheme		
MNHI	Maternal and Newborn Health Initiative	RPO	Representation of People's Ordinance
		RTI	Right to Information
MoLJPA	Ministry of Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs	RIA	Right to Information Act
MoF	Ministry of Finance	SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
MOP	Ministry of Planning		
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	SAIEVAC	South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	SDF	Social Development Framework
		SDG	Social Development Goals
MP	Member of the Parliament	SFYP	Sixth Five Year Plan
MSP-VAW	Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women	SHS	Solar Home System
		SI	Sub-Inspector
MSM	Methylsulfonylmethane	SMC	School Management Committee
MTBF	Medium Term Budget Framework	SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
MHVS	Maternal Health Voucher Scheme	SPD	Special Programmes Department
NAP	National Action Plan	SPP	Social Protection Programmes
NCWCD	National Council for Women and Child Development	SSNP	Social Safety Net Program
		STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
NEP	National Education Policy	SVRS	Sample Vital Registration System
NER	Net Enrolment Rate	TMSS	Thengamara Mohila Shobuj Shangha
NGO	Non Government Organization	TT	Tetanus Toxoid
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
NIPORT	National Institute of Population Research and Training		
		UAE	United Arab Emirates
NLASO	National Legal Aid Services Organization	UESD	Use of Essential Service Delivery
		UN	United Nations
NNS	National Nutrition Services	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
NPWA	National Policy for Women's Advancement		
		UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
OCC	One Stop Crisis Centre	UNFPA	United Nations' Fund for Population
PC	Planning Commission	UNSD	United Nation Statistics Division
PEDP	Primary Education Development Program	UP	Union Parishad
		UZP	Upazilla Parishad
PCJSS	Parbatya Chattgram Jana Sanghati Samity	UPR	Universal Periodic Review
		VAW	Violence Against Women
PIC	Public Interest Litigation	WID	Women's in Development
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity	WMC	Water Management Cooperatives
PRP	Police Reform Programme		

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Section 1: Overview analysis of achievements and challenges since 1995

Bangladesh endorsed the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) at the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) in 1995. The period following the FWCW has been an eventful one with many actions being initiated and achievements attained. Bangladesh has periodically reviewed the progress of implementation of the BPFA in 2000, 2005 and 2009, submitted reports to the UN and participated in regional and global review process.

Bangladesh has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) with some reservations and is a signatory of many other international conventions and agreements. Some of the prominent ones having implications for women's and girls' rights and development include the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention no. 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labour, Convention on the Political Rights of Women, and International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

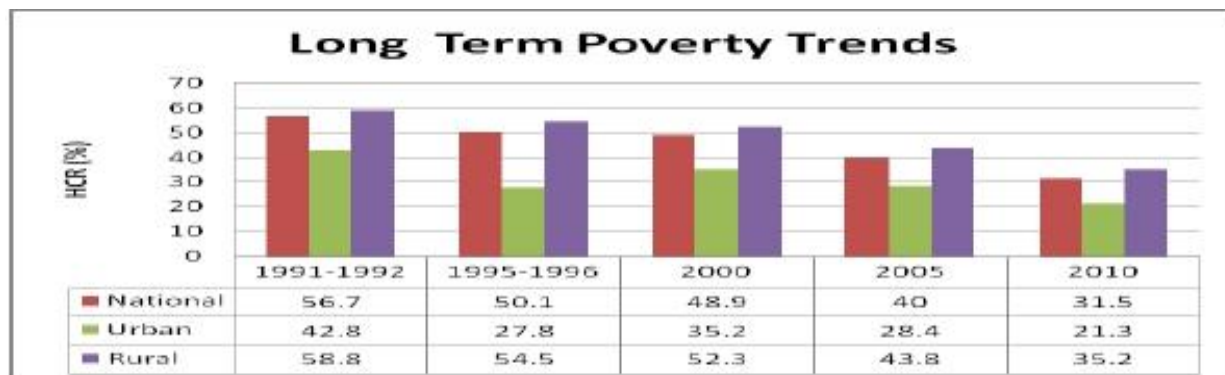
Bangladesh has also adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration 2000, which marked a strong commitment to the right to development, peace and security, gender equality, eradication of many dimensions of poverty and to sustainable human development. Bangladesh committed itself to the goals and targets embedded in the Declaration, known as the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Government has regularly reviewed progress and reported on the attainment of the MDGs and other international commitments, such as the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, CEDAW, CRC, and Universal Periodic Reports (UPR). Actions taken at national level have yielded remarkable achievements on different socio-economic indicators.

The period 1995 to 2014 has been a period of economic growth led by increased agricultural production, exports, and remittances from international migration, lowering of dependency on external aid and a growing productive population. It has also been a period of increasing vulnerability to climatic change and environmental degradation and disasters as well as economic shock due to 1997 Asian economic and 2007-2008 global economic crisis. Politically, since the return to democracy in 1990, the Government has gone through democratic transitions from one political Government to another with regular elections at both national and local levels. In spite of changes in political Government there has been consistency in both macro-economic and social development policies which have enabled remarkable progress in human development.

1. A Major achievements in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women

Planned and concerted actions have resulted in major achievements in several areas. Prominent amongst them is the reduction of poverty which has been lowered considerably in the last two decades from 56.7 percent in 1991-92 to 31.5 percent in 2010. The rate of reduction was faster in the present decade (2001- 2010) than the earlier decade (1991-2000). The Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2010 data reveals that the incidence of poverty has been declining at an annual rate of 2.47 percent in Bangladesh during 1991-92 to 2010 against the MDG target of 2.12 percent. Bangladesh has already met one of the indicators of target-1 by bringing down the poverty gap ratio to 6.5, against the MDG target of 8.0 in 2015. Since the trend of sustained Gross Domestic Production (GDP) growth is continuing, the MDG target of halving the population living under the poverty line (from 56.7% to 29%) has already been achieved in 2012.

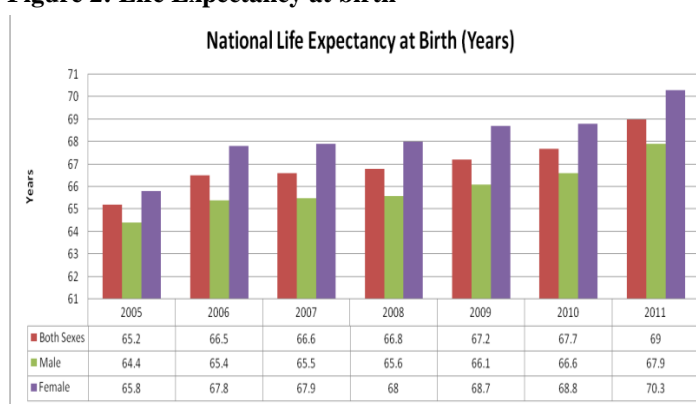
Figure 1: Long-Term Poverty Trends (Headcount Ratio)



Source: Millennium Development Goals, Bangladesh Progress Report 2012

Multi-dimensional activities on poverty reduction, food security, employment and services in health sector have contributed towards substantive increase of life expectancy at birth at the national level, an increase from 65.2 in 2005 to 69 years in **Figure 2: Life Expectancy at birth**

2011. Life expectancy for males rose from 64.4 to 67.9 and for females it rose from 65.8 to 70.3 years during the same period (SVRS 2011). Life expectancy at birth was 58 years for females and 58.9 years for males in 1995 (BBS, 1996). While the increase in life expectancy is an achievement in itself it is also the result of increase in women’s status, improvements in women’s access to nutrition and health services, and an overall improvement in infrastructure.

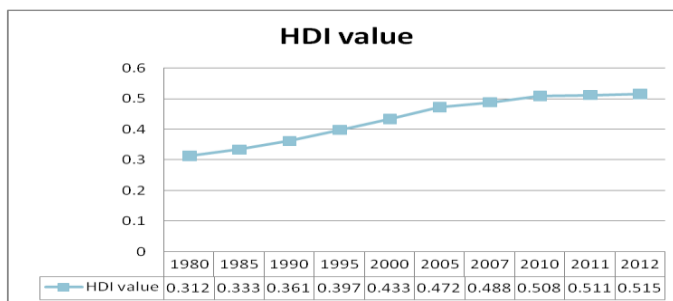


Source: Sample Vital Registration System 2011

Another major achievement is the progress in girls’ education reflected in increasing literacy rates, increased enrolment, retention, completion of primary education etc. The net enrolment ratio in primary increased from 81% for girls and 83% for boys in 1996 to 95.4% for boys and 98.18% for girls in 2012. (ASPR 2013) The primary cycle completion rate shows a steady growth for both girls and boys. Average completion (pass) rate in primary education as of 2012 increased to 99.19%, from 60% in 1995. Pass rate for girls in primary educations increased from 87.51 percent in 2009 to 97.19 percent in 2012. There has been a positive shift in transition rate from primary to secondary education indicating higher enrolment of girls at secondary level. Girls constituted 53.28% of all secondary students in 2012, an increase from 46.03% in 1995. Participation and completion of girls at the tertiary level and different streams has increased but the percentage of female students at tertiary levels is still only around 30%.

According to the Human Development Index (HDI), Bangladesh has been identified as belonging to a group of highlighted 18 countries in the world which have seen rapid progress in human development. Bangladesh's HDI value increased from 0.312 to 0.515, an increase of 65 percent or average annual increase of about 1.6 percent. Bangladesh's HDI value for 2012 was 0.515 in the low human development category positioning the country at 146 out of 187 countries.

Figure 3: Human Development Index Trends 1980 – Present



Source: Human Development Report by UNDP
<http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/BGD>

Women participation in, and contribution to, political processes has also increased, both at national and local levels. Women's participation in the national parliament is presently 19.7% and the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and the Speaker are all women. A number of women mayors have been elected. Women's participation and voice in political parties and at local government levels has been facilitated by legislations with special provisions for women's representation. In 1976, the Bangladesh Government adopted the Local Government Ordinance and introduced a three-tier local Government system, which includes Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and City Corporation¹. The Acts related to all three tiers allow for direct election of women to one third of the seats reserved for women. In elections held on 22 January 2009, 480 women have been elected to the reserved post of vice chairpersons in 480 upazilas, out of a total number of 1,936 contestants. In the 11 city corporations and 321 municipal bodies known as *pourasavas* (small townships) provide elected governance in cities and townships. One third seats are reserved for women. Elections to four City Corporations and nine *pourasavas* were held on 4 August 2008, in which 194 (2.4 per cent) women candidates contested for 39 reserved councillor's seats. In nine *pourosavas*, 120 (0.47 per cent) women contested for 27 reserved seats (Bangladesh Election Commission, 2008).

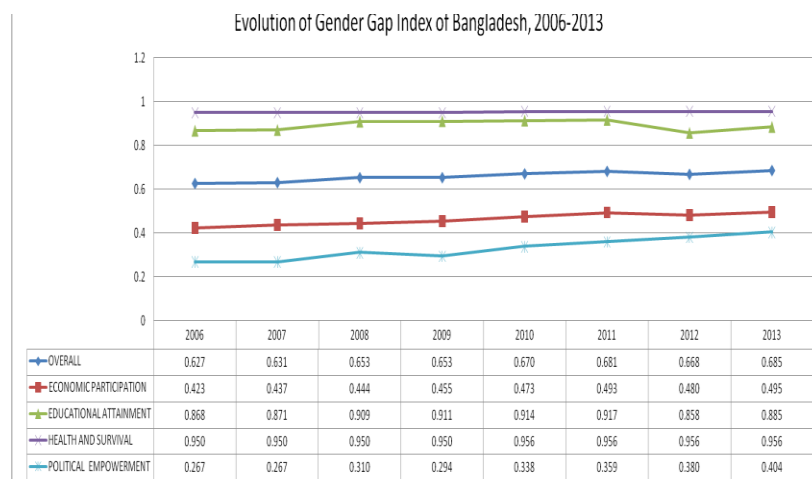
Increased access to and use of information and communication technology has increased connectivity, e-services as well as Information Technology (IT) based employment. In 2012 the number persons using mobile phones reached 63.8 per 100 population and increasing. Internet use has expanded to 6.3 per 100 population in 2012 and access to internet through mobile phones is on the increase. This has created improved access to information, knowledge, news, and services; interconnectivity and even income earning opportunities for both women and men through internet based work.

The above factors have resulted in Bangladesh making progress on indicators such as the gender equity index and the global gender gap index. According to the Gender Equity Index (GEI) 2012 of Social Watch², Bangladesh has an overall GEI value of 0.55 which places the country at rank 114 out of 168 countries. For education, the country has a GEI value of 0.81 (which is at medium level), 0.65 for economic activities, and 0.18 for women's empowerment.

¹ The Ordinance was later replaced by several Acts.

² <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/14367> which measures education, economic activity and women empowerment

Figure 4: Gender Gap Index of Bangladesh, 2006-2013



Source: Global Gender Gap Report 2013

In the Global Gender Gap Index calculated by educational attainment, health and survival, economic participation and political empowerment from the World Economic Forum, Bangladesh ranked 75 out of 136 countries in 2013 with a score of 0.685. In 2006 the score was 0.627. During the period between 2006 and 2013, the score has improved by 0.0578 and a percentage change in score by 9.2. The report attributed this

increase to strong national commitment to better public health and education services, innovative poverty education programs, and strategic engagement in the world economy.

According to the Social Progress Index 2014 by Social Progress Imperatives, the score of Bangladesh was 52.04 which was higher compared to that of Nepal, India and Pakistan and lower compared to Sri Lanka (59.71).

Bangladesh's endeavours in many sectors for the advancement of women and children has been recognized by international community and several awards have been received by the Honourable Prime Minister. These include among others,

- "MDG 2010" award for outstanding contribution in reducing child mortality.
- South-South Award 2012 by United Nations' Digital Health for Digital development" for outstanding contribution towards improving health of women and children through information technology.
- Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) award for the success of regular immunization Program
- The Model on People's Empowerment and Development has been accepted at the United Nations
- "Global Diversity Award" by House of Commons UK for contribution in reconciliation of democracy, visionary leadership, good governance, human rights, regional peace and facing the challenge of climate change.

Factors contributing towards success

One of the major measures taken for women's advancement is the National Policy on Women's Advancement announced by the Honourable Prime Minister on International Women's Day on March 08, 1997 and the new Policy in 2011. Following the approval of the Policy 1997, a National Action Plan (NAP) for Women's Advancement was approved in 1998 and implemented. In 2012 another Action Plan was approved encompassing all the different aspects of women's life covering all sectors.

The national planning documents, the consecutive five years plans and poverty reduction strategy papers integrated gender aspects in a progressive manner and gender mainstreaming was adopted as an approach for all social and economic development sectors, starting from the Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-1995). The ongoing Sixth Five Year Plan, 2011-15 (SFYP) continued with gender mainstreaming as

a key approach. The strategy and policy initiatives to improve the economic political and social inclusion under SFYP includes empowerment of women through policy and legal frameworks, productive employment, social protection, education and health, political empowerment, addressing violence against women, gender mainstreaming, institutional strengthening, integrating gender issues in planning and budgetary processes, addressing needs of vulnerable women and promoting public image of women. In the post Beijing period the various national policies formulated and approved in different sectors ranging from water and environment to health, education and agriculture also addressed gender equality issues. This has contributed to overall achievements in promoting gender equality.

The policy commitments of the Government were further strengthened when the Ministry of Finance (MoF) introduced the Medium Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) in 2008 for attaining public financial management reform objectives and ensuring increased efficiency in the use of public money. This included Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) with performance indicators, which provided an essential cornerstone for promoting gender equality. The MoF, through its budget call circulars, instructed ministries to provide estimates of budget allocation for gender equality and poverty related activities. In 2009 the Government initiated use of the Recurrent, Capital, Gender and Poverty (RCGP) model for analysis and all expenditure items were disaggregated to indicate what percentage of allocation benefited women and also addressed poverty. The resource allocation for gender by the ministries are to be aligned with the identified priority areas and should correspond to actions based on 14 set criteria related to women's advancement and gender equality.

Further to earlier attempts to address gender analysis at the planning stage and in consistency with the GRB efforts, the Ministry of Planning issued Guidelines for Gender Responsive Planning in 2008, which required identification of how the projects would have effect/impact on women and how they addressed gender gaps based on the 14 criteria of GRB mentioned above in the project design.

The partnership and cooperation with Civil Society Organizations (CSO) including development and advocacy groups and private sector has been strengthened. Development and advocacy initiatives on issues of national importance have been pursued jointly. The public-private partnership for implementation of sectoral programs has increased resulting in better delivery of services, especially in rural and remote areas. This has also contributed to Bangladesh being able to achieve the various successes discussed above.

1.B Major challenges

Despite successes, Bangladesh has faced many challenges in achieving women's advancement. Bangladesh has a very progressive constitution and a multitude of good laws and policies that address the rights of citizens and groups. However because of weaknesses in the enforcement of such laws and acts the promotion and protection of rights of women is yet to be ensured at all levels and for women across social classes. For example, violence against women still persists as a critical challenge for the country. Trafficking of Bangladeshi women and children to Middle Eastern and neighbouring countries has been a critical problem for many years. While the awareness of laws making violence and trafficking crimes against women has increased, the slow legal processes, difficulties in ensuring accountability of law enforcers and the uncertainty of obtaining legal justice have made the rule of law weak.

Strategies to address this challenge include increasing people's awareness of their legal rights, increasing the capacity of those in the justice systems and making the judiciary accountable for access to justice by people and outcomes in terms of justice received. The Government has undertaken judicial and police reform programmes with assistance from development partners. Institutions to promote and

protect legal rights and human rights have been established, such as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and the National Legal Aid Services Organisation (NLASO). CSOs and groups have also played a role in increasing awareness of rights and enabling access to justice.

In spite of the steady decline of rates of stunting over the past 10 years progress, malnutrition still persists and affects women and girls disproportionately. Rates of malnutrition in Bangladesh are among the highest in the world. Strategies to address malnutrition have included targeted programmes, awareness programmes, and integration between health and nutrition programmes. Still more than 50% of women suffer from chronic energy deficiency and studies suggest that improvement in women's nutritional status over the past 20 years has been slow. The prevalence of women with a BMI < 18.5 kg/m² was 34% in 2004, and 30% in 2007 which was reduced to 24% in 2011. Important differences exist in the prevalence of women malnutrition among administrative divisions. Anaemia is more prevalent among pregnant and lactating women.

Despite the increase in age at marriage for both male and female the proportion of women marrying early is high. The prevalence of child marriage and early pregnancy is another major concern having an intergenerational impact with undernourished teenage mothers having underweight children who are at greater risk of malnutrition. The odds of children becoming stunted significantly increases by 22% if born to a teenage mother.³

To achieve the goals for economic development, investments in social and economic infrastructure is necessary. Considerable investment in education is one of the prerequisites to build domestic capacities, to meet the demands of domestic and international markets and for sustainable development. However, the present education system lacks adequate resources, market orientation and research on service requirements and promotion of contemporary technical education. Girls and women are differentially impacted by this.

Bangladesh is rapidly transforming from a predominantly rural to an urban society with rapid and unplanned urbanization not supported by adequate measures and services. Rapid internal migration with shifting and mobile populations combined with rapidly changing realities and significant industrialization poses a developmental challenge. An unprecedented increase in the urban population with an estimated average annual growth rate of 2.7% in 2012-2030⁴ will result in population more than twice as many as now living in urban areas. The growth of cities in Bangladesh has been driven by, and underpins, economic growth and calamity induced migration. Urban poor people have limited access to services, land and shelter and are exposed to serious health risks. Cities and municipalities cannot cope with this rapidly growing population and the Government at all levels has not given sufficient priority to the urban poor in their budget allocation. Women are more vulnerable to poverty; more at risk from social, economic, political factors specific to urban areas.

Strategies to address these problems such as planning and policy initiatives are in place. The urban sector is now included in the SFYP and the current Perspective Plan. The FSYP and the Pourashava and City Corporation Acts 2009 provide a forward-looking platform and endorse decentralisation. A draft urban policy is awaiting approval. There are regular democratic elections at all levels of municipal Government. Identity cards and various movements around voting rights mean that most of the urban poor vote in elections, which gives the potential for them to gain more voice. The participation of the poor in managing basic services for the urban poor is being promoted.

³ Presentation at LCG Plenary, 10 April 2014 by UNFPA and UNICEF

⁴ UNICEF Statistics

1.C Set backs/reversals in progress

The enormous progress made in terms of women's development has also led to concerns among certain groups about the need to conserve religious and cultural values. As a democratic Government the state has had to ensure respect of all opinions. Therefore, although the majority of Hindu women campaigned for the right to marriage registration and divorce an optional marriage registration was agreed upon and formalized in a law in order to keep it flexible so that people may apply as per their choices. Similarly while Muslim women have the right to own and inherit property, the proposal for equal right to inherit is being contested by some groups. The mitigation measures for such cultural and religious sensitivities have included awareness raising, discussions and dialogues between different interest groups.

Climate change, environmental degradation and severe disasters have increased in the last 20 years which has caused additional strains for individuals and communities as well as for the Government and national resources. Repeated floods within a season and category 4 cyclone in 2007 shattered the development gains in a large part of the country. Access to fresh water threatened by salinity, levels of arsenic and by withdrawal of water from rivers with sources upstream. Human made river pollution, filling of water bodies and reduction of tree cover has reduced natural resources and impacted negatively on climatic conditions. The South West has become more water-logged and prone to salinity, and the North has become dry leading to new kinds of poverty. The mitigation measures have included a number of specific climate change and environmental interventions and policies as well as ensuring that all programmes and policies factor in safeguards related to these issues.

1.D Main constitutional, legislative and or legal developments

In the period since the FCWC there have been major legal developments in a number of areas. A number of laws were passed regarding the functioning of local Government institutions such as the municipalities and the election of people's representatives to these bodies. The Ordinance on people's representation in political parties and in national parliament was revised twice in this period.

A number of laws were passed which set up various institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the Information Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the National Legal Aid and Services Organisation (NLASO). The Government also signed a Peace Treaty with the insurgents in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), which brought to an end of 22 years of conflict and began a period of peace and development in that area. The labour law was amended twice in this period as were laws related to migration.

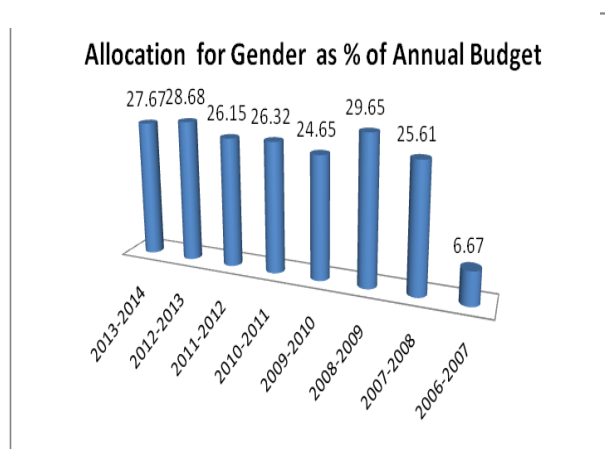
In order to better address issues around violence against women a law was formulated on acid violence and to restrict the sale of acid. Another law was formulated on domestic violence in 2010 and its rules were approved in 2013. Finally laws related to human trafficking were formulated in 2012.

A number of laws have been formulated to control abuse of information related to internet use and also pornography. However there is a risk of freedom of information being curtailed using some of the provisions of these laws. Several other laws related to sectoral areas also have been enacted.

1.E Budgetary allocations

Under the MTBF approach, an annual analysis of expenditure is done and compiled by the MoF for reporting to the Parliament at the Budget sessions. Gender budget analysis of all ministries is done by Ministry of Finance. The annual allocation of budget as percentage of the annual budget has gradually increased. Figure 5 presents a year-wise allocation of budget for gender as a percentage of revised annual development plans. This therefore represents budget estimates of expenditure as prepared towards the end of the fiscal year and can be considered to be close to actual expenditures (except for the FY 2013/14). In FY 2013/14 the total percentage of allocation for gender related expenses stood at 27.67 % as opposed to 6.67 % in 2006/7. However the budgetary and expenditure figures are based on estimates made by line departments and ministries as to how much benefit women and poor populations will get from those activities/allocations as per the RCGP model.

Figure 5: Allocation for Gender as % of total Annual Budget



Source: Compiled from Website of Ministry of Finance

Budget preparations at the local Government level (UP, UZP and municipalities) are done with the participation of local citizens through open budget sessions in which one-third participation of women is mandatory. This practice is yet to be followed at all levels. Also there are resource constraints at the local Government level with line department agency budgets not being delegated to local level. In the Second Urban Governance and Infrastructure Project of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) 47 municipality budgets have an allocation of 3 percent of the total budget which they are supposed to spend for gender. Similarly in the Union Parishad and Upazila Parishad budget the financial guidelines for the allocation of the Local Government Support Programme (LGSP) block grant specify that 30% of the budget should be spent on gender related expenditures.

1.F Mechanisms in place for regular dialogue between Government and civil society

There are a number of mechanisms in place to enable regular dialogue between Government and CSO. Many of the committees set up as the institutional mechanisms for women's advancement include representatives from CSOs, such as the National Council on Women and Children Development (NCWCD). On various technical issues a number of working groups or committees have been set up which also included such organisations, e.g. the Core Committee to prepare "Minimum Standards of Care for the Victims of Trafficking" (lead ministry-MoSW). A drafting committee has been set up to finalize the Bangladesh Citizenship Act 2014 to provide feedback on the upcoming law. When the domestic violence legislation was formulated there were sustained interactions and dialogues between the Law Commission, MoWCA and various members of Parliament and various human rights and women's rights organizations through CIDV (Citizens' Initiatives for Domestic Violence), a coalition of CSOs. There is a regular practice of inviting CSOs to consult while formulating reports, policies and laws.

NGO/CSOs have an important role in development. The Local Consultative Groups for donor-Government consultation and coordination have sub-groups and those on health, education and environment include civil society members. Various Government programmes and projects include NGOs/CSOs in programme implementation and also have various consultation mechanisms where they

are formally included. All land acquisition programmes for development have the involvement of NGOs for resettlement and community level activities. Both the private sector and NGOs engage with Government on budget formulation and critiquing. Business associations are regularly involved in a discussion of the next year's proposed budget. Some specialized civil society groups do an analysis of the budget from a gender perspective and call Government to share their views.

A Core Group for Beijing Follow up was established which played an advisory role and contributed in preparation of the National Action Plan for Implementation of the BPFA and National Women's Policy 1997. However the mechanisms for follow-up to the Beijing PFA were not fully active after 2000. There is interest on both sides for regular mechanisms which would allow for substantive exchange and collaboration between Government and Civil Society.

1.G Engagement in in-country, bilateral, sub-regional and/or regional cooperation

Bangladesh is involved in numerous cooperation initiatives at both national, sub-regional and regional levels to promote women's development, some of which were explicitly seeking to address the Beijing PFA. The country is a founding member of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which has a SAARC Technical Committee on Women in Development. A SAARC Gender Database has been up (Mapping Progress of Women in the South Asia Region). A SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution was formulated in 2002. Bangladesh and India have set up a joint task force for prevention of trafficking in children and women. Bangladesh is an active member of the Bali Process on Human Trafficking, People Smuggling and Other Related Crimes. Bangladesh is one of the members of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) and has been playing significant role to make the alliance effective. A Network of SAARC Women Parliamentarians has been set up.

Bangladesh is the current Chair of Colombo Process, established in 2003 as a Regional Consultative Process (RCP) on the managing of overseas employment and contractual labour for countries of origin in Asia. RCP promotes cooperation on issues of common interest and concern relating to labour mobility. The main area of focus is the protection of and provision of services to migrant workers.

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) is also a forum for regional cooperation and technical exchange in the Asia Pacific region. Bangladesh also belongs to the Commonwealth of Nations which has strong South-South exchange. The Commonwealth Secretariat had a strong role in promoting GRB.

1.H Contribution of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in facilitating the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

The BPFA identified key areas of concern and provided guidance about the action areas and the role of Government, civil society and development partners. Targets related to each area or activities were determined at the country level and in many cases with inadequate resources. In the case of MDG, targets were globally agreed and at the national level implementation was incorporated within the national development plan and rigorous monitoring was ensured. The monitoring of the progress of MDG contributed towards achieving some of the targets of BPFA, particularly those on gender equality, in education and health. Excepting MDG 3, the other targets were not always seen in sex disaggregated manner. Therefore, progress for women was not always clear. Although other MDGs were relevant for gender equality, MDG reporting did not include a gender perspective in areas such as environment or diseases. On the other hand the MDGs had little or no relevance for other areas of concern such as media, armed conflict, violence and human rights as included in the BPFA.

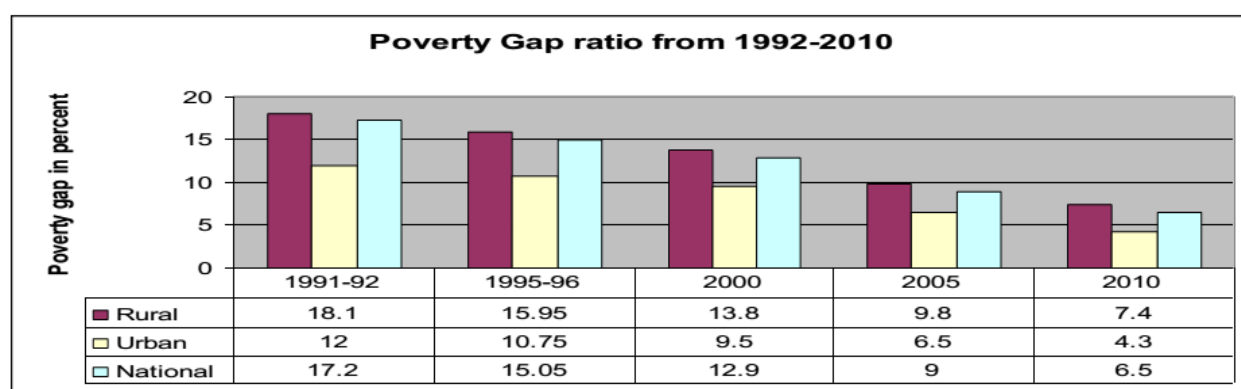
Section 2: Progress in the Implementation of the Critical Areas of Concern of the Platform for Action since 2009

2.A.1 Women and Poverty

Prevalence and Incidence: The Government of Bangladesh is strongly committed to reducing poverty, improving human development and reducing inequality. This commitment is reflected in Vision 2021, the Perspective Plan 2010-2021 and in the Sixth Five Year Plan FY11-FY15. Bangladesh has made substantial progress in the eradication of poverty and hunger. The sustained growth rate in excess of six percent achieved in recent years has played a positive role in eradicating poverty. The robust growth has been accompanied by corresponding improvements in several social indicators such as increased life expectancy and lower fertility rate. The HIES of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) provides data on the incidence of poverty by using the cost of basic needs (CBN) method which shows that between 2005 and 2010 the percentage of women headed households under the lower poverty line has declined from 21.9% to 14.6 % and the percentage of women headed households under the upper poverty line has declined from 21.9% to 14.6 %. There is a possibility that the number of women headed households is under-reported as many women would not socially want to be categorised as head of household. However the HIES does not allow to disaggregate poverty at the individual level i.e. in terms of number of women and men at various levels of poverty. There is also no data on asset or land ownership by sex.

The poverty headcount ratio reduced, on an average, at 2.13 percent per year during 1992 to 2010 period. The size of the population below the upper poverty and the lower poverty lines declined by nearly 8.58 million and 8.61 million respectively during the period. The level and distribution of consumption among the poor improved as well, as is evident from reductions in the poverty gap and squared poverty gap measures by 28 percent and 31 percent respectively. Real per capita consumption expenditure during the 2005-2010 period increased at an average annual rate of 16.9 percent, with a higher rate of increase in rural areas as compared with the urban areas. The progress in respect of eradication of poverty was possible due to changes in population structure, increase in labour income, improved infrastructural and telecommunication connectivity, internal migration and Government's targeted safety net programmes.

Figure 6: Poverty Gap Ratio using Upper Poverty Line, 1992-2010



Source: MDG report 2013

One of the MGD indicators (1.2) is the poverty gap ratio which is the mean distance separating the population from the poverty line (with the non-poor being given a distance of zero), expressed as a percentage of the poverty line. The ratio is an indicator of the depth of poverty. It is evident from Figure 6 that reduction in the poverty gap ratio in Bangladesh has been quite significant. The poverty gap ratio

declined from 12.90 in 2000, to 9.00 in 2005 and further to 6.50 in 2010. Thus Bangladesh has already achieved the MDG target of halving the poverty gap i.e. 8.6, which was targeted to be achieved in 2015. It is also worth noting that poverty gap ratio declined at a faster rate than the poverty headcount ratio.

Another one of the MDG indicators (1.3) is the “Share of the poorest quintile in national consumption”. The figures show a trend towards greater inequality. In 1991-92 the poorest quintile had 6.52 percent share of national income. The share fell to 5.26 percent in 2005 and further to 5.22 percent in 2010 implying increasing income inequality between the rich and the poor. The Government MDG report of 2012 acknowledges that appropriate interventions are required so that higher benefits of economic growth can reach the poorest quintile. (MDG Report, 2013: 26).

To have a better understanding of the trend in inequality, the coefficients of income Gini and expenditure Gini from 1991-92 to 2010 are presented in Table 1. It is evident that during these periods inequality has increased in the country. However, the level of inequality has remained somewhat stable over the last ten years at the national level as reflected in the coefficient of Income Gini, although the coefficient of Expenditure Gini slightly reduced during the same period. Rural Bangladesh experienced a moderate increase in income inequality (0.39 in 2000 to 0.43 in 2010), although consumption inequality as reflected in Expenditure Gini remained stable during the same period.

Table 1: Coefficients of Income Gini and Expenditure Gini: 1992-2010

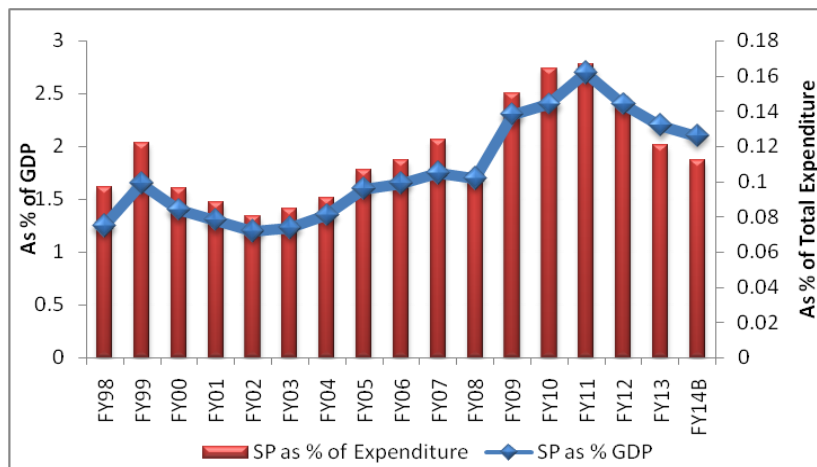
Gini	1991-92		1995-96		2000		2005		2010	
	Income	Exp.	Income	Exp.	Income	Exp.	Income	Exp.	Income	Exp.
National	0.388	0.260	0.432	0.310	0.451	0.334	0.467	0.332	0.458	0.321
Urban	-	0.310	-	0.370	0.497	0.373	0.497	0.365	0.452	0.338
Rural	-	0.250	-	0.270	0.393	0.279	0.428	0.284	0.430	0.275

Source: HIES 1991-92 and HIES various years, BBS, and MDG Report 2013: 27

Social Security and Social Protection: One of the major factors behind the falling poverty rates have been the safety net programmes which reflect the Government’s response to support the poor and the vulnerable population. In response to the 1974 famine and floods in the 1980s, new schemes were developed for poor families that were badly hit. The schemes were mainly public works and other food aid programmes, making use of foreign assistance. In the 1990s the Government began to introduce schemes that addressed risks across the lifecycle, such as school stipend programmes and allowances for the elderly, people with disabilities, and widows. During the 1990s, there was also significant investment by donors in various programmes managed by non-Government organizations (NGOs), providing a range of social services, including social transfers.

Budgetary allocations for social protection have grown in absolute terms as well as a share of GDP. The allocation for Social Protection Programmes (SPPs) increased from 1.3 percent of GDP in 1998 to 2.5 percent in FY2011. Since then, it has stabilized at around 2.2 percent of GDP. The total amount spent on these programmes in FY13 was Tk 231 billion. Although this level of funding is modest by international standards, when measured against the Government’s tight budget situation, this represents a substantial commitment, accounting for 12 percent of total Government spending.

Figure 7: Social Protection Expenditure as % of GDP and Total Expenditure.



Source: MoP, 2014 : 7

The HIES show that the coverage of these programmes for the poor and vulnerable households has increased and they have helped lowering poverty. Targeting has improved and leakages have been reduced. At the national level the impact of the SPP spending is partly reflected by the sharp reduction in the incidence of hunger-based poverty. Simulation exercise shows that in the absence of SPP spending the head count poverty rate would have been about 33 percent,

which is 1.5 percentage points higher. Yet, a large proportion of the poor and vulnerable households do not have any access to these SPPs. The average benefit of safety net programmes is low and in many cases falling in real terms.

A strategic review of programmes shows that some 65 percent of the SPPs are seeking to address life-cycle related risks. Yet, there are significant gaps. Coverage is highest among school age children but the transfers they receive are low in value, a problem that affects almost all of Bangladesh’s social protection schemes. Bangladesh’s current social protection system is complex, comprising a large number of programmes and managed by as many as 30 line ministries/agencies.

In recognition of these concerns, the Government of Bangladesh has embarked upon the formulation of a comprehensive National Social Security Strategy that seeks to streamline and strengthen the existing safety net programmes with a view to achieving better results from money spent, and to broaden the scope of social protection from the more narrow safety net concept to include employment policies and social insurance to address the emerging needs of a middle income Bangladesh in 2021 and ahead. It will be a core element of the other policies and programmes that together comprise the broader social development framework (SDF). A universal coverage within specific targeted poverty groups is planned and BBS is in the process of developing a citizen’s register that would allow tracking of poverty levels and receipts of various allowances by individuals.

Targeted Programmes for Women in Poverty: The Government is particularly sensitive to the disadvantageous position of women in the society. So, in addition to a range of regulatory and affirmative action policies aimed at offsetting the sources of disadvantage in the context of the broader Social Development Framework, a number of special social protection programmes have been adopted to support the women living in poverty. The most important programme is the Allowance for Widow and Deserted Destitute introduced in 1998. Over time gradual expansion of the programme occurred and in FY2012 the total allocation increased to 3312 million taka, the number of beneficiaries was 0.92 million and the monthly allowance was 300 taka. The Vulnerable Group Feeding accounted for 5.2 percent of the FY13 SPP Budget and Vulnerable Group Development programme accounted for 3.7 percent of the FY13 SPP Budget.⁵ A Maternal Health Voucher Scheme (MHVS) provides subsidies to the

⁵ About 750,000 poor and destitute women in remote areas are given monthly subsistence allowance of TK. 400 and training on income generating skill under VGDUPP programme.

target group to enable them to buy specific services. The overall goal of the MHVS is to reduce maternal mortality rate and neonatal mortality rate by increasing: (i) awareness and demand for maternal health services among poor pregnant women, and (ii) institutional delivery.

Anti-poverty programmes: Along with the Government, the banks and micro-finance institutions (MFI) are involved to provide financial services to the people and accelerate the overall economic development of the country through microcredit operations. Although a large number of NGO-MFIs are operating, the top 4 large licensed MFIs - BRAC, ASA, TMSS and BURO Bangladesh, as well as Grameen Bank (GB) cover the large share of the national credit and savings operations

Table 2: Microcredit operations of the Grameen Bank and large MFIs⁶

Microcredit operations of the Grameen Bank and large MFIs	FY11	FY12	FY13
1. Disbursement	276.59	333.22	366.08
2. Recovery	253.66	300.75	344.32
3. Outstanding Loans	172.88	205.35	226.97
4. Loans Overdue	172.88	205.36	226.97
5. Overdue as a percentage of outstanding	4.17	3.49	3.61

Source: Microcredit regulatory Authority (MRA) in Bangladesh Bank Annual Report 2013: 78.

There are a number of Government and NGO large scale interventions that seek to achieve poverty eradication through livelihoods and credit support. There include the programmes financed under PKSF, programmes under the Rural Development and Cooperatives Division, Department of Social Service (DSS) and Palli Daridro Bimochan Foundation.

Remaining Challenges: There remain discriminatory laws limiting women’s ownership, control and usage of land. Ownership and control over assets and land is still mainly by men. Poverty monitoring data is not sex disaggregated. There are no mechanisms to monitor regularly the impact of social and economic policies on women. The disadvantaged position of women in rural and remote areas who experience difficulties in access to knowledge, resources, information and decision making in general constrains them to remain in poverty.

2.A.2 Education and Training of Women

The Constitution provides for taking measures for removing illiteracy and establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law. Bangladesh is a signatory of the World Declaration on Education For All. The National Education Policy (NEP), 2010, reflects the education-related mandates in the Constitution and primary education of five years at present will be extended to grade 8 will become universal within the next decade. Good progress have been made in increasing equitable access to education, reducing dropouts, improving completion of the primary and secondary cycle, and implementing a number of quality enhancement measures in different levels and streams of education. Gender parity in primary and secondary enrolment has been achieved.

Primary education: The Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) III (2011-2016), a five-year program following PEDP I and II under Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) supports primary education and follows a sector-wide approach focusing on improving education quality and

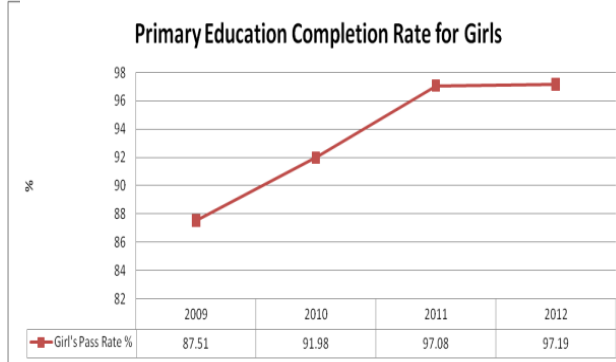
⁶ More than 90% of the borrowers are women.

management in pre-primary and class I-V of primary school. The net enrolment ratio stood at 96.7% in 2012 (98.1% for girls) from 93.9 (99.1% for girls) in 2009. Initiatives like free text books, food for education, media outreach, and community/ satellite schools, schools in private sector, stipends for poor students have helped in boosting the Net Enrolment Rate (NER). Improvement in NER was driven by the faster and relatively consistent growth in girls' enrolment vis-à-vis boys. Bangladesh is well on track in meeting the MDG target- Universal Primary Education for All.

Primary Completion: In addition, better infrastructure, water supply and sanitation

facilities, improved curriculum and teaching modality, and inclusive⁷ education have been prioritized. In 2011, the Government distributed 232 million text books in primary and secondary schools. The primary cycle completion rate shows a steady growth for both girls and boys. Internal efficiency was 73.5% for boys and 77.2% for girls in 2012. Survival rate of 57.1% for boys and 62.2% for girls in 2009 reached to 73.5% for boys and 77% for girls in 2012. The pass rate for girls in primary education has increased from 87.51

Figure 8: Primary Education Completion Rate for Girls

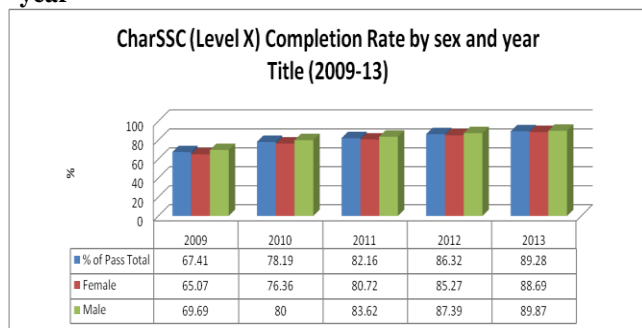


Source: Annual Primary School census 2012

percent in 2009 to 97.19 percent in 2012. One-year of pre-primary education in all primary schools have been introduced with one teacher trained in each school in 2012 841,892 boys and 838,212 girls were enrolled.

Transition to secondary and retention: There has been a positive shift in transition rate from primary to secondary education indicating higher enrolment of girls in secondary schools (and madrasah). Percentage (as of 2011) of women having secondary or higher education stands at 30.8, in comparison to 39.3 for males. The introduction of stipends for girl students at secondary schools initially up to grade ten and subsequently up to grade twelve and free education up to grade twelve contributed towards

Figure 9: SSC (Level X) Completion Rate by sex and year



Source: Extracted from BANBEIS, Basic Education Statistics-2012

a gender disparity in favour of girls in secondary security the reasons being the support provided to girls in the form of stipends and dropout of boys for joining the labour force. Poverty focused stipend program has been introduced to address the situation. In the year 2012 a total of 20,96,546 girls and 7,61,864 boys received stipends at the secondary level.

higher number of girl students completing secondary education. Better infrastructure, water supply and sanitation facilities, have been integrated as strategy to retain girls in schools. The secondary school pass rate for girls reached 88.69% (89.87% for boys) in 2013 from 65.07% (69.70% for boys) in 2009. The secondary dropout rate has reduced from 80.2% to 55.26% from 2005 to 2010. Percentage of girl students in secondary education was 53.61% as of 2011. Bangladesh is one of the fifty-four countries with

⁷ Includes gender, minority groups, children of sex workers, dalits, street children and children with disabilities.

Tertiary education: Participation and completion of girls at the tertiary level and different streams have also shown increasing trends. However the percentage of female students at tertiary levels is only around 30%. A steady growth in pass rates have been observed for girls compared to boys since 2002 (33.7% for girls and total pass rate 31.2%) at the degree level, which reached at 75.23% for all students and 79.64 for female in 2011. A total of 12,810 girls received stipend for degree pass and equivalent level education in 2012-13. Women’s enrolment in public and private universities has also increased. Table3 shows that women’s share stands at 30.03% of students and 22.84% of teachers as of 2012.

Table 3: Percent of male and female students in public and private university

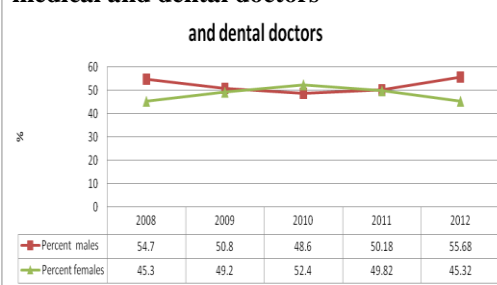
Type of University (Number)	Number of teacher				Student Enrolment			
	Total	Female	Male	% of female Female	Total	Female	Male	% of female
Public (34)	9962	1931	8031	19.38	316331	108377	207954	34.26
Private (52)	10683	2784	7899	26.06	280822	70977	209845	25.27
Total (86)	20645	4715	15930	22.84	597153	179354	417799	30.03

Source: BANBEIS, Basic Education Statistics-2012

Adult Literacy: Adult literacy rate, as of 2011, reached to 58.81% (62.5% for male and 55.1% for female) at national level which was 55.3% in 2005 according to Sample Vital Registration System, 2011. However, growth since 2008 is very low and falls short of the required rate of 7.03 percent for achieving the MDG target of 100% by 2015. To achieve the target by the year 2015, the required average annual growth rate over the years 2012-15 needs to be as high as 17.5 percent. However, the gender parity index for adult literacy has increased from 0.60 in 1991 to 0.71 in 2000 and further to 0.88 in 2011.

Technical education at tertiary level: The technical universities both in the public and private sectors provide general and technical education. Women’s participation, though on the rise in different technical institutions such as, agriculture, engineering and medical but still is low for women excepting for medical. Enrolment rate of female students in technical and vocational education is only 27.2%. The figure 10 shows the pass rate for girls and boys in medical and dental colleges which is almost equal.

Figure 10: Ratio of new male and female medical and dental doctors



Source: DGHS 2013

Teacher contingent: The number of female teachers has substantially increased due to a quota provision of 60% women in primary teaching. During PEDP II (2004-2011) 60% of the 45,000 extra teachers recruited for Government run primary schools were women. By 2012, proportion of female teachers in Government schools rose to 61%, from 50% in 2005 and the proportion of female head teachers rose from 22% to 42% over the same period. A positive trend in female teachers in non-Government schools teachers and head teachers was observed, but the changes are small and overall rates are much lower (11% of head teachers and 42% of assistant teachers). The policy that at least 20% of teachers at secondary level in rural schools and 40% in urban schools should be female has resulted in

an increase in the number of schools with female teachers. The percentage of female teachers in rural schools was 18.91% and in urban schools was 34.11% in June 2012. The growth has been slow and numbers have increased from 20% in 2005 to 23% in 2010.

Teachers' training and school management: Coverage of teachers' training has been increased but in all types of in-service training females lagged behind males, with 64.4% of males having had subject-based training compared to 58.4% of females, 24.9% of males having had classroom-based training compared to 13.7% of females. The reasons include the inability of women to participate due to household responsibility, lack of child care facilities at home and in institutions and inadequate infrastructure for women. As per guidelines of the Government at least 2 women are involved in School Management Committees (out of 13 members) and 63% of secondary schools achieved the target by June 2012.

Technical and Vocational Education: The NEP recognizes the need to make skills development and market oriented vocational education and training to meet the increasing demands of the global labour market and being flexible and inclusive of all including youth with low literacy and numeracy, child workers, women and rural communities and persons with disabilities. Gradually establishment of linkages between training institutions and employers to ensure that graduates have the skills needed by employers is being focused. In order to facilitate continued education, Government implemented a Post Literacy and Continuing Education project which served 552,828 females and 550,336 males in gaining literacy and vocational skills. Vocational skills training indifferent training has been imparted to women under about 10 different ministries and many more NGOs.

Budget: The allocation in absolute terms for education has increased but the allocation was only 2.06% of GDP in 2012-2013. The share of actual allocation on gender of Ministry of Primary and Mass Education has increased over time to about 53% in FY 2014. The share for gender in the budget of the Ministry of Education catering to secondary tertiary level is below one third. A good share of the allocation in the sector comes from the development partners and investment from the private sector. Continuity and increase in resource flow for the sector is needed to ensure market oriented education.

Challenges: A large number of children with special needs, vulnerable groups and children in remote locations remain out of the school system. High repetition and dropout rates are the major barriers for achieving the targets of survival rate across different levels. The quality of education is also a challenge at the primary and higher levels. A serious gap exists between the learning from the school system and existing demands of the market. A recent challenge is the reduction of student in the science stream and girls are in lesser number there. A market oriented and life skills based education for all requires science education, continued research and improvement. Another challenge is to collect and compile statistics from English medium and unregistered religious educational institutions.

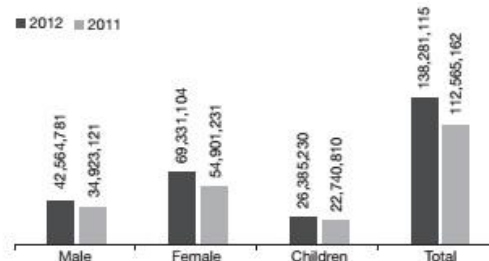
2.A.3. Women and Health

Health sector outcomes for women have shown positive trends. With a view to accelerating progress of the health, population and nutrition (HPN) sector, the Government has been implementing the Health Population and Nutrition Sector Development Program (HPNSDP) for July 2011- June 2016. This is the third sector-wide program for overall improvement of HPN sector after HPSP (1998-2003) and HNPSP (2003-2011). The successes can be attributed to a pluralistic health system with many stakeholders, including Government, non-Governmental and private sector organizations, implementation of a women-focused, equity-oriented, and targeted programmes, such as those in family planning, immunization, oral rehydration therapy, maternal and child health, tuberculosis, vitamin A

supplementation, and others. The approach to equity, and widespread deployment of (mostly female) community health workers to bring high-priority services to doorsteps, improved social determinants such as women's empowerment, expanding education, and mitigation of the effect of natural disasters, promotion of gender equity were contributing factors. Yet the pronounced reductions in mortality accompanied by persistent malnutrition and low use of some basic health services present a paradox.

Primary and lifelong care: Women's access to life-long care services has increased through creation of health care facilities, and introduction of innovative schemes. Over 12,000 community clinics have been reintroduced and revitalized all over the country allowing women to access primary health care facilities at the grassroots level. Above 73% of the clients of the clinics are women and 90% are poor. More than 46 % of the clients are of reproductive age. The records of outdoor visits in health facilities show that women's visit is more than males indicating their awareness and access to healthcare. The Figure11 shows number of outdoor visits by men, women and children in health facilities. Urban primary healthcare facilities has been expanded for the low income urban communities and the slum dwellers especially women in accessing immunization, care and MCH services. The Second Urban Primary Health Care Project (July 2005 - Jun 2012) provided services to 4,002,938 urban poor of which 37.5% card holders were given free services of whom 78% were women and 21% were children. The coverage is limited compared to the growing needs of the urban poor. A third phase is being implemented.

Figure 11: Number of reported outdoor visits in all DGHS health facilities (2011 and 2012)

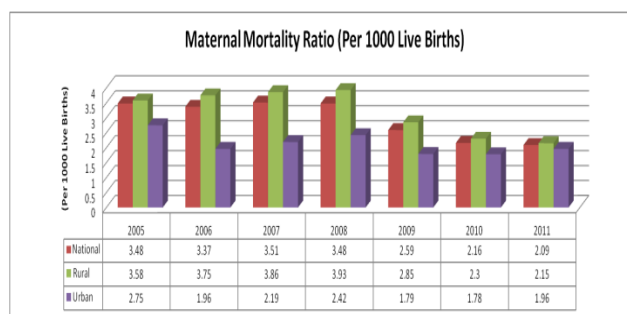


Source: DGHS, 2013

Institutional healthcare facilities at the tertiary level at both public and private sectors have increased. Women's admission at the post graduate level institution hospitals and specialized hospitals is lower than that of men, indicating that women's health care needs are yet to be understood and addressed.

Maternal and child health: Maternal mortality has declined from 3.48 in 2005 to 2.06 in 2011 (per 1,000 live birth), which is a 40% decline in six years (Figure 12). Overall mortality rate among women of reproductive age has substantially declined. The decline can be attributed to the proportion of deliveries by medically trained providers, which has doubled from 16 percent in 2004 to 32 percent in 2011, and improved ante natal care (ANC) and post natal care (PNC) of mothers. Figure 13 shows utilization of different category of maternal health services in different years.

Figure 12: Maternal Mortality Ratio (Per 1000 Live births)

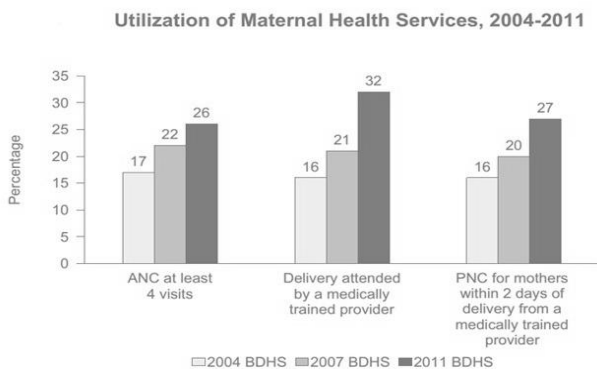


Source: Sample Vital Registration System 2011

Additionally, trained traditional birth attendants assist in 11 percent of deliveries. Utilization of ante-natal care has increased from 17 percent in 2004 to 26 percent in 2011. Similarly, post natal care shows an increase at 27 percent in 2011 from 16 percent in 2004. Institutional delivery facilities have increased and availed.

The Maternal and Newborn Health Initiative (MNHI) is being implemented by the Directorate of Primary Healthcare in four districts focusing on saving maternal and newborn lives through creating need-based demand and priority-based actions. Emergency obstructive care (EOC) services have been expanded at the upazila level. To increase the number of trained midwives a six month long certificate course and a three year long diploma course have been introduced.

Figure 13: Utilization of Maternal Health Service 2004-2011

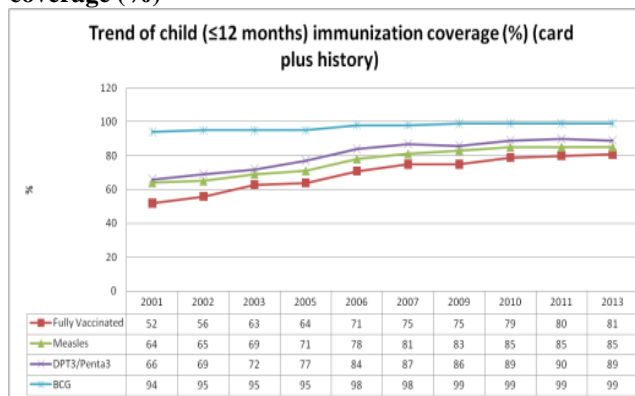


Source: BDHS 2013

Neo-natal mortality, reduced to 23 per 1000 live births in 2011 (25 for male and 22 for female) from 33 per 1000 live births (36 for males and 30 for females) in 2005. The reasons include improved nutrition, availing of maternal health care services and greater awareness about care of pregnant women. Use of family planning services has increased resulting in reduced fertility rate per 1,000 women among the 20-24 years age group to 153 in 2011 from 173 in 2007. Increase in contraceptive prevalence rate from 56% in 2007 to 61% in 2011 has also played an important role both in reduction of fertility and the risk of maternal mortality.

Immunization: Access to and utilization of immunization services has increased. As per EPI Coverage Evaluation Survey 2013 (EPICES), the percentage of children aged ≤ 12 months covered with all vaccinations was 81.0%. Immunization coverage for women with Vitamin A and TT has also increased. Intensive programs on exclusive breast feeding; maternal, newborn and childcare; working in synergy with the health programs undertaken by other stakeholders, have contributed largely for immunization. As per BDHS 2011

Figure 14: Trend of child (≤ 12 months) immunization coverage (%)



Source: DGHS, 2013

the exclusive breastfeeding rate among children below 6 months increased from 43% in 2007 to 64% in 2011. The Food Security and Nutrition Survey (FSNS), December 2012 found early initiation of breastfeeding for 47% of the 0-5 month(s) old children, and 46% were continuing exclusive breastfeeding.

Nutrition: Malnutrition is a major concern with 24% women with low body mass index in 2011 with BMI less than 18.5 which was 30% in 2007. Obesity also is gradually becoming prominent among women which was 2% in 2011 and 14% women were overweight. 43% women were anaemic. Control and prevention of iron-deficiency and other nutritional anaemia are addressed through awareness raising the routine service-delivery network and National Nutrition Services (NNS). The proportion of women taking iron folic acid (IFA) supplementation during the last pregnancy was slowly rising but iron-deficiency anaemia is remaining in the same level. Nutritional anaemia is controlled by treating intestinal parasites through distribution of albendazole tablets during vitamin A campaign and separate Deworming Week. Additionally, several programs for ensuring food security are under implementation

and under the safety net programs, poor lactating mothers are given an allowance to cover nutritional deficiencies.

Health screening and care:

- 300 centres are providing services for screening of breast and cervical cancer for women.
- Fistula screening was introduced in 10 medical colleges.
- 25 hospitals have been certified as women friendly where women are treated with respect, dignity and equity; women receive adequate, appropriate, timely and affordable care; and a woman is respected as the person to receive the necessary information.
- A women cardiac centre is being established in the National Heart Foundation Hospital.
- National Advisory Committee on Autism in Bangladesh has been established to guide adequate screening for autism and implement culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions.

Sexual and reproductive health rights: Human rights include the right of women, freely and without coercion, violence or discrimination, to have control over and make decisions concerning their own sexuality, including their own sexual and reproductive health. Many initiatives related to women's reproductive health have been taken but often control over and decisions concerning their reproductive behaviour are dependent on partners and the family. Women's rights to determine their own sexuality free of coercion, discrimination and violence, is still to be understood and accepted and information and counselling on this is not available at health centres and hospitals.

HIV/AIDS care: HIV/AIDS prevalence rate remains low (<0.1%) among general population but significant among key populations such as sex workers, hijra, people who inject drugs etc. (Serological Surveillance, 2011). Despite low prevalence, there has been a growth of 25% in number of infected persons over the years 2001-2011. As per Government record, 3,241 persons are registered as infected, however estimated number is 8,000. Among them the number of adults aged 15 and up was 7,600 of whom 2,700 were women⁸. A midterm review has been conducted of the currently implemented National Strategic Plan 2011-2015. Government has planned to set up 20 healthcare facilities for HIV testing and counseling and providing free ARV for people living with HIV. More than 380 NGOs and AIDS service organizations have been implementing programs with focus on preventing sexual transmission, increase awareness and condom promotion among high-risk groups. Building the capacity of NGOs, combining their reach with the resources and strategic programs of the Government has been taken as a way to change behavior in vulnerable populations and prevent the spread of HIV. Recently, a gender assessment and a national consultation on punitive laws have been conducted to assess the status of the epidemic through the lens of gender and to identify legal barriers. The Government plans to take necessary preventive and corrective measures based on the findings.

Other sectors: An important progress is the introduction of e-health services as part of the digitization program of the Government. The efforts to increase access to safe water and sanitation facilities had positive effect on health. In 2014 the percentage of households having no toilets came to 3% (from 11.31% in 2005) and 86% urban and 84% rural households have access to safe water. About 96.7% households used tube-well or piped water for drinking purposes.

Budget and Monitoring: The budget for health sector has gradually increased over time. Allocation for gender in health sector has also increased. The amount of allocation was Tk. 2,161 crore for gender

⁸UNAIDS, <http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/bangladesh>

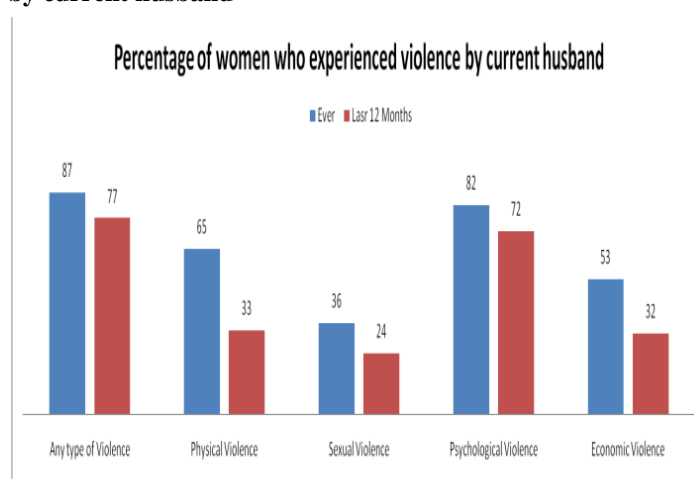
(31.63 % of total budget) in fiscal year (FY) 2009-2010, which rose to Tk 4,513 crore (47.54% of total budget allocation) in FY 2013-2014. To ensure health care services at the grassroots level the allocation of budget for the community clinics has increased over the years where majority of the beneficiaries are women and children. The amount of allocation per community clinic for medicine supply was BDT 0.07 million in 2009-2010, which rose to BDT 0.11 million in each of 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. Monitoring of the health care services has been strengthened through establishment of management information system, launching of different periodic surveys and establishing a complain mechanism at all levels. A registration and tracking system of services for women and children is under process of establishment at the community clinics.

Challenges: Nutritional deficiency is one of the major concern in the health area. The Food Security and Nutrition Surveillance, Round 9, 2012 found that 18% of women were severely and moderately underweight. Nearly half of pregnant women in Bangladesh are anaemic. While the mortality rates have declined substantially, inequalities in terms of access and utilization of health services among the populations still need to be addressed. The Health Economics Unit found that 64% of the healthcare cost is borne out of pocket, health insurance system covers only a few and universal coverage still far away. Access to tertiary level healthcare for the poor is yet to be ensured. The global warming and climate change has increased tropical diseases and catastrophic health care expenditure. Rural-urban migration is increasing the slum population in the urban areas without adequate health care, immunization and family planning services. Comprehensive knowledge of HIV among young people age 15-24 in 2008-2012 was as low as 14.4% for males and 11.9% for females (UNICEF). HIV/AIDS prevention, particularly controlling the risk of being infected by marital partners, is a priority. HIV related stigma and discrimination against women is a concern. The use of the research and data for policy planning is yet to be strengthened. Access to required health care services for disabled women is still a challenge.

2.A.4. Violence against women

Prevalence and Incidence: Violence takes place in the home, in the workplace and also in public spaces. Poor women looking for work often fall victim to trafficking due to lack of information and/or legal or other protection. Often it is women who were seeking employment or wanting to migrate for work fall victim to traffickers and are trafficked within or outside the country. These victims face various inhuman treatment including violation of human rights in the form of extortion, sexual exploitation etc. There are also new forms of VAW emerging such as that due to the use of social media, and new technologies (such a mobile phones), etc.

Figure 15: Percentage of women who experienced violence by current husband



Source: Violence Against Women Survey 2011, BBS

A study by ICDDR'B carried out in 2011 in an urban and in a rural setting found that about 52% of urban and 46% of rural men reported emotionally abusing their female intimate partners during their lifetime. About 52% of men in both sites reported ever physically assaulting female intimate partners many

times. About 10% of urban and 14 percent of rural men even perpetuated sexual violence against a woman/women. The study found that the most common motivation for sexual violence was the belief that sex is men's entitlement (77% of urban and 81% of rural men. Another finding was that about 29-35% of men sexually abused women to take out their anger and to punish them while about 57-67% of men sexually abused women "just for fun" (Naved et al., 2011: iii).

The recent survey on the prevalence of VAW carried out by the BBS in 2011 shows the highest rates of violence found so far. This was the first nationally representative survey on VAW perpetrated by the current husband, previous husband and non-partner perpetrators. As many as 87% of currently married women reported having experienced any type of violence in the last 12 months. Among the different types of violence reported, psychological violence was the most common, followed by physical violence. Regarding violence against women by partners, the rate for sexual or physical violence is 67% but the rate of psychological violence is 82% and for economic violence is 53%. (Figure 15).

Though the BBS survey did not find statistically significant rural-urban differences or differences by age group, however earlier surveys have found such differences to be significant (Naved, Azim et al., 2006). The severity of physical violence is manifested by various emotional and psychological effects. The 2011 BBS survey found that mental sickness, attempts to suicide, drug addiction and abortion were amongst the most commonly cited types of effects. It was found that despite the severity and frequency of physical violence only a small percentage of women took legal action (6.8% against the previous husband and 1.9% against the current husband). However more women sought health care (52% in the case of physical violence by current husband and 58% in the case of physical violence by the previous husband). However earlier studies which are also statistically significant found that only 2% of women faced with violence sought help from institutional sources (Naved, Azim et al., 2006).

Non-partner violence is also high: one-third of women have been violated in the past 12 months and women (below 29 years) seem to be more vulnerable. About 8% of women reported recent incidence of non-partner physical violence in the past 12 months while almost a quarter of the women reported their life-time experience of such violence. Four percent of women have experienced sexual violence by non-partners and one percent experienced this in the past 12 months. Perpetrators includes parents, in-laws, step-parents, siblings, teachers and for a small minority employers/colleagues at work. (BBS. 2013)

Bangladesh was on the Tier 2 List in 2013 after being on the Tier 2 Watch List for a few years "2013 Trafficking in Persons Report" published by the US Government's Department of State. Bangladesh is a source and transit country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. Because of the clandestine nature of trafficking, exact numbers are not available. Children and women are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and forced and bonded labour⁹.

Violence and discrimination (exclusion, isolation, stigma) are also related to sexual orientation, disability and discriminatory health status (e.g. persons living with HIV/AIDS)¹⁰. A situational analysis showed, 76% of the female student currently studying at the tertiary level faced sexual harassment for at least once in the campus.¹¹

⁹ Source: USAID <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/> accessed 16.9.12

¹⁰ 11.3% are verbally insulted, harassed and/or threatened – BSPH/UNAIDS, 2010: 37.

¹¹ Situational Analysis of Sexual Harassment at Tertiary Level Education Institutes in and around Dhaka, HDRC, 2013

Preventive and Legislative Measures: As part of the State's obligation, the Government has enacted and revised various criminal law provisions to deal with violence as a criminal offense. Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000 and Amendment in 2003 were promulgated as a non-bailable Act, which contains special provisions for certain kinds of violence against women and provides for a special trial process through specific tribunals. The Acid Crime Control Law, 2002 aims to restrain acid related offences and provides strict measures to combat acid violence. The Acid Control Act, 2002 has sought to control the sale and availability of acid. The awareness of the risks of making acid available has increased and the various control bodies and committees have been set up. Acid violence is on the decrease.

The Labour Code, 2006 and its revision in 2013 recognized the issue of sexual harassment in the work place. The High Court judgement on sexual harassment also provides guidelines to employers and educational institutions on how to address sexual harassment issues. The Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) filed a writ petition in 2010 under Article 102 of the Constitution to formulate policies to protect women from sexual harassment in work places/ educational institutions and other public places, and take immediate steps to enact legislation to address sexual harassment. In response to this the High Court ruled in May 2010 that any kind of physical, mental or sexual harassment of women, girls and children at their workplaces, educational institutions and at other public places, including roads, was a criminal offence, punishable by fines and/or imprisonment.¹²

Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010 addresses some of the forms of violence that could not be addressed by the other laws and brought in a range of types of violence that would be committed by family members. It includes provisions for protection orders whereby the victim is given security while staying in their own home. . The Rules of Procedure to implement the Act were approved in 2013. Measures still need to be taken to ensure full-scale training for all concerned such as the judiciary, police and others and also to allocate the necessary budget for human resources and other expenses. The Act was prepared in close collaborate with various civil society actors who formed into the CiDV (Citizen's Initiatives for Domestic Violence). The CiDV has collaborated in the training of implementers, preparing of Rules of Procedure and even budgeting for the possible costs to be incurred during implementation.

In May 2011, the Appellate Division of SC passed a judgment declaring the imposition of *Fatwas* illegal for punishing any individual. The GOB has initiated review of the Early Marriage Restraint Act, 1929. The GOB has sent directives to all marriage registrars to make it mandatory to consult Birth Registration Certificates and/ or National ID Cards for any girls or boys getting married on their own. Other legislation includes the Torture and Custodial Death (Prohibition) Act, 2013.

It needs to be mentioned that worldwide evidence on what works in preventing VAW is weak. Research on different intervention options is required in the context of Bangladesh. There is some effort in this direction. A cluster randomized trial of an intervention lead by ICDDR,B is being implemented in Dhaka slums. Undoubtedly, much more remains to be done in this area.

Various initiatives to improve law enforcement: Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women (MSP-VAW) is being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. The programme is now in its 3rd phase, which will continue until June 2016. The project is being carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (MoLJPA), Ministry of Information (Mol), Ministry of Social Welfare(MoS W), Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Ministry of

¹²<http://www.dpiap.org/resources/article.php?id=0000194&year=&genreid=05>

Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA), Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) and Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (MoLGRD&C).¹³ One of the significant components of the programme are the eight OCCs (One Stop Crisis Centre) in the Medical College Hospitals (MCHs). The idea behind OCC is to provide all required services for a woman victim of violence in one place. The OCC provides health care, police assistance, DNA test, social services, legal assistance, psychological counselling and shelter service etc.

To expand the support for women and children victims of violence, 60 One-Stop Crisis Cells were established around the country, 40 in District Sadar Hospitals and 20 in Upazila Health Complexes. The main objective of the One-Stop Crisis Cell is to provide information to the women and children survivors of violence regarding various services i.e. health care, police assistance, legal advice, psychosocial counselling, rehabilitation, reintegration etc and refer them to the relevant organizations.

The National Forensic DNA Profiling Laboratory is the country's first ever forensic DNA profiling laboratory. The laboratory will provide services to various investigating agencies to solve violent crimes like, murder or rape. DNA analysis can also help solving disputes arising over issues like, paternity, maternity, immigration or inheritance and determining the identity of missing children, disaster victims or mutilated bodies. The laboratory is well equipped to provide all kinds of DNA testing service related to criminal investigation. In order to make the DNA screening service available across the country seven DNA screening laboratories were established at seven medical college hospitals.

A National Trauma Counselling Centre was set up in 2009 at the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) Building, to provide mental health support to the women and children victims of violence. This centre also provides different types of training to develop a pool of skilled counsellors. The National Helpline Centre for Violence Against Women and Children has been set up under MSPVAW for women and children who are victims of violence so that they or their family members can call for advice and legal, psychological or administrative counselling.

Another strategy which is gaining popularity is involving men and boys in the protesting and prevention of VAW. Acid Survivors Foundation and the We Can Campaign innovated this approach starting from the 90s and a few major NGOs have adopted such an approach in some areas. Centre for Policy Dialogue and CARE have done studies on the costing of domestic violence. Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) is now piloting the concept of a VAW geographic free area. Apart from this there are a myriad NGOs doing work on VAW prevention, reduction and retribution.

Role of law enforcement authorities: The Police Reform Program (PRP) identified the importance of addressing gender at two levels: increasing the number of women in the police, and ensuring that the police deal sensitively and appropriately with women clients. The number of women police officers has increased from 2% in 2007 to 4% in 2010/11. In 2009 a total of 23 women Assistant Superintendents of Police, 14 SIs and 2955 women constables were recruited. The Bangladesh Police planned to recruit an additional 3000 female police under the Strategic Plan 2008-2010. It is recognized that increased representation of women in the Bangladesh Police is critical to sustain reform and it is linked to crime prevention and community policing outcomes, as more female investigating officers encourage more women to assist police with investigations and prosecutions. In Phase-I of PRP 11 model thanas were set up and in Phase-II another 18 thanas have been undertaken to develop them as model thanas. This includes providing special staff and facilities to provide assistance for women victims of violence.

¹³ <http://www.mspvaw.org.bd/>

Community policing has been introduced nationwide by the Bangladesh Police with the support of PRP and includes an important role for women. Community police are engaged in crime prevention initiatives, service delivery, enhanced law and order and in preventing and addressing VAW. The PRP supports the Bangladesh Police to consolidate community policing to build trust, genuine interaction and strengthen public service ensuring accountability to the community in maintaining peace and harmony. The role of community police is to help local government institutions (LGI) and to bring any incidence of conflict to the notice of LGIs and law enforcing agencies.

National Action Plan on VAW: MoWCA has formulated a national action plan on VAW for the period 2013 to 2025, which outlines how the Government will coordinate, prioritize and follow strategies for the most effective forms of action in the short, mid and long term and to measure progress. NAPVAW will be focused on six main areas, namely, (i) legal arrangements, (ii) social awareness and mental transformation, (iii) advancement of women's socio-economic status, (iv) protective services, (v) curative and rehabilitation services, (vi) inter-sectoral cooperation and (vii) community involvement.

Institutional Mechanisms: MOWCA operates a Central Cell to ensure coordination of work on prevention of violence against women and children and extend necessary support to the victims of violence. It maintains a helpline to provide legal, medical, rehabilitation and counselling help to victims.

A 'Special Cell' comprising female police personnel has been set up at the Police Headquarters and four police stations to receive complaints and help women and children victims of violence. As per the directives of the Supreme Court, complaint committees have been set up in all Government Ministries/ Divisions, educational institutions and other workplaces to receive and address allegations of sexual harassment against women. However there is a need to follow-up and monitor the functioning of the complaints mechanisms. Employers associations and private sector bodies such as BGMEA and BKMEA could have a role in ensuring compliance with the sexual harassment guidelines of the High Court. The MHA has set up an 'Acid Cases Monitoring Cell' for effectively monitoring progress of legal proceedings prosecuting acid attacks against women and girls. The Government has created a special fund to assist victims of Acid attacks. The harassment of young women, particularly students, has been inserted as an offence in the Mobile Court Act, 2009 which provides for a summary trial procedure.

Committees for the Prevention of Violence against women have been established at district and upazila (sub-district) levels. These Committees provide legal, medical and psychological counselling to the victim of violence. The Committee TORs have been modified in 2014 to include dealing with children. Shelter homes for abused and tortured women and for women under safe custody have also been established to meet their needs. The DWA has undertaken a programmes to support victims of violence. This programmes is providing skill development training and legal assistance to the victims.

Progress in combating human trafficking: The number of prosecutions increased in 2011, but the number of convictions declined as compared to the previous year. A web-based software Integrated Crime Data management System has been installed at Police Headquarters Monitoring Cell where every information of trafficking victims/survivors and other relevant statistics are preserved. Trafficking in Human Beings Cell has also been established in Criminal Investigation Department to monitor the trafficking cases. A comprehensive anti-trafficking legislation titled Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, 2012 has been enacted, and a National Plan of Action 2012-2014 to combat human trafficking adopted. An Inter-ministerial Committee is functioning under the MoHA to coordinate ongoing efforts in preventing human trafficking. Similar committees have been formed at district,

upazila and union levels. A monitoring cell has been established at the Police Headquarters and in each district to monitor, in particular, criminal prosecution of human trafficking. The MHA has also set up a Taskforce for rescue, recovery, repatriation and reintegration of victims of trafficking, especially women and children. Owing to all these initiatives, Bangladesh has graduated from “Tier 2 Watch List” to “Tier 2” in the US State Department Report on Trafficking in Persons.

Table 4: Human Trafficking - Summary of Progress by Law Enforcing Agencies

Progress Summary of Law Enforcing Agencies January-December 2012	No.
No of cases lodged:	209
No of accused arrested:	128
No of cases charge-sheeted:	84
Final reports submitted:	33
No. of cases under investigation:	92
Number of cases disposed	45
Cases ended in conviction	8
Cases ended in acquittal	37
Persons convicted	11
Life imprisonment	10
Other term	1
Persons acquitted	97

Source: MoHA 2012

Remaining challenges: Social norms are still tolerant of VAW and both individuals and communities feel that it is justified in certain contexts. These beliefs are reflected among the law enforcement authorities and the judiciary. The process of accessing justice still remains complicated and lengthy. Women continue to face barriers in gaining access to justice. While there is a need for more legislation such as formulation of a law on sexual harassment based on the High Court Directives of 2010 and incorporation of the SAARC Convention on Trafficking into national legislation, effective measures to ensure the implementation of the existing legal

framework still are weak. At present data is being collected and compiled in various sources. There are various attempts being made to create to consolidate the various streams.

2.A.5 Women and Armed Conflict

Bangladesh is not in an armed conflict situation excepting some internal conflicts arising of law and order, political violence and communal violence at times.

Peace keeping: The country plays an important role in peacekeeping on behalf of United Nations. The role of women in peace keeping in conflict situation is gradually being recognized and increasing. Bangladesh is the top contributor of women police officers to the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and has won the honour of becoming the first Muslim majority nation to send an all-women contingent. In May, 2010, Bangladesh sent its first all-women police contingent of 160 women personnel on the UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti, headed by a woman Additional Police Commissioner. Bangladeshi women peacekeepers established themselves as the role model in the community of the Mission area and have become the crucial partner in the transition from war to peace. They have been working to reduce gender-based violence, conflict and confrontation, providing sense of security especially for women and children, mentoring local female police officers and thus empowering women in the host country and promoting social cohesion. The performance of Bangladesh female Formed Police Unit, Haiti has been highly appreciated and the demand for Bangladesh women police officers is increasing in the UN peace keeping operations. By 2013, 603 women police personnel have completed their peacekeeping mission and 190 are currently on Mission. The UN Peace-keeping missions also started including female members from Army officers and Army Medical Core since 2007.

Crime control and conflict management: Women police have also played a critical role at the domestic level. Women personnel were deployed in containing violence on streets side by side with males, during the pre 2014 election of Bangladesh and they performed duties managing mobs and curbing conflicts with competence. Women police are also engaged in investigating organized and other crimes as well as in supporting communities in case of communal violence. Community policing has been introduced nationwide by the Bangladesh Police with the support of PRP and women play an important role.

CHT Peace Accord: In December 1997, the Government signed a peace deal with Parbatya Chattogram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), ending a 22-year armed conflict in the hills. As per the agreement, some 683 members of PCJSS got jobs in the police. The treaty provided for the return of CHT refugees from India and rehabilitation and mitigation of sufferings of refugees and internally displaced persons. In this process, 12,222 tribal families repatriated from the Indian State of Tripura were rehabilitated. In the area violence, killing and kidnapping of women, are reported, mostly as part of local conflicts over land and forest resources. The Hill People continue to fight among themselves for establishing supremacy and settlers create conflicts over land. Women fall victims of the situation in both cases. Kapaeng Foundation¹⁴, in a recent report revealed that in last seven years 245 cases of killings took place and repression of women was carried out as a tool for land grabbing. The Government is concerned and is trying to implement the Peace Accord. As part of conflict mediation the media, lawyers and civil society groups are working together in the area to address the conflict and violence. A Peace Makers' Network has been formed with 47 members (13 women) who have been trained on conflict mediation and peace building, who play a role in mediation as well as flagging a conflict situation to the administration.

Support to refugees: Bangladesh is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol. Still, for the last three decades Bangladesh has been hosting Rohingya refugees from Myanmar with support from UNHCR and others. In 2011 approximately 29,000 refugees were in the refugee camps in Cox's Bazar district. An estimated 36,000 unrecognized refugees congregated in makeshift sites. In addition, there were thought to be at least 200,000 undocumented Rohingyas living in host communities. All these are of concern to Government and UNHCR. Earlier, the Government in close consultation with the Myanmar Government had achieved voluntary repatriation of 250,000 refugees during 1991-2005. During 2009-12, initiatives have been taken to deepen dialogue with the Myanmar Government to arrange voluntary repatriation of the remaining refugees. Owing to its socio-economic, environmental and demographic challenges, Bangladesh is constrained to accept and support the influx of Rohingyas from Myanmar. There has been a lack of concerted international action to address the circumstances that forced the Rohingyas to leave Myanmar and which now obstruct their repatriation. There has been inadequate international understanding and support with respect to the refugee impact on host communities as well. International support is needed to address the situation.

2.A.6. Women and the economy

Women's labour force participation (LFP): Women entering the workforce is increasing numbers but their labour force participation rate still stands at 36% while it is 82.5% for men (Bangladesh Labour Force Survey 2010). Access to new economic opportunities has had important implications for women's lives, expanding their social networks, increasing their voice and bargaining power in household decision-making and their mobility in the public domain. It is also evident that, as in other regions of the world, that there is a strong association between women's access to economic resources, such as

¹⁴ Daily Star May 4, 2014.

income and micro-credit, and increased investments in children’s health and wellbeing, often closing long-standing gender gaps in these outcomes. The effects of these new opportunities have gone beyond the actual numbers of women who took them up.

Women’s LFP rates are increasing faster than for men, leading economist to speak of a feminisation of the labour force. While there is some increase in the formal sectors there is a larger increase in the informal sector such as home based work. A change in women’s roles in the economic sphere – not only are they home-based workers or unpaid family labour, they are also paid workers in the formal sector, producers, entrepreneurs, managers/supervisors and owners/directors of private sector companies, large and small is visible. According to the global Gender Gap report of 2013, 16% firms have women participation in ownership, and 35% women have an account in a formal financial institution compared to 44% men who have an account. However, only 1% firms have women as top managers. It also shows that the female-male ratio of legislators, senior officials and managers is 0.31 and female-male ratio for professional and technical workers category is 0.28.

Table 5: Labour force participation rates over time

Labour Force participation rate (%) (refined activity rate)	2002-2003	2005-2006	2010
Total	57.3	58.5	59.3
Male	87.4	86.8	82.5
Female	26.1	29.2	36.0
Urban			
Total	56.8	55.7	57.3
Male	85.1	83.2	80.2
Female	27.4	27.4	34.5
Rural			
Total	57.5	59.4	60.0
Male	88.1	88.0	83.3
Female	25.6	29.8	36.4

Source: Labour Force Survey 2010 (BBS)

According to the LFS women’s LFP rate has increased from 29.2% in 2005/6 to 36% in 2010. The male LFP however has decreased slightly from 86.8% in 2005/6 to 82.5% in 2010. For both women and men their LFP rates are slightly higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas. 23.4 % of the total labour force is in urban areas and 76.6% in rural areas. The figures are roughly similar for men and women. In case of unemployment rates the situation is different. For males 32.9% unemployed were in the urban areas and 67.1% were in the rural areas. About 34.7% of unemployed women were in urban areas and 65.7% in rural areas. Overall unemployment number of males is greater than females.

Table 6: Employed persons aged 15 years and over by broad economic sector 2010

Sector	total	male (%)	female (%)
Total	100	100	100
Agriculture	47.56%	40.18%	64.84%
Non-agriculture	53.07%	60.71%	35.21%
- manufacturing	12.44%	12.73%	11.77%
- other industry	5.28%	6.87%	1.55%
- services	35.35%	41.11%	21.89%

Source: Labour Force Survey 2010 (BBS)

Employment by Sector and Type: In 99/2000, 46.3 percent women were in agriculture, and only 17.7 percent in services. The share of the industry sector up to 2000 was of 21.2 percent. Over the same period (83/84 to 99/2000) the female share of agricultural employment expanded from 1.3 percent to 19.5 percent; the female share in industry employment increased from 23.4 to 33.6 percent and the female share of service

employment rose from 17.7 percent to 19.4 percent. In 2010 we see that for males the highest number

(41.11%) were engaged in the services sector, followed by agriculture (40.18%) and industry (19.60%). For women the highest number (68.84%) were engaged in agriculture sector followed by service sector (21.89%) and industry sector (13.32%).

New agricultural technologies have increased the demand for female labour. The adoption of high yielding varieties of crop production has increase workload not only in the fields but also in crop processing activities. It is mainly the women from landless of near landless households who work as wage labour. Men are also moving out of agriculture, either migrating to urban areas/abroad or taking up non-agriculture related activities, with increasing productivity and returns from involvement in non-agricultural sectors.¹⁵

Informal sector employs more labour than the formal sector, and that more men than women work in the formal sector. Women make up 31% of the workforce in the informal sector and 19% in the formal sector. There also exists an urban-rural variation. In the urban areas 25.1% employment was in the formal sector compared to 7.7% in the rural areas. On the other hand in the urban areas 74.9% was in the informal sector compared to 91.3% in the rural areas.

Table 7: Persons aged 15 years and over by status in employment

Gender differences exist in the status of employment. As shown by table 8 the highest percentage of employed persons were self-employed in agriculture (22.8%) followed by unpaid family workers (21.8%) and self-employed in non-agriculture (17.97%). Among men the highest 25.6% were self-employed in agriculture followed by self-employed in non-agriculture (21.5%) and regular and paid employed (16.8%). Among women, 56.2% were unpaid family worker followed by self-employed in agriculture (15.7%) followed by workers (23.1%) and self-employed in non-agriculture (16.8%).

Status of employment	total	Male	female
Total	100	100	100
regular paid employee	14.6	17.0	8.9
Employer	0.2	0.2	0.2
self-employed (agri)	22.8	25.8	15.7
self-employed (non-agri)	18.0	21.7	9.4
unpaid family worker	21.8	7.1	56.3
irregular paid worker	2.8	3.1	1.8

Source: Labour Force Survey 2010 (BBS): 46

Unpaid family worker grew at a higher rate compared to the rate of growth of total labour force during the period of 1999-2000 to 2010. Annual rate of growth for unpaid worker at national level was 9.64%, whereas the growth of total labour force during the same period was only 3.37%. In 2010, 11.8 million unpaid family workers were active in labour market, compared to 4.7 million in 1999-2000. Unpaid female family worker increased at a significant rate (237%) compared to male (only 35.0%). Furthermore, the number of unpaid female worker in labour market increased faster than male in both areas. Unpaid female work in urban and rural area grew by 6.17% and 6.81% respectively for the period of 1999-2000 to 2010 (Basak, 2013).

Gender differences remains in terms of wage rates. The LFS 2010 Survey found that there were wage differences both for day labourers and monthly income of salaried workers. More women than men (21.4% versus 10.6%) had weekly income less than 500 takas. Both rural and urban areas follow the same pattern (BBS 2011). For men the highest number of salaried workers were in the category of 10,000 to 12, 499 (17.4%) whereas only 17% of women were in that income group. The second highest

¹⁵ Towfique and Turton, 2002

income group for men was 8,000 to 8,999 (12.2% against 10.2% for women) whereas for women the second highest income group was 4,000 to 4,999 income group (10.9%). Women are also more represented than men in the lower income groups of 3,000 to 3,999 and below (e.g. 10% women against 6.5% men earning the same amount).

Rights of workers and Initiatives to Ensure Decent Work Environment: Labour Act, 2006 (revised 2013) and the National Overseas Employment Policy 2006 provides for decent work environment. A ban on women migration was withdrawn in 2003 and the number of women migrant labour to different countries, including to the Middle East, increased dramatically. The Government developed a specific policy in addition to the “Overseas Employment Policy 2006” to promote and address women migrant issues. The policy emphasises on greater regulation of recruiting agencies, providing clear information to migrants and employees, involvement of embassies at receiving end, specific contracts between recruiting agency at both ends, training and orientation of migrant workers etc. In addition there is a SAARC agreement about Trafficking and a draft Child Labour Elimination Policy 2008. The EPZ Labour Welfare Association and Industrial Relations Act, 2010 ensures EPZ workers’ well-being.

The National Women Development Policy (NWDP) 2011 provides for equal rate of wages for women, increased participation of women in the labour market, equal opportunity at the workplace, security and removal of disparities in employment. The National Industrial Health and Safety Council has drafted an Occupational Safety and Health Policy which remains at the final stage of approval.

Following the tragic Rana Plaza building collapse in April 2013 where 1100 workers of five garments factories lost their lives, the Government, in coordination with the development partners moved to address safety issues in the readymade garment factories. A cabinet committee was set up to scrutinize safety measures. The scope of the National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety (NAP), drawn in November 2012 was expanded to include “structural building integrity”. An agreed action plan developed in May 2013 supported by International Labour Organization (ILO) focuses on short and medium terms steps including a labour law reform package to improve protection rights to freedom of association, rights to collective bargaining, occupational safety and health. It also includes an assessment by end-2013, on the structural safety and fire safety of all active export oriented garment factories and initiate remedial actions and also increasing staffing of factory inspection. The Labour Law has been amended covering workers’ right to trade unions, introduction of insurance scheme, setting up of a central fund to improve the workers’ living standards, and requiring five percent of annual profit to be deposited in employee welfare funds.¹⁶ The Government announced a new wage board in 11 May 2013 for fixing minimum pay for garment workers.

Workers in the informal sector are unprotected by law, and face abuse, discrimination, do not get regular work, paid low wages, and work long hours. Rights of domestic and agricultural workers are not included into the present Labour Law of 2013 and limits are placed upon union participation in factories. Various organisations have recommended adoption of Domestic Workers’ Welfare Policy, inclusion of informal workers within Labour Laws, and effective enforcement. There is a need to ensure compliance of labour laws by the private sector employers and women’s rights with regard to health, safety, security, maternity, child care, etc. Positive role of the trade unions, workers associations, chambers of commerce, employers associations is necessary in ensuring these.

¹⁶ Even after Rana Plaza, Bangladeshi law remains out of compliance with some International Labour Organization standards, including Convention No. 87 on freedom of association and Convention No. 98 on the right to organize and bargain collectively.

Migration trends: Migration is increasing both at international and internal levels. 12.28% of the households reported any kind of migration either within the country or abroad. Of these, 8.60% of the households reported migration abroad. The proportion of rural households belonging at least one migrant was higher (13.72 %) than that of urban households (8.33 %). The proportion of migration from rural area was higher than that of urban area in case of both types of migration.

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Households Reporting Migration of Any Member by Residence

	Total	Within country	Abroad
National	12.28	3.97	8.60
Rural	13.72	4.84	9.25
Urban	8.33	1.62	6.85

Source: HIES 2010 (BBS)

At the national level, women constitute only 2.83% of migrants. The sex-wise variation between the rural and urban areas is very similar. However, urban-rural variation in total number of migrant persons is high showing 82.49% from rural areas and 17.51% from urban areas. The proportion of internal male migrants was 32.51% and 67.48% migrated abroad. But in case of females, the ratio is reversed and the proportion of migration within the country was higher (60.17%) than that of migration abroad (39.82%).

Female international migration started in late 1990s and it was only 1.49% of total international migrants and in 2004 increased to 4.12%. Although the total number of international migration is decreasing, but female international migration trends is positively increasing in terms of percentage and numbers. About 13% of international migrants are women. As per BMET report female international migrants were 158,862 out of total international migrants 2,350,429 within 2009 to 2013. Women have mainly migrated to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Malaysia followed by other Arab countries. Only 3% of migrants go to work in professional categories and women mainly migrate as housemaids, cleaners, care givers etc.¹⁷ Initiatives to train and prepare women is inadequate to prepare them for more skilled employment categories that provide better working conditions and higher earnings.

There are various social, cultural and family costs of migration beyond the economic costs. Control by working women over their earnings, their low social status, insecurity in their place of work, stereotypes against migration in the sending communities are challenges. The Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment has set up 16 labour wings in Bangladesh Embassies and Missions abroad to provide services to migrants, ensure their safety and security and promote overseas employment.

Promotion of Women Entrepreneurs: Bangladesh Bank encourages all banks and FIs to provide loans to women entrepreneurs at 10 percent interest rate. A Dedicated Women Entrepreneurs Desk has been established in the SME & SPD of Bangladesh Bank and all the banks and financial institutions have been directed to do the same. They have also been instructed to reserve 15 percent of total SME funds exclusively for women entrepreneurs. An amount of Taka 6.43 billion has been refinanced to Women Entrepreneurs until the end of June 2013 against 8,358 enterprises. For providing assistance to women entrepreneurs, an allocation of Tk. 100 crore was made for Women Development Fund in the budget for FY 2012-13. Against this allocation, a 2-year long programmes at a cost of Tk. 10 crore has been taken up in 2014 fiscal for imparting training to women entrepreneurs¹⁸.

The Small and Medium Enterprise Policy 2005 gives special preference for women entrepreneurs and aims to accelerate the retention and promotion of women entrepreneurs. An objective of Industrial

¹⁷ Migration from Bangladesh and overseas employment policy-BMET

¹⁸ Source: SME section, Bangladesh Bank

Policy 2009 is to mainstream women in the industrialization process. The Policy also includes a strategy to undertake special measures to develop women entrepreneurship ensuring access to land and finance for business support services. Participation and development of women entrepreneurs has been given emphasis through various incentives and support mechanisms.

Remaining Challenges: The right to work still has not been recognized as a right. It is important to monitor measures in the formal labour market to eliminate both horizontal and vertical occupational segregation, narrow and close the wage gap between women and men, and apply the principle of equal remuneration and equal opportunities at work in accordance with ILO conventions 100 and 111. A regulatory framework for the informal sector has to be developed, with a view to providing women with access to social security and other benefits and to monitor and take measures against the exploitation of girls involved in child labour. Lack of gender sensitive working environment including inadequate facilities of crèche, transport and housing are some of the reasons discouraging women from accessing the challenging job market. Although the Government has granted women 6 months maternity leave, this is not compulsory for the private sector or for NGOs. This results in discriminatory practices across the sectors. Also the provision of day care centres in workplaces and outside is a necessary service to increase women's participation in the economy. Minimum wages have not been set for all sectors.

2.A.7 Women in power and decision-making

Constitutional and Legal Provisions: Bangladesh is a signatory to most of the international conventions that seek the promotion and political empowerment of women. The NWDP 2011 emphasizes political empowerment and women's participation in decision making processed. In order to achieve this it advocates ensuring 33% representation inside the political parties and recommends that political parties nominate women at increased rates in the election. Furthermore, to increase women's representation in the parliament, the policy supports the idea to increase the number of women's seats to 33 percent and advocates for direct elections to the extended numbers of seats for women.

The Sixth Five Year Development Plan (SFYP) (2011-2015), sets out strategies to ensure political empowerment and participation of women such as ensuring participation of women in the parliament and local institutions, influencing political decisions in favour of women, direct elections for the reserved seats in parliament and women's representation in the local bodies with authority and responsibility. Most importantly it has proposed to take initiatives that would make women politically more conscious and encourage them to participate in politics and to build leadership among women.

Constitutionally there are provisions for reserved seats for women representatives in the Parliament. In the 14th Amendment of the Constitution in 2004, the provision of women's seats was increased to 45.

The Representation of People's Ordinance' (RPO) 2013 (Third Amendment) specifies some characteristics that a registered political party must meet up in order to qualify to participate the National Election. These include that the political party must have incorporated the following specific provisions in their constitution namely a) to elect the members of the committees at all levels including members of the central committee and b) to fix the goal of reserving at least 33% of all committee positions for women including the central committee and progressively achieving this goal by the year 2020. Article 90(c) mentioned that a political party will not qualify for registration if the party constitution has any discriminatory clause regarding religion, race, caste, language or sex. To be nominated by a party, the candidate is required to have been a member of that party for at least three years. The recent RPO is significant for its initiatives to promote parties to adopt practices of internal

democracy, such as election of party leadership and more grassroots power over candidate nomination; mandated parties to hold certain basic principles such as non-discrimination; tough financial controls to increase transparency in party operations; inclusion of women inside the party leadership role. All the above mentioned criteria can effectively support women entering into national politics.

Present Status of Women's Representation in Elected Posts:

Women in Cabinet: Six women were appointed to a 43 member Cabinet in 2009. Three were full ministers, and the rest state ministers. In the Cabinet formed in 2014 Home, Agriculture and Women Affairs Ministries are led by women and there is a woman State Minister in the MOPME.

Women in Parliament: Out of 63 women who contested in general seats in Parliament in 2008, 19 were elected, (6.3% in a house of 350) and 45 women were selected by parties in Parliament to fill 45 reserved seats, raising the percentage of women in the Ninth Parliament to 18.5 per cent as compared to 4.3 per cent in the Eighth Parliament. Later on, 5 more reserved seats were added in Nineteenth Parliament. Nineteen women were elected through direct elections and in total the 2009 parliament had 66 women members. There were 57 women members in various Parliamentary Standing Committees in the 9th Parliament.

In the 10th Parliament there is a total of 50 Standing Committees with a total number of 509¹⁹ members of whom 428 are male and 81 are female²⁰. After the 2014 elections there are 69 women parliamentarians of whom 50 are on the reserved seats and 19 have been elected directly, bringing the percentage of women MPs to 19.7%. In the 2014 elections only 27 women out of a total of 540 candidates contested from different political parties (except BNP and 19 parties alliances) of whom 19 won the elections. The appointment of the first woman Speaker in 2013 is a significant step in the history of Bangladesh.

Women in Local Government: In 1976, the Bangladesh Government adopted the Local Government Ordinance and introduced a three-tier local Government system, which includes Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad and City Corporation.

The Union Parishad Act (Second Amendment) 1997 allows for direct election of one chairperson and twelve members to the Union Parishad, with three seats reserved for women members through direct election. In addition to three reserved seats, women can take part in direct elections for general seats. The Act is considered a milestone towards increasing women's participation in politics and promoting their political skills through direct elections.

The Upazila Parishad Act 2008 reserved one seat for women among the two elected vice chairpersons. Women can compete for the general seats (The Upazila Parishad Act, 2009). In elections held on 22 January 2009 under the RPO 2008, 480 women were elected to the reserved post of vice chairpersons in 480 upazilas, out of a total number of 1,936 contestants. In the Upazila elections in 2014 in 458 Upazilas 1509 women candidates participated which amounted to 3.4 women candidates per upazila which went down from 2009 where 2900 women had participated, which amounted to women 6.3 candidates per upazila. This represents a 48% decrease over the five years.²¹

¹⁹ Total higher than total of MPs are some MPs may be members of several committees.

²⁰ Compiled from the Bangladesh parliament Website: <http://www.parliament.gov.bd/index.php/en/parliamentary-business/committees/list-of-committees/name-of-committees-for-10th-parliament-bangla>

²¹ Aparijita study carried out by Democracy Watch, Steps and PRIP Trust, 2014

City Corporations: Six city corporations and 223 municipal bodies known as *pourasavas* (small townships) provide elected governance in cities and townships. Ten to thirty seats were reserved for women depending on the size of the city corporation.²² As per the Local Government (City Corporation) Act 2009, one third of the counsellors' seats are reserved for women candidates and women can also contest for direct election for the general seats. Elections to four City Corporations and nine *pourasavas* were held on 4 August 2008, in which 194 (2.4 per cent) women candidates contested for 39 reserved councillor's seats. In nine *pourasavas*, 120 (0.47 per cent) women contested for 27 reserved seats (Bangladesh Election Commission, 2008).

Although the numbers of women in local Government is a positive development there are constraints in how effective they can be. The authority of women elected to reserved seats and resources available to them are not equal to the general seats. As a result, they cannot fully meet the expectations of their constituencies.

Women's Representation in Political Parties: Historically the number of women contenders in various elections and within the political parties has been low. Two central and biggest political parties of Bangladesh are being led by two women leaders. Their presence has made it significantly easier for other women to be in politics over the last thirty years. Reservation of seats has not brought about a perceptual change about women in electoral politics because the electoral field is still dominated by male politicians. Bangladesh has First Past the Post and single member constituency system. In this system, the winning candidate is the one who gains more votes than any other candidate, even if this is not an absolute majority of valid votes. Therefore, the political parties show little interest in nominating women in general seats as they fear to lose seats in the election.

Women's representation within the five major political parties is still very low. In the hierarchy within the political parties, less women's representation compared with their male counterparts is seen. Bangladesh Awami League had 12 percentage women in the Central Executive Committees (9 persons) while the Bangladesh Nationalist party had 6 persons in its national executive committee. The following table shows the distribution of women representation within the major five political parties.

²² The Local Government Act 2007

Table 9: Number of women members in the hierarchy of major political parties in Bangladesh

Name of Party	Committees	Total Members	Female Members
The Bangladesh Awami League	Presidium Member	12	4
	Central Working Committee	131	7
	Advisory Committee	34	2
The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	Advisory Council to the Chairperson	33	0
	National Standing Committee	16	2
	Central Executive Committee	380	46
Jatiya Party	Presidium Member	41	4
	Executive Committee	89	6

Source: The Bangladesh Awami League, The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jatiya Party

Women politicians rarely hold leadership positions in the central executive committees. These positions are traditionally considered to be the men's domain. Women usually are given positions in committees those are traditionally considered to be women's area, such as, education, health, women and children committees and are less likely seen to sit on economics, budget, and foreign affairs committees.

Women in public service: Currently, the Bangladesh civil service has more than 1.1 million civil servants in 37 ministries, 11 divisions, 254 departments and 173 statutory bodies (BBS 2012). Appointment to a service is on the basis of both merit and quota reservations for districts, freedom fighters, women and ethnic minorities. 10% of posts are reserved for women. There is steady progress in the numbers of women in service at mid and senior levels from 15% in 2006 and 21% in 2011 (BBS 2011).

In the public sector employment, men and women enjoy the same benefits and amenities in all respects including pay, allowances, pensions and other financial benefits. However, reviews on administrative reform have found that substantial improvements in working conditions are needed to attract more women to the civil service. Constraints identified for the lesser participation of women in the public service and especially at decision-making levels include lower recruitment of women; lesser promotions of women, especially at senior levels; field postings and transfers; lack of gender sensitivity and discriminatory attitudes among management and colleagues and lack of family support. Various institutional weaknesses and constraints in overall public administration make human resource development, planning and utilisation difficult, which impacts on both women and men. The lack of centralised human resource management functions and the lack of adequate sex-disaggregated data for human resource management and planning are some of the major constraints.

The Government is one of the largest employers and appointment to a service is on the basis of both merit and quota reservations for districts, freedom fighters, women and ethnic minorities. Forty five % are appointed on merit, 30% from freedom fighters and if appropriate candidates from this category are not available, their wards, 10% for women, 5% for ethnic minorities and the remaining 10% for districts (source: Public Service Commission website) in cadre services. Table 11 presents data on the proportion of male and female officers at middle and senior levels.

Table 10: Breakdown by sex of male and female officers at middle and senior levels, 1999- 2011

Level	2011		2006		1999	
	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)
Secretary	96.1	3.9%	98.4	1.6	98.0	2.0
Additional Secretary	94.8	5.2%	100.0	0.0	98.2	1.8
Joint Secretary	90.2	9.8%	93.2	6.8	98.5	1.5
Deputy Secretary	88.1	11.9%	88.3	11.7	98.6	1.1
Senior Assistant Secretary	79.8	20.2%	84.3	15.7	91.0	9.0
Assistant secretary	79.8	25.9%	77.3	22.7	85.7	14.3
TOTAL	79%	21%	85.0	15.0	91.5	8.5

Source: Ministry of Public Administration, Public Administration Computer Cell, 5 September 2011, and Human Development report in Facts and Figures of Gender Compendium of Bangladesh 2009, BBS

We can see the progress over time by comparing numbers from right to left in the table. There is steady progress from 1999 through to 2011 with increases up to the level of Joint Secretary. However, at Secretary level there is no marked increase in 12 years and at the Additional Secretary level there is an increase only in 2011 to 5.2% - which still very low in absolute numbers. There are more women in the departments and directorates as these figures include women at lower levels and engaged in direct service delivery, such as teachers, health and family planning assistants, nurses, etc. But the semi-autonomous organisations, corporations (outside the scope of the 10%/ 15% quotas) and private sector have much lower ratios. There appears, therefore, to be a positive relationship between quotas – despite not always being met – and the number of women in public administration. In addition there are 23% of women in the judiciary.

A Bangladesh Civil Service Women’s Network is registered as an official association with 720 registered members. The first ever comprehensive Gender Guidelines for Civil Service have been formulated. The Guidelines have also been approved by the Honourable Prime Minister to issue a circular. A Gender Training Module has been formulated for the public sector senior managers.

The number of women in decision-making positions in the private sector has also started to increase although data on this is limited. A number of associations of women entrepreneurs had been set up. Women are visible on boards of private corporations and also in senior management.

Remaining Challenges: Laws such as the RPO and the Women’s Advancement Policy provisions aimed at the promotion of women’s full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of public, political and professional life need to be monitored and enforced by Government. Elected women representatives to public office need institutional support and resources so that they can function effectively. Awareness-raising activities for the society as a whole about the importance of gender equality and women’s participation in decision-making needs to be continued. Capacity building and mentoring programmes for women candidates and women elected to public office as well as programmes on leadership and negotiation skills for current and future women leaders should be institutionalized. The draft Civil Service Act, currently being finalized, and its Bye-laws, is a key piece of legislation and a priority. It should therefore be ensured that it includes provisions to promote and support women in civil service and their full and effective integration. Institutional coordination between the Ministry of Public Administration and Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs should be strengthened so that MOWCA can fulfil a catalytic and monitoring role on MoPA initiatives. Institutional

support to improve gender balance should focus on the areas of improving availability and quality of sex-disaggregated data to enable the tracking of gender balance at various levels

2.A.8. Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women

The Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) has emphasized mainstreaming women's development as a strategy. Though it has been recognized in the PFA that the goal of achieving gender equality cannot be achieved by Government alone, Government does have a significant role to play. Since women's development is a cross cutting issue, it is not only the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, which should alone be responsible for women's development. It is crucial that all government sectors are equally involved in the integration of gender concerns, needs and interests into their policies, plans and programmes. Within this broader framework of government agencies' roles and responsibilities regarding mainstreaming gender, the MoWCA as part of the National Women Machinery is mandated to act as the focal point and catalyst for action by Government on issues of women's equality and development and to promote a broader and more consistent response by all Government agencies to the needs and priorities of women.

The following institutional measures are in place to ensure implementation and monitoring of the NAP:

- National Council for Women and Children's Development (NCWCD)
- The Parliamentary Standing Committee for Women and Children's Affairs
- The Women's Development Implementation and Evaluation Committee
- Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee for the National Programme for the Prevention of Violence and Dowry
- MOWCA and its implementing agencies: the Department for Women's Affairs (DWA) and the Jatiya Mahila Sangstha (JMS)
- The WID Focal Points mechanism
- Policy Leadership advocacy Unit (PLAU) in MOWCA
- District and Thana level WID Coordination Committees

National Council for Women and Children's Development (NCWCD): The NCWCD is the most high-powered committee for women's development headed by the Honourable Prime Minister. The Council consists of 14 Ministers, Secretaries of 13 ministries, a member of the Planning Commission, 5 Members of the Parliament and 10 prominent women, nominated by the Government. The Secretary of the MOWCA is the member secretary of NCWCD. In March 1995, the Committee was formed. At the first meeting (1997) the National Policy for Women's Advancement was approved. The Committee was revised in 2011 to include Children and the TOR were revised to mention follow-up of the 2011 Policy.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Women and Children: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Women and Children headed by a Member of the Parliament (MP) was established to fulfill the commitments of the National Policy for Women's Advancement. A 10- member Parliamentary Standing Committee for women and Children's Affairs meets monthly to review the activities of the MOWCA on behalf of the Parliament. The Secretary of the MOWCA is the member secretary of this committee.

Women's Development Implementation and Evaluation Committee: This Committee, headed by the Minister of the MOWCA was formed in order to monitor implementation of the NAP by different sectors and is to meet on a quarterly basis. The Secretary of the MOWCA is the Member Secretary.

Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee for the National Programmes for the Prevention of Violence and Dowry: Includes representatives from Government Ministries and civil society. Its objective is to coordinate and review programmes of all organisations and committees working on VAW. It reviews the activities of law enforcement agencies and meets twice a year.

Policy Leadership Advocacy Unit (PLAU): The Unit is to play an analytical role by reviewing sectoral policies to ensure consistency with CEDAW and Women's Development Policy. It also reviews national laws and policies to ensure consistency with international commitments and is to prepare proposals for necessary changes to national laws. It is to consolidate reports provided by WID Focal Points and prepare reports for various inter-ministerial committees.

WID Focal Points Mechanism: Since the Fourth Five-Year Plan, all sectors and ministries are responsible for incorporating WID issues into their programmes. Each ministry selects an official at the rank of Joint Secretary to function as the WID Focal Point. This mechanism was established in 1990 to ensure that gender concerns are included in the policies, plans and programmes of all line ministries. In 1997 the Focal Point position was upgraded to that of Joint Secretary/Joint Chief and Deputy Secretary/Deputy Chief were nominated as WID Focal Points and Associate WID Focal Points respectively. In 1999 MOWCA initiated the establishment of Sub WID Focal Points in all implementing agencies.

Role of NGOs in the Beijing Follow Up: The Government gives due recognition to the role of women's organizations and NGO's in national development efforts and encourages their participation in different forums and committees. Representatives of women's organizations and eminent women activists, writers, researchers are part of the National Machinery that has been set up to monitor Beijing follow-up such as the NCWCD. Most of the members of the Core group that was responsible for coordinating all activities and tasks for the formulation of the NAP were from the broader civil society. NGO's, Women Organizations and Human Rights Organizations continue to play an active and important role in the above critical areas of concern. They have taken up programmes and projects based on the critical areas of concerns according to their resources, capacity and needs of their clientele. Some have taken up new programmes based on the critical areas of concerns and others have consolidated and strengthened previous programmes. Their programmes range from providing direct services to raising awareness, mobilizing support, advocating for policy changes and lobbying at different levels for adoptions of laws that is sensitive to needs of women.

Challenges: MoWCA's role of working as a catalyst is not always acknowledged. Other ministries need to take on more responsibilities for the implementation of the NWDP and National Action Plan. Their Allocation of Businesses needs to be revised accordingly. WID Focal Point mechanism needs to be activated and facilitated so that they can play their envisaged role. Their capacity building, continuity and accountability remain challenges. Monitoring and Coordination role of MOWCA need to enhance to oversee the implementation of policies related to gender equality.

2.A.9. Human Rights of Women

Institutional and legal framework for protection and promotion of human rights: The Government has taken a number of measures for the strengthening of the institutional framework for protection and promotion of human rights. The National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009 empowers the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to exercise its investigative power suo moto to probe into any alleged violation of human rights. Its mandate extends, inter alia, to summon explanation from the Law Enforcing Agencies and other public authorities, visit jails, prisons or correctional centres, lodge writ petitions to the High Court Division on behalf of an aggrieved and exercise the powers of a civil court while conducting any inquiry. Since 2009, the Government has prioritised transforming the NHRC into the primary institution that oversees human rights implementation in Bangladesh. The freedom to use its allocated budget and the guarantee of tenure of the Chairman and members of the NHRC ensures its functional independence. The NHRC has set up an online Complaints Management System. Staffing and use of legal panels, however, still need to be enhanced, the complaints mechanisms have to be further strengthened and its mandate further extended.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) and the National Election Commission (EC) are considered to be part of the institutional framework of Human rights. The ACC acts as an independent institution to investigate and prosecute offences related to corruption. There are some remaining constraints to its functioning due to lack of financial independence, not having a code of conduct for its staff and also limitations on which cases it can take up.

National Election Commission (EC) is EC is vested with the task of conducting elections in Bangladesh. The President appointed a new Chief Election Commissioner through a consultative selection process in 2012. The Election Commission Act, 2009 and subsequent reforms have delinked EC from the Executive to guarantee its independence. The EC has also been given financial autonomy.

The Law Commission is a statutory body empowered to recommend enactment, amendment or repealing of laws relating to fundamental rights and values of society. It codifies laws and advises reforms of the judicial system. Before finalising draft laws, the Commission consults, solicits and considers submissions from various stakeholders. Since 2009, the Commission has prepared a number of reports on reform of laws for promotion of human rights, including abolition of corporal punishment, prevention of sexual harassment in educational institutions and workplaces, prevention of violence against women, protection of victims and witnesses to grave offences, ensuring speedy disposal of civil and criminal cases, and reform of Hindu family laws.

The Information Commission (IC) has been established under the Right to Information Act, 2009 (RIA) with a view to ensuring citizens' access to information under public and private domain. IC retains the power to impose legal sanctions for breach of RIA, including failure of any public or private organization to provide information to anyone who may apply.

The Government, through the Legal Aid Act, 2010, has set up the country's first legal aid institution, the National Legal Aid Services Organization (NLASO) in order to facilitate poor citizens' access to justice and enforcement of their rights. The NLASO has put in place hotline numbers which are accessible by the people. The NLASO provides service through District Legal Aid Committees (DLAC) operating in all districts. Each DLAC manages a legal aid fund financed by the Government.

International legal obligations and commitments: Bangladesh has reaffirmed its commitment to promote and protect human rights through its unequivocal pledge to uphold the principles and purposes of the UN Charter, international peace and security, respect for international law and rejection of colonialism and racism. Bangladesh is party to 16 international human rights instruments and has enacted domestic laws for their implementation. During 2009-12, Bangladesh has ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 1998 (23 March 2010); the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (24 August 2011) and the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime 2000 (13 July 2011) and Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, Beijing, 3 December 1999 (24 August 2010).

Since UPR 2009, UN Special Rapporteurs on Housing and Water and Sanitation, the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and the UN Special Rapporteur on Poverty have visited Bangladesh. During this time, Bangladesh has submitted its periodic reports to CEDAW and CRC Committees and has initiated work, in cooperation with UNDP, to strengthen reporting capacity to other treaty bodies, particularly ICCPR and ICESCR .

The Government separated the Judiciary from the Executive by amending the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1898 to make the lower and upper judiciary fully independent. To further strengthen administration of justice, a separate Judicial Service Commission, a Judicial Service Pay Commission and a Judicial Administration Training Institute have been established.

Withdrawal of reservation to Article 2 of CEDAW remains under active consideration of the Government and the implication of withdrawal of reservation to Article 16.1(c) is being examined further in consultation with CSOs and all religious and ethnic groups.

National Legislation: Bangladesh has approved the Hindu Marriage Registration 2012 which gives Hindu women the option to register their marriages. The Citizenship Amendment Act of 2009 gives women the opportunity to pass on their citizenship to their children. A new legislation recognizes the rights of disabled people after a few Public Interest Litigations (PILs) were successful in ensuring compliance to disability rights. New legislation is being prepared by the Law Commission in collaboration with NHRC and civil society as an anti-discrimination law as well as a Child Marriage Prevention Act.

Law enforcing agencies and human rights: As stated in the State Report to the Human Rights Council, the Government continues to maintain its 'zero tolerance' policy towards violation of human rights by law enforcement authorities. A draft Police Reform Act with stringent code of conduct is in place, while pro-people policing has been introduced through establishment of model police stations and victim support centres²³ in key police stations. According to existing laws, there is no scope for impunity for human rights violations by armed forces and law enforcement authorities. They follow their respective Codes of Conduct and Rules of Engagement. After every incident of use of force or exchange of fire by police, RAB or other law enforcement authorities a series of inquiries and investigations are conducted by competent authorities. If it is found through inquiry that any law enforcement authorities member has breached Code of Conduct and human rights, appropriate legal and disciplinary actions are taken against such persons. For instance, during 2010-12, more than 1,600 RAB members have been brought to justice, including imprisonment, dismissal and removal from service for committing various offences and human rights violations. An Internal Enquiry Cell, a special team trained and organised with the US

²³ in two locations

Government support, investigates any incident of use of force or exchange of fire by RAB members. (UPR Report, 2013: 30).

Prison reform: The number of prisoners exceeds the official capacity of prisons in Bangladesh leading to overcrowding. During 2009-12, the Government has taken steps to construct new prison facilities in spacious, healthy conditions. Four new central jails have already gone into operation while construction work is ongoing for two more jails for under-trial prisoners. The prison authorities are making sustained efforts to turn jails into correctional homes where prisoners would get opportunity to go through corrective measures and a disciplined lifestyle, and also learn new skills to pursue gainful employment upon release. In every jail, there are enclosed, protected accommodation arrangements for female prisoners, where children up to 6 years of age are allowed to stay with their mothers. (UPR Report, 2013: 30)

Access to, and Services from, the Judiciary: 71 judges have been appointed in upper court and 125 judges in sub-ordinate courts to reduce backlog of cases. Justice delivery system in upper and lower judiciary has been digitalized. (UPR report 2013). In spite of various measures for law reform and setting up of special courts for cases under the Women and Child Repression Prevention Act 2003, there are many constraints to women accessing justice in cases of VAW, through the judicial system. This system is lengthy, expensive (due to various legal fees, costs of lawyers and also due to the length of the process), and unfriendly to women. Although the number of women lawyers is increasing, the courts, judges, prosecutors and the procedures in general are intimidating, male biased, and very insensitive to the difficulties in dealing with personal and domestic violence issues

In order to facilitate the access to legal aid for the poor Government set up the National Legal Aid Services Organisation in 2010. Its services include legal advice (oral advice given by the panel lawyer to the poor people); legal representation; legal support (drafting legal documents for court proceedings) and legal counselling. District Legal Aid Committees have been activated. To provide better and timely services to poor litigants, NLASO has taken several steps i.e set up new legal aid office at the court premises with modern offices in 41 districts; developed reporting and documentation mechanisms such as forms and registers; improved coordination among DLAC, Upazila and Union legal aid committees etc. for improved legal aid services. The organization works to develop a database and strategic plan. In December 2010, a full time legal aid office staff has been appointed in every District Court. In 2009 only two Districts had separate staffed Legal Aid Office. Now 41 Districts have their own offices and the number of new offices is growing steadily, despite the serious challenges posed by the shortage of office space in most District Court compounds.

With the help of the A2I Project, the organization is going to introduce a hotline service to receive calls, provide referral services and information which will be transformed into a computerized data base so that the types of services, legal aid information sought by citizens and a speedy grievance redresses mechanism would be initiated and the provision of legal aid services can be evaluated. NLASO made provisions for Upazila and Union Committees. In March 2011, through a gazette notification, the Government has formally activated the Upazila and Union Committees whilst NLASO is currently working to develop their mandates and functions. Simultaneously, interactive meetings with the members of Upazila and Union Legal Aid Committees have been organized at pilot districts where the public representatives have shown their keen interest to make the common people aware about Government legal aid services.

The MoLIPA is actively exploring options to increase the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms to reduce case backlog and delay in the court system. The organization has started to explore how legal aid clients can be more benefited from ADR and introduce ADR as a mechanism to resolve disputes. Although LASA was amended in 2006 to include ADR as a legal aid service, these amendments did not cover most cases where ADR would be useful, and were never put into full effect²⁴.

Human rights education and awareness: The National Education Policy, 2010 has made provisions for imparting knowledge of human rights at all education levels. The judiciary, armed forces, police and other law enforcing agencies have undertaken various reforms and training programmes aimed at improving observance of human rights among their members. The Government supports NHRC's human rights awareness initiatives. Since 2009, the NHRC has regularly organized interactive dialogues with stakeholders to increase public awareness about human rights and in 2011 conducted a comprehensive baseline survey on citizen's perception of human rights. It was found that half of the respondents had not heard of human rights. Those who had were more likely to be urban, educated, male and less poor. Another 18 % of those who had heard the term could not describe what it means. When asked what human rights people should have, respondents recognized the right to life as the primary human right, along with political and civil rights such as equality and freedom from discrimination personal freedoms and freedom of expression. There was also a strong focus on socio-economic rights and access to services. Over half of those surveyed were either not aware or did not believe that human rights, or atleast some of them, are legally protected and enforceable in Bangladesh. Of those who were aware rights are protected, only 6.1% knew that they are protected by the Constitution. This is perhaps not surprising when coupled with the finding that 58% had not heard of the Constitution. Since people can only claim and defend their rights when they know and understand that they can be legally enforced, the lack of knowledge around the legal protection of rights is problematic (NHRC, 2011: 10)

There are also widespread legal literacy and human rights education programmes carried out by various NGOs such as BRAC-HRLS, BLAST, BNWLA, ASK, RDRS, but despite the outreach of these programmes, the overall awareness of human rights and understanding of legal rights remains limited.

Remaining Challenges: Increasing legal literacy and the understanding of human rights and women's rights is a priority as is increasing access by the poor, marginalised and women to justice and removing the various barriers which make the processes lengthy, costly and do not ensure fair outcomes. Increasing accountability of judiciary and law enforcement authorities for the delivery of justice needs to be ensured. Overall the culture of impunity is a major barrier for the enforcement of human rights.

2.A.10 Women and Media

There has been a phenomenal change in the landscape of media which include growth of print media, private satellite TV channels, FM radio, and community radios in Bangladesh in the last one decade. The media is not only providing information, but active in flagging issues of human rights, development, governance and other matters of national importance in the public domain with a view to generating dialogue and consensus on those issues. Introduction of new IT based communication and social media has opened a new horizon with increased global connectivity.

²⁴ <http://www.nlaso.gov.bd/index.php/key-achievements>.

Journalism: Women's participation in journalism, in both electronic and print media, marked a rise in the last couple of years, but found a high turn-over rate. Women have been doing noteworthy work as journalists, yet the number in both print and electronic media is less than expected. Despite many successful women in the profession, women's participation and representation at the decision making level at the media houses is still as low as only 0.6 percent at editorial and management positions and 7% in the print media journalism. Women journalists face many challenges related to security and safety while performing their responsibilities, irregular schedule, night hours, risk at work and balancing family responsibilities. As the media houses are mostly in the private sector and yet to introduce a pay scale, low and unequal wage, unfair treatment and lack of recognition of work discourage women. Often women are not assigned to cover special/ important or significant events/ reports. They are assigned for soft stories, day's events, or light events unlike their male colleagues who are preferred for significant and leading assignments and stories. The number of female field agents is negligible.

Electronic media: Women constitute about 15 percent of the journalists working in country's 22 state and privately run TV channels. With the increase of the number of private TV channels, participation of women as artists, news presenters, photographers, and anchors has substantially increased and expected to rise further in 20 upcoming registered channels. It is recognized that women journalists play an important role in voicing concerns of the victims in conflict or calamity stricken areas, who are mostly women and children, since these victims are more comfortable sharing their experiences with female professionals.

Community Radio: The Government has opened up community radio service in 2011. Community radios are operating throughout the country for fostering community development, alerting local communities of imminent natural disasters and helping them mitigate risks. Currently there are 30 approved radio stations of which 14 are operational and young women are involved in this broadcasting industry. An estimated 249 women are working in 14 radio stations.

Information Technology: Expansion of information technology through Government and private providers has enabled citizens to access information, entertainment, consumer market and services. As per HIES, 2010 63.74% households had access to mobile phones, which is increasing every day. Access to land telephone was 2.07%. Internet facility has reached to 21.3% of the population but mobile based internet facility is growing. Women of remote local community have access to mobile phones. Access to social media, especially among the young generation has opened new mode of socialization, services and catering to the needs of young population including women.

E-services: In consistency with the vision of Digital Bangladesh, E-service centres have been established in all districts, 147 upazillas and 4,516 Unions. The union information service centres aim to ensure people's access to public services and are run by local youths, half of them being women. These centres have enabled people of remote areas accessing information, Government forms, results of public examinations and information on agriculture, education, health, law, and overseas job opportunities. A project under Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is in operation in 13 upazillas for training 8,280 women in managing IT centres. Approximately, 8,000 rural post offices and 500 upazilla post offices are in the process of being converted into e-centres.

Outsourcing: Bangladesh has become an exporter of information technology through outsourcing. There are now about 20,000 people employed in this industry which is exporting services to European, North American and East Asian clients. Bangladeshi freelancer outsourcing community has supplemented the IT exports by earning close to US\$7 million in 2010, with Bangladesh appearing

consistently in top freelance work locations on sites like oDesk, eLance and the like. Given the unemployment rate of young people and household responsibility of young women, freelancing career is gradually becoming popular including among women which has opened a new horizon for their empowerment. Women are already successful in freelancing business, but still an enormous gender gap exists in the freelancer community. Not only are women's earnings growing, but online work provides them flexibility and more opportunities to succeed in technology based careers over traditional onsite or full-time work and can reduce the problem of gender-based discrimination in payments. The Government is implementing a number of projects to provide training for men and women for online earning. Also 100 English resource centres have been set up with the support of the British Council to improve language skills.

Portrayal of women in media: Transformation in news content has been brought on by an influx of women into the news media. Issues such as health, education, child care, violence and women's work and such topics have gained prominent slots in newspapers, and electronic media. Portrayal of women's positive image is promoted. However, in the changing world, interaction with global media, women's negative roles as well as projection in promotional programmes as commodity has been noticed. The lifestyle magazines also project the importance of physical appearance of women. Publishing of pictures of victims of rape and the perpetrators have been restricted. A National Broadcasting Policy 2013 was drafted with the objectives in strengthening of broadcasting for the development of women and poor groups; ensuring release of social responsibility of preventing any broadcasting against social and ethical norms; portrayal of women's productive roles; and prevention of projecting women as objects in commercial media. The Policy needs approval and measures for screening of promotional for consumer products and establishing ethical values are necessary. The Film Censor Board screens the contents of the films.

With the expansion of information technology and social media there is also the risk of expansion of pornography and abuse of women. The Pornography Control Act, 2012 aims to prevent deterioration of moral and ethical values of the society and to prevent the use of information with criminal intention. The Act declares any pornographic recording of video, still picture and publication of them in print, electronic or other form a Criminal offence. The Act has a separate section for child pornography. Few other features of the Act empower the Court to take expert opinion/help from IT experts and empowers the Investigation Officer to seize or search any device, book, CD etc as evidence.

Challenge: The work environment in the media particularly the stress, timing and safety concerns refrain women from continuing in media, particularly as reporters. Given the opportunities, women are still lagging in technology based jobs and in outsourcing as women's educational attainments, science learning, technological knowledge is still lower than those of men. Mass awareness among the media personnel at all levels, including for the owners is necessary in order to promote positive portrayal of women's roles and images. The expansion of consumerism promoted by corporate houses calls for the orientation and capacity of corporate and media houses on the positive portrayal of women in media. Establishment of principles and ethics for all media is a must and development of the capacity of media personnel in projection and portrayal of women and gender aspects is necessary. To increase positive portrayal of women in media establishment of screening body for commercials, formulation of gender policy and owners' manual for media houses, well equipped registration body and inclusion of dedicated time on gender issues are necessary. The challenges of managing Bangladesh's exposure to new media and IT within the changing global scenario, need careful planning so that ICT can be used for the country's advantage at the same time minimizing any potential risks.

2.A.11 Women and the environment

Bangladesh suffers from serious environmental degradation and is a victim of severe global climate change. Climate change as well as human made environmental degradation has seriously threatened the country's resource and livelihood base of its vast population. The effects of climate change and environmental degradation include water stress, sea level rise and increased extreme weather events, adverse effect on food security, water and air pollution, salinity, climate induced migration and health problems. Women being the principal resource managers at the household level are the worst victims of resource stress and depletion and increased natural calamities. They face significant effects as well as have a major role to play in daily life as well as in pre and post-disaster management for the well-being of her family. Women's work responsibilities include managing the most basic and natural of all resources—food, fuel and water. Women have been included in the local level natural resource management as well as in international level climate change negotiation teams. Similarly, women have also been involved in village common forest management groups in the Chittagong Hill Tract area.

Mainstreaming gender in policies and plans: The Government, recognizing the challenges of climate change, environmental degradation and role of women in natural resource management, has developed several policies and mechanisms to combat them, which include both adaptation and mitigation measures and considers roles and needs of both women and men. Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan, (BCCSAP) 2009 includes specific action on Strengthening of Gender Considerations in Climate Change Management. Gender equality and enhanced sustainability is included in the objectives of the action plan. Similarly, Draft National Environment Policy 2013, Forestry Sector (Amendment) Rules 2009, Bangladesh Water Policy (1999) have incorporated women's roles and benefits in relevant policies and plans. The policies and plans provide guidance on policy issues and initiatives that should be taken into consideration by the Government and development practitioners, in collaboration with different stakeholders, institutions including civil society to address environmental and climate change issues in a gender responsive manner. A major one amongst them, the Climate Change and Gender Action Plan (ccGAP) 2013 was developed considering gender as a crosscutting element.

The ccGAP addresses four of the key pillars of BCCSAP, a) Food Security, Social Protection and Health; b) Comprehensive Disaster Management; c) Infrastructure; and d) Mitigation and Low Carbon Development. The other two pillars of the BCCSAP i) Capacity building and Institutional Strengthening and ii) research and knowledge management, are also reflected throughout this plan as cross cutting issues. The ccGAP incorporates women's role in cost effective adaptation, enhancement of adaptive capacity in terms of skills and capabilities at community and national level, roles in mitigation and alignment with the national and sectoral plans and programs.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation: Within the climate change adaptation framework building resilience to climate change impact is prioritized and women's involvement is promoted in different sectors. Women's role is gradually becoming prominent in contributing in climate change mitigation. In the adaptation area water and forest management, food security, infrastructure, disaster preparedness are addressed. Women's participation in mitigation is mainly through low carbon generating activities such as renewable energy like solar power, Improved cooking stoves (ICS) and bio-gas, waste management, which were mainly initiated for livelihood support, environmental protection, increasing access to energy or for poverty reduction.

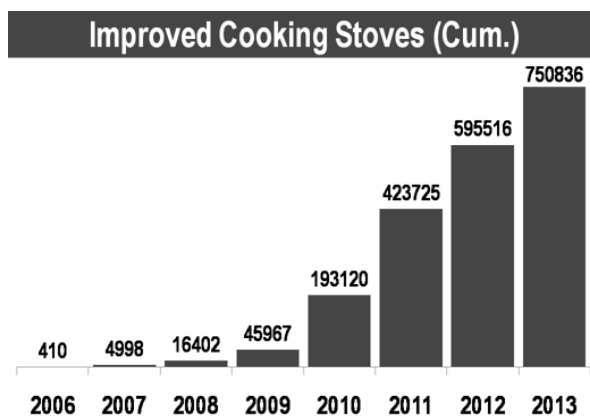
Water management: Water is one of the key natural resources but Bangladesh suffers from water stress, salinity, and flooding. Water management is the key to livelihoods of women. The National Water Policy, 1999 and the Water Act 2013 called for institutional changes in enhancing the role of women in water management. The Guidelines for Participatory Water Management, 2000 has provision of women’s participation in water management cooperatives (WMC) associations and in labour contracting societies. Currently women constitute about 27% percent of the members in WMCs in small scale water management units (<1000 hectares) who are engaged in drainage improvement, command area development/irrigation, water conservation, and flood management. Women also play important roles in water supply and sanitation groups at the community level and constitute about 30% of the members.

Food security and infrastructure: Food security program involves livelihood support and agriculture including low gestation and low water consuming products, short gestation fisheries where women are the major target group. Climate resilient infrastructure development projects, especially those which are in the coastal region, have identified and incorporated women’ role in infrastructure construction, planning, management and use. Infrastructure design also addresses women’s needs including privacy.

Forest and bio-diversity: Women’s involvement in social forestry, mangrove and coastal greenbelt expansion and protected area management programs have increased over time. Poor women mostly organized by non-Government Organizations (NGO) are responsible for tree plantation and care under different tree-cover expansion projects. Women benefit from the forestry programs and get share of the sale proceeds of the harvested lots at the end of rotation according to Social Forestry (amendment) Rules-2009 and 2011. In June 2012 25% of total 500,000 participants in social forestry were women. Other Government agencies dealing with infrastructure also promote social forestry for infrastructure maintenance. A community based approach called co-management ensures 40% women participation in Co-management Committees for Protected forest areas, establishes their rights and access to natural resources management and improve the rural ecology through forestation. Khurshida Begum of a village from south-eastern Cox's Bazar district received for the first ever Wangari Maathai Award-2012 for her pioneering role in co-management in wildlife conservation of forest resources. (see annex 3).

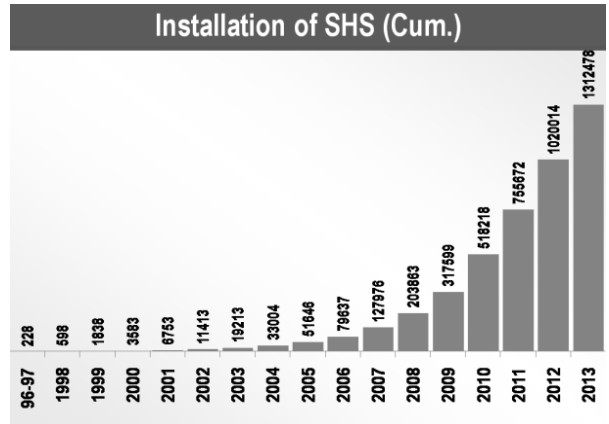
Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS): In rural Bangladesh, the energy consumption for cooking outstrips the demand for all other uses of energy. About 51% of the energy for cooking comes from bio-mass and women are traditionally the managers of fuel and cooking. The introduction of improved cook stoves (ICS) by Bangladesh Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and expansion by Government and non Government organizations, is not only saving fuel but reducing emission, women’s drudgery and health hazards. With the growing understanding of climate change impact and need of energy efficiency, ICS is expanding with more involvement of women ensured. More than 30 organizations are engaged in the rural renewable energy sector though except for a few, majority have a very small client base. As of December 2012, Grameen Shakti (GS), one of the pioneering organizations alone has installed 595,516 ICSs in rural areas with more than 14,000 ICSs installed per month. GS trained more than 1000 local youth especially women to make, sell and repair ICSs.

Figure 16: Improved Cook Stoves by Grameen Shakti



Renewable energy: As Bangladesh is not yet sufficient in electricity and other energy supply, solar home system has growing popularity. It is not only replacing expensive fuels, it also has become a tool of social change, empowering girls and women. For rural households, solar power means productivity, income, connectivity and education while minimizing energy cost and emission. Opportunity for women to be involved in solar energy technology has been on the increase. Similarly women’s role in livestock and subsequent bio-gas production using bio-digesters is on the increase. The Government has also initiated wind power generation involving local community in the south eastern coastal region. In order to reduce pollution, Government is introducing low carbon technology for brick-kilns, where a large number of labourers are women.

Figure 17: Solar Home System by Grameen Shakti



Waste management: Household, hospital and industrial waste is polluting rivers and degrading the environment. Women’s role in household and municipal waste management is gradually being recognized and pronounced. In 7 city corporations and 47 municipalities women counsellors have been involved in municipal level solid waste management activities ensuring participation of women citizens. They also take a lead in arranging courtyard meetings, rallies and information dissemination in community for awareness raising on social and environmental issues such as inter-relationship between environment, sanitation, solid waste management, health and hygiene. At the urban slum level, women run household waste collection program and act as managers of drainage, water and sanitation management through community based organizations.

Disaster management: The National Plan for Disaster Management identifies women as a distinct target group and agent in disaster forecasting, preparedness and management. Women’s participation has been ensured in the Disaster Management Committees at the district, upazilla and union levels and amongst community level volunteers. The volunteers are trained on early warning, evacuation, rescue and first aid. The Cyclone Shelter Management Committees also have women representation ensured. A guidebook on practicing gender and social inclusion in DRR has been developed and distributed to address women’s needs.

Challenges: The consequences of climate change fall out and environmental degradation will result in severe arsenic contamination and salinity making safe water especially unreachable for the poor. Similarly access to low carbon power and energy sources is a challenge more for women. The world including Bangladesh will gradually move into the path of green growth, explore green jobs and technology. Women’s participation and adequate share into this green economy would be a challenge. Average annual growth rate of urban population during 1990-2012 was 3.4% and this causes rapid increase of population in slums without adequate services posing environmental and health hazards. Controlling neighbourhood and river pollution, encroachment of forest, public water bodies and hills, identifying and rehabilitating female headed households, and enforcement of environmental laws are challenges to the Government. The shocks resulted by increased frequency of extreme weather events is likely to increase women’s burden and responsibilities. Chittagong Hill Tracts districts need special attention in relations to forest management because of the different land ownership pattern in the area.

2.A.12. The Girl Child

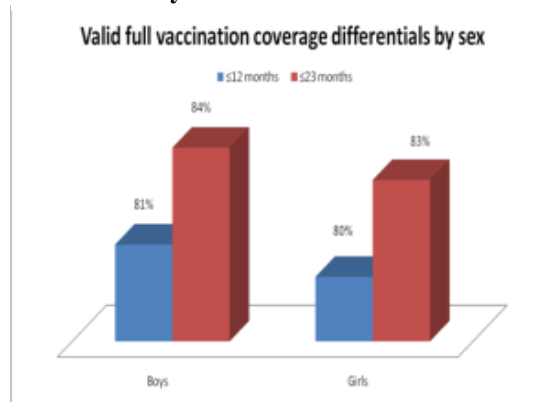
Reduce gender-based discrimination and negative attitudes: The total child population of Bangladesh in 2012 stood at around 510 million of which, 302 million were boys and 208 million were girls. Bangladesh, a signatory of the Convention on the Rights of Children (CRC) formulated a new Children Act 2012 replacing the Children Act 1974 in order to ensure the rights of the children in alignment with provisions of the CRC. The strategies of SFYP include creating an enabling environment for women and girls, eliminating health and education disparities, empowerment and participation, addressing violence, developing institutional capacity, giving special training to service providers, incorporating topics on health needs of both male and female and their impact on gender disparities in school curricula.

In order to eliminate traditional attitude about the roles of boys and girls and social decisions about the treatment towards girls community awareness programs have been undertaken by both the Government and NGOs. These include awareness and motivation to eliminate discrimination and negative attitudes against girls and the negative consequences of the gender-based discrimination. Prominent amongst them is the MINA cartoon series in media. Attention towards addressing girls' health and education has increased but there remain some differences on overall treatment and achievements of girls and boys. The Department of Primary Education (DPE) motivates guardians and others through parent teachers meeting and School Management Committees (SMC) for continued education of girls. The curriculum of the primary and secondary school levels have been reviewed and revised with gender perspectives to highlight equal rights and roles of boys and girls.

Promotion of the rights of the girl child: Legal and regulatory mechanisms are in place to promote the rights of the girl children. The Birth and Death Registration Act 2004 explicitly defines the role of local Government authorities to register birth and death of all children, irrespective of religion, cast, gender and ethnicity. Birth registration certificates as a proof of age at the time of enrolment in schools, marriage and 15 other services (e.g. Obtaining Voter ID, passport and land registration) is necessary. Still birth registration was only 30.5% during 2005-2012 and birth registration of girls is a problem as at times guardians mention higher age to get a child in marriage. Massive awareness program is being implemented using print and electronic media to raise awareness regarding the importance of birth registration. The National Children Policy, 2011 ensures non discriminatory provisions to uphold the rights of the children.

Eliminate discrimination in education: The National Education Policy 2010 ensures inclusion of pre-school in all primary schools. As discussed in Section 2.a.2, poverty focused initiatives as well as stipend program for the girl students supports continuity of girls in schools and in attaining gender parity at the primary and secondary levels. Dropout rates decreased and in 2012 total of 22,26,356 girl students received stipend at secondary and degree (pass) levels. Inclusive education plans are in place under the PEDP III and Secondary Education Sector Development Program to ensure educational opportunities for children needing special care, children of different vulnerable groups the socially disadvantaged girl children (e.g. sex workers).

Figure 18: Full vaccination coverage differentials by sex

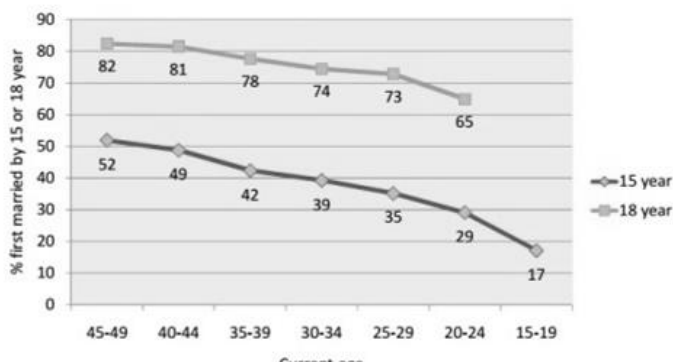


Source: DGHS 2013.

Eliminate discrimination in health: Health The EPI CES 2013 validated the immunization coverage both by EPI cards and history. Vaccination coverage for girls and boys under 12 months and 23 months has increased substantially. Still immunization rate for girls is 1% less than that of boys and information and motivation campaigns are run for universal immunization. According to the BDHS 2011, under-five mortality rate per 1000 live births declined to 53 in 2011 from 65 in 2007 and, percentage of infant mortality rate per 1000 live births declined to 43 from 52 during the same period. Among children under five 41% were stunted, 15% were wasted, 36% were underweight and about 51% of all children were found anaemic in 2011. Percent of children of 6-23 months fed following appropriate intensive young children feeding (IYCF) practices reached to 31.6%, as per UESD 2013. Breast feeding, dietary diversity, food security measures are in place to address this. The slow progress in reducing stunting, wasting and underweight raises concerns about the adequacy of child nutrition.

Child marriage and pregnancy: Population aged 12-19 constitute about 20.9% of the population. As per the existing law, the minimum age of marriage is 18 for girls and 21 for boys. The proportion of women marrying in their adolescence continues to decline due to social and legal measures. Across age cohorts, the proportion of women marrying by age 15 has declined by two-thirds over time, from 52 percent among women age 45-49 to 17 percent among women age 15-19. Similarly, the proportion of women marrying by age 18 decreased substantially from the oldest cohort to the youngest cohort. However, child marriage and adolescent motherhood are still prevalent. About 50% of all 15-19 years old females are married, of whom about 33% are already mothers, and another 6% are pregnant having risks to their health. The probability of children becoming stunted significantly increases by 22%, if born to a teenage mother. Everyday 21 women die giving birth, of whom 13 are below 18 years of age. A Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013 has been drafted. A CSO alliance called **Girls not Brides** is working to eliminate child marriage.

Figure 19: First Married at 15 or 18



Source: DGHS 2014

The probability of children becoming stunted significantly increases by 22%, if born to a teenage mother. Everyday 21 women die giving birth, of whom 13 are below 18 years of age. A Child Marriage Restraint Act 2013 has been drafted. A CSO alliance called **Girls not Brides** is working to eliminate child marriage.

Eliminate exploitation of child labour and protection of girl children: Child labour is a common phenomenon with 10.1% of children between age 5 and 14 in the work force and another 6.8% between age 7 and 14 who while going to school also work. Moderate advancement is seen in eliminating the worst forms of child labor. A large number of children are working in informal sector. A majority of employed girls work as domestic help and often are denied of their rights. A Law has been drafted to protect domestic child labour. The National Child Labour Elimination Policy (NCLEP) 2010 is to prevent and eliminate child labour, especially hazardous forms of child labour. Minimum age for employment is set at 14 and no person under the age of 18 years is allowed to be engaged in hazardous work. Parents of working (including the hazardous work) children are being engaged in different forms of occupations, for income generating activities with a view of getting children out of poverty. A National Plan of Action (NPA) has been formulated to implement the National Child Labour Elimination Policy 2010.

Eradicate violence against the girl child: Several laws, policies and measures to prevent and address violence against girls are in place. Section 2.A.4 discussed them. Amendment of Children Act 1974 is underway. Mass awareness raising programs on values of non-violence and equality are under

implementation. In collaboration of development partners and NGOs, MOWCA and others are supporting rescue, repatriation and rehabilitation programs for child victims. The eight OCCs and help-line is functioning. Up to April 2012 a total of 2,808 child victims received services from OCC. Bangladesh is one of the members of the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children (SAIEVAC) and has been playing significant role. A child from Bangladesh has become one of the members of the Governing Body in May 2012.

Promote girl child’s awareness and participation in social, economic and political life: A National Children’s Taskforce was formed in collaboration with NGO partners at the district and national level as a mechanism for eliciting children’s views and promoting their roles as stakeholders. DWA and others are implementing several projects for enhancing girls’ participation in community. A total of 379 clubs have been formed to organize adolescents at Upazila level to enhance their life skills.

Improving the role of family: Many parents in Bangladesh do not have knowledge and capacity to support for the overall development of their children. An Early Childhood and Care Development Policy has been finalized. There is an increasing demand for child development knowledge, which is being introduced and disseminated to help change perceptions of a ‘child’ and ‘childhood’ so that people and parents recognize and address the key features of physical, emotional, psychological and cognitive development at different stages of childhood. Community Based Child Protection Committees have been formed and training package has been designed for members, parents, adolescents and youths. Reintegration of the children with the family and community is one of the main objectives to support the victims of violence and trafficking. The activities include family trafficking, reintegration in the family, family counselling, livelihood support for families and post reintegration follow up.

Protection: Alternative care is provided by the Government run by DWA and DSS. These include orphanages, dropping centres for street children, 3 baby homes for abandoned children²⁵ aged 1 to 5 years. Shelter homes training and rehabilitation of destitute children and for abused and tortured girls have also been established by the Government to meet the needs.

The Pornography Control Act, 2012 has a section on prevention of pornographic presentation of children. Any pornography recording, pictures with a child (below 18) being filmed will be punished. The High Court through a writ petition issued a guideline regarding protecting children from sexual harassment.

Challenges: The FSNS, Round 9 December 2012, found that 11% of adolescent girls were severely and moderately underweight. The adolescents (10-19 years) constitute about 23% of the population in Bangladesh. Girls, when married before the age of 18, are at greater risk of physical and psychological violence. The adolescent birth rate has though on decline yet, to prevent childhood marriage and pregnancy are challenges. Still many girls are out of the education and health system particularly of various vulnerable groups. Adequate and quality support for human development is necessary for girls to develop them as responsible citizens.

2.B Challenges in Implementing the Critical Areas of Concern

²⁵ An ‘abandoned child’ was defined in the repealed Bangladesh Abandoned Children (Special Provision) Order 1972 as ‘a child which, in the opinion of the Government, is deserted or unclaimed or born out of wedlock’.

The sectoral and thematic challenges related to the twelve areas of concern have been discussed with the relevant area of concern.

The BPFA did not have agreed upon targets and indicators and at the national level the action plans prepared did not develop these either. As a result follow-up and implementation was not systematic. Plans was not matched with resource allocation. The various ministries and line agencies developed and implemented their programmes and policies often without explicit reference to the PFA or the NPA.

On the side of civil society the enthusiasm and energy generated by the Beijing process was not sustained over the years. The Core Group for Beijing Follow up was dismantled. Attention was diverted to other priorities and agendas that emerged, both nationally and internationally, such as the MDG implementation and follow-up.

2. C Policy and Measures in the Aftermath of 2007/2008 Financial Crisis

Bangladesh economy faced severe shock in FY2008 when it experienced repeated floods and the catastrophic cyclone Sidr, which happened in 2007 resulting in major loss of life and destruction of infrastructure, property and crops. Industrial growth was pulled back by a reduction in garment production in the first half of the fiscal year. The growth was affected by external shock resulting from high raw material import cost, commodity prices and shortage of energy. While Bangladesh was on track to achieve the 2015 MDG target of reducing income poverty by half, income inequalities widened and regional variation in poverty reduction remained. Growth in exports and remittances significantly slowed down since October–December 2008 (the second quarter of FY2009), which also affected revenue collection.

The annual development program faced a cut and growth was slow in both public and private investment. With more than 2.2 million workers directly engaged in the ready-made garments sector, and an equal number of workers employed in ancillary activities, the slowdown in exports translated into widespread poverty in both urban and rural areas.

Sound economic management enabled Bangladesh to withstand major external shocks while sustaining its growth momentum. The anticipated decline in the number of workers leaving overseas jobs and the pressure on the already slack domestic job market and, slowdown in the growth of remittances causing hardship for recipient households were considered for economic and fiscal planning. The Government's development agenda paid particular attention to economic stability, elimination of poverty, energy security, combating corruption, and good governance. The agenda reflected concerns about the economic and social implications of the crisis, the prevailing high poverty incidence, and the effect of recent natural disasters. A task force was established to monitor national and global events, and provide prompt advice to enable decisions for mitigating the impact of the crisis.

In April 2009, the Government announced a fiscal stimulus package for Tk34.2 billion (\$495 million) for exports, agriculture, power, and SSNP. The FY2010 budget was consistent with the Government's commitment to maintaining macroeconomic stability and undertaking fundamental policy and institutional reforms to attain pro-poor inclusive growth.

A countercyclical development program in the form of additional fiscal expenditures was announced in the FY2010 budget in June 2009 with four broad components: (i) a fiscal stimulus package; (ii) an expansion of the SSNPs; (iii) a substantial increase in the Annual Development Program; and (iv)

introduction of a new public–private partnership (PPP) scheme. Contribution from development partners, especially borrowing from multilateral development banks was sought as large scale investment was necessary in putting the economy on a higher growth trajectory, and achieving rapid and sustainable poverty reduction. Supportive policy measures were taken to induce large-scale domestic and foreign investment. Emphasis was put on protecting investments in human development through enhanced and effective spending on SSNPs in mitigating the adverse impact of the global economic crisis. The measures included both higher long-term economic growth, and improving service delivery for social protection. The SSNP included introduction of 100 day employment program in rural areas for poor women, open market sale of essential food items and test relief activities. The Government borrowed to increase fiscal space for development program while maintaining expanded SSNPs with greater access to social services by women and vulnerable populations and combined enhanced efficiency and integrity in public spending, and higher revenue generation to manage the country's exposure to external shocks.

Section 3: Data and statistics

3.A Core set of national gender equality indicators

Statistics and indicators on the situation of women and men are needed to describe the role of women and men in the society, economy and family, formulate policies and plans, monitor changes, inform the public and for making management decisions. A core set of national gender equality indicators is yet to be agreed. Bangladesh has been using different sets of indicators for different purposes.

At the national level progress of MDG is measured and followed up through using data and statistics based on the targets and indicators agreed as MDG indicators. Sixth Five Year Plan, the main strategic document for national development uses indicators consistent with the MDG indicators and some additional indicators are used. The gender related indicators of the SFYP are as follows:

- Women and men enjoy equal opportunities
- % of women employed in the formal sector
- % of births attended by skilled health personnel
- % of people using modern contraceptives in HPNSDP low performing areas, by gender
- Grade V completion rate, by gender
- Net enrolment rate in secondary education, by gender

Similarly, under the GRB within the RCGP framework 14 criteria are used for allocating resources for gender and for analyzing the budget. The same criteria are also used for planning and assessment of impact on women while preparing the development projects/programs. These are:

1. Access to health care and improved nutrition
2. Access to public properties and services
3. Access to education and training
4. Reduce daily working hours of women
5. Women's participation in labour market and income generating activities
6. Enhance social safety for women and reduce probable vulnerabilities
7. Women's empowerment
8. Women's participation in various forums
9. Ensure safety and free movement for women
10. Monitoring and evaluation
11. Increase social status of women
12. Access to law and justice to women
13. Information technology for women
14. Reduce violence and oppression

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) is the nodal agency for collection and collation of national statistics. A new law titled “Bangladesh Statistics Act, 2013” declared BBS as the custodian of national statistics. The BBS is responsible for collection and collation of statistics for all national censuses and other surveys. Some other agencies are also responsible collection and compilation of statistics in specific areas. NIPORT conducts National Demographic and Health Surveys, Utilization of Essential Service Delivery Survey, Contraceptives Prevalence Survey and other demographic surveys. BANBEIS collects and maintains all educational statistics. DPE compiles the annual Primary Sector Performance Report. As per the Bangladesh Statistics Act, 2013, all other agencies are required to get their survey

methodologies and data collection instruments checked and cleared by BBS before administering any survey. A National Strategy for the Development of Statistics, 2013-2023 has been drafted and waiting for approval.

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) conducts poverty assessments, research on development related topics and impact assessments. ICDDR'B also collects health related statistics. Different other agencies collect and compile service statistics for their management information system.

Data on the private sector is incomplete with information on private sector activities in health, education, social services etc being available on a piecemeal basis. However we know that the private sector provides a large share of the education and health needs of women and men. Although the Government agencies are supposed to have a regulatory and monitoring role the information collection and analysis is still weak.

3.B Collection and compilation on the minimum set of gender indicators

The Government of Bangladesh agreed on the collection and compilation of a minimum set of gender indicators as agreed at the UN Statistical Commission in 2013. Out of the agreed fifty two indicators, Indicator number 50 on female genital mutilation is not relevant for Bangladesh. Bangladesh Government is collecting and compiling data for 47 different indicators through different censuses and surveys. Data collection and compilation of statistical information at a regular interval is ensured through censuses and surveys of BBS, NIPORT and BANBEIS. The relevant ones include Population census, Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), Labour Force Survey (LFS), Price and Wage Rate Survey (PAWARS), Sample Vital Registration Survey (SVRS), Health and Demographic Survey (HDS), Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Literacy Assessment Survey (LAS). BBS also conducts a number of sample surveys in each year either as its regular activity or on an ad-hoc basis.

A compendium of gender related statistics was published in 2009 by BBS compiling the statistics from different survey and censuses. Another compendium compiling the relevant available statistics on the minimum agreed indicators has been compiled as Gender Compendium 2012, which is expected to be published by June 2014. However, data on some indicators, such as, employment rate of persons aged 25-49 with a child under age 3 living in a household and with no children living in the household, by sex or proportion of children under age 3 in formal care; and proportion of adult population owning land, by sex were not covered by any of the surveys and will be available only, if such surveys are conducted.

These surveys and censuses are incorporating gender information based on sex-disaggregated data in recent years. However, due to lack of orientation in all agencies availability of sex disaggregated data is difficult. At times though sex disaggregated data is collected or maintained at the field level, information are compiled on a neutral basis. Statistics from the private sector is difficult to collect.

As of now the sex disaggregation of statistics are done by male and female category. Very recently the transgender community has been officially recognized. The new category needs to be integrated in all relevant survey and censuses.

3.C Collection and compilation on the nine indicators on violence against women

BBS already collected and compiled data on the nine indicators on violence against women, as agreed by the UN Statistical Commission in 2013. A report on Survey on Prevalence of Violence Against Women, 2013 has been published, which incorporated statistics on all nine agreed indicators on VAW. Another

survey will be conducted in 2015. A multi-country study conducted jointly by UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and UN Volunteers in Asia and the Pacific, and the Bangladesh component was coordinated by ICCCR'B examining the male perspective on violence against women and girls. Civil society groups, UN agencies and the MSPVAW Project of MOWCA are also engaged in collection and compiling information and statistics. There remain some problems in this area. The studies are often fragmented or the definitions used for different areas vary. Therefore, the results and analysis vary.

While there is a consensus on the need to have a unified system of collection and storage of data on VAW, a number of initiatives are in place. Firstly, the Government is implementing an Initiation Plan (IP) Project titled Enhancing Institutionalization Process of National Database on Violence Against Women from July 2013 till June 2015. The project seeks to address VAW issues and also to support MoWCA for operationalizing and institutionalization of an online based VAW database by digitizing VAW data collected from grassroots to central levels. It will involve the scaling up of a pilot initiative under UN JPVAW in 44 unions to 388 unions in 6 selected REOPA/LGSP LIC project districts to 388 unions under 41 Upazillas of 6 districts of Bangladesh. With the field implementation support from BRAC, this integrated and comprehensive database will be linked with Government and NGO victim support service providers including DLAC, police, shelter homes, hospitals etc. Secondly the MSP/VAW also has developed a national data base on VAW. Thirdly police records on VAW are being digitised with UNFPA assistance and attempts are being made to combine this with other sources of available VAW data.

3.D Processes undertaken to collect data on the situation of particular groups

Collection of statistics on the situation of particular groups is dependent on specific surveys. Statistical surveys are undertaken with a view towards making assessments of population being studied, and the survey questions are designed according to need. An example is the serological surveillance. The National AIDS/STD Programme (NASP) of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, is responsible for HIV surveillance in Bangladesh. As in previous years the 9th round of serological surveillance was conducted during December 2010 and June 2011 amongst a selected sample of populations at risk. They included HIV-sex workers, people who inject drugs (PWID), heroin smokers, combined PWID and heroin smokers, males who have sex with males (MSM) and transgendered people (*hijra*). A total of 12,894 individuals were sampled from 36 geographical areas of Bangladesh. The 9th round of HIV surveillance was conducted on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh by the ICDDR,B and the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), DGHS. A large number of NGOs, private organizations and community groups participated in the surveillance by providing access to the vulnerable population groups and helped in various aspects of the surveillance.

The Department of Primary Education collects statistics on children with special needs of school going age through Annual School Census. Similarly, Child Sight Foundation (CSF) has been regularly conducting a study since 2008 on childhood visual disability in Bangladesh.

A Socio-Economic Baseline Survey of CHT was conducted for a comprehensive understanding of socio-economic status of the people living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts by the Ministry of CHT Affairs with assistance from UNDP. The study generated benchmark information for subsequent use to track periodic progress attained through interventions by the UNDP for the development of CHT. Accordingly, the study generated an extensive knowledge base on multiple aspects of livelihood of all the twelve ethnicities (including 11 indigenous peoples and the Bengali community) living in CHT.

Case studies are also used as a method to collect information mainly qualitative on the situation of particular groups. This is used by Government agencies, projects and CSOs on a need basis.

Section 4: Emerging priorities

4.A Key priorities for action over the next three to five years

Bangladesh is facing challenges in many areas, which include ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction which will benefit all regions and population groups, health care coverage, universal education, managing climate change effects and environmental degradation, and meeting the energy needs of a growing population and expanding economy. Population growth, climate change impacts, natural calamities, low resource base, together with traditional social attitudes curb the expected results from development initiatives. Priority action in the following areas is necessary in the next three to five years in order to accelerate implementation of the BPPA and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly.

A young population of age group 15 to 24 years comprises nearly nine percent of the country's population and 23 percent of the labour force of whom 50% are women. Women's labour force participation is still low at 36% against 82.5% for men. Unemployment and underemployment is high in this group: 10.6% for 15-19 year olds with lower rates for young men (9.8) and slightly higher rates for young women (11.4) and 7.1 % for 10-25 year olds with lower rates for young men (6.8) and slightly higher rates for young women (7.7 %)²⁶. The youth bulge can be a major advantage for the economy by increasing human resources and demand. However to be an advantage it is important to provide appropriate education and skills to those entering the workforce and enable them to be responsive to the needs of the contemporary employment markets, both national and international. Towards this end, four-fold action is needed: analysis and projection of domestic and international job markets; reform and revision of education system and curriculum, including contemporary technical education and expansion of ICT, English and science education to address the market requirements; support greater access to and completion at all levels for both boys and girls; and support development of entrepreneurship amongst the youth. Young women being underrepresented in technical education and will lower rates of entry and completion of tertiary education need greater support in this area.

Bangladesh's achievements on the MDGs are the weakest with regard to nutrition of women and children. While food security has been ensured, adequate and balanced nutrition will be a priority area in the next few years with particular emphasis on regional disparities and income disparities. Food production has increased tremendously but inequalities in intra-household food distribution, disparities in access to primary health care and lack of balanced diets are among the reasons for the persistent of malnutrition. Nutritional deficiency has an influence on intergenerational malnutrition dynamics and protein and micronutrient deficient diets have serious implications for both maternal and child malnutrition. Strengthening of supplementary feeding for malnourished pregnant and lactating women and children and scaling up of maternal iron and foliate supplementation, age specific complementary feeding and micronutrient supplements, nutrition education to promote diet diversity are necessary. Early initiation and exclusive breast feeding up to six months of age, community orientation on severely acute malnutrition in children, supplementary feeding, and use of fortified food in nutrition, promotion of homestead food production and affordable health care should be promoted. Universal access to safe water and improved sanitation especially in urban slums and rural areas need to be ensured. Another emerging concern is that malnutrition and obesity is also gradually emerging as a problem. In 2004 9% of women and children were overweight and in 2009 this rose to 23%²⁷.

²⁶ BBS, LFS 2010: 75)

²⁷ BDHS 2011

Despite the progress in reducing maternal mortality, it is still higher than acceptable and needs continued attention. Among the 4,000,000 women becoming pregnant every year, an estimated 600,000 develop complications. 14% of deaths of women during pregnancy and puerperium are related to violence and injury. Complications during delivery often develop among young pregnant women who are child brides and is a critical health concern. Early pregnancy results in low birth weights and malnutrition in mothers is related to stunting among children. Although the Government has taken numerous measures to increase ANC, PNC and EOC care and rates of access and use are growing, further action is needed to overcome the plateauing of the reduction of maternal mortality rates.

Climate change induced, as well as non-climatic, environmental degradation affects women adversely and threatens environmental sustainability. It is essential to develop climate change resilience at the community level including women. Together with disaster management capacity, the challenge of access to safe water for all should be ensured. Arsenic and salinity intrusion due to climate change fall out as well as reduction of water flow have already exacerbated availability of safe water especially for the poor. Legal and other measures need to be enforced against environmental degradation resulting from man-made water pollution, reduction of green cover, and reduction of surface water sources.

With the increase in life expectancy, aging of the population is a phenomenon which will increase the dependency ratio and increase geriatric health care needs. Due to cultural norms of age difference at marriage, women generally outlive their husbands and widows are generally socially and economically more disadvantaged. Violence against elderly women has emerged as a phenomenon that needs addressing. Upcoming development plans need to incorporate capacity development initiatives for community as well as safety net and health care programs in addressing this emerging issue.

A long standing problem, child marriage and early pregnancy should continue to be addressed through taking a multipronged approach, including awareness raising, ensuring expansion of educational opportunities for girls, enforcement of laws against child marriage, SPP measures and employment opportunities. In some cases girls are married off due to fear of insecurity and sexual violence. Improvement of law and order, enforcement of laws in cases of violence against women, and ensuring punishment of criminals are also imperative.

Another long standing obstacle to gender equality is gender based violence, a phenomenon harmful not only for women's dignity and health but for overall economy and child development. A multi-pronged approach including prevention, protection and prosecution to end violence against women should be strengthened and expanded. Expansion and up-scaling of good initiatives by assessing the impacts of the existing programs is necessary.

Unless the rapid urbanization is managed strategically, it can cause reversals in the progress that has been made for women's development. There are predictions that the country will become an urbanised state. With a projected average annual growth rate of urban population during 2012-2030 by 2.7 percent and Dhaka alone receiving 1,418 new people every day, pragmatic urban planning is necessary, particularly to ensure access to utility services, health, energy, education, livelihood, transportation for mobility for social, environmental and economic development. Women are particularly affected in the low cost settlements in accessing water, gas, electricity, sanitation, and transportation. They are also subject to other forms of insecurity and violence that are specific to urban settlements.

Expansion of access to energy sources, particularly renewable energy is important, mainly for the off grid areas. Increasing access to energy is significant for improving the lives of the poor and women as primary managers of traditional energy sources. The benefits of women will include reduced workloads and timesaving, more secure livelihoods and incomes, improved security, education, recreation, knowledge, connectivity and reduced exposure to indoor air pollution. Uninterrupted power supply and related infrastructure is also important ensure the benefits from the growing IT market.

A new area with tremendous potential is the spread and use of internet and information technology. Expansion of ICT education and ICT based services is important for the poor and the people of remote areas. Market assessment of ICT based employment opportunities; appropriate training and linkages can help reduce unemployment of young women. Expansion and use of IT as means to accessing information and services such as health, technical advice, disaster warnings, and market opportunities should be ensured. Digitization will contribute to increase transparency with all sorts of rates, forms, Government circulars etc. being available on-line. Increased access to internet among different classes will also reduce dependency on others. At the same time, the challenge of ensuring pragmatic and positive use of IT free of crime and coercion in the world of transition needs to be addressed. While women have been affected adversely by violence related to internet use they have also benefitted from the freedom and access that the internet offers. Therefore the challenge in the next few years will be to ensure that they are able to maximize the benefits of digitisation and the internet while controlling or eliminating the negative sides.

The commitment to bringing in women as a critical mass in the decision making is yet to be fulfilled. Though women are visible in all areas, their representation is often in terms of numbers and not effective participation. It is important to reaffirm the pledges made by the Government to increase women's representation and take action in promoting women's effective participation in decision making and managerial positions by ensuring both their presence, scope of action and capacity. While women have succeeded in overcoming family and social barriers to enter politics, political parties and both LGIs and Government institutions have to give them scope and authority to play a role in decision making. Both the private sector and Government sector have gradually increased the numbers of women in decision making but there is no ground for complacency. At the present rate of progress it will take decades for women to achieve parity unless some immediate and accelerated measures are taken.

An increased resource allocation for women's advancement in national and sectoral budgets needs to be ensured in consistency with the targets and objectives of each sector. Depletion of resource should be checked by reducing leakages, and ensuring transparency in implementing development programs.

Stringent monitoring based on a set of agreed key national indicators as well as enhanced accountability for gender equality result is necessary. Gender related results should be integrated within project, programme and national plan results frameworks and should be strongly followed up by the respective ministries, MoF, MoWCA and the Ministry of Planning. Finally as a result of all the work done in integrating gender into policies, law, programmes and projects, it is now time to carry out assessments of the impacts achieved. Gender audits or assessments of policies and programmes should be carried out on a systematic manner to ensure that results are being produced.

4.B Recommendations for Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the post 2015 Agenda

Preparation of Post 2015 Era Goals and Targets

The Government has formulated a proposal for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and the post 2015 Agenda which has been submitted to the UN. It identified eleven different goals and identified target areas with possible indicators and recommended for their inclusion in the SDG in the post 2015 era. While Goal 5 is specific to gender equality promotion, all other goals have implications for women's empowerment and gender equality.

The Government, while reviewing progress of the MDGs found certain weaknesses. Firstly, MDGs, having been a top down process, followed a sectoral approach where issues were treated in a fragmented manner practically in silos. As a result, MDGs in some cases only addressed the symptoms instead of the root causes of the problem. Second, narrow indicators were used to identify progress toward the target and goals, which overlooked the consequences which may have generated out of the progress. One such area is the fight against poverty. While some progress has been achieved in this area, inequality has grown noticeably dividing most of the societies and in the process raising more questions than answered. Third, lack of focus on human rights and human development also weakened the framework; it prioritized statistical figures more than the issue of human progress. Fourth, the issue of mutual accountability along with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities was practically absent from the MDG framework.²⁸

Based on the experience of MDGs the emerging expectation is that the new goals should keep the people at the centre of development and build a development framework which is right based, peace centric, inclusive and equitable. The UN Conference on Sustainable Development which took place in Brazil in June 2012, rearticulated the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely social, economic and environmental dimensions. The conference also underscored that the Post 2015 Development Agenda should be action oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally acceptable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.

In Bangladesh, several set of actors were involved in the process of consultations. The General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission (PC) was vested the responsibility to prepare the framework along with Goals and Targets of Post 2015 Development Agenda supported by several indicators. The PC initiated rounds of consultation among the multiple stakeholders. The draft was reviewed by an inter-Ministerial High Level Official meeting held in May 2013. The revised draft was again reviewed by the Core Committee and a group of experts from the specialized organizations of the UN stationed in Dhaka.

The national document of Bangladesh contains 11 goals, 58 targets and 241 indicators. Goals and targets have been articulated in such a way so that they could act as a bridge between the unfinished agenda of MDGs and the potential SDGs as suggested in Rio+20 Conference. The proposed framework is based on the principles of inclusiveness, sustainability, equity, rule of law, human rights, governance, justice,

²⁸ GOB MDG report 2013: 142

opportunity and participation of all stakeholders. Issues of accountability and transparency, both domestically and globally, have also been incorporated. National priorities as articulated in various vision documents, including Vision 2021, SFYP, and Perspective Plan, Progress Report on MDGs have been taken as guide for identifying goals and targets. These have been aligned with the global aspirations and priorities particularly of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS as much they are appropriate. Simple and measurable indicators corresponding to each target of the goals have been suggested to help periodic monitoring of progresses attained by targets of the goals set.

Post 2015 Era Goals and Targets and Recommendations based on the Beijing Plus Twenty Review.

The draft SDG proposal prepared by Government has been organized under broad 11 Goals. The first goal entitled 'Unleash human potentials for sustainable development' focuses on the people as the central element in the development process, and touches on harnessing the potential of all segments of population. Targets include one on ensuring women's full participation and indicators relate to marginalized groups. Under the goals entitled 'Eradicate poverty and reduce inequality' ambitious targets have been proposed to completely eliminate extreme poverty by 2030 and accelerate pro-poor growth for reducing inequality. On the goal entitled 'Ensure sustainable food security and nutrition for all' special attention has been given to develop targets for ensuring nutrition of pregnant women, ensuring safe food, diversify food supply and promote dietary diversity. A target relates to "Improving nutritional status of pregnant women, lactating mothers and their newborns" and some of the indicators are specific to women's nutrition.

Under the goal entitled 'Universal access to health and family planning services', targets include reducing maternal, infant and child mortality with equity, ensuring basic health services and reproductive health rights along with efforts to control and if possible eliminate non-communicable diseases and climate induced diseases and development disorders. The civil society consultations for the preparation of the report on Beijing Plus 20 suggested that the target on reproductive rights should be more forward looking and include indicators on decisions concerning women's reproductive behaviour.

Under the goal of 'Achieve gender equality' elimination of violence against girls and women, child labour and ensuring role of women in decision making process have been included as targets. The civil society consultations for the preparation of the report on Beijing Plus 20 suggested that the target on VAW should include indicators related to violence in information technology, domestic and workplace VAW.

On 'Ensure quality education and skills for all', in addition to attaching importance to achieving 100% enrolment target in primary education, mainstreaming of TVET, skills training has been suggested along with lifelong education to make the young population ready for the increasingly competitive complex job market. Although it would be important for this goal to set some gender specific indicators to address differences among girls and boys, women and men, this has not been done. Some targets could include increasing girl's access to science and technical education and training.

The goal on 'Increase employment opportunities and ensure worker rights' is about creating opportunities for decent employment, including in the informal sector, legal framework on worker rights, equal wages for men and women, and migration as a part of development dynamics. Here too, although it would be important for this goal to set some gender specific indicators to address differences among women and men, this has not been done. Some of the possible differential targets are increases in wage rates or removal of disparities in wage rates and increased women's participation in the formal sector. Even on the issue of child labour we know that girl children are more likely than

boys to be child domestic workers and targets could take this into account. In the civil society consultations for the preparation of the report on Beijing Plus 20 it was suggested that Indicators on access to decent work, reduction of wage differentials and institutions having child care facilities should be incorporated. An indicator on women's ownership of assets, particularly land ownership and ownership of inherited property should be incorporated. It was also recommended that unpaid care work of women's should be recognized and measured.

On the goal relating to 'Ensure good governance', issues ranging from global governance to local governance have been included as targets along with strengthening the accountability and transparency institutions, empowering people through effective implementation of right to information (RTI) regimes and removing barriers to market access. Certain indicators relate to women such as "Proportionate participation of marginalised and excluded groups including women in all legislative bodies" and "Percentage of revenue budget allocation directly benefiting the poor and disadvantaged groups such as women, ethnic minorities and disabled. More indicators could have addressed gender differences in access to justice, for example. During civil society consultations for the formulation of the Beijing Plus 20 report it was suggested to incorporate women's role in women in peace and dispute resolution (e.g. land, communal, ethnic) as an indicator.

On 'Promote sustainable production and consumption' goal, sustainable use of resources for production and consumption pattern has been proposed along with measures to ensure further efficiency. On the goal entitled 'Ensure environmental sustainability and disaster management' suggestion has been made to integrate DRR and climate change adaptation into the core component of sustainable development, and increase the resilience of communities, and encouraging regional and global cooperation for disaster forecasting and managing post disaster situation. On the environment side, a comprehensive perspective linked to use of land, water, agriculture, forest, urbanization and energy has been suggested. However neither the targets not the indicators reflect women's key role in this area.

For 'Strengthen international cooperation and partnership for Sustainable Development', issues of resources sharing, fulfilling of ODA commitment and creating new opportunities for promoting collaboration among Government, trade facilitation, participation of private sector, civil society and philanthropic entities has been included as targets.

Another priority recommendation based on the Beijing Plus Review is that since all the goals have gender implications, it should be mandatory that all progress is tracked using sex-disaggregated data.