



Gender Diagnostics, Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

For National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh



January 2020



Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme
Cabinet Division and General Economics Division
Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Gender Diagnostics, Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

For National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh

Copyright © The Cabinet Division and General Economics Division (GED), Planning Commission, January 2020.

All rights are reserved. Though we encourage use of these research papers by any interested person, but no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by means of electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior permission.

Disclaimer: The responsibility for opinions in this document rests solely with its authors. Cabinet Division and GED in no way bears any responsibility for any statement, figure/data that contained in the research papers where onus lies to author(s) only. The document has been produced with technical assistance from Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme, a joint project between the Cabinet Division and General Economics Division (GED) of Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; DFAT and UNDP in Bangladesh, but the contents or any statement, figure/data that contained in the publication can in no way be taken to reflect the views of DFAT and UNDP.

Published and cover designed by

Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme

Cabinet Division and General Economics Division (GED) of Planning Commission

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

www.socialprotecton.gov.bd

Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures	vii
List of Boxes.....	vii
List of Abbreviation	viii
Executive Summary	xi
Part A: Gender Diagnostics of Social Protection Issues	1
1. Background, Objectives and Methodology	2
1.1 Introduction	2
1.2 Gender and Social Protection.....	2
1.3 The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS)	3
1.4 Objective of this Study	4
1.5 Methodology	4
1.6 Conceptual Framework and Definition Used	4
2. Gender Norms and Social Protection in Bangladesh	7
2.1 Norms and Practices Impeding Women’s Social Protection	7
2.2 Women’s Situation in Human Development and Workforce Participation relevant to Social Protection.....	10
3. Gender and National Social Security Strategy	12
3.1 General Aspects in National Social Security Strategy	12
3.2 Gender Equality as Practiced in Social Protection Programmes.....	15
3.3 Some Experiences of Gender and Social Protection in the Field	19
3.4 Programme Elements and Gender Informed Social Protection Findings	24
3.5 Good Social Protection Practices to Leverage Women’s Empowerment	25
3.6 Agencies/Institutions to Tackle Discriminatory Social Norms and Behaviours in Promoting Social Protection	29
4. Addressing Norms and Strategic Interests through Gender Responsive Social Protection.....	33
5. Way Forward and Recommendations.....	36
Part B: NSSS Gender Policy.....	40
1. Introduction	41
1.1 Background to the NSSS Gender Policy.....	41
2. Situational Analysis	42
2.1 National Context	42
2.2 Poverty, Gender and Social Security Nexus	43
2.3 National Response to Gender and Social Security	43
3. Challenges to Gender Equality and Social Security	46

4.	Policy Goal, Objectives, Principles and Priorities	47
4.1	Policy Goal and Objectives	47
4.2	Guiding Principles.....	47
4.3	Policy Priorities.....	49
4.4	Policy Commitments and Actions	51
5.	Institutional and Implementation Framework.....	57
5.1	Institutions and their roles in implementation, cluster, etc.	57
5.2	Guidelines for gender focused programme design, review and monitoring	57
5.3	Change management	58
5.4	Resource mobilization.....	58
6.	Policy Monitoring and Evaluation	59
6.1	Monitoring of policy implementation: Role of CMC and stakeholders	59
6.2	Review of policy implementation	59
Part C: Gender Strategy for Implementing Gender Policy of National Social Security Strategy.....		60
1.	Introduction	61
1.1	Background.....	61
1.2	Gender in Social Security.....	62
1.3	Gender Strategy and Action Plan Formulation Process	62
1.4	Priority Areas for Social Security.....	63
2.	The Gender Strategy	65
2.1	Approach	65
2.2	Areas of Social Security Support	66
2.3	Strategies.....	66
Part D: Gender Action Plan of Ministries and Divisions		74
1.	Ministry of Social Welfare	75
2.	Ministry of Food	80
3.	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief	84
4.	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	87
5.	Financial Institution Division	90
6.	Secondary and Higher Education Division	93
7.	Technical and Madrassah Education Division	97
8.	Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	101
7.	Finance Division.....	106
8.	Health Services Division	110
9.	Medical Education and Family Welfare Division.....	113
10.	Local Government Division	116

11.	Rural Development and Co-operatives Division	120
12.	Ministry of Labour and Employment	123
13.	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment	126
14.	Ministry of Youth and Sports	131
15.	Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.....	134
.16	Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tract Affairs.....	137
17.	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	140
18.	Ministry of Land	143
.19	Ministry of Agriculture	145
20.	Ministry of Cultural Affairs	148
21.	Ministry of Industries	151
22.	Ministry of Water Resources.....	154
23.	Prime Minister's Office.....	157
24.	Ministry of Housing and Public Works	160
25.	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	163
26.	Cabinet Division.....	166
27.	General Economics Division	169
28.	Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).....	172
29.	Statistics and Informatics Division	175
	Gender Action Plan for Thematic Clusters	177
1.	Social Allowance Cluster	177
2.	Food Security and Disaster Response Cluster	180
3.	Social Insurance Cluster	182
4.	Labour/Livelihood Intervention Cluster	184
5.	Human Development and Social Empowerment Cluster.....	186
	Part E: Implementation and Monitoring.....	190
	Implementation.....	191
	I. Institutions and their roles in implementation	191
	II. Roles in coordination	192
	Monitoring and Capturing Results	193
	Annex	195
	Glossary of Terms.....	197

List of Tables

Table 1: Recommendations are at two levels: general for transformative social protection and specific for programmes	39
Table 2: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Social Welfare	78
Table 3: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Food	83
Table 4: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Disaster Management	86
Table 5: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	89
Table 6: Gender Action Plan of Financial Institutions Division	92
Table 7: Gender Action Plan of Secondary and Higher Education Division	96
Table 8: Gender Action Plan of Technical and Madrassah Education Division	99
Table 9: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs	104
Table 10: Gender Action Plan of Finance Division	108
Table 11: Gender Action Plan of Health Services Division	112
Table 12: Gender Action Plan of Medical Education and Family Welfare Division.....	115
Table 13: Gender Action Plan of Local Government Division	119
Table 14: Gender Action Plan of Rural Development and Co-operatives Division	122
Table 15: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Labour and Employment	125
Table 16: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.....	130
Table 17: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Youth and Sports	133
Table 18: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Liberation War Affairs	136
Table 19: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs	139
Table 20: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	142
Table 21: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Land	144
Table 22: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Agriculture	147
Table 23: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Cultural Affairs.....	150
Table 24: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Industries	153
Table 25: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Water Resources	156
Table 26: Gender Action Plan of Prime Minister's Office	159
Table 27: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Housing and Public Works.....	162
Table 28: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change	165
Table 29: Gender Action Plan of Cabinet Division	168
Table 30: Gender Action Plan of General Economics Division.....	171
Table 31: Gender Action Plan of Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).....	173
Table 32: Gender Action Plan of Statistics and Informatics Division	176
Table 33: Gender Action Plan of Social Allowance Cluster	180
Table 34: Gender Action Plan for Food Security and Disaster Response Cluster	182
Table 35: Gender Action Plan for Social Insurance Cluster.....	184
Table 36: Gender Action Plan for Labour/Livelihood Intervention Cluster	186
Table 37: Gender Action Plan for Human Development and Social Empowerment Cluster.....	189

List of Figures

Figure 1: Relationship between and among different elements of social protection support.....	37
Figure 2: Gender Strategy and Action Plan Formulation Process	63
Figure 3: Support for Transformative Social Security	65
Figure 4: Lifecycle based Allocation in 2019-20.....	67

List of Boxes

Box 1: Key Actions of Ministry of Social Welfare	79
Box 2: Key Actions of Ministry of Food	83
Box 3: Key Actions of Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.....	86
Box 4: Key Actions of Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	89
Box 5: Key Actions of Financial Institution Division	92
Box 6: Key Actions of Secondary and Higher Education Divison.....	96
Box 7: Key Actions of Technical and Madrasah Education Divison.....	100
Box 8: Key Actions of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.....	105
Box 9: Key Actions of Finance Division.....	109
Box 10: Key Actions of Health Services Division	112
Box 11: Key Actions of Medical Education and Family Welfare Division	115
Box 12: Key Actions of Local Government Division.....	119
Box 13: Key Actions of Rural Development and Co-operatives Division	122
Box 14: Key Actions of Ministry of Labour and Employment	125
Box 15: Key Actions of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment	130
Box 16: Key Actions of Ministry of Youth and Sports.....	133
Box 17: Key Actions of Ministry of Liberation War Affairs.....	136
Box 18: Key Actions of Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs	139
Box 19: Key Actions of Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	142
Box 20: Key Actions of Ministry of Land.....	144
Box 21: Key Actions of Ministry of Agriculture	147
Box 22: Key Actions of Ministry of Cultural Affairs	150
Box 23: Key Actions of Ministry of Industries	153
Box 24: Key Actions of Prime Minister's Office.....	156
Box 25: Key Actions of Prime Minister's Office.....	159
Box 26: Key Actions of Ministry of Housing and Public Works	162
Box 27: Key Actions of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change	165
Box 28: Key Actions of Cabinet Division.....	168
Box 29: Key Actions of General Economics Division	171
Box 30: Key Actions of Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED).....	174
Box 31: Key Actions of Statistics and Informatics Division.....	176

List of Abbreviation

APA	Annual Performance Plan
BB	Bangladesh Bank
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BEZA	Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority
BF	Bolsa Família Program
BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BSCIC	Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation
CBP	Child Benefit Programme
CCMA	Commission for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CFPR	Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction
CIPs	Commercially Important Persons
CMC	Central Management Committee
CPTU	Central Procurement Technical Unit
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CTP	Cash Transfer Programmes
DWA	Directorate of Women Affairs
ECNEC	Executive Committee of the National Economic Council
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunities
EGPP	Employment Generation Program for the Poorest
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FD	Finance Division
FFC	Food Friendly Card
FFW	Food for Work
FID	Financial Institutions Division
G2P	Government to Person
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GC	Gender Committee
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GE	Gender equality
GED	General Economics Division
GIS	Geographical Information System
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
HSD	Health Services Division
ICIMOD	International Center for Integrated Mountain Development
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ICVGD	Investment Component of VGD
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IMED	Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division
LCS	Landless Contracting Society
LFP	Labour Force Participation
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
LGD	Local Government Division
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LGI	Local Government Institutions

LJD	Law and Justice Division
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEFWD	Medical Education and Family Welfare Division
MIC	Middle Income Country
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoC	Ministry of Commerce
MoCA	Ministry of Cultural Affairs
MoDMR	Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MoF	Ministry of Food
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoFECC	Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change
MoFL	Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MoI	Ministry of Information
MoLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoPA	Ministry of Public Administration
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MoR	Ministry of Railway
MoS	Ministry of Shipping
MoSW	Ministry of Social Welfare
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
MoYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MTBF	Medium Term Budget Framework
NEC	National Economic Council
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NICAR	National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reforms/Reorganisation
NIPORT	National Institute of Population Research and Training
NPR	National Population Register
NSI	National Social Insurance
NSIS	National Social Insurance System
NSSS	National Social Security Strategy
OAA	Old Age Allowance
OMS	Open Market Sales
PC	Planning Commission
PFI	Private Financial Institution
PKSF	Palli Karma Shahayak Foundation
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
RCGP	Recurrent, Capital, Gender and Poverty
RDCD	Rural Development and Cooperatives Division
RERMP	Rural Employment and Road Maintenance Programme
RMP	Rural Maintenance Program
ROSCA	Rotational Savings and Credit Association
SBD	Swarnivar Bangladesh
SCITI	Small & Cottage Industries Training Institute
SDB	Social Development Bangladesh
SDF	Social Development Framework

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association of India
SIC	Slum Improvement Committees
SID	Statistics and Informatics Division
SP	Social Protection
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
SSPS	Social Security Policy Support
SSS	Social Security System
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWAPNO	Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities
TLCC	Town Level Coordination Committee
TMED	Technical and Madrasah Division
TR	Test Relief
UGIAP	Urban Governance Improvement Action Plan
UGIIP	Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
USG	Urban Sector Group
VGD	Vulnerable Group Development
VGf	Vulnerable Group Feeding
VWB	Vulnerable Women's Benefit
WDWA	Widows and Distressed Women's Allowance
WFP	World Food Programme
WHSCS	Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation System
WLCC	Ward Level Coordination Committees
WTO	World Trade Organization
APA	Annual Performance Plan
BB	Bangladesh Bank
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BEZA	Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority
BF	Bolsa Família Program

Executive Summary

Though Bangladesh has progressed towards becoming a middle-income country, still a large proportion of people are under extreme poverty and other vulnerabilities. Therefore, the Government is to provide social security services and benefits to reduce vulnerability and promote resilience to shocks and stresses at individual, household and community levels. Feminist researchers suggest that social security programmes can become a good instrument to promote gender equality and empower women. In Bangladesh, addressing gender in social security is critical as women are the majority among poor, face different types of vulnerabilities, have limited endowments to live as equal citizens and often are subject to gender-based discrimination and harassment. This document provides strategic directions for design and delivery of social security programmes that will support women's empowerment and reduce gender gap while implementing the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) of Bangladesh. It also provides action plan for specific ministries on how they will advance gender equality through social security programmes.

Bangladesh targets women and girls in many social security programmes and in the absence of concrete guidance and planning, the gain towards gender equality were less than their potential. Therefore, a Gender Policy was developed and approved by the Central Management Committee (CMC) of National Social Security Programmes under the Chair of the Cabinet Secretary in 2018. This Strategy and Action Plans a step forward in realization of the objectives of the NSSS towards reducing the gender gap.

The NSSS is operationalized through 35 Ministries and Divisions which have developed their respective action plans to implement the NSSS. This strategy and action plan support these Ministries/Divisions in designing and delivering social security programmes aiming at reducing the gender gap and empowering women and girls.

Gender in Social Security

A diagnostic study on social security programmes identified that besides gender-based discrimination and deprivation, women's vulnerabilities and risks are different even if they live in the same situation. Social norms enforce subordination of women and girls leading to women's low educational and economic accomplishment, weak bargaining capacity, lack of mobility, early marriage of girls and child pregnancy, discriminatory legal provisions, low participation in public sphere and politics, thus intensifying the nature of disadvantages faced by women and girls. The Action Plans of different Ministries incorporate specific actions that will contribute towards changing the social norms and facilitate gender equality. The Gender Strategy and Action Plan both are anchored within the NSSS and Gender Policy for NSSS. The Gender Strategy and Action Plan have been developed in a participatory manner considering the main functions of each Ministry.

Priority Areas for Social Security under Gender Policy

The diagnostic study suggested that in addition to human and productive capital development for women, developing social capital and sense of self-respect and to address individuals' needs at the appropriate phase of the life cycle. The Gender Policy identified eight different priority areas for social security:

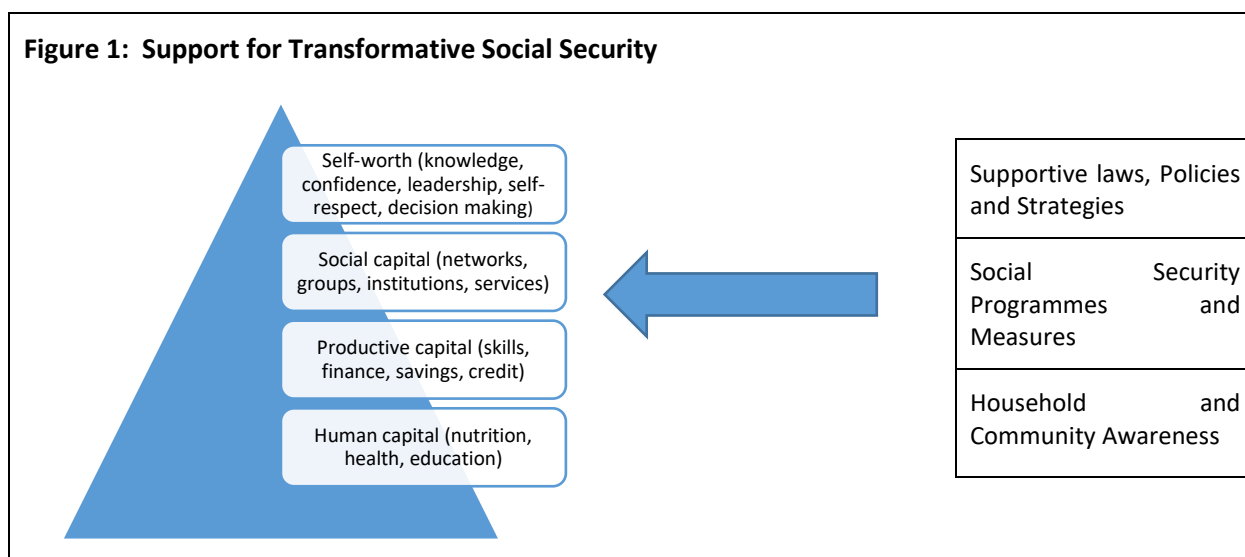
- Food security and nutrition
- Human development support
- Access to livelihoods activities, income and transfers
- Active labour market participation
- Productive financial inclusion • Social empowerment
- Reaching urban women
- Expanded coverage of social insurance system
- Emergency preparedness and resilience to shocks

The NSSS action plan identified a few areas for gender focused social security for children and women. Their family members (*particularly women*), which have been considered in this action plan.

- Introduce Child Benefit Programme (allowances to be disbursed to female parents preferentially)
- Introduce Vulnerable Women’s Benefit programme
- Workplace Childcare Services
- Child Maintenance
- Maternal Health Care
- Maternity Insurance within National Social Insurance System (NSIS)
- Scale up SWAPNO (Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities) Project Scale up ‘One House - One Farm’ programme now called “My House - My Farm”
- Strengthen Social Allowance (financial support/ assistance/ benefits) for migrant workers and their families.

The Gender Strategy

The Gender Strategy is a framework that supports and complements the implementation of the NSSS and the Gender Policy to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment for the period of 2019-2025. The strategy has been synchronized with other strategic priorities of the country. In addition to human capital and productive capital development for women, developing social capital and sense of self-respect is important for women’s empowerment. Transformative social security programmes include support starting from the basic needs to developing voice, self-respect, decision making ability and capacity to overcome risks and vulnerabilities including violence. It is more beneficial for society and individuals to address the origins of gender discrimination and facilitate women’s empowerment as an outcome of social security programmes through multi-dimensional initiatives. This has been explained in the figure below.



Areas of Social Security Support

The Strategy supports covering the key phases of life as in the NSSS in order to be not only protective but also gradually make them transformative.

- Childhood support:** To provide all children, boys and girls from all backgrounds the opportunity to grow as human being with education, health, skills, knowledge and prepare for adulthood.
- Support for working age:** To enable all working age women accessing the labour market with opportunity for decent work, income and a congenial work environment.
- Child bearing and maternity:** To support women in this important phase of their life to remain healthy and safe, and for delivery and development of healthy future generation.

- d. **Old age and elderly care:** Ensure care, livelihood and health care for the elderly women.

In addition, some issues that cut across all phases of life are important through social security support

- a. **Affordable healthcare:** To ensure affordable and accessible primary and lifecycle-based care for all vulnerable women and address gender specific health risks and risks due to shocks.
- b. **Protection from violence, changing gender roles and social norms:** To influence changing the social norm of women's subordination, the role of women and men, and promote equality.
- c. **Support for women with disability, minority, ethnic and other marginalized groups:** To ensure basic rights and opportunities for development and leadership of these groups.
- d. **Resilience from climatic and other shocks and vulnerabilities:** To protect women and girls from adverse effects of the climate change and other shocks.

Strategies

Strategies include: a. strategies related to lifecycle-based targeting and support; b. strategies related to programme design and delivery for gender equality; and, c. operational strategies.

a. Strategies related to lifecycle-based targeting and support

Timely consideration and prioritized investment in lifecycle-based needs

The support and protection requirement of each age is essential. Early childhood care, bringing out of school children in education, skills for youth, maternal health care etc. with focus on gender-based needs safeguard from future vulnerability, risks and disability at a later stage of life.

- i. Focus on early childhood care and nutrition.
- ii. Strengthen educational outcomes at school age and adolescent care.
- iii. Enhance capacity for labour-market access.
- iv. Ensure pregnancy and maternity care.
- v. Ensure elderly care: specific support for disability.

b. Strategies related to programme design and delivery for gender equality

The following strategies related to gender equality, inclusion, empowerment and graduation need to be incorporated while designing social security programmes.

- i. Rights-based approach and transformative social security
- ii. Support for vulnerable women
- iii. Empowerment in programme objective
- iv. Where applicable, plan graduation in advance
- v. Mainstreaming gender in programming
- vi. Participation and inclusion
- vii. Awareness, motivation and behaviour change to reduce discrimination and violence
- viii. Voice and social capital
- ix. Labour market interventions
- x. Reaching urban women
- xi. Financial inclusion and resource base
- xii. Cash transfer for start-up or access to livelihood activities and empowerment
- xiii. Emergency preparedness and resilience from shocks
- xiv. Expand coverage of social insurance system

c. Operational strategies

Operational strategies incorporate ways to ensure effective implementation and better results through monitoring, harmonization, complementarity, capacity-building and such others.

- i. Harmonization (Consolidation), expansion and sustaining results
- ii. Promoting complementarity and partnership for gender focused social security

- iii. Invest in capacity and capability-building for gender responsive social security including capacity of beneficiaries, community and institutions
- iv. Gender inclusive design and quality assurance
- v. Grievance redress mechanism
- vi. Investment in monitoring
- vii. Resource mobilization

The Gender Action Plan

The Action Plans have been organized for each Ministry or Division implementing or supporting social security services and also for thematic clusters. Emphasis has been given on lifecycle-based support, priorities set by the NSSS, and key actions in the clusters. It emphasizes on developing a Child Support Programme, a Vulnerable Women Benefit programme, women's access to converted programmes from food-based to cash-based, livelihood support and consolidation of smaller programmes with incorporation of empowering elements. Besides consolidation of workfare programmes incorporating empowering elements and graduation planning, disaster preparedness and recovery, scaling up of stipend programme for girls etc. have been incorporated within the mandate of each Ministry or Division. In addition, ensuring gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data, grievance redressal, digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment have been emphasized.

Implementation and Monitoring

Ministries and Divisions will be mainly responsible for the implementation of the Action Plan. Primarily 35 Ministries/Divisions of the Government will develop an annual work plan integrating social security considering the provisions of the Social Security Action Plan and the Gender Action Plan. This work plan will be an integral part of the Annual Performance Agreements (APA) of the Ministry/Division and report to the Central Management Committee.

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs will support other ministries for mainstreaming gender in policies, projects and programmes, gender capacity building, and performance monitoring, where necessary. MoWCA will lead the process in developing the Child Benefit Programme and the Vulnerable Women Benefit Programme.

General Economics Division (GED) of the Planning Commission will provide overall technical and operational guidance on operating standards and assist in identifying social security priorities and trends by applying a gender lens.

Statistics and Informatics Division will help develop a database on eligible individuals for different types of social security and prepare a consolidated list of social security recipients in a sex-disaggregated manner. BBS will gather data and prepare presentation of gender-focused progress reporting.

Finance Division (FD) will strengthen Gender Responsive Budgeting shifting focus from at-entry allocation to utilization of budget for gender equality results and allocate budget to ensure timely support for lifecycle-based needs and women's empowerment.

Central Management Committee (CMC) under the Cabinet Division will lead the process by ensuring smooth coordination between Ministries and Clusters to achieve the objectives of the Gender Action Plan to implement the Gender Policy of NSSS.

Cluster Coordinating ministries/divisions will coordinate the programmes under different thematic clusters to ensure that the objectives are achieved.

Social Security /Gender Focal Points of the ministries/divisions will be responsible for inclusion of gender perspectives within projects/programmes and coordination of women's empowerment aspects within the Ministry.

The Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) will be responsible to integrate gender perspectives and use indicators in monitoring of social security programmes.

The new platform for GO-NGO Collaboration for Social Security Programme has been established, which will support the ministries in implementing the programmes and assist the CMC in monitoring and addressing grievances.

Part A: Gender Diagnostics of Social Protection Issues

1. Background, Objectives and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

Notable progress has been achieved in poverty reduction in Bangladesh as a result of planned and concerted actions. The country was recognized for its strong performance against majority of the MDG targets and has achieved the level of lower middle-income country (MIC). A World Bank Report (2016) has found that extreme poverty reduced significantly, and the reasons include gender parity in education, effective family planning, and economic growth among others. Still 20 million people remain under extreme poverty, calling for effective poverty reduction programmes.

A wide range of Social Protection (SP) interventions by both government and non-governmental agencies are in effect within the national poverty reduction framework. Social protection is a response to the dynamic understanding of poverty and attending problems of risk and vulnerability (World Bank). Social protection is a large envelop in which many different socio-economic policies and measures can be placed. It encompasses the set of policies and programmes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by promoting efficient labour markets, diminishing people's exposure to risks, and enhancing their capacity to protect themselves against hazards and the interruption/loss of income (ADB, 2012). Social protection provides protection and prevention services from insecurity and vulnerability including safety net, social security, social transfer, social insurance, health care, etc. Social protection can help people meet immediate basic needs in times of crisis in the short-term and also can have longer-term aims for enabling people to move permanently out of poverty (Babajanian et al., 2014) by improving opportunities for inclusive growth, human capital development, equity and social stability. Some social protection programmes intend to be transformative, supporting equity, empowerment and human rights.

1.2 Gender and Social Protection

Social protection has been identified as one of the key drivers of reducing poverty and vulnerability. Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and graduating from Least Developed Country status, demand both reduction of people's vulnerability, and promoting their role as human capital. As women form half of the population and they lag men on many counts, poverty reduction or economic growth both demand women's participation in social protection as beneficiaries and as contributors to poverty reduction. It necessitates development and role of women as human capital by changing gender norms and promoting gender equality. Some equity measures are necessary in promoting gender equality. The Government of Bangladesh's approach towards gender equality has evolved from welfare to mainstreaming over time and the policies and measures undertaken have yielded significant improvements against human development and gender equality indicators. Though gendered data of risk and vulnerability often is not available, studies found that a significant proportion of the insecure, poor and vulnerable are women. As social protection programmes operate within poverty reduction frameworks, gender becomes a core element of social protection programming and poverty reduction.

Women often need social protection support, as they lag men based on social development indicators and are discriminated against. Thakur, Arnold, and Johnson (2009) stated, "Women and men face different risks and vulnerabilities, some specific to their gender and others exacerbated by gender inequalities and discrimination". In Bangladesh, harmful and discriminatory practices like child marriage, abandonment, dowry, and gender-based violence persist largely due to practices rooted in

¹Gender equality implies that the equal opportunity is accorded to both women and men to reach their full potential as human beings. It refers to women and men having the equal rights, resources, and voice to derive equal benefits.

Gender Equity is the process of being fair to women and men. It implies providing need-based support to those who lag, i.e. introducing special measures to compensate for the disadvantaged women and men so that they both can derive equal results/benefit. Equity is a process that leads to equality.

the traditional social norms favouring boys over girls. During extreme climatic events women and girls are vulnerable to death, deprivation and harassment. The risks may be economic, social or in overcoming the losses due to disaster.

Luttrell and Moser (2004) compiled a list of risks and vulnerabilities associated within the life cycle of women according to age and marital status. These include the vulnerability of girls not attending school owing to income-earning or domestic responsibilities, invisibility of their work done as part of normal household, agricultural or parental employment, double burden of education and work (or caregiving in family). In case of women, their lack of access to financial institutions and asset building opportunities, restricted access to the labour market owing to societal norms, pregnancy or motherhood, sexual harassment in the work place, loss of employment or job insecurity owing to pregnancy and child and elderly care, stigmatisation of divorce, loss of assets due to widowhood, and old people's cost of illness.

Many of the existing social protection programmes target women or girls to reduce their vulnerability, improve livelihood and/or facilitating their empowerment. The extent of gender integration into the social protection programme elements varies. Therefore, the impacts of such programmes also vary. Many programmes have positively impacted women and children's health, girls' education, and women's knowledge levels and empowerment within the household and community. Some programmes also facilitated empowerment, such as participation in decision making, building self-confidence and joining the labour market. Therefore, researchers suggest that the social protection programmes should address such gender-related constraints, including those hindering women's economic advancement, labour market rights and human development opportunities.

Gender has not uniformly been used as an analytical tool to design social protection programmes. Analysis showed that programmes targeting women as beneficiaries may reinforce their traditional roles, as mothers and carers, not as individuals (Molyneux, 2008). Women's empowerment or positive change of gender relations towards substantive equality may not be promoted. Holmes and Jones (2013) concluded that beneficiary women cannot always increase their control over household income, and conditions may only increase their domestic workload and time burden. They suggest that with relatively simple changes in design and with investment in implementation capacity, social protection can contribute to transforming gender relations at the individual, intra-household and community levels.

The traditional social norms of male biases originate from institutions like family, community, religion, culture and legal frameworks. Therefore, there is a need to address these gender biases from where they originate. Workplace biases are to be addressed differently from the biases originating from within the household. The first one requires social policies and strict enforcement of laws. The second is a deeper social problem and needs legal and social protection measures and motivation within family and community.

1.3 The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS)

In Bangladesh, despite all progress, a lack of a coherent social protection policy in the past hindered the gains from the government-led social protection interventions in terms of reducing risks and vulnerability and facilitating empowerment. The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) approved in June 2015 calls the social safety nets a story of resilience and transformation. As per the NSSS, the safety net programmes reflect the Government's response to support the poor and the vulnerable population to manage risks. In recent years, the coverage of these programmes for the poor and vulnerable households has increased, but still a large proportion of the poor households remain beyond all social protection programmes.

The NSSS is imbedded in a social development framework (SDF) encompassing the Government's strategies for poverty reduction in sectors related to human development, financial inclusion, women and gender empowerment, social inclusion, environmental protection and climate change management, disaster management, infrastructure development, the security of persons with special needs, elderly and widows. The NSSS aims to, "Build an inclusive Social Security System for all deserving Bangladeshis that effectively tackles and prevents poverty and inequality and contributes to broader human development, employment and economic growth."

Over the next five years, the goal for the NSSS is to “Reform the national Social Security System by ensuring more efficient and effective use of resources, strengthened delivery systems and progress towards a more inclusive form of Social Security that effectively tackles lifecycle risks, prioritizing the poorest and most vulnerable members of society”.

The NSSS intends to develop a lifecycle focused social security system. It aims to cover all children including girls under the childhood support and explicitly intends to extend Support for Vulnerable Women of Working Age. It also includes a proposal for a consolidated Vulnerable Women’s Benefit (VWB) programme.

1.4 Objective of this Study

The current study aims to conduct a women empowerment analysis and prepare recommendations for an NSSS gender policy through

- identification of discriminatory social norms and behaviours and other structural barriers that impede women’s access to and benefits from social protection programmes;
- exploring how the social norms and behaviours can be transformed through gender-responsive social protection policies and interventions;
- identification of good social protection practices that can leverage women’s empowerment;
- identification of government and non-government agencies, including community-based organisations and women’s groups, that can be engaged to tackle discriminatory social norms and behaviours through social protection; and
- identification and analysis of strategic gender interests as relevant for the Bangladesh National Social Security Strategy.

1.5 Methodology

The study is primarily qualitative in nature and depended on document review gathered through review of policy/programme documents, strategies, research reports and plans taking a comprehensive approach. It was supplemented by some interviews and consultations at the field level for collecting information from the beneficiaries of social protection programmes, views of local people and validation of the concepts and analysis. One consultation with relevant stakeholders was carried out in Dhaka, with social protection experts and relevant representatives of Government ministries and civil society to obtain feedback on the definition used, the methodology and information on relevant studies and documents. A second one for sharing the preliminary findings and recommendations will be held with the stakeholders.

Field information has been collected from focus group discussions with various groups. They include social protection programme beneficiaries from Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Rural Employment and Road Maintenance Programme (RERMP), SWAPNO, Old Age Allowance (OAA), Disability Allowance, Maternity Allowance, and One House One Farm. Others included domestic workers, rice husking mill workers, shrimp processing workers, construction labourers, adolescent girls, retrenched garment workers, Union Parishad (Council) Chairpersons and members (both male and female). Questionnaires were used to collect data from 50 households in Satkhira and Kurigram districts. Some interviews have been conducted with key stakeholders.

1.6 Conceptual Framework and Definition Used

The initial assessment started with Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler’s (2004) transformative social protection conceptual framework, “Social protection describes all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social

vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups". The analysis then also considered the Asian Development Bank's elements of social protection," comprising five major kinds of activities: labour market policies and programmes, social insurance, social assistance, micro/area-based schemes, and child protection".

The concept of women's empowerment was reviewed using Naila Kabeer's (2008) definition that women's empowerment "touches on many different aspects of change in women's lives, each important in themselves, but also in their inter-relationships with other aspects. It touches on women's sense of self-worth and social identity; their willingness and ability to question their subordinate status and identity; their capacity to exercise strategic control over their own lives and to renegotiate their relationships with others who matter to them; and their ability to participate on equal terms with men in reshaping the societies in which they live in ways that contribute to a more just and democratic distribution of power and possibilities".

The full range of social protection interventions comprising of protective, preventive, promotive and transformative measures were considered: As per Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler these are

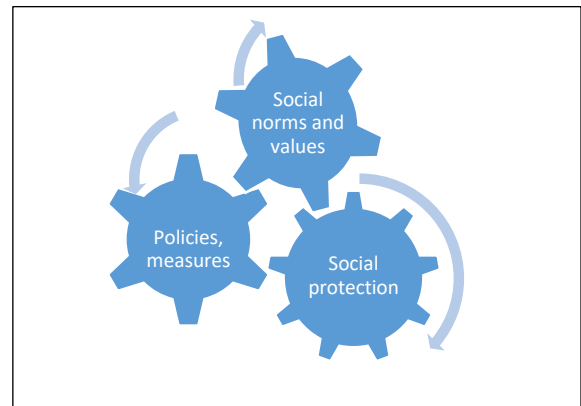
- Protective measures: targeted safety nets for income and consumption smoothing in periods of crisis or stress (e.g. social assistance programmes for the chronically poor).
- Preventive measures: seeking to avert deprivation (e.g. social insurance such as pensions and maternity benefits).
- Promotive measures: aiming to enhance real incomes and capabilities, and provide springboards and opportunity ladders out of poverty.
- Transformative measures: seeking to address concerns of social equity and exclusion through social empowerment (e.g. collective action for workers' rights, building voice and authority in decision-making for women)

It is recognized that social protection can play a bigger role in long-term and sustainable poverty reduction. It can support reducing risk, protecting the poor against vulnerability to income and consumption shocks, facilitate economic growth, and support poor bring them out of poverty. It also can support in enhancing livelihood security. Thus, it goes far beyond a "safety net" function to "economic protection". Jones and Wheeler argued that to become "social protection", it needs to have additional elements of social transformation or empowerment. This argument can also be applied for "gender equality", which also needs to have empowering and transformative elements. Social protection should be considered from its broader sense beyond the income and asset transfers. Other non-economic elements providing protection are also essential to make social protection affordable as well as empowering, such as legislative change. Social protection programmes providing safety net or economic protection mainly serve the practical needs of women. Social Protection, to become empowering or transforming gender relations, needs to have elements incorporated that facilitate women's strategic interests.

Kabeer (2007) said that social protection interventions can be conceptualised as "seedbeds" of social change, designed with these broader socio-economic impacts in mind. They have to go beyond social safety nets (dealing with production and consumption shocks, food aid, etc.). While applying social protection as means to change the situation of women and girls and change the gender relation, the incorporation of "transformative" elements recognizing the need of women and girls for protection against risks and vulnerability as well as equity is essential.

As per Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler social protection should address vulnerability associated with "being poor" (for which social assistance is needed), and vulnerability associated with the risk of "becoming poor" (for which social insurance is needed), as well as social injustice arising from structural inequalities and abuses of power (for which "social equity" is needed).

It is to be noted that social protection is not only affected by the social transfer, workfare or labour market initiatives; it is also influenced and ensured by the macro-economic policies and measures like economic growth, creation of employment opportunities, poverty reduction, educational and health support, legal provisions and above all social norms and community attitude and practice. Similarly, the policies and norms can also be influenced by social protection. The attached diagram gives a view of their inter-dependence.



Therefore, a broad approach, including human development (nutrition, education and health support) labour market support (job creation, work environment, insurance and rights), financial inclusion (capital/savings formation, microcredit), safety nets for vulnerable groups, is necessary. A transformative social protection may address equity, empowerment and rights (economic, social and cultural) beyond the targeted income and consumption transfers. Therefore, the following elements were identified for gender informed social protection programmes for this study. These include promoting:

- i. access of women and girls to resources and protective (crisis management) services;
- ii. opportunities to own economic assets;
- iii. increased time for productive tasks;
- iv. opportunities to enter labour markets for decent work (work environment with equality and without harassment) without social and institutional barriers;
- v. opportunities for human capital (nutrition, health, skills, education) development,
- vi. opportunities to build women's/girls' capacities/skills to participate in the labour markets;
- vii. opportunities for effective control over incomes and material wellbeing;
- viii. opportunities for self-assessment, building confidence, leadership and bargaining power;
- ix. participation and leadership in the community, and developing social capital (membership in economic or social groups, linkages, networks);
- x. voice and decisions in matters related to vulnerability and risk reduction, coping strategy, resource allocation, utilization, and distribution in the family and community;
- xi. opportunities for voice against discriminatory norms and making decisions at family and community; and
- xii. promoting positive social norms and attitudes in favour of gender equality and against harmful practices.

2. Gender Norms and Social Protection in Bangladesh

This section provides an overview of the norms and practices related to the roles of women and men and the current state of the situation of women compared to men. The factors mentioned in this section influence the development of girls and boys, girl/women's access and mobility in public spheres, self-reliance, economic base and their need for social protection.

2.1 Norms and Practices Impeding Women's Social Protection

The risks and vulnerabilities compiled by Luttrell and Moser are applicable for Bangladeshi women. Different types of discriminatory behaviour and harmful practices exist based on social and gender norms. Despite the progress in social indicators such as health, education and labour force participation some norms enforce the traditional low status of women and girls. These norms are related to the differences in roles and responsibilities between women and men, power and decision making in the family, masculinity and femininity. The norms are nurtured and applied by institutions like family and other social and community institutions and at time by formal institutions as well. Due to social norms and practices women lack equal access to food, sanitation, health and nutrition services, and employment. The norms also influence the context in which policies, and measures are formulated, implemented and how they influence women's lives. Some of such norms and practices that are relevant to influence women's risk, vulnerability and access to social protection are discussed below:

Gender roles and division of labour: The household status defines the different roles and responsibilities in the family. The expected behaviour and roles of both women and girls flow from socially nurtured customs and beliefs and at times from religious provisions. The norm of men being head of the family and the breadwinner or principal provider makes them responsible for providing financial support, taking major decisions and undertaking responsibilities outside home. Women are expected to bear children, take responsibility of household chores and care and follow decisions of the household head. The norms determine the bargaining power and the decision-making ability within family. They also influence women's labour force participation, education, mobility and so on. The norms of men to be the breadwinner can lead to boys being taken out of school to financially support the family through work. In case of girls, they are taken out of school because the family either cannot afford their educational expenses or need their help with domestic chores and care work, or for the girl to be married. All these contribute to women's low educational attainment, skills and self-reliance.

Now girls/women are increasingly going for education, taking responsibility of household farming, and paid employment. In low income households, women are gradually getting more involved in work outside home. Yet, this has not often led to a reduction in their domestic responsibilities. Women's involvement in domestic and productive responsibilities put them in time poverty implications and in some cases in vulnerability to domestic or external violence

Emergence of female headed households: Although it is assumed that households are headed by males, female headed households are gradually becoming common due to displacement, labour migration, polygamy, male disability, widowhood or abandonment. Unemployment, river erosion, natural calamities lead to out-migration of male members of the households, forcing women to become de facto heads of households. The absence of husband for a long time may make the wife more vulnerable or she may become more independent and active in taking care of the family and making decisions. "For example, being without a male partner (and their earnings) may at one level exacerbate poverty for female heads – especially in respect of incomes – but this can be compensated by other gains. These may include female heads being able to use whatever income they themselves or other household members earn at their own discretion, to avoid the vulnerability attached to erratic support from spouses, or simply to enjoy a greater sense of well-being because their lives are freer from conflict, coercion or violence" (Chant, 2008). As per the Household

Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), 2010 the percentage of female headed households was 13.9. During the last few years, internal and external labour migration has increased, leading to more women effectively heading the family. Women benefitting from social protection programmes is often determined by women's role as household heads as widow or spouse of disabled husband considering them more vulnerable. It also has the implication that social protection programmes can make them more confident and self-reliant and they can take decision about the use of the support provided by social protection programmes.

Seclusion and lack of mobility: Often the norm of male headship expects women/girls to follow seclusion, remain within households, which curtails their mobility and women's ability to make decisions. Seclusion restricts women's access to services, weakens their self-confidence and makes them vulnerable. It may prevent women and girls from accessing educational and health opportunities, making them ineligible in accessing the labour market. This eventually makes them seek social protection support when men are unable to or do not support.

The norm of seclusion and roles of women and men is changing. Women and girls are now more mobile outside home for schooling, accessing services, employment and such other purposes. Women from poor sections form a large group of the urban labour force including in readymade garments, rice mills, shrimp processing, electronics, micro-level businesses, and as domestic help. Rural women are now more in agricultural activities and self-employment. Women are also working as migrant labourers in urban areas from rural areas and in other countries. The lack of labour market support like insurance, maternity and child care and health care makes them vulnerable. Seclusion and lack of mobility also limits women's access to social protection services, particularly those requiring mobility and action outside home.

Child marriage and child pregnancy: The norm of child marriage is a critical barrier to girls' growth as educated and healthy citizen and as an economic agent to contribute to their communities. About 62.8 percent of all women age 15-49 were married before the age of 18 (MICS 2012-13). Percentage of young women aged 15-19 years who are married or in union was 34.3 and the percentage of women of age 20-24 years who had at least one live birth before age 18 was 24.4. Daily Prothom Alo (10 Dec, 2016) reported about two villages where all households had child marriage without marriage registration. It not only hinders growth of a girl as a productive agent but due to their early pregnancy poses health risk for them and the future generation. Thus, child marriage and early child birth make both mother and child needing more health and nutritional support. Among children under age 5, the prevalence of severe underweight is 8.8 percent, severe stunting 16.4 percent and severe wasting 1.6 percent, which indicates that these children will have difficulties in growing as healthy workforce. Child marriage is a major cause of the girls' inability to grow as independent, self-reliant and educated human beings. Even for social protection programmes for girls like stipend, though they provide educational support, field experience shows that they cannot always prevent child marriage.

Widowhood, old age and living alone: In Bangladesh life expectancy of men was 67.9 years and for women 70.3 years in 2011 (SVRS 2011), which is expected to have further increased by now. Women in Bangladesh are generally married to older men. In 2012-2013 (MICS 2012-13) about one fifth (20-22 percent) of currently married women had spouses who were over 10 years older, while 42-47 percent had spouses 5-9 years older. The practice of abandonment of wife by men in low income households is high. These factors imply, women are more likely to experience widowhood or to live alone in later life, experiencing the risk of living in poverty for longer. Sylvia Chant wrote that female senior citizens may be particularly prone to disadvantage for three main reasons: i. the legacy of greater gender gaps in education, literacy, savings, pension coverage and so on; ii. greater probability of 'Feminisation of Poverty' that older women will be widowed than men and/or live alone, and iii. the possibility that older women suffer greater social and economic discrimination than their younger counterparts or male peers. These are relevant in Bangladesh. Older widows (80 and above) in some parts of Bangladesh face a particularly high risk of vulnerability. The possibilities of women living without disability in later life is smaller than for men (Athina Vlachantoni and Jane Falkingham, ADB, 2012).

The increased life expectancy can place pressure on women as support and care providers in the household, in addition to the household work and care work they already perform. It also may increase women's requirement of support and care as majority of the older people. Even widowhood and abandonment at young or middle age puts women in a vulnerable situation as most of the poor families do not or cannot support these women. "The general social attitudes towards widows, as well as the actual lack of a partner to physically share responsibility and economic loads, make their position more onerous. At certain times in the farming cycle, women headed household (WHH) are without any income" (Kuntala Lahiri Dutt, 2014).

Gender based violence (GBV) including for dowry: High rate of domestic violence has already been found by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Sexual harassment and abuse in public places and at work place are also being reported in recent days. Many cases of killing girls after rape have also been reported. This has consequences on women's physical and mental health including on self-confidence. It has effects on children's wellbeing, women's/girls' sense of security, mobility and on family expenditure. A large share of domestic violence is related to dowry demand, though it is illegal as per the Muslim Personal Laws and the civil laws. The Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS, 2014) found that 28.3 percent women agreed that wife beating is justified in any of the following five situations: if she goes out without telling him; if she neglects the children; if she argues with him; and if she burns the food or she refuses to have sexual intercourse. This was also confirmed by some respondents during the field visit. The beneficiaries of some social protection programmes paid high dowry for their daughters and their daughters were also tortured or abandoned for not fulfilling the demand for dowry.

Drudgery in household chores: The expectation from women to perform household work means time and energy to ensure household food security and human development. Lack of basic services, low access to technology and energy, time spent on collecting water, fuel and fodder also make it difficult for women to engage in productive work. Unpaid care work, often performed by women, is generally not recognized as valuable. BBS's pilot national time use survey, 2012 found that men spend four times more time than women in productive work for market (5.8 hrs and 1.5 hrs respectively). Men spend far less time on care work compared to women (1.5 hrs versus 5.6 hrs), even when women are employed. The amount of time spent in care work by men (1.5 hours), whether employed or not, is the same, while for employed women the time declines from 5.6 hours as not employed to 3.5 hours as employed.

Son preference: Son preference is still strong, as a son is considered the future of a family and the source of support for parents. The inheritance laws influence favouring male children. This also has influence on allocation of family resources for health, educational and professional attainment of boys compared to girls. Child marriage and girls' low opportunities for development are at times results of son preference. Investing in boys is taken as investment for future.

Legal rights and social practice: The major reason behind women's low status and the existing social norms is interwoven within the provisions of the personal laws. Women's unequal rights in marriage, divorce and guardianship enforce the social norm of women being excluded from decision making. The discriminatory provisions in inheritance in Muslim or Hindu Communities is a critical one that affects women's resource base. Even social norms override the legal provisions and women often are deprived of their legal share of parental properties due to the social practice of brothers not giving their due share. Women also often do not or cannot claim their share due to the social practice and lack of resources and ability to claim through legal litigation. All these have major impact on the level of confidence, resource base, status and decision-making ability of women. Male family members often own most of the land and make the agricultural decisions.

The formal institutions like judiciary, law enforcement, and public sector are also influenced by social norms and practices despite existing good policies or laws. Therefore, implementation of laws and policies remains ineffective. Consequently, women are subjected to discrimination in the public places as well, even though the Constitution provides equal rights in the public spheres.

2.2 Women's Situation in Human Development and Workforce Participation relevant to Social Protection

Sylvia Chant (2008) suggested that poverty should be understood not only as income poverty but as a massive restriction of choices and options. Steps taken in this consideration may mean an improvement of women's life circumstances. She mentioned that household income, though it is an important determinant of welfare, may bear no relation to women's welfare because women themselves may not necessarily be able to access the income. For many women, the capacity to command and allocate resources may be considerably more important than the actual resource base in their households. The capacity to command the resource base is dependent on women's education, skills, orientation, employment, income, voice and such factors.

Education: Women's low educational and skills attainment particularly in higher and technical education is often a result of the general expectation from women being homemakers and taking care of family members. Many children still are out of school and will have little opportunity to grow with ability for decent work in adult life. At the primary level, girls account for about half (44.6 percent) of the out-of-school population (MICS 2012-13). Girls' share decreased to 33.7 percent, however, at the secondary school level. There are higher proportions out-of-school children in rural areas (28 percent) compared to urban areas (23 percent). At the secondary school level 21.1 percent of children were out of school and for girls the percentage was 33.7. Proportions of out-of-school girls of secondary school age in urban area is higher (38.3 percent) than in rural areas (32.6 percent). Girls only form one third of all students in technical education, excepting in medicine where about 50 percent are girls. The low educational and skills attainments of women/girls and the social norms of seclusion prevent them from taking advantage of the social protection programmes and labour market opportunities.

Health and nutrition: Despite progress in health indicators, affordable health care has not been ensured to all citizens. Child pregnancy is a major challenge as about 33 percent below the age of 19 are already mothers, and another 6 percent are pregnant. Every day 21 women die giving birth, of whom 13 are below 18 years of age. Around two-thirds of the health expenditure is borne by the households as out-of-pocket expenditure and the insurance sector does not have an affordable health care system. Probability of a child dying between birth and the first birthday is 46 per thousand live births and before reaching the age 5 it is 58 per thousand live births. The prevalence of malnutrition among women and children is a major concern and 37.7 percent of children are born under-weight. Due to the social norms, the household food distribution is influenced, where women and girls get less share and eat after men and boys. The overall implication is that women and girls are more vulnerable to malnutrition and diseases and the families spend less for their health care. Maternity care, child nutrition of child and pregnant women and health support become crucial for most of the low-income families.

Disability: About 9 percent of the population have some form of disability and among women the rate is higher than that of men (HIES, 2010). Women with disability face a complex discriminatory situation and social stigma as women and as disabled. Possibilities of education, marriage and family support among disabled women is low compared to that of men. Therefore, the possibilities of labour force participation and social attainment is low among women.

Employment: The Labour Force Participation (LFP) rate was 82.5 percent for men and 36 percent for women in 2010, which showed a decline for women to 33.6 percent in 2013, i.e. for every three men in the labour force there was only one woman. The LFP for females has been growing steadily since mid-1980s, but a drop to 33.5 percent in 2013 in both rural and urban areas was visible. The reason may be the change in definition. Women when working outside home concentrate in labour-intensive, low-skill manufacturing sector and in informal sector work and, therefore, are mostly ineligible for social insurance measures. Women in the private manufacturing or service sectors including readymade garment, the largest sector employing

women, have no guaranteed women's labour or reproductive rights. Women constitute the majority of the unpaid family labourers. A significant proportion of working women are in the informal sector and in domestic work. Evidence of women's retrenchment due to pregnancy or child birth is not uncommon. Women tend to find it hard to regain employment after retrenchment due to lower skill levels. Social protection of part time or contractual workers is absent.

Maternity benefits, child care and health insurance are some of the key requirements of the working women. Women often resort to their immediate families or kin to take care of the children and elderly while they are out on work. MICS found that 11.6 percent of children under age 5 were left alone or in the care of another child younger than 10 years of age for more than one hour. The female employees with informal contracts and having small children are particularly in need of child care. As more women are moving to urban areas for work, they are gradually losing the support from relatives for child care. The need for child and elderly care is a phenomenon more acute for the working women in the urban areas. At the field, social protection beneficiary women and other working women voiced the concern of growing need for child care.

The Labour Act (Amended) 2013 and the Labour Rules, 2015 provide such provisions, but implementation is inadequate. Decent work with equal wage is another important concern. Inequality of wages is pronounced in the informal sector though the gap is decreasing. Enforcement of these laws and policies can provide protection for a large section of deserving working women.

3. Gender and National Social Security Strategy

3.1 General Aspects in National Social Security Strategy

The NSSS proposes life-cycle based social protection and has set the goal to “Reform the national Social Security System (SSS) by ensuring more efficient and effective use of resources, strengthened delivery systems and progress towards a more inclusive form of Social Security that effectively tackles lifecycle risks, prioritising the poorest and most vulnerable members of society.”

It declares to be rooted in a rights-based approach, and identifies the following priority challenges for the medium-term to be addressed over the next five years:

- i. a shift from current discretionary to a targeted universal approach;
- ii. expanding coverage of core schemes for the extreme/hard-core poor and most vulnerable people, focusing on mother and child, adolescent and youth, working age, the elderly and people with disabilities;
- iii. progressive but substantive scaling up of the ‘graduation’ programmes that offer real and direct income earning opportunities and formal and informal work to the poorest;
- iv. providing the most vulnerable women with income security and greater opportunities to engage in the labour market;
- v. initiating a social insurance system for protection against the risks of old age, disability, unemployment and maternity; expanding coverage to the residents of urban areas and to the socially excluded people;
- vi. supporting an effective disaster response system;
- vii. strengthening the delivery systems for priority transfers; and
- viii. expanding awareness of the social security programmes for the beneficiaries and motivating potential contributors.

Within the above, only items ii and iv mention women. The item ii emphasises different age groups. It focuses on women’s motherhood. Child, working age, elderly and disabled include women as well. Item iv emphasises income security and labour market opportunities for women. All the other items also have gender implications, but that has not been made explicit. They include women’s access to schemes, graduation programmes, social insurance, disaster response, awareness, maternity support and smooth delivery of services to women and girls.

The intended focus of the above is very much related to food and income security, labour market or protection from disaster or improvement of delivery system. It emphasises women’s roles as mothers, in maternity, poverty reduction and for employment. The NSSS is not explicit about the transformative elements, particularly the empowerment aspects of social protection, though many of the programmes have potential for such transformation. Some of the key features of social protection proposed with their potential to promote gender equality are discussed below.

Expanded coverage: The Government declares to increase both coverage and the size of transfer of the social protection programmes and proposes many reforms. The increase in coverage, depending on which area and age, has potential to cover women and support them for old age security, insurance and employment. The existing practice of targeting women and expanded coverage with focus on women’s vulnerability and potential for empowerment can have transformative impacts.

Supporting young children: Priority has been put on supporting young children up to the age of four years, through a child benefit package built on the success of the Maternal Allowance Programme for the Lactating Mother and providing a transfer to around half of all children aged 0-4 years. The Government recognizes that though income transfer is a critical help, a wide range of other interventions to support pregnant women, young children and their mothers is needed to eradicate under-nutrition. An expansion of support

through the health system, a more effective programme of health promotion has been proposed. This is a critical area to reduce the gender gap in nutrition, child death and maternal mortality, which has a long-term benefit on morbidity, labour-force participation, family expenditure and the quality of life of future generations. Focused attention to reduce gender gap in these areas based on sex disaggregated data analysis will be useful.

Human development: The Government intends to increase the transfer value of the stipend schemes and extend the coverage to the 50 percent poorest children in primary and secondary schools, with no distinction by gender. The education programme has high potential of empowering girls and boys and transforming the gender relations. In addition, the Government declares to continue with the human development and enterprise support provided to women as part of the Government commitment to empower poor and vulnerable women to move out of extreme poverty, which, if implemented properly, has high potential for gender equality impact. The Government's plan to provide 500,000 women and adolescent girls per year with additional capacity development and enterprise support for a period of two years has potential for women's empowerment. Complementary support of quality education with progressive curriculum is essential.

Labour market support: Support has also been proposed for the parents of children to access the labour market and continued vocational training and support for them. Considering the changing structure of the labour force and the increase in women entering the formal sector workforce, the NSSS proposes providing day care and other services through the private sector employers and to retain the skilled labourers. Skills development and labour market support is essential for economic growth. It is also important for taking advantage of the demographic dividend of the high proportion of young population in the country. The economic empowerment of young women can be fostered through inclusive and targeted labour market interventions.

Old age support: Introduction of pension and contributory private pension for additional protection in old age, which is under consideration in the NSSS, can reduce women's vulnerability and risk during widowhood and in old age. It is important for elderly women due to the increased life expectancy of women and widowhood or abandonment. The large number of women workforces in garments, public sector and other areas can benefit from introduction of insurance and pension support. These intensions are positive for women's benefit as well as promotive of women's empowerment, and for coming out of poverty, if planned using a gender lens.

Multi-sectoral support: The Government is aware that the inter-linkages of programmes and beneficiaries is necessary within the life cycle. The NSSS admits that "support to children comes not only through direct transfers but is complemented by other initiatives that indirectly support children, such as old age and disability benefits and schemes to help their parents more effectively engage in the labour market". It mentions, "without health financing reforms and adequacy of supply side interventions in health, education, water supply and sanitation, the cash transfers from the life cycle scheme alone will not achieve the desired results". Support for working age families to encompass more than only social security and labour market support has been proposed. It may include ensuring effective access to financial services, especially of micro-finance. The need for a range of policies and programmes encompassing the Government's strategies for poverty reduction, education, health, nutrition and population, sanitation and water supply, inclusive finance, women and gender empowerment, social inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities, disaster management and social security has been envisaged. It is well consistent with the requirement of gender equality promotion as a multi-sectoral and multi-level effort and the principles of an inclusive society.

Consolidation of women's benefits: The consolidation of the Allowance for Widowed, Deserted and Destitute Women and the VGD scheme into a new Vulnerable Women's Benefit (VWB) programme is pragmatic. The Government declares to integrate a mechanism for providing all new mothers with maternity insurance within a new National Social Insurance Scheme (NSIS). These intensions are positive for women's

benefit as well as promotive of women's empowerment, and their coming out of poverty. Consolidation of programmes considering the needs of various groups of women at different ages with inclusion of some empowering or graduation elements can be useful for women.

Consolidation and cash transfer: The intention is to consolidate and convert all workfare-based food programmes into cash transfers in the long run. Maxine Molyneux (2016) found that cash transfer programmes (CTPs) have the potential to generate a variety of change processes. Cash transfer, in addition to being an essential support for consumption or human development, can support beneficiaries' increased confidence, sense of self-worth, dignity, and their assertiveness. As a result of gaining some economic security, the CTP recipients may gain more financial independence and control over their lives, if the programme designs include such features.

Emphasis on the disabled: The net percentage of population suffering from any type of disability is about 9.07 - 8.13 percent for males and 10 percent for females. The proportion of disabled in rural areas is 9.63 percent, and in urban areas 7.49 percent. As may be expected, disabilities tend to increase with age, in general (HIES 2010). The support strategy for the disabled consists of a disability benefit for children and working age population with disabilities. People with disabilities are discriminated against due to negative attitude and lack of knowledge that these persons can be productive within their capacity and potentials. Disabled women are more vulnerable than their male counterparts and due to social norm of seclusion, women's health and nutritional needs often remain unattended. Therefore, they need different types of support. Due to physical inability for movement, they may be exploited in delivery and use of their share of social protection support. Disabled women become doubly disadvantaged – as women and as disabled. Therefore, specific attention to disabled women, not only with allowances but through health care and family orientation, can improve their social protection.

Emphasis on urban population: The NSSS aims at bringing more of the poor and vulnerable population living in urban areas under social security. With the increase in rural urban migration, lack of inadequate services and the concentration of poor working women in urban slums, different types of support are necessary. The existence of poor people in slums side by side with the richest people makes the living more difficult for the poor. The Bangladesh Urban Health Survey, 2013, found 50 percent of the children of urban slums to be stunted. New problems include increasing difficulty of managing the work outside home and caregiving, which is essential for the nutritional well-being of the children. Particularly child care, maternity support, elimination of child labour are some of the elements that can assist urban women for continuation of work and help their urban girls and boys grow as healthy citizen with care, nutrition, and education.

Inclusion of vulnerable groups: The NSSS aims to bring all vulnerable groups under the umbrella of social protection. Accordingly, expansion of the priority social security schemes for the elderly, children, vulnerable women, can support addressing different aspects of life, if designed appropriately for each group with a gender lens. Still there is a large group of population, both women and men, needing support as they are now outside any social protection programme. Therefore, expansion of both social protection and sectoral programmes is necessary.

The above section shows that the need to address women and girls at various ages has been considered by the NSSS. The issues and challenges identified are in line with reducing the gap in income poverty, employment and consumption. Emphasis also has been put in supporting urban poor making the social protection programmes more inclusive addressing needs of various groups like elderly, disabled, lactating mothers and other vulnerable groups. Women have been identified as a group with specific needs. These are no doubt good initiatives in supporting women and reducing gender gap in poverty and income. However, the intension to promote gender equality or empowerment through transformation is not explicit in the document. There is potential that the intended actions can bring benefits for women. If girls and women are considered specifically within the beneficiary groups, their practical needs will be addressed. The programmes may also support addressing their strategic interests with appropriate planning.

The educational support programmes are both practical as well as having a potential to be transformative. Some other programmes have elements of empowerment, like skills enhancement, awareness about rights, group activities, etc. However, to address the strategic interests, additional elements need to be built in, taking conscious efforts. Community mobilization, formation of social capital, awareness raising to change the social norms are some of the elements that can be built within the programmes for better gender equality results. Improvement in gender relations has to be made an explicit objective within the design of programmes, incorporating appropriate empowering elements and ensuring their delivery. Therefore, informed attention for addressing the strategic needs such as self-confidence, leadership, voice, bargaining power is essential in designing social protection programmes and in reform measures within the framework of the NSSS.

3.2 Gender Equality as Practiced in Social Protection Programmes

In the government's budget of the year 2016-17, a total of 142 social protection programmes are included. In addition, there are donor supported, civil society operated as well as private sector operated social protection programmes, but the details of information on them are difficult to gather without an intensive study. The objectives of the programmes vary widely, including reducing poverty and vulnerability, building human capital, empowering women and girls, improving livelihoods and responding to economic and other shocks. Some also tend to address issues of inequality in access to income, assets, dignity and human capital. The programmes include promoting employment, diminishing people's vulnerability to risks, enhancing people's capacity to manage economic and social risks, and support in life events like sickness, maternity, disability or old age. Some programmes assist in graduation out of poverty through improved income-generating skills, financial inclusion and other opportunities. The form and elements of social protection are different, depending on programme objectives.

Even though the national strategy is called social security strategy, in the Government's budget it is still titled safety net budget. The total budget of safety nets is 2.31 percent of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2016-17. It is divided under the headings cash transfer, food security, micro-finance, miscellaneous funds and development programmes. The cash transfer allocation includes transfers under headings social protection, social empowerment and special purposes. Food security is given under social protection and micro credit programmes are placed under social empowerment. Miscellaneous funds are for both social empowerment and social protection. There are development sector programmes as well, which include, education, health, public work, skills development, etc.

Out of the 142 programmes in the budget of 2016-17, about 27 programmes have a primary focus on women, directly or indirectly. They include cash transfer (conditional and unconditional), food security (conditional and unconditional), micro-finance, and development programmes. The programmes support social transfer, social empowerment and special purposes. Some of the development programmes also have in-built elements of social transfer and empowerment.

Above 37 percent of the safety net budget is for the pension of the retired government employees and their families, indicating that the large share of safety net is for formal sector employees, a small proportion of the total population. The other nine large programmes in terms of budget share are: Old Age Allowance (OAA), Honorarium for Freedom Fighters, Open Market Sales (OMS), Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF), Test Relief (TR), Food for Work (FFW), Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP) and Primary Education Stipend.

Out of these 10 large programmes, VGD is the lone programme targeting women. Women's share in old age allowance is 50 percent and the share is about 30 percent in public work programmes like TR and FFW. Very few women receive the Freedom Fighters' Allowance. Women and their families can also benefit from OMS and primary education stipends. A careful look into the budget of the 27 specific programmes indicates that the size of women specific programmes is relatively small excepting the VGD, though they have important

elements of women empowerment supporting education and livelihoods. The Allowance for the Widows and Distressed Women and the Secondary Stipend Programmes are the two major programmes targeting women and girls, though they are not in the ten largest programmes.

The social protection cash transfer programmes exclusively targeted to women include ICVGD, Allowances for the Widows and Distressed Women, Maternity allowance programme for the poor, allowances for urban low-income lactating mothers, secondary education stipend programme and stipend for female students at the bachelor level. Some of these are based on conditions often related to human capital development, such as the stipend programmes including condition of school attendance and grades in examination. Other cash transfer programmes not specific for women but benefitting women include allowance for primary education, elderly, disabled and the pension programmes.

Public works programmes take a major share of the social protection budget. Several workfare programmes like EGPP provide seasonal or regular employment for the poor to do community work in return of social-security payments. The TR and FFW also provide employment in lean seasons and after crisis. Workfare schemes specific to women are Rural Employment and Road Maintenance Programme (RERMP), and the Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO) project. An employment generating programme for destitute rural women, a cash-for-work programme through the Rural Maintenance Program (RMP), was implemented by CARE between 1983 and 2006. Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) gradually took up the model. Gradually the programmes incorporated rural maintenance, tree plantation and care, income diversification, savings and such components to make the projects more beneficial for the poor women for their self-employment. Generally, these programmes provide wages lower than market rate for day labourers and mostly the destitute women join the programmes as they give steady income for a certain period. The rural road maintenance component, savings and income generation model has been incorporated in almost all the rural infrastructure development projects of LGED. They also contribute to economic growth through public asset creation. The SWAPNO project integrates additional elements with the aim of graduation from poverty through self-employment or entrepreneurship, as well as it facilitates social empowerment.

The major in-kind transfer programme for women is the VGD Programme. The SP programmes like the VGD both directly and indirectly contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction and gender equality to some extent by supporting women to raise the incomes and consumption of their families. It allows women to engage in livelihood activities and to build or protect their asset holdings from shocks through provision of training and information. A new version of the programme Investment Component of VGD (ICVGD) is being implemented in selected areas on a pilot basis. It aims to enable the beneficiary women of VGD programme with the help of a cash grant for investment and training, to earn enough for themselves and their families so that they can move out of extreme poverty and food insecurity by the end of the two-year programme cycle. The programme is adding nutrition-focused approaches, such as behaviour change communication on nutrition and providing post-harvest fortified rice. The ICVGD has potential to improve food security of poor vulnerable women and their families and it is contributing to their nutritional outcomes (Osmani et al. 2016).

Vulnerable Group Feeding and School Feeding Programmes are some of the transfer programmes introduced to address food security during crises. FFW, TR for Food and VGF are now also supporting poor men and women to get temporary employment during lean periods or to provide food support during festival seasons. Similarly, food-for-education schemes invest in human capital development.

Some programmes addressing social equity concern interventions that modify prejudicial attitudes and behaviour towards socially vulnerable groups. Some programmes challenging customary prejudice against Dalits, unequal inheritance rights, rights of tea garden workers, introducing minimum wages for low-paid workers, and awareness raising campaigns to protect trans-gender people, people living with HIV/AIDS, child marriage and against discrimination are in place. They are relatively small but addressing specific needs of

vulnerable groups. They have potential to address the strategic interest of the vulnerable groups including women.

Micro-credit from the non-government organizations (NGOs) has played an important role in poverty reduction as well as addressing poverty and vulnerability of women. Micro-credit schemes have been funded by the Government, banks, Palli Karma Shahayak Foundation (PKSF) and donors. Many of the micro-credit programmes have supported beneficiaries to come out of poverty by integrating social empowerment elements. The current trend of commercialization of micro-credit programmes shows that many of the agencies have already discarded awareness raising, social empowerment or group activities and focusing mainly on credit disbursement and recovery. It is important to note that the socio-economic context has changed and the methodology of weekly group meetings for training and awareness raising may not be feasible any more in all areas. Therefore, use of digital media in an innovative manner needs to be considered. In the remote locations like chars, the old fashion community mobilization may still be applicable.

Skills development and vocational training, separate or combined with micro-finance, is implemented by around ten ministries, including Ministries of Social Welfare, Women and Children Affairs, Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Youth Affairs, supporting the poor for self-employment or wage employment. Most of these programmes target women. In addition, several NGOs are engaged in such programmes. These programmes essentially support accessing labour market but may or may not be empowering to participate in decision making at the family and community level. Programmes like Joyeeta, or programmes of Micro-Industries Development and Services (MIDAS), have introduced poor women with markets to sell their products. Yet, in the social context, mostly the widows or separated women take more advantage of access to market.

In general, social protection programmes have targeted women with a generalized notion of women or women headed households forming the poorest segment of the population and also admitting that women have lesser opportunities for skills acquisition, access to finance and employment. The women specific programmes, though small, include important elements like day care, allowance for urban lactating mothers, maternity allowance, skills training, allowances for the widow, deserted and destitute women, improving working condition in the readymade garments sector and such other programmes. The programmes mostly focus on income poverty and are preventive and/or protective in nature. Some are promotive, but elements of transformation addressing women's strategic interest are not visible in most of the programmes. It may be said that the potential of SP programmes could not be harvested adequately in terms of women's empowerment and reducing gender inequality.

Broad based programmes involving women in agriculture, fisheries, livestock, handicrafts, computer operation and various income generating activities are in place, providing training for skills development and creating access to the labour market. Providing skills to poor women by mobilizing them in groups for creating self-employment opportunities, provision of microfinance combined with training, involving poor women in productive and development activities like infrastructure, stipend, or in-kind asset transfer are some of the other forms of social protection in place. The sector development projects under safety net budget also include components on group formation, skills development, public work, health, education and income support for women. Some of them include elements to improve women's voice and develop their agency, such as developing capacity of the elected women members of local government or raising women's voice in water management cooperative associations.

The social protection programmes have been overwhelmingly focusing on rural areas even though the urban population is growing rapidly. Migration of women and men to urban areas is generating new requirements of services and social protection. Allowances for Urban Low- income Lactating Mothers, Urban Based Marginal Women Development, Day Care Programme for Lower and Middle Income Working Women are some of the main programmes benefiting urban women for child care, skills development and maternity

support, but are limited in scale compared to the needs. The recent labour market policies have considered women as a group and include certain benefits for their protection, which are mostly applicable for women in urban areas and applied mainly for the manufacturing sector. The implementation of such policies, particularly the compliance by the private sector employers, has not been ensured.

Social insurance programmes mitigating risks associated with unemployment, ill health, disability, work-related injury and old age, have been limited and are mostly applicable to the public sector and in some cases corporate employees. Between 2001 and 2011 the share of the working age population increased for both sexes by around 4 percent. The female labour force grew from 10.3 million in 2002-03 to 18.2 million in 2013, a rise of 77 percent in 8 years, compared to the growth for males by 10 percent during these years. In 2013 more than half (51.5 percent) of the female labour force was in the 15-29 years age group, while 45.5 percent were aged 30-64 years. Between 2005 and 2010, the proportion of married female workers increased from 72 percent to 85 percent, and the proportion of unmarried workers remained static at around 7-8 percent (data on marital status is not available in LFS 2013). This indicates that the maternity, health and child care needs of these workers has increased both in urban and rural areas as majority of the female workers are married and of child bearing age. The female LFP rate has been increasing steadily since mid - 1980s, therefore, the decline in female LFP rate in 2013 needs to be further investigated and explained.

Only 3 percent women are employed in formal sector against 10.9 percent for men (LFS 2013). This data is not consistent with the data in Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES, 2010). Zhang et. Al. (2013), using HIES data, wrote, "The share of female LFP in the formal sector has exceeded the share of males, and the gap has widened from 10 percentage points (28.15 percent for females and 18.15 percent for males) in 2000 to near 13 percentage points (39.16 percent for females and 26.21 percent for males) in 2010, perhaps due to the increasing demand for female workers in the manufacturing sector, especially the garment industry". The increase of women in public services and inclusion in previously non-traditional areas like defense services, tourism, electronic media have also contributed in the rise of women's participation in the formal sector.

According to the 2013 Labour Force Survey, 28.1 percent of all women 15 years old and above and 68.3 percent of all men are employed in the informal sector. This indicates that majority of the employed women and men are in the informal sector, therefore, formal insurance system does not cover them. Sectors where women's presence is high, like the readymade garments and other private sector agencies, have not yet ensured women's maternity benefits and child care support, which are critical for women's continued participation in the labour market. Some initiatives on micro-insurance for health primarily provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are in place. Most of these micro-insurance programmes for health are linked to loans and are reliant on the group dynamics of micro-credit. The low income and gender differentials in earnings can affect the capacity of women to contribute to pension schemes.

To conclude, it may be said that the existing social protection programmes are covering a huge number of women and men and providing consumption and income generation support. They are supporting promotion of gender equality against education, employment, income and health related indicators. Most of the programmes do not have the specific goal of women's empowerment, but many programmes have had intended and unintended positive effects on women. These include enhanced knowledge and skills; increased economic activity, credit and social capital; increased or decreased marital tensions (Holmes & Jones, 2010). Overall, women's decision-making power in the household and the community does not appear

¹ These percentages do not exactly correspond to labour force participation data of the same report, since the definition of labour force participation includes also unemployed people actively looking for a job. It provides information about the eligibility of formal sector social insurance programmes.

¹ Xiaobo Zhang et al, Rising Wages in Bangladesh, IFPRI Discussion Paper 01249, IFPRI, 2013.

to increase as a result of social protection programmes (Holmes & Jones, 2010). It needs planned initiatives to gain such results. There are examples of informed and planned effects on women's empowerment in some of the programmes, like SWAPNO.

Careful assessment and identification of factors that affect people's access to resources, services and social and economic opportunities and the factors that influence exclusion/inclusion outcomes can help in design of the interventions. By helping in identifying the strengths and limitations of specific instruments it can support addressing factors outside the sectoral reach of social protection and can help in adjusting expectations and setting realistic and feasible goals (Babajanian et al). This is applicable in designing social protection interventions and policy instruments. In facilitating effective implementation of the NSSS, crosscutting policies and activities that go beyond the social sectors are crucial, together with an enabling governance environment.

3.3 Some Experiences of Gender and Social Protection in the Field

Two upazilas of Kurigram district and four upazilas of Satkhira district were visited to gain first-hand knowledge about the benefits and beneficiaries of different social protection programmes. The women beneficiaries included participants in SWAPNO, RERMP, VGF, OAA, Maternal Health Voucher, One House One Farm, Secondary School Stipend, Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP), Allowance for Widows and Distressed Women, Allowance for Low Income Lactating Mothers' programmes. A few male community members were consulted, including recipients of OAA, Disability Allowance and EGPP. Local leaders included Union Parishad (Council) Chair, Upazila Nirbahi Officer, UP members, both women and men, teachers and representatives of the general public.

Social Pension: Two major social pension programmes supporting the elderly women are OAA and the Allowance Programme for the Widowed and Distressed Women. The OAA targets destitute elderly from amongst extreme poor and vulnerable. Fifty percent of the beneficiaries are women. The Allowance Programme for the Widows and Distressed Women also mainly targets elderly widows. These are important support for elderly and widows/deserted women as they are generally less able to undertake economic activities. They are also less able to undertake household and care work; rather they need care support from

Health care support is important

Ensuring access to low cost health care system together with the old age allowance and disability allowance can better support the beneficiaries including reduction of their health care expenses and the need of care.

their children and family. Widows/deserted women of the poor households generally lack productive assets and their access to labour market is also low because of low education and social norms. These social pension programmes have limitations. The amounts of allowances are low and by no means adequate to cover the expenses of elderly or disabled persons. The beneficiaries have to rely on family support or other means even to work to cover the

expenses. It was found that most of the beneficiaries spent the money to support household needs. Women mostly hand over their receipt to their sons or other male members as those family members support their daily food and other needs. Some beneficiaries supported school stationaries or tuition for their grandchildren. Improvement in the consumption and health care was also reported. Yet health care was highlighted as a prime need among older people and the amount is too meagre to cover it. On the other hand, the allowance has a value of self-worth and status. Even though the amount is small, the recipients feel confident of having some cash in their own hand. It has brought a new meaning of self-worth to the beneficiary women that it not only is contributing to fulfil their own needs, but they now can contribute cash to the family, and the family values them as contributors, not only as dependents. This is consistent with the findings by Paul-Majumder and Begum (2008) (cited in ADB). The allowance has made the women more desirable members at the household and their children are willing to take care or reside with them. It supports looking after the older family members/parents by the family members /children. This programme provides protection and some degree of self-worth but incorporation of promotive or transformative

elements is difficult. For elderly, persons low cost health care is a dire need and access to quality health care at a low cost is an important contributory factor for them.

VGD: In general, the VGD is focusing on poor female heads of households or even poor women as an option to direct resources, in this case 30 kg rice per month to them for 24 months with the intension of nutrition supplement and the well-being of the targeted families as a whole. The beneficiaries are of working age (20-45 years old), having no male earning member in the family. The programme includes provision of skills training for income generating activities (IGA) and micro-level savings through NGOs with the intension to support women in engaging in IGAs and use of their savings as capital. The programme has nutritional value and can be promotive, if the training could be designed and used meaningfully. However, the field situation was different in the two districts. In Kurigram (Chilmari) beneficiaries reported that they had not received any training and they were not able to tell the name of the NGO operating the saving activity. The beneficiaries of Satkhira reported receiving training on poultry/livestock rearing, sanitation, tree plantation, etc. However, when asked they were not able to talk about the vaccination need of animals. The two situations call for strong monitoring of the programme delivery and the benefits. The amount of savings, 40 Taka a month for 24 months, can accumulate only 960 Taka at the end of two years, which is too small for investment for income generation. The programme has promotive element of training (VGD programme, not ICVGD) and some savings. With effective implementation of training, some modification in the programme design and strong monitoring, it can provide meaningful support for graduation from extreme poverty. Due to the mobility and training, some degree of empowerment can happen. However, transformative elements like training, confidence building, larger savings, social capital building support are necessary for empowerment.

Suggestion on VGD from the field

Incorporate compulsory individual savings – may be delivery off 25 Kg rice and savings equal to 5 Kg rice to be disbursed at the end of the term. Include 100-200 Taka savings and monthly rotational interest free credit for the women (Group of 24) for income generating activities. This will allow women to start some IGA during the term of VGD and earn income and asset. Women to initiate their IGA earlier and have a larger amount as capital at the end to invest in the already practiced IGA. It will require stronger monitoring and will have a large group of women become self-reliant not needing further SP support. Incorporation of some additional conditions will also benefit them. The conditions may be sending children to school, vaccination, marriage of daughters without dowry, no child marriage, etc.

Road maintenance: Beneficiaries of three different road maintenance programmes were consulted in Kurigram. One was SWAPNO. Two other road maintenance programmes under LGED were operating in the same union. One was Rural Employment and Road Maintenance Programme 2 (RERMP 2) and the beneficiaries were not aware of the name of the other programme. The aim of the RERMP of LGED is to graduate 59,180 vulnerable women headed households from ultra-poor families through year-round maintenance of 90,960 km of rural access roads to markets and service centres. The duration of employment of these three programmes were different; five years and four years as per the beneficiaries for the LGED's programmes and 24 months for SWAPNO. Beneficiaries of the two LGED projects were working in the same village while visited. One group received IGA training and another group did not receive any. Both groups had compulsory savings in the bank from their wages.

These women were from the lowest economic strata as earthwork is not generally attractive to women, if they had other means. It was evident that the two groups of women and beneficiaries of SWAPNO were receiving same wages in cash and having individual savings, but the opportunity to training was different. SWAPNO had an in-built continuing learning opportunity. IGA training was extended to only one group of LGED. The other group was not having similar support. The possibilities of the women of this group being able to invest their capital gained after the end of the work term was limited compared to the beneficiaries of RERMP 2 and SWAPNO. The gain in life skills and quality of living may be different for these women. The awareness level was also low among this group as they could not even tell the name of the programme or duration of their employment accurately. There is a risk of unproductive use of the savings, for dowry or such purposes, or losing the business investment, if women are not trained on selection and management

of IGAs. The maintenance programmes transfer cash to the women, which supports consumption and asset creation. They also gain recognition in the family as income earners. These types of employment programmes have greater possibilities of graduation as well as potential for women's empowerment, if inputs are planned properly. These programmes can also be instrumental in building social capital like networks and community support.

The SWAPNO project has a slightly different model that has a lot to offer to these public work programmes for women's empowerment. In addition to the wage employment and savings, the practice of Rotational Savings and Credit Association (ROSCA) of SWAPNO has been appreciated by both the beneficiaries and the local government representatives as an effective instrument for self-reliance and empowerment. They proposed to integrate this model in other social

"No one considered us as human beings before joining SWAPNO. Now even the shop keepers do not hesitate to sell good to us on credit"- Beneficiary of SWAPNO.

protection programmes. A clear distinction between the SWAPNO and other programme beneficiaries (VGD, RERMP, One house One farm) was visible in terms of confidence, knowledge about available services, self-respect, etc.

Secondary School Stipend: Stipend programme is one example of a social protection intervention that can contribute to longer-term poverty reduction. The free education is providing immediate cost reduction and the stipend is supporting the family by contributing for expenses though the amount is small. It is providing an immediate result by encouraging poor households to send their girls to school. This programme is serving both protective and promotive social protection objectives. It is also serving a transformative purpose by encouraging girls to learn, developing girls' capacity to join the labour market and reducing the possibilities of child marriage. The gain from education though is long-term and benefits are not visible immediately. It is also consistent with the basic right of education. The programme in the past provided stipend to all girls at the secondary level, but now it is supporting 60 percent of the poor girls at the secondary level. Still, the total purpose of the programme could not be achieved. It was found that several girls after completing the grade ten could not sit for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination mainly because of the families' inability to bear the expenses for examination fees. On the other hand, some girls were not qualified for sitting in the final exam.

Time to think for adolescent girls

The girls who cannot appear in the school final examination, cannot pursue higher education after school final, or are not engaged in skills development are in need of different kinds of social protection support. They cannot be married off before the age of 18 and they are not eligible for micro-finance and other SP programmes. This situation creates uncertainty among guardians and the girls themselves are also not sure about their future. They may fall victim of violence and trafficking and others can allure them to different traps including through mobile phones and such medium.

The findings are consistent with the typical international experience of conditional cash transfer (CCT) for education. CCTs positively affect enrolment, attendance and reduces dropout. The impact is larger in magnitude for secondary than for primary schooling (Saavedra and Garcia, 2012). Evidence is lacking that students receiving cash transfers perform better in school results, since continuation in school may not be driven by students' motivation. Poor education quality is also an issue; CCTs improve demand, but parallel improvement of supply is required. If the schools provide quality instruction, it is clear that the transfers would improve students' learning outcome (Reimers, 2006). Further study is needed to find out whether this was applicable only for girls or not. A few girls who had completed SSC were not admitted to colleges due to reasons like not having college in the area, insecurity or parent's inability to afford their higher education. It was found that given the legal restriction on child marriage, cases of girls marrying were common. The adolescent girls reported several marriages of their classmates. The guardians marry their girls off without informing in the area and without registration. The classmates are also not informed by the girls. A practice of affidavit of age and holding marriage at magistrate court was commonly mentioned. Discussion with

adolescents, male and female groups of different programmes confirmed their knowledge about legal age at marriage. Yet the male groups were in favour of reducing the age at marriage on the ground that they may not get a good groom when girls are grown up, the girls may elope with local boys, if they are not married early or they may fall victim of sexual harassment.

Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP): EGPP is a programme to provide employment opportunity for the poor in public works during lean seasons. One third of the beneficiaries of EGPP are to be women who are poor, destitute, widow and having no other means of work. Initially it started with a 100-day employment programme but currently it provides 80 days of employment in two slots a year, 40 days each. This has proven to be useful in providing protection against hunger when employment opportunity is low in the rural areas. It generally does not have any long-term empowering impact. Encouraged by the empowering effect and possibilities of graduation of the beneficiaries of SWAPNO, the local government representatives of Satkhira felt that EGPP can be converted into a promotive programme, to bring the poor out of poverty with some modifications in design and delivery. Though it may not cover the large number of population it is currently covering, this will have higher potential to bring the beneficiaries out of poverty, which will bring better result in providing social protection.

Suggestions for EGPP

The employment days can be increased to 150 days and the wage to be fixed at 250 Taka. A compulsory savings of 50 Taka a day will give 7500 Taka for investment. An introduction of ROSCA model can further support alternative IGAs. - Suggestion by UP Chairman in Satkhira.

One House One Farm: Women beneficiaries of One House One Farm were not from among the landless. Two thirds of the beneficiaries are women. The project mobilizes savings, provides training and credit for income generating activities. The

respondents were from different groups, who generally do not take part in public work activities and many of them follow seclusion practices. They reported that in the first six months the project workers recorded a government contribution of 200 Taka against a saving of 200 Taka per month, but after six months the staff told them that they were not sure about the government contribution and therefore only their own savings are being recorded. Later it was learned from the project office that the government contribution was already shown against all beneficiaries. The programme has provision for training, but of the 6 women present in the discussion only one received training; on cow rearing. Credit at a lower interest rate than the micro-finance organizations (8 percent) was disbursed. Each group consists of 60 members and is given capital of Taka 3 lakh by the Government for credit operation. One woman told that even though there was credit facility for income generation at low interest, she was not willing to take loan as she did not know how to invest in which business and was not confident of the ability to repay the loan. These women generally are less confident and do not usually go outside home and depend on male members of the family. They need extensive support with training for IGAs to be able to take advantage of the project support. Even though the project is to provide training and organize monthly meetings, this was not apparently happening effectively. Graduation from poverty is possible with extensive training, follow-up and monitoring at the field level.

Allowance for the Lactating Mothers: A mother is given allowance for two years and twice in life. The amount is low and the beneficiaries mentioned that the amount was given for their nutritional support. Since it is an important contribution for women and the future generation it needs additional support. Beneficiaries reported that no training or other activities were associated with the allowances excepting advice for taking good food. Since the allowance is mainly for nutrition subsidy, the benefit will be better if it is combined with orientation on low cost basic nutrition and food habit for women and children. The programme provides consumption support but does not show potential for empowerment or getting out of poverty.

Combining nutrition education and preventive healthcare can bring better health outcome for women and children.

Vulnerable Group Feeding: This programme is mainly for providing consumption support during disaster and crisis. As one of the in-kind transfer programmes, it only provides 10 kg rice during the two religious festivals. Women beneficiaries can support their families with some staple food. This type of food assistance programmes needs a lot of additional inputs even to become fully protective or preventive.

Issues of women labourers: Interaction with workers of a rice mill, shrimp processing, construction and domestic work revealed that wage of the working women was about two thirds of that for men. In the rice mills in Chilmari women receive 4 kilos of *khud* (broken rice) and 40 Taka as wage for working from 5 in the afternoon until morning, that is completion of the processing of a fixed amount of paddy. If due to electricity failure or other reasons the processing takes longer time, the wage remains same. The domestic workers in some areas of Chilmari work in exchange of food only without any cash during the period when the rice mill work is not available. These women consider the rice mills as a source of steady income for about six months even though the income is very low. The question of minimum wage was not even remotely heard by these women. The working women with small children take their children to the mills and keep them in the open or in the dust, which makes the children vulnerable to illness. The dust and heat/cold can affect children in acquiring respiratory diseases. With the gradual break of joint families or female members joining the workforce, the child care support is diminishing. These women are now realizing the need of child care support. The situation also makes one think of the need for establishing minimum wage, low cost health care and other support for these women.

Need of child care

I have to leave my three children at home, the eldest one is 10 years old. I am always scared that any one of them may fall in a pond, catch fire or face accident on the road-SWAPNO beneficiary in Ulipur, Kurigram.

The local people including UP leaders admitted that the SP programmes supported women's economic development and security. They enabled the women to send children to school, they became more familiar in the locality, became more self-dependent, their awareness increased, and they can communicate more, their leadership capacity

developed, they are socially more acceptable, and some have stopped begging. Now they have better participation in family decision making, their living standard and food security improved, they can have better health care, clothing, etc. They also admitted that women were deprived of the opportunity to contribute in the society. Training of women and creation of new job opportunities, increase in wages, encouragement for savings, education and monitoring programme outcome were also suggested.

The local leaders also mentioned women facing negative attitudes, discouragement from family, existence of child marriage, violence against women, etc. Some women beneficiaries of public work programmes mentioned that they were initially being looked down upon by some people for doing physical work outside home. Now the situation has changed. But in some cases, dowry demand for their daughters has increased.

Conclusion: From the interaction in the field it was clear that both women and men found the social protection programmes supporting them. The elements included support for consumption, food security and income. Promotive elements were present in some programmes, but the right based and transformative elements were rare. Many of the recipients of social transfer like VGF or ration card (30 Kg rice at the rate of Taka 10) who were of working age wanted work. To them wage or transfer in exchange of work was much more acceptable than charity. Beneficiaries of different programmes sought training and support for knowledge, skills and information. The beneficiaries of the SWAPNO project received the highest number of training days and were intensively supervised. Therefore, their level of confidence was higher. Training/knowledge/information was found to be the most desirable support for the beneficiaries as well as the local people including local government leaders. Though awareness on child marriage was high, practice of child marriage was prevalent. Adolescent girls require support for developing self-esteem, career guidance and skills. Attention is required for supporting girls who are not in school, job or not in skills development training.

It was found that the beneficiaries of EGPP, VGF, OAA, SWAPNO were outside of any microfinance programmes as they were among the poorest. NGO operated microfinance programmes are not present in many of the char areas. Geographical variation also had prominent effect on social situation in the two locations. Women of Kurigram were less informed of microfinance agencies and had lower wage compared to women of Satkhira. The widows and abandoned women were more mobile and visible in markets and public places compared to the married women and girls. If clientele with banks is considered a sign of empowerment, most of the beneficiaries of workfare programmes have bank accounts, which they opened as per the requirement of the programmes. This has reduced the financial exploitation of women by the family members and others.

3.4 Programme Elements and Gender Informed Social Protection Findings

The social protection programmes no doubt are providing useful consumption, income, crisis management and human development support. A careful assessment of the programmes based on the elements identified in Chapter 1 reveals the following.

Women's and girls' access to resources through stipend, allowances, food and food subsidy has been increased through the current social protection programmes. This has enabled the families to have better nutrition, health care and well-being. Microfinance, skills development and asset transfer programmes have enabled women to increase their economic assets at the personal or at the family levels. These include mostly livestock, better housing, etc. Skills development, access to finance and educational support have also enabled women to access the labour market. This is also helping in breaking the social norm of women being dependents. Nutrition, health care, maternity support, educational support are also supporting human capital development. These are mainly addressing women's practical needs and reducing their income poverty. The coverage is still low compared to the number of people needing support. Some of the beneficiaries have been able to take advantage more than the others and progressed towards empowerment at various degrees.

It is important to note that other sectoral programmes are also playing a critical role on changing social norms and in social protection. Complementary sectoral programmes like campaign against child marriage, violence against women and girls, education, water and sanitation, nutrition are some of the supporting initiatives. Similarly, there are a number of facilitating legal and policy measures and actions like urban day care centres; provisions in labour laws related to maternity support, child care, workplace safety and environment and participation in labour associations; domestic workers' protection policy, High Court directives against sexual harassment at workplaces and educational institutions, law against eve teasing, etc. These legal and policy provisions mostly recognize women's agency and support raising their voice. However, practical implementation and compliance monitoring is weak.

While considering the strategic elements like control over income, leadership, bargaining power, self-esteem, some of the programmes include profit calculation, business support or introduction to market. Effectiveness and coverage of such elements are difficult to assess in absence of a thorough study of operation of such programmes. Leadership development through group mechanism and community awareness raising has been included in some programmes as well. There is little evidence of elements in developing voice against discriminatory norms, promoting positive image of women, developing social capital and enhancing bargaining power. Development of social capital is addressed by programmes like SWAPNO, but not by all programmes. Mainly due to weak implementation and monitoring, the results of such elements are short of the expected ones. In short, there is still a long way to go for social protection programmes to be transformative and empowering for women.

3.5 Good Social Protection Practices to Leverage Women's Empowerment

A common assumption is that simply by targeting women, programmes are automatically addressing gender inequality. Although this is an important first step, the role that gender dynamics play in social protection is more complex. The gender dynamics of a community, even at the household level, shape the types of risks that women and girls face, which risks are tackled and how, the political, community and public buy-in and the effectiveness of implementation. Social protection programmes around the world have encompassed various elements that can have empowering and transformative potentials and results. Some of the initiatives (social transfer, legal and other) that have empowering effects are presented below.

Secondary School Stipend: The secondary education stipend programme initiated initially for girls has been considered as one of the key drivers of increased women's education level in Bangladesh. Mahmud (2003) found that the programme created a positive attitude among community leaders and the general population towards female secondary education. It was considered as an achievement in a patriarchal society that values women's seclusion and in an economy where private returns to secondary education have not been very high. The positive attitude to girls' secondary education may have been positively influenced by other changes in the economy. Policy and programmatic interventions have impacted on expansion in employment opportunities for women with some schooling in export-oriented industries in urban areas (especially readymade garments) and increased opportunity for self-employment due to having greater access to micro-credit in rural areas. Scholarship programmes targeting girls seem to succeed in raising age at marriage and increasing school attendance. Providing girls one extra year of education beyond the average boosts their eventual wages by 10–20 percent; for boys, the returns are 5–15 percent. Economic returns to education investments, in the form of eventual wages, vary by level of schooling (Levine et al. 2008). Education has both practical and strategic value and transformative potential. Improved literacy in general supports accessing knowledge and can influence behaviour change. The stipend project alone is not enough to improve girls' and women's quality of life and opportunities. Ensuring quality education that better prepares them to be participants in social, political and economic life through supply side intervention can improve the status of girls as a group, as a result of the programme, for sustainability and better results.

Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities (SWAPNO): SWAPNO is a rural employment generation project, which supports income and empowerment of women. The model works with an aim for graduation and self-reliance and includes various services. The elements include public works employment, compulsory and voluntary saving habits, life skills training, lesson learned and best practices, social empowerment, linkage with service delivery institutions, business management and financial literacy training, livelihood skills development, graduation from poverty. It has similar components of wage employment, compulsory savings and IGA training. The Rotational Savings and Credit Association (ROSCA) is a supervised voluntary savings activity that provides credit to the beneficiaries free of interest on a rotational basis for income generation early in the project. With support from the staff on IGA selection and training, this enables the beneficiaries to start their own IGA early, gain experience and income and also learn business. Compulsory savings of 50 Taka per day in the bank from the daily wage helps accumulating capital that can be utilized after the end of the 18-month employment tenure. Sanitation, water, child marriage and other social issues are also discussed during meetings and training. Daily sharing lessons among the SWAPNO members is an innovative way of learning. The beneficiaries have been introduced to the local officials of the service providing agencies, which has made it easy for them to access services when required and has enabled them to build social capital. A comprehensive approach of encompassing income, awareness and social capital building has greater potential for graduation of beneficiaries of poverty and sustainability of benefits. They also include direct social transfer programmes and some sectoral interventions.

Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction (CFPR)/ Targeting the ultra-poor, BRAC: It offers a 'graduation' model, one that provides achievable objectives of graduation out of extreme poverty. The programme defined graduation on the basis of several indicators and identified someone as a graduate if she met a majority of the indicators. Women beneficiaries are selected using a two-pronged method, spatial poverty maps developed by the World Food Programme (WFP) and a community wealth ranking. The graduation model envisions that a beneficiary will receive a cash or an in-kind stipend for several months or

for the entire duration of the programme. Enterprise selection and training and compulsory savings are part of the programme (Hashemi and Umaira, 2011). The programme addresses both economic and social risks through asset transfers and income generation training. It aims at increasing women's social capital through the support of Village Poverty Reduction Committees formed by the programme. It also incorporates training and awareness on prevention of violence against women, dowry and early marriage. The CFPR programme addresses women's practical needs in managing the household and increased women's access to and investment in productive assets through transfers and training. The income of the beneficiaries has increased, resulting in increased consumption, investment in education and improved healthcare. Important benefits like increasing women's self-esteem, dignity and self-confidence have been evident. They perceive improvement in their position and status within the household and the community (Holmes et al. 2010). Though Holmes found limited evidence of the programme effectively translating into women's empowerment at the household or community level, it has elements of addressing both practical and strategic needs (self-esteem, dignity, awareness, participation in community forums).

Investment Component of VGD (ICVGD): ICVGD is aimed at increasing the earning potential and social empowerment of 21,000 most disadvantaged rural women Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme recipients in the targeted project area. WFP is offering technical assistance and capacity strengthening support for ICVGD. In addition to the aim of positive changes in the quality of life of the VGD programme beneficiaries through rice and training support, the ICVGD provides cash grant of Taka fifteen thousand for each woman. The project provides business skills development training and supports beneficiaries to choose their IGA or a set of IGAs. ICVGD provides specific technical training to implement these IGAs. Women receive income generating activities and life skills training after they have received their cash grant (WFP). In collaboration with Bank Asia, issuance of smart card has been initiated to the ICVGD beneficiaries. The first set of cards was distributed in September 2016 that contain the ICVGD supported amount of fifteen thousand. The cash grant combined with training and banking support is a good initiative that can be transformative. It has empowering elements like training, access to resources and awareness for women. Yet, the success depends on intensive care and supervision of the IGA and inclusion of regular awareness raising and social capital building activities.

Bolsa Familia, Brazil: In 2003 the innovative Bolsa Família (BF) Programme was launched in Brazil for scaling up and coordinating scattered existing initiatives to attain the zero-hunger initiative. It included a cash grant for poor families in return for keeping their children in school and utilisation of health care services. BF has been instrumental in halving the extreme poverty in Brazil – from 9.7 to 4.3 percent of the population. Income inequality also fell markedly by a 15 percent decrease. “BF reaches nearly 14 million households – 50 million people or around 1/4 of the population – and is widely seen as a global success story, a reference point for social policy around the world” (World Bank, 2013). This programme has proved to be an effective CCT programme that helped promote the dignity and autonomy of the poor, particularly for women, who account for over 90 percent of the beneficiaries. Besides the poverty impact, the goal of BF is to break the transmission of poverty from parents to children by increasing the opportunities for the new generation for better education and health outcomes. BF has increased school attendance and grade progression. The chances of a 15-year-old girl being in school increased by 21 percent. Children and families are better prepared to study and seize opportunities with more prenatal care visits, immunization coverage and reduced child mortality. Labour income has increased during this period, which is another critical aspect in the reduction of poverty and inequality in Brazil. Other social programmes and services were also behind the successes. Efficient administration and good targeting have enabled BF to achieve its success at a very low cost (around 0.6 percent of GDP), and build ambitious programmes to include those not yet reached (World Bank). The targeting at the household level with focus on education and health has supported reducing the gender gap in these areas. However, quality of education and health services are essential complementary elements. The empowerment potentials need to be harnessed in a planned manner.

Campaign in Dominican Republic: The Dominican Republic planned a campaign involving changes in employment norms to promote equal working hours for men and women, licenses for maternity leave for both men and women, protection of salary in the informal sector and options for child care. The programme was planned as three campaigns over 2006–15. The Dominican Republic also planned two sensitization

campaigns to sensitize politicians, employers and workers to the necessity of formalizing domestic work as an effort to provide increased legal protection to domestic workers, a large percentage of whom are adolescent girls (Levine et. al 2008). The campaign is largely for mass awareness raising on equality in the workplace, legal protection and maternity support. These campaign programmes particularly targeted protection of domestic workers and equality of working hours. Though they are addressing practical needs, they are very much supporting the strategic interests of women and girls.

Supporting Urban Poor Women, Bangladesh: Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project (UGIIP) in its three phases supported women to take part and benefit from Pourashava (municipal services) through the implementation of Urban Governance Improvement Action Plan (UGIAP). Each participating municipality established a Town Level Coordination Committee (TLCC) and Ward Level Coordination Committees (WLCCs) involving 40 percent women. Each municipality *formed a Gender Committee* (GC), chaired by a woman councillor, who is responsible for design and implementation of a Gender Action Plan (GAP) prepared with a demand driven process tailored to the need of the municipality as the main strategic instrument for supporting women. Slum dwellers formed Slum Improvement Committees (SIC) led by women, who prepared and implemented plans for development and upgrading of the slums including contracting, constructing and maintaining slum development infrastructure. Infrastructure services includes tube wells, toilets, waste bins, footpaths, drains and streetlights. Through slum improvement activities, the quality of living of women slum dwellers was explicitly improved as they received financial benefits and improved infrastructure. They were supported with a range of skills development training and financial support, or provision of material goods. This resulted in greater income generation opportunities for women to have more ownership over their own lives. The Municipalities also supported activities on preventing child marriage and eve teasing. The project combines a comprehensive approach of developing public asset, income generation support and participation in decision making for women implemented by local government authorities.

Organizing Street Vendors, Cambodia: Women street vendors face a number of problems including unsafe working environments, harassment from officials, and arbitrary charges by market owners and governments. These latter charges can reduce already low incomes. Urban Sector Group (USG), a non-government organization in Cambodia, helps women street vendors to organize and improve their income earning opportunities, working conditions and negotiation skills. USG organized around 160 women street vendors in Phnom Penh as members of vending communities. By providing training, capacity building in advocacy and negotiation and business management skills, USG has enabled women street vendors to increase their incomes and bargain with market and public authorities against harassment, extortion and a range of other issues. USG has also promoted the establishment of savings schemes among the members of the vending communities, for lending to members so that they do not need to use private lenders who charge high interest rates when they need resources for social emergencies or for business expansion. Many street vendors earn more income than before. They have more business and communication skills and contact market chiefs and market security guard chiefs directly in the event of harassment (ILO, 2006). This is an example of supporting urban informal sector women who are now able to bargain and negotiate for their rights. It has not only served practical needs but addressed strategic interests also.

Minimum Wage Law for Domestic Workers of South Africa: Minimum wages were set for South Africa's one million domestic workers in 2002. The regulation is a major step in raising domestic workers' pay and reforming their relationships with their employers. The real wages, average monthly earnings and total earnings of all employed domestic workers rose since the regulations came into effect, while hours of work per week decreased. Average real hourly wages of domestic workers rose by almost 20 percent and for women it was 22 percent. The percentage of workers estimated to be earning less than the applicable hourly minimum fell from 75 percent to 63 percent. These wage increases have been accompanied by a 5 percent reduction in average hours worked per week for women; for men the decrease was roughly 2 percent. The combined effect of the changes in wages and hours was that the average real monthly earnings of employed domestic workers increased by about 15 percent (9 percent for men, and 16 percent for women). The non-wage outcomes include increase in written contract with employers and unemployment insurance fund (UIF)

contributions, although the rate of compliance with these two provisions was less than 30 percent. The number of cases brought before the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) increased by roughly 50 percent since the regulations went into effect. An adverse effect was that employment of full and part-time workers also fell, which for women was by 10 or 12 percent. Strikingly, male employment rose by 14 or 15 percent. For women, the employment losses offset some of the wage gains, but the estimated net increase in total earnings was 3.5 to 5 percent. Despite substantial apparent non-compliance with both the wage and non-wage provisions, average hourly wages, average monthly earnings and the total monthly earnings of employed domestic workers rose. The provision of written contracts and, to a lesser extent, the provision of paid leave and even pensions increased, which are not mandated (Hertz, 2005). Establishing minimum wage for domestic workers is an important strategic interest that was supported by the Law.

Insurance for low income women, India: The Self-Employed Women's Association's (SEWA) integrated insurance scheme, or VIMO SEWA, has three components – life insurance, asset insurance and health insurance. It has over 102,000 members. SEWA found that most of the default in SEWA's savings scheme was due to the members' high health costs and ill health. The health insurance helps cover the cost of seeking necessary medical attention and also helps to avoid further loss of income. The reduction in cost of treatment is an important incentive for workers to seek medical attention when needed, rather than compounding health problems. SEWA developed a maternity benefit scheme in 1992 within VIMO SEWA (Dayal, 2001), as SEWA members work right until their labour pains start and return to work soon after delivery, endangering their own and their children's health and lives. The maternity benefits include a grant at the time of child birth and some antenatal and nutritional care. Still there is concern that some of the poorest members cannot afford even the low premiums charged. There is also concern that while the health insurance provides access to hospitalization, in some cases the standard of care provided is inadequate. Low cost, quality and trusted health care at the community level helps to ensure that health services are affordable and accessible to low earning working women (Lund, 2009). Insurance is an essential complementary support to enable women and their families to remain healthy, continue productive activities and get protection from shocks.

Generating decent work, Brazil: Between 2001 and 2009, 17 million new jobs were created in Brazil, of which more than 10 million were those where employees hold social security cards (Carteira de Trabalho). It shows that the right government action can yield impressive results, even against a backdrop of increasing flexibility and vulnerability of employment in the global economy. Women's labour force participation rate rose from 54 to 58 percent and the proportion accessing jobs with social security cards increased from 30 to 35 percent between 2001 and 2009. Brazil's achievements in creating decent jobs are the result of a package of economic and social policies. Macro-economic policy aimed at inclusive growth has contributed to job creation. Investment in labour inspection and the simplification of registration costs and tax administration for small and medium-sized firms have promoted the formalization of jobs and enterprises (UN Women, 2016).

Review of Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation System (WHSCS), Canada: An Independent Review Panel established in May 2007 was seeking public input in an "open-ended and comprehensive examination" to determine whether the New Brunswick Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation System (WHSCS) was functioning appropriately. The panel included labour representative and employer representatives. The Committee was asked to address two questions, which included adequacy of the workplace health, safety and compensation system and the coverage within the New Brunswick economic and social context. Areas of evaluation included governance, scope of coverage, benefits and assessment rates, education and prevention efforts and the appeal system. The Advisory Council on the Status of Women presented its views and recommendations to the Independent Review Panel on the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation system, focusing on matters of concern to women, including the need for gender based analysis to guide policy and programme decisions, inclusion of psychological harassment or workplace bullying in occupational health and safety protection, and issues related to the scope and cost of workers' compensation coverage (New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 2007). This is an effective complementary action to ensure social protection of working women.

3.6 Agencies/Institutions to Tackle Discriminatory Social Norms and Behaviours in Promoting Social Protection

Social norms are developed and nurtured through social institutions and social relations. They shape the norms, values, roles and relations including gender norms, and gender roles in a given society. It is important to strengthen a shared understanding of the key issues and factors that relate to women's empowerment and their importance for the family and community.

The Asia-Pacific Forum on Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls on Social Norm Change identified evidence on what works for social norm change in relation to addressing the norms, practices and structures of gender inequality and gender-based violence. The identified preventive measures included i. effective community mobilization; ii. prioritizing education and youth; iii. strategically engaging men and boys in prevention; and iv. utilizing policy and legal reform to address structural inequality. These are also relevant for breaking norms related to gender roles and relations and ensuring social protection and empowerment of women and for promoting gender equality. The various institutions and agencies that play important roles in enforcing or transforming social norms are discussed below.

Household or family: Family is an institution which mainly shapes human attitudes and practices from childhood, including those related to gender. The role of the family in supporting girls or boys in their development with education, health, nutrition, skills or labour-force participation is critical. The role of family in gender composition of labour supply from household to public and private sector shows that majority of the workforce or leaders are men. The low social development and economic indicators for women has substantial influence from the family. Therefore, the positive change of attitude of family members towards promoting gender equality is critical to support more women becoming confident, self-reliant and in participating in the labour-force or in politics. The extent of need for social protection support for women, girls, boys or elderly can be influenced by the role and ability of the family in developing its members as human capital, their participation in the labour force and their capability.

The utilization of social protection allocation is also determined by which member of the family receives the support. If income is transferred through a male member, it eases the pressure of women in managing household budget and creates opportunity for women to participate in productive activities within or outside the household. In this case the role of a woman in productive work or her access to information, her mobility may or may not be encouraged. Social protection support given to women directly is expected to improve economic decision-making of women, particularly within the household. Therefore, it is important that the attitude and behaviour towards women and girls are transformed to support equal relationship and developing human capital. The social protection programmes may build in such elements for positive mobilization of families in promoting gender equality.

Yoong et al (2012), in a review of evidence of impact on family wellbeing depending on whether economic resources are given to men or women, found that targeting transfers to women can improve children's wellbeing, but that increasing female control of transfers does not guarantee positive outcomes. Wellbeing outcomes included impacts such as women's empowerment and decision making in the household and/or community. The study report concludes that "it cannot be assumed that *any* transfer to a woman will lead to better outcomes for family wellbeing than the same transfer to a man". Outcomes depend on the type of programme. Conditional cash transfers to women was found to lead to greater improvements in family wellbeing than transfers to men, but there are more ambiguous outcomes in case of pensions and transfers focusing on income generation.

Media: The media (including print and electronic) reaches out to almost the entire nation. Its outreach can create an impact on the large audience. In recent years, a change in the news and programme contents has been observed. Issues like health, education, child care, violence prevention, women's work and such topics are discussed in newspapers and electronic media. Portrayal of women's positive image is promoted by some programmes. The projection of subordinate position of women has also been observed. The media can play

an important role in the development of women and poor groups; portrayal of women's productive/leadership roles; and prevention of projecting women's subordinate position. The recent changes in the landscape of media can be utilized for the promotion of equality, empowerment, in flagging issues of human rights, development, disaster response and other matters related to social protection and gender equality. It can generate dialogue and consensus as well as develop public opinion and attitude in favour of girls' schooling, women's productive role, need for child care, against violence, need of good work environment, child marriage and on other such issues. The media at large has been instrumental in supporting the movement for women advancement as well as expanding sanitation, oral saline and schooling in Bangladesh. However, media also contributes to the reinforcement of norms of women as mothers and carers. For example, television dramas continue to foster gender stereotypes and family disputes. The media can become a powerful means to challenge and change gender norms and stereotypes, for opening new possibilities for women, creating public support, developing new image of women in different roles. It can have a role in showing the changes in women's roles and gender relations and women's increased role in employment, leadership and as decision-makers.

Financial institutions: Access to financial resources for engaging in economic activities cannot only empower the poor economically but also socially recognize them as an economic force. The poor people cannot access financial services due to lack of awareness, living in remote locations, low income/assets, high transaction cost and social exclusion. The supply side barriers include distance from the branch, timings, documentation requirements, etc. Access to financial resources can economically and socially empower women, allowing them to carry out livelihood activities, better integrate into the economy and actively contribute to development. It also helps them realizing their self-worth and coming out of poverty. The measures taken to facilitate women's access to micro-credit have shown an increase in women's mobility, their ability to make household decisions, support human development, ownership of productive assets and their legal and political awareness. Microfinance schemes have shown significant individual and household level outcomes such as family welfare, nutrition and girls' education. An inclusive financial system to include the extreme poor and vulnerable women with appropriate products, that not only provide credit but combine inputs like training, business management, can provide social protection and reduce the need of external support. The product design needs to be enabling for the excluded groups. Women then can invest in livelihood activities from household based activities to micro or small enterprises. Changing the social norms about the role of women has been positively influenced by the support of microfinance institutions, mostly non-government organizations. Strengthened effort for financial inclusion can bring about faster changes in the social norms of women being home makers. It can also improve women's self-confidence, negotiation skills and status as a contributing member of the community and family.

Service agencies: Different service agencies can support breaking social norms by extending their services. Transportation can facilitate mobility and economic empowerment for both men and women. The need of women's mobility has increased due to more women going for education, entering the workforce and also being responsible for accessing services for themselves and their families. Removing barriers to women's smooth and safe mobility can break the norm of women's dependence on men for accessing appropriate services (like health and education), employment and markets. Affordable and convenient transportation can facilitate women's increased access to work places, reduce travel time, provide security and reduce the cases of sexual harassment during travel. There are differences in the transportation needs of women in urban and rural areas. Well planned secured public transportation, clean sanitation at public places, well maintained roads, traffic safety are some of the areas that can facilitate women taking productive roles and availing services outside home. Facilitating mobility of disabled women, pregnant women, elderly women is important for accessing services, as well as for breaking some of the social norms. Similarly, development agencies on local government engineering, health, public health, education or agriculture extension have taken many initiatives to facilitate women's employment in construction, in enterprises, agriculture and such others. Planned initiatives with a gender lens can have stronger effect on changing social norms related to the role of women and men and generating positive notion of men in favour of equal participation in development. Strengthening the role of sectoral agencies (health, security, education, justice), in integrating training, allocating budgets, developing positive policies and measures aiming at gender equality and

implementing them as a co-ordinated multi-sectoral response to the need of social protection can bring good results. The agencies can also support building social capital for the excluded groups and women.

Educational institutions: Education is a key measure that can influence women's and girls' empowerment as well as changing social norms and behaviour. Education leads to gaining increased knowledge, awareness, confidence and thus promotes empowerment and develops women's agency. Education gives women and girls and all vulnerable groups the capacity to access the labour market, to act affecting their own lives, family and community. Women's labour force participation rate, the quality of their economic engagement and career progression depend on their skills, level and type of education and the opportunity of continuous learning. Education eventually empowers women and girls and enables them to make key decisions. As discussed earlier, additional years of schooling affect women's economic participation positively. Education can make women and girls more confident and increase their self-esteem and can have positive effects on education, health and wellbeing of their own children and family and on their coming out of poverty. Stipend programmes targeting girls have seemed to succeed in raising age at marriage and increasing school attendance.

The social norms push girls to pursue humanities over science or commerce, limiting their options for technical education. Curriculum is a powerful means to develop a positive image towards girls and women and to promote egalitarian relationship between women and men from childhood. Curriculum and opportunities in technical education for girls can also be instrumental in enforcing the social norms of girls, if mainly focusing on stereotype trades like sewing or nursing. Conscious efforts for diversification of technical education for girls can also facilitate breaking the social norms.

Local Government: Local government institutions are responsible for ensuring vital registration, law and order at the local level, identification of beneficiaries for the implementation of social protection programmes, women's development, citizen participation, certification and so on. Local government institutions can play a powerful role in changing the social norms. They can engage in awareness raising, involve women in civil activities like budget preparation and development planning, protect women and vulnerable groups from abuse and harassment, and prevent practice of harmful norms like child marriage, polygamy and dowry. The local government institutions are working against child marriage and gender based violence and they can be a strong force against other harmful social norms in rural and urban areas.

The Taichung City Government Act of Gender Equality in Employment.

In November, 2012, the Taichung City Government issued the act which is an example of a local government developing its own act of gender equality in employment. It has general provisions to protect gender equality in right-to-work and implement the constitutional mandate of eliminating gender discriminations. The Act has provisions for prohibition of gender discrimination against applicants or employees or providing education, training, welfare matters, wages, retirement, severance, in marriage, pregnancy or other related activities. It provides for prevention and correction of sexual harassment, complaint procedures and disciplinary measures. The Act provides for menstruation leave, maternity leave, paternity leave, feeding time, social insurance, child-care facilities.
<http://eng.taichung.gov.tw/ct.aspx?xItem=12222&ctNode=852&mp=1> visited 31 May 2016

Civil society organizations: Civil society organizations (CSO) have been playing important roles in development. They are supporting implementing the policies of the government and providing health, education, awareness, microfinance, skills and other services for the poor. They are also included in various consultation mechanisms. The role of CSOs in raising awareness in community on development issues, supporting women's and girls' engagement in development, popularizing oral saline, orienting community on women's rights, supporting victims of domestic violence and trafficking are noteworthy. CSOs are also involved in implementing social protection services, savings generation, skills training, microfinance, etc. CSOs have been instrumental in supporting local communities in disaster response and in supporting women in participating in politics. A strong role of CSOs in bringing about positive changes on women's

empowerment and breaking harmful social norms will facilitate faster change in attitude and practice towards women and men. Civil society organizations also can act for monitoring, as well as advocacy for addressing grievances related to delivery of social protection support.

Policies and Laws: Conducive policies and legal provisions can also facilitate changing social norms. Reform of policy, measures and tools that create opportunities for economic empowerment, human development and development of agency of the vulnerable groups and women can support positive change in social norms. They also can transform gender relations. The law against child marriage, policies on labour rights, minimum wage, maternity leave, birth registration, domestic workers' protection, quota provision in public sector employment, women's quota in public work based social protection programmes are examples of conducive policies and laws that influence changing social norms. They can include affirmative measures and actions within rights-based approaches. Researchers contend that to transform gender relations and women's empowerment, first there must be a change in how women and men perceive themselves in terms of their material security, well-being, capacity to influence household and community decisions. Some of the structural constraints can be addressed through legal and policy reform that facilitate transformation from welfare to empowerment.

Working with the above institutions, relevant agencies and sectors, as well as addressing the need of policy and legal provisions, all are important for addressing social norms.

Example of conducive policy in changing social norm: National Skills Development Policy 2011

Section 14.5- Women: "... The participation of women in skills development programs t will be increased by:

- a. Offering a broader range of traditional & non-traditional skills training programs that could improve the employability of women; ...
- c. Conducting social marketing and awareness raising for women on the benefits of skills development;
- d. Increase enrollment rates for females across all skills development programs;
- e. Providing a gender friendly environment for female students;
- f. Providing separate wash rooms for male & female students;
- g. Employing female instructors where possible;
- h. Implementing a workplace harassment prevention policy in public institutions;
- i. Ensuring all instructors and managers undergo gender awareness, workplace harassment prevention and equal employment opportunities (EEO) training;

Source: Extract from National Skills Development Policy 2011, http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@ilo-dhaka/documents/publication/wcms_113958.pdf

4. Addressing Norms and Strategic Interests through Gender Responsive Social Protection

Women are not only affected by the same social and economic risks differently, but also can face different types of risks and vulnerabilities. Constraint or disadvantage in human development at the household or community level puts one in disadvantaged position in the labour market or in the public domain. Gender cuts across all aspects of life, all sectors and the identities of different excluded groups, where women face additional disadvantages due to gender based discrimination and deprivation. But gender alone does not lead to social marginalisation. It is the subordination of women and girls based on gender norms, women's low educational and economic accomplishment, weak bargaining capacity, economic and other group-based inequalities, discriminatory legal provisions that works to deepen the nature of disadvantage faced by different groups of women and girls. While designing social protection programmes the risks and vulnerabilities from households to public domain needs to be addressed. Social norms that limit women's equal benefits from development services, and labour market need addressing. Mitigation of risks and ensuring social protection requires context specific policies and interventions in multiple areas including household, community and individual level.

Addressing strategic gender interests is also important to achieve the full potential from the implementation of NSSS. The interests include recognition of women as equal participants and contributors in development, women's increased share in the labour market, control over resources and income, sharing or reduction of care responsibility, increasing mobility, reducing women's time poverty, women's enhanced role in decision making in public and private spheres, improved voice and agency of women, positive image of women/girls, positive attitudes on women's and girls' rights, equal legal provisions, freedom from violence, women's enhanced bargaining power and support for women's rights among men and boys. These can only be facilitated through social protection programmes, if the objectives of the programmes and elements of interventions are integrated with appropriate and planned delivery mechanism.

It is important that social protection programmes facilitate reform of policy, measures and tools that create opportunities for economic empowerment, human development and development of agency of the vulnerable, in this case for all strata of women. It can include affirmative policies and actions within rights-based approaches. Transformative social protection can be more affordable in the long run than transfer programmes by ensuring behaviour change and human capacity development elements. Social protection, in addition to offering social transfers, should address vulnerability and develop capacity to cope with and be protected from shocks. Resource transfer should not be the only means, but ensuring access to services, change in behaviour, creating collective voice, sensitisation and awareness-raising against discrimination, community mobilization, provision of policy support can also be part of implementation of the NSSS.

Timely consideration of life cycle based needs: The life cycle includes the period from before birth through to old age. The focus of social protection should be on access to age, sex and vulnerability specific services and overcoming constraints to access and benefit from social protection programmes. The programmes should consider the gender based needs at different ages. The needs of childhood, like nutrition, immunization, health care, prevention of child labour, protection from abuse, are not the same as needs at reproductive age or in old age. Similarly, preparation for the working age also starts at childhood and demands education, skills and employment opportunity. Ensuring old age security, supporting protection from inter-generational transmission of poverty to the next generation, access to community resources are also important factors. If the support and protection required at each age is not ensured, the need for charity and transfer based support will be high. If nutrition of mother and child is not ensured, healthcare needs and expenses will be higher at later life. Similarly, if access to quality education and skills is not ensured, the return from labour market and economic growth potential are bound to be low, with high propensity to poverty. The lifecycle approach of NSSS is appropriate, but still the coverage of social protection and access

to services are much less than needed. Still a large number of children are out of school, level of skills is low compared to other developing nations, nutrition level of women and children is low, accessibility to affordable health care for the poor is less, and unemployment is high. Therefore, ensuring the requirements at each stage of the life cycle for all with focus on gender based needs, for the best gain from social protection, is essential; also for the safeguarding/protection from future vulnerability and risks. These efforts should also include attention to ways of changing harmful practices and norms.

Cash Transfers: Though conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes have proven to be successful, the design of such transfers should include elements that promote long lasting behaviour change and a plan for phasing out. Short term transfers may be necessary, but socially sustainable and transformative social protection should have long-term changes in behaviour across communities. Some approaches, such as community based approach in sanitation and stipend for school enrolment, have been successful. Emphasis should be on motivational and behaviour change and empowerment elements. Short term benefits should be a step towards long-term result. For the moment FFW and such programmes focus largely on short-term needs. These are not enough to attain sustainable changes in behaviour and self-reliance across communities in the long run. Therefore, some of these programmes need to be complemented by other sectoral programmes. The CCTs for education have limitations. Reimers et al. found CCT (UNESCO, 2006) not to be an impressive educational instrument in terms of students' learning. In targeting beneficiaries on the basis of poverty rather than educational need, CCTs are educationally inefficient. They transfer incentives to families who would have enrolled their children in school anyway and such children would have had regular attendance. The incentives are insufficient to motivate some families to enrol their children in school and they do not reach families who might enrol their children in school if given the incentive. Some estimates suggest that as much as half of the total cost of CCT programmes is inefficiently spent in terms of education results (Janvry et al., 2003). Therefore, CCTs like the stipend programmes can achieve better results if complemented by quality education and facilitating changes in women's mobility and work. Similarly, FFWs can also be combined with sanitation, financial inclusion and so on. With inclusion of behaviour change elements with attention on addressing social/gender norms, long lasting gains may be made towards promoting gender equality.

Human development: Asadullah (2005) noted that the returns to primary, secondary and higher education for males respectively are: 3.4 percent, 3.2 percent and 12.7 percent and for females the respective figures are much higher: 8.9, 9.6 and 12.4 percent. This is consistent with findings of other studies that females enjoy higher average returns to schooling. Shafiq (2007) studied direct costs of education for boys, foregone child labour earnings, and option value. He found, "The estimated returns are 13.5 percent for primary education, 7.8 percent for junior-secondary education, 12.9 percent for higher-secondary education, and 9.7 percent for higher education; the resulting option value from primary education is 5.3 percent". The social returns to education as found by other studies include late marriage, fertility choice, health, nutrition and sanitation practices, etc. The Education Watch by CAMPE 2016 found that at least 6-7 years of schooling was necessary for initial level literacy (defined by reading, writing, numeracy and application) and at least 10 years of schooling for advanced level literacy. All the above indicates that there is both economic and non-economic rationale for poor or non-poor households to invest in girls' (and boys') education beyond primary school level for better return and for positive social protection. In line with this, The Dominican Republic (Levine et al. 2008) planned a programme to train teachers to assist girls in secondary school in selecting a career. Education is a single input that can facilitate access to labour market, leadership development, changing social norms and practice, empowerment and decision making. Therefore, education for all in its true sense needs to be ensured.

Health and nutrition programmes with expansion of coverage for all excluded children and adults, as well as inclusion of issues on reproductive rights, elimination of stigma against people with leprosy and HIV/AIDS, hygienic menstruation and delivery practice, safe sex, pregnancy care, etc. can be supported through the

social protection programmes. They should be complemented by the sectoral programmes and supply side intervention, which can reduce the need of social protection services.

Campaigns and awareness: The success of total sanitation, oral saline, child schooling, etc. shows that the power of awareness campaign in changing behaviour is enormous. Therefore, campaigns on prevention of child marriage, sharing household care work, women's leadership, etc. will support changing gender norms. Some such initiatives are already in place. Civil society organizations can be partners in community sensitization and social marketing programmes in reshaping family and community expectations. In some cases, civil society must press national and local governments to adopt more appropriate policies and priorities. At the same time, civil society organizations can watch the benefits of incentives for families (for example, conditional cash transfers and community-level incentives that promote broad participation) to ensure girls' rights to good health, delayed marriage, decent work and such other issues.

Labour market interventions: Workfare programmes can be instrumental in addressing strategic interests in developing group dynamics, voicing needs, participation in public affairs, etc. Integration of savings, investment, awareness raising, skills and business support, linkages in public work programmes, etc. can be contribute in addressing women's strategic interests and social norms. Establishing minimum wage has proven to raise the status of labourers and improve work environment in other countries. This is an area that also may have adverse effects on employment. Therefore, establishing minimum wage needs to be considered carefully without jeopardizing the market and with least possible job loss. Supporting child care, maternity care, prevention of workplace sexual harassment, participation in trade unions/ bargaining agents are areas that not only support the practical needs but address strategic interests and recognize women's agency.

Social capital development: Introduction and access to extension services and financial services and service agencies (agriculture, fisheries, livestock, health, finance, local government) support building women's social capital that can also help addressing collective interests. Independent access to finances and services remain as constraint for women, who typically have less mobility and access to credit and other financial services. Social protection programmes have initiated women opening independent bank accounts and women receive the payments directly. This has enabled women's increased access to their own income. It is important to help establishing linkages for women's access to productive inputs, credit and markets. Effective group mobilization, networking and linkages have proved to be facilitating mutual support. This gives women the chance of going beyond meeting basic survival needs and giving them access to community services as necessary.

The above can all support addressing women's strategic interest only if the specific strategic interests are planned to be addressed with adequate programme inputs and elements with effective implementation and monitoring. The programmes often aim at change in women's conditions and are focused on women's economic participation and food security. The assessment of the pre and post programme situation related to women's position and the transformative effect of social protection programmes is virtually lacking. Many social protection programmes have potentials in the built-in elements, but mechanism and indicators of monitoring are not in place. Very few programmes address women's position and facilitate empowerment of women through programme elements. Investment in monitoring is key to ensure results. Therefore, it is essential to build in result indicators for both practical needs and strategic interests in the programme monitoring framework and track them. Therefore, investment in human resources and systems is also important. This will contribute towards achieving economic growth consistent with that of a MIC as well as in achieving the SDGs.

5. Way Forward and Recommendations

Given that the social protection programmes target women and recognize their vulnerabilities, it is important to ensure that the programmes result in transforming gender relations. Most of the programmes have not been designed to address gender inequality, gender based discrimination and power relationships within household and community, but some programmes expect women's empowerment results and reduction of gender inequality. Some programmes with their elements have contributed towards reduction in gender inequality and some others may aggravate women's time poverty and discrimination as women are to provide unpaid productive or care services of the family and have less authority of making decisions. Despite targeting women, the existence of all gender based discrimination calls for a thorough examination of the limitations of the programme designs on a case by case basis.

There is a need to look into the social protection policies and programme designs and operation through a gender lens and put in place instruments/strategies to explicitly address origins of the discrimination and facilitate women's empowerment as an outcome of social protection programmes. The aim of the NSSS in developing "social safety nets as story of resilience and transformation" requires addressing gender based risks and needs both at the public and private domains, as well as addressing strategic interests. As per Taylor and Francis (2016) "The issue is not about empowering women as mothers, but recognising and guaranteeing their rights as a human being and a woman, so that they can take control of their own lives. When women's demands are not adequately taken into account, policies and programmes tend to overburden them with even more responsibilities, increasing the gender imbalance." The social protection programmes should take this into consideration.

The NSSS admits that low average benefit size of safety net programmes, the leakage of allocated funds and coverage of a significant percentage of non-poor households result in consequent suboptimal impact on poverty reduction from the amount of money spent on social protection. In addition to addressing these issues, transformative social protection should have elements of both promotive and transformative social protection. They may include developing:

1. Human capital (nutrition, health, education);
2. Productive capital (skills, savings, credit, asset);
3. Social capital (networks, groups, institutions, services);
4. Self-worth (knowledge, confidence, leadership, self-respect decision making)

These should be backed by household and community awareness and motivation at one level and policy and legal support ensuring their implementation at the other.

It is important to understand that gender equality and social protection both need multi-dimensional initiatives and cannot be achieved easily by only targeting women for economic gain. It is essential that the requirements of various groups are assessed with a gender lens and that gender aspects are integrated from beginning to end, at every stage and at every level of social protection programmes and being complemented by sectoral and macro policies and interventions. Orientation and support of men are also essential elements. The following diagram presents the relationship between and among different elements of social protection support.

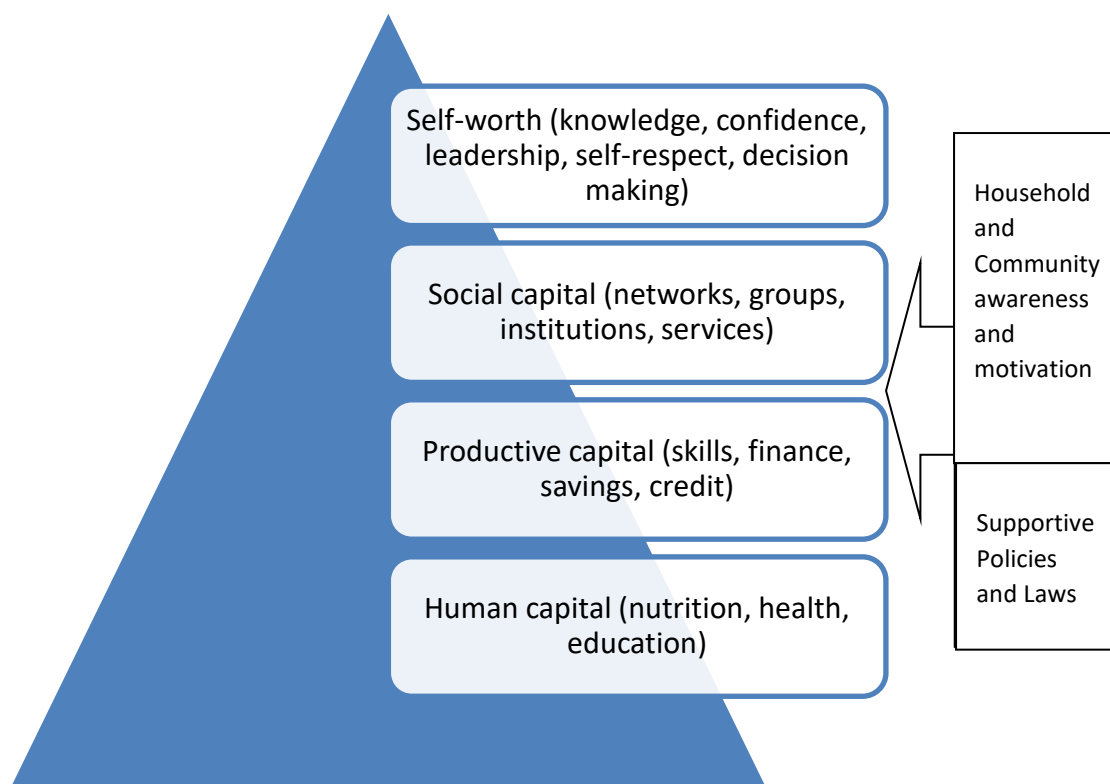


Figure 1: Relationship between and among different elements of social protection support

The following recommendations are made based on the findings from field visit, review of programmes and review of literature. The recommendations are at two levels: general for transformative social protection and specific for programmes:

SI No.	Recommendation	Activities	Responsibility
Transformative social protection			
1	Address gender aspects in social protection action plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all ministries and clusters address gender issues within the programmes, incorporate monitoring indicators and empowering elements, allocate adequate resources. 	Cabinet Division, Ministry of Finance and all ministries
2	Complementary sectoral interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure synergies with other macro and sectoral interventions (in application and results), including policy, measures and laws. 	Sectoral Ministries/ agencies
3	Include empowerment as an objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowerment with appropriate indicators should be an explicit objective of social protection programmes, particularly in relevant programmes like workfare, human development and CCT, incorporating components to facilitate that. 	Ministries/ Departments
4	Invest in a strong training design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate capacity building considering both practical and strategic gender needs and literacy, and emphasise leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship/ livelihoods, social support and risk mitigation. 	Sectoral Ministries/ agencies and partners in the field
5	Ensure social protection for out-of-school adolescent girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch programmes to cover adolescent girls who are out of school, not in for education, employment or skills acquisition. This may include skills, education loan and a community awareness programme about their worth. 	Needs policy as well. Sectoral Ministries/ agencies and partners

6	Develop strategy to support informal sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific programmes for informal sector workers including exploring possibilities of minimum wage for different sectors. This should be based on extensive research and consultation so that imposing a minimum wage does not cause substantial retrenchment or curtail benefits. 	Planning Commission Ministry of Finance
7	Build in maternity/child care in urban areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure implementation of labour laws related to child care, maternity benefits, protection from workplace harassment and developing bargaining capacity. • Combine corporate social responsibility with protection of labourers, if required with government subsidy. 	Sectoral Ministries/ agencies and partners in the field
8	Apply a strong set of gender focussed indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and apply a set of indicators for incorporating both practical and strategic gender needs including transformation or empowerment, in the social protection programmes as well as in gender budget criteria. • Identify indicators for the programmes depending on their objectives beyond provision of inputs, with focus on process and results, for transfer, workfare, promotional and other programmes. • Ensure that programme design, approval and review processes apply the indicators and enforce them. 	Planning Commission Relevant Ministries, agencies and IMED
9	Increase investment in monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that monitoring is strengthened using a set of criteria for practical and strategic gender needs and apply them as appropriate in programme monitoring and reporting. 	Planning Commission Ministry of Finance, Sectoral Ministries
Specific programme related recommendations			
1	Focus on nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build nutrition education and practices as component in all training and maternity and child support programmes. 	Sectoral Ministries/ agencies and partners
2	Form social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce and link beneficiaries with service providing agencies, support inter-agency linkages for access to services. • Form peer group of beneficiaries to facilitate learning and create social capital through meetings and mutual support 	Sectoral Ministries/ agencies and partners in the field
3	Build in self and community awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include role of men and community awareness component using media and other forums and programmes. • Provide a forum for community members to address questions and concerns about women's empowerment. • Utilize opportunities to address social norms and practices. 	Sectoral Ministries/ agencies
4	Cash transfer for start-up or access to livelihood activities and empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure grant sufficient for initial start-up as per current local market prices; allow for some flexibility in the budget. • Investigate micro-credit and other start-up/ financial options in the project areas, which can provide support once the household has lifted itself out of extreme poverty. • Build in empowering conditions in workfare programmes and programmes like VGD (sending children to school, no child marriage, family planning, 	Cabinet Division Sectoral Ministries/ agencies

		etc.), complemented by supply side interventions to facilitate transformation.	
5	Plan graduation in advance where applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on planned graduation out of poverty and transformation instead of only coverage and incorporate promotive measures from the outset. • Plan and determine graduation criteria, design empowering elements, provide inputs and monitor progress indicators. 	Sectoral Ministries/agencies
6	Ensure access to finance and capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes, especially like VGD and workfare programmes, should ensure savings and capital generation and develop linkages with financial institutions. Micro-credit may not be accessible for the ultra-poor. Therefore, consider resource transfer as a start. 	Sectoral Ministries/agencies
7	Specific support for disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled women should be supported based on their individual age. • Increase in disability allowance should be complemented by health and disability care facilities; mobility support and education for children and youth; skill enhancement and labour market support for working age, designed with gender focus. 	Sectoral Ministries/agencies
8	Strategies for the vulnerable women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the definition 'female heads of household' with care, allowing other categories of vulnerable women in by broadening the selection criteria to prevent that the most vulnerable women are excluded. • Identify needs and provide additional support for women who are disabled, chronically ill, live in remote locations, belong to cultural minorities or live in other vulnerability. 	Sectoral Ministries/agencies
9	Support stipends and school feeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the amount of transfer, complemented by provision of quality teaching. 	Sectoral Ministries/agencies and partners
10	Emphasis on elderly care and allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased amount combined with availability of and access to health and care support. 	Sectoral Ministries/agencies

Table 1: Recommendations are at two levels: general for transformative social protection and specific for programmes

Part B: NSSS Gender Policy

1. Introduction

Social Security (SS) is one of the key elements to attain the national targets of poverty reduction and social development. It is also a key driver of reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The SDG targets under Goal 1 for ending poverty; Goal 2 to end hunger and to achieve food security; goal 3 to ensure healthy lives and well-being; Goal 4 to ensure quality education; Goal 5 to achieve gender equality; Goal 8 to promote inclusive productive employment and decent work; Goal 11 to make cities and settlements inclusive, safe and resilient; and Goal 13 to combat climate change and its impacts; all require effective social security for all citizens. The Government of Bangladesh agreed to implement a nationally appropriate social security system that increases coverage among the poor and the vulnerable. The commitment brings significant prospect for women who form most of the poor, vulnerable, unreached and excluded groups from the existing developmental realm. The global pledge towards the SDGs has been followed by approval of the National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) by the Government of Bangladesh, which defines a set of minimum support for the population of different age and vulnerabilities to ensure that no one is left behind.

1.1 Background to the NSSS Gender Policy

In Bangladesh, women are hardworking, yet they lag behind men in almost all counts of socio-economic indicators owing to gender discriminatory norms and practices and also due to limitations in reaching social security coverage and services for all. It is evidenced that well-designed social security systems can be instrumental for narrowing gender gaps in poverty, employment, human development, security and resilience from shocks. It is also clear that despite a well-designed social security strategy, all women will not be able to equally reap the benefits of such a system. Comprehensive and gender integrated state-based social security, complementary robust social services in health and education, conducive macro-economic policy with specific attention to reduce gender gaps and promoting social empowerment are still requirements to prevent women from “falling through the net”. Addressing gender inequality and promoting women’s empowerment are also fundamental to reduce inequalities in status and position of women and men. The Government of Bangladesh, recognizing the importance of addressing gender issues in social security, embarked on a gender diagnostic of the NSSS, which recommended specific attention to gender equality promotion at different stages of women’s lifecycle. This Policy is an outcome of the policy makers’ recognition of the need for a gender policy for social security that will guide the programme planners and designers in taking conscious measures in addressing gender aspects in design and delivery of social security services considering the gender-based needs of women at different points of their lifecycle.

2. Situational Analysis

Bangladesh, recognized for its strong performance against the majority of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets, has achieved the level of lower middle-income country (MIC) in 2015. This was brought about by achieving gender parity in education, effective family planning and economic growth among others. Despite significant progress in poverty reduction over the last three decades, still poverty remains pervasive and aggravated by periodic natural calamities due to climate change and other shocks. Still about 20 million people remain in extreme poverty and a substantial proportion of them are women. Therefore, social security becomes imperative for the country and more so for women.

2.1 National Context

The Government introduced social security schemes with its own fund and support from development partners since the independence of the country in 1971. Starting from support for crisis management and food transfer, social security programmes gradually addressed risks across the lifecycle. Significant investment in serving women like Vulnerable Group Development (VGD), widow and old age allowances, maternity allowance, and stipends for girls' education have been introduced and their coverage increased over time. These include both social services and social transfers. Gradually food transfers are being replaced by cash transfers. In addition, services like microfinance and social empowerment by non-government organizations (NGOs) complement the Government's efforts. There has been a significant increase in schemes and government allocation for social security over the years. The programmes supported development of attainments in education, health and well-being, and disaster management, but still the coverage of programmes is limited. Therefore, the NSSS has been put in place. Despite increase in the coverage of social security programmes, the transformative potential of these programmes could not be realized in many cases. This has limited the scope of the beneficiaries', especially women's, empowerment and sustainability of the benefits, hindering their graduation from extreme poverty.

2.1.1 Situation of women and need for social security

A large proportion of the population in Bangladesh live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihoods. Women participate in the agricultural labour force, often as unpaid family labourers. They have limited access to and control over productive resources. Gender division of labour require women to work for long hours in drudgery. Female-headed poor households are often deprived of the basic means of survival. Women have continued to play traditional roles at household level. In addition, they have taken on additional responsibilities due to changes in livelihood requirements as a result of natural calamities, male migration, economic hardships, gradual change in social norms and other factors.

Women face different risks and vulnerabilities, some specific to their gender and some others aggravated by gender inequalities in norms and practices. Harmful and discriminatory practices like child marriage, abandonment, dowry and gender-based violence persist due to the deep-rooted traditional social norms favouring boys over girls. Deprivation of girls from childhood, in terms of nutrition, immunization, health, education and skills poses long-lasting negative impacts on their access to labour market, decent job opportunities, health care, etc. in their adult life. Lack of attention to the needs of adult women like nutrition during pregnancy, child care at work, work place harassment, violence at home and in public places and maternity care hinders women's growth as individuals and excludes them from participating in development, adversely affecting the individual, the family and the country. High maternal mortality, socially accepted incidents of domestic violence, increasing sexual harassment and violence in public places, violence towards migrant women, inability to claim resources and rights, restricted mobility and gender-based risks of climate change events, low attainment of skills and education are factors that put women in the vicious circle of deprivation and lack of social security. These have also implications for feminisation of the workforce in the informal sector and in specific jobs like readymade garments, low paid agriculture labourers, unpaid household workers and domestic workers at home and abroad. The discrimination in opportunities leads to women's exclusion from formal social security programmes, which again aggravates their need of social security.

2.2 Poverty, Gender and Social Security Nexus

Social security is a key driver of reducing poverty and risks. As women and girls represent half of the population, closing gender gaps in all developmental indicators is essential for poverty reduction, economic growth and social development. Women must not only benefit from social security or developmental efforts but become capable as contributors to poverty reduction. It entails changing social norms and practices towards gender equality and women's human rights. On the other hand, women need human development support like education, skills and health to develop and perform as equal human beings. Social security programmes can facilitate the process. Although social security is not necessarily meant to empower women, it provides a great opportunity to do so by facilitating women's access to resources, developing their productive ability and empowering them for decision-making. Social security programmes, if gender responsive, can provide support throughout one's lifecycle as an individual and facilitate women's social and economic empowerment. Social security programmes in Bangladesh targeting women or girls reduce their vulnerability, improve livelihood and some facilitate their empowerment, such as participation in decision making, building self-confidence, creating voice and agency, and joining the labour market. Therefore, research suggests that social security programmes should address gender-related constraints, including those hindering women's economic advancement, labour market rights and human development opportunities.

Women's empowerment is not an automatic process of developmental interventions, yet several programmes have shown positive potentials. Programmes like conditional or unconditional cash transfers and services have positively impacted on women and children's health, nutrition, girls' education, women's knowledge levels, economic independence, self-confidence, by joining the labour market and decision making within the household and community. Women are over-represented among the poor and vulnerable and social security programmes can provide a set of minimum guarantees for women, children, working-age adults, older people, people with disabilities, different ethnic and other vulnerable groups and facilitate their empowerment prospects. Some of the micro-finance and workfare programmes have also facilitated women's empowerment. The impact of social security programmes on women's empowerment varies, depending on their design and method of delivery facilitating empowerment. Therefore, social security programmes should address gender-related constraints, including those limiting women's economic advancement, labour market rights, human development opportunities and facilitate gradually taking control over their lives. It is important to have programmes targeted towards women, but mainstreaming gender perspectives is vital to all social security programmes. As social security programmes operate within poverty reduction frameworks and macro-economic policies, addressing gender issues must be a core element of social security programming and poverty reduction.

2.3 National Response to Gender and Social Security

Grounded on learnings from past experience, the Government of Bangladesh stands committed to social security for poverty reduction and reducing vulnerability of citizens. Similarly, the Government is committed to meet the challenges of a middle-income country and also addressing gender-based disadvantages and facilitating women's empowerment. The commitments have been echoed in the Government's key policies and strategies for development. The Vision 2021 and Perspective Plan of Bangladesh (2010-2021) envisage a country free from poverty, based on equitable growth, secured health and education and capacity to meet the challenges of climate change. The NSSS, the National Women's Development Policy (NWDP) 2011 and the Seventh Five-Year Plan (SFYP) 2016-2020 have integrated strategies and measures for social development, social security and promoting gender equality.

2.3.1 The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) of Bangladesh

The NSSS aims to, "Build an inclusive Social Security System for all deserving Bangladeshis that effectively tackles and prevents poverty and inequality and contributes to broader human development, employment and economic growth." The objective of the NSSS is to reform the national social security system by ensuring

more efficient and effective use of resources, strengthened delivery systems and progress towards a more inclusive form of social security that effectively tackles lifecycle risks, prioritizing the poorest and most vulnerable members of society.

The NSSS integrates a social development framework (SDF) that encompasses the Government's strategies for poverty reduction through human development opportunities, financial inclusion, women's empowerment, social inclusion, environmental protection and climate change management, disaster management, infrastructure development, and the security of persons with special needs, elderly and widows.

The NSSS commits to adopting a lifecycle based social security system. It intends to cover all children including girls under childhood support and explicitly intends to extend support for vulnerable women of working age. Programmes for the elderly, health support for all and support for persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are prioritized. The NSSS broadens the scope from the safety net concept to include employment policies, social insurance and other human development measures to address the emerging needs of a middle-income Bangladesh in 2021 and ahead. It aims to reduce income inequality and contribute towards higher growth by strengthening human development and includes a proposal for a consolidated Vulnerable Women's Benefit (VWB) programme, which forms the basis of this Policy.

2.3.2 National Women Development Policy, 2011

The National Women Development Policy, 2011 provides a comprehensive framework for women's advancement in Bangladesh. The objectives of the Policy include among others, establishing equal rights of men and women; ensuring security and safety of women; women's socio-economic, political, administrative and legal empowerment; developing women as educated and skilled human resources; freeing women from poverty; taking steps to ensure sound health and nutrition of women; prioritizing women in provision of proper shelter and housing; rehabilitating women affected by natural calamities and conflicts; extending overall assistance to ensure rights of the disabled women, and women of the minority and ethnic community groups; arranging safety of the widowed, aged, abandoned, single and childless women; and providing necessary support services for the development of women.

The Policy commits to include the hardcore poor women inside the social safety net transfer programmes for the widowed, elderly, pregnant, distressed and disabled women and continuing food security for the vulnerable. Mobilizing poor women to increase their skills, creating opportunities for productive activities, extension services, providing workplace child care, health care, recreation, extension services, preparation for overcoming climate change and disasters, ensuring equal wages for the same job and to remove wage discrimination of women in agriculture. It also aims at ensuring nutrition and health through the lifecycle of women and addressing the problems of urban and working women. Hence, the Policy guides the development planners and practitioners to address the challenges of women's and girls' development and promote gender equality through social security programmes.

2.3.3 National Development Framework: The Seventh Five-Year Plan (SFYP)

The Government of Bangladesh is currently implementing the Seventh Five-Year Plan that aims at inclusive and sustainable growth and empowerment of citizens. The SFYP includes enhanced coverage and efficiency of targeting and delivery of social security for prevention of poverty and inequality, broader human development, employment and growth. Social security programmes for children, working age and elderly and disadvantaged groups including women have been incorporated. It also incorporates social inclusion of women and vulnerable people of different social and ethnic groups and support for reduction of their poverty, improved food security, creation of employment and support for human resource development. The SFYP incorporates advancement and rights for all children irrespective of gender and socio-economic background. Empowerment and protection of children with access to education, food and nutrition, birth registration, protection from violence, child marriage and child labour call for sectoral as well as social

security programmes with a gender focus. Social security programmes for ethnic minority communities are also planned as they face vulnerabilities and risks.

The Gender Strategy of the Seventh Five-Year Plan provides a framework for women's empowerment encompassing improvement of human capabilities, increase in economic benefits, enhancing women's voice and agency and creation of an enabling environment for women. The action areas include access to human development opportunities, access to and control over productive resources, increase protection and resilience from shocks, changing of discriminatory social norms, increase in participation and decision making. Freedom from violence, decent work, financial inclusion, social security addressing gender inequality and gender dimension of poverty and shocks are incorporated as areas for attention. Design and delivery of social security programmes considering these aspects will very well contribute towards achieving the aims of the SFYP and thereby, also attaining the SDG targets.

3. Challenges to Gender Equality and Social Security

Addressing gender equality and promotion of empowerment is not an easy task and several areas of challenges may emerge in doing so. These may be related to coverage of services for children and women at different stages of the lifecycle, some may be due to gender-based norms and practices and others related to design and operation of the social security programmes, or resource constraints.

Challenges of resources and coverage: Universal basic essential health may be constrained by coverage gap or availability of accessible and affordable quality care for girls and women of all ages. Low coverage of social security programmes compared to eligible child and adult population, problem in identification of target beneficiaries and in the process of transfers may hinder reaching all the eligible people. Inability of programmes due to resource constraints may hinder delivery of services to vulnerable women and girls of remote locations, ethnic or marginalized groups. Rapid increase in urban population is creating an additional demand for social security services, which may not be possible to provide in the short run.

Norms and gender-based challenges in accessing social security: The expected behaviour and roles of both women and girls may hinder social security and women's empowerment. Household responsibilities, child bearing, care work, lack of mobility, low participation in decision making may hinder women to participate in social security programmes. Taking girls out of school due to poverty, child marriage, pregnancy or for performing domestic chores and care may contribute to women's low educational attainment, skills, access to labour market and empowerment. The expectation or conditions of social security programmes may place women under an additional work burden, creating time constraints and also make them vulnerable to domestic violence. Female headed households may face constraints of low access due to not having enough hands to manage household responsibilities and benefit from social security programmes. Seclusion restricts women's access to services, weakens their self-confidence and makes them vulnerable and prevents women and girls from pursuing higher education or accessing the labour market. All these eventually make them seek social security support when men are unable to or do not support them. Widowhood, abandonment or old age may place pressure on women as support and care providers and can increase women's requirement of support and care. The high incidences of domestic and external violence may create an additional demand for social security support. Low awareness amongst women about the programmes may also lead to non-participation and low benefit from SP programmes.

Challenges in design and operation of programmes for empowerment: The expected result of gender equality and empowerment may be hindered by the design and the delivery process of social security programmes. If the programme designs do not envisage gender equality or empowerment as an objective, do not consider graduation planning and do not harness the transformative potentials, the results may not be sustained. Insufficient linkage of cash transfer programmes to productive inclusion, lack of attention to control over resources, insufficient linkage for social empowerment may also limit the prospective results. Taking an instrumentalist approach to address women's need as mother or wife instead of addressing their personal growth as an individual also limits their self-confidence and release of their potential. Lack of complementary support activities to provide poor people with a means to lift themselves out of extreme poverty, their human development and lack of monitoring for empowering results may also limit results. Not addressing gender perspectives in disaster response may aggravate women's risks and vulnerabilities. Inadequate attention paid to the require conditions for receiving social security support may increase women's time burden. Also, low capacity amongst planners and implementers may be a challenge in promoting gender equality through social security. Low attention paid to urban poverty and low value of transfers can also become barriers to the achievement of expected results.

4. Policy Goal, Objectives, Principles and Priorities

The Policy is based on the provisions of the Constitution of Bangladesh on equality of women, ethnic communities and minority groups. It is consistent with the provisions of Vision 2021, the National Women's Development Policy, the National Social Security Strategy, the Seventh Five-Year Plan, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant commitments of the Government of Bangladesh. The social security programmes will be a combination of protective, preventive, promotive and transformative in nature with ultimate goal of utilizing the transformative potential for empowerment of the poor beneficiaries, especially women and girls of all communities. It will include strengthening the demand side, grievance redress and feed-back mechanisms by strengthening of participation and advocacy by civil society organisations (CSO) and the private sector. It will progressively expand coverage of services and benefits in realizing universal social security for Bangladeshi women and men throughout their lifecycle and ensure meeting their basic needs, promoting human development opportunities and social empowerment. The implementation of this Policy requires participation of different stakeholders at multiple levels for planning, implementation, coordination and oversight.

4.1 Policy Goal and Objectives

This section lays down the Goal and Objectives of the Policy.

4.1.1 Goal

To support women and girls in coming out of poverty and empower them by reducing their risks and vulnerabilities through a transformative and gender responsive social security system.

4.1.2 Policy objectives

This section lays down the Objectives of the Policy.

- To enable the social security programmes of Bangladesh in enhancing their effectiveness in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.
- To reduce gender gaps by integrating a gender lens to design, implementation and monitoring of all social security programmes.
- To encourage policy makers, programme designers, implementers and evaluators to apply a gender lens to design and deliver social security.
- To ensure addressing the gender-based needs of women of different groups and communities as individuals and members of the society to reduce their risks and vulnerabilities throughout their lifecycle.

4.2 Guiding Principles

The Policy respects the principles of equality as per the universal human rights; and the prohibition of discrimination and prejudice on grounds of sex, race, caste, religion and place of birth. It is also consistent with the concepts of gender equality. The following principles have been set for addressing gender equality in designing and delivery of social security programmes.

4.2.1 Promoting gender equality: Mainstreaming gender in social security programming

The social security programmes will mainstream gender perspectives and attend to the critical elements that are expected to promote and pursue gender equality. Attention will be given to ensuring equal benefits to women and men (including for those who are disabled and are members of minority, ethnic and vulnerable communities), considering their needs through delivering social security. This will require a gender responsive strategy for the delivery of social security and social transfers. The design and delivery will

consider women's household responsibilities and vulnerabilities and ensure that women's work burden and time poverty is not aggravated and that required gender-based support like child and elderly care etc. is ensured. Transfers will also consider women's accessibility to receive them. Safety and security of women and girls will be ensured. Gender-responsive instruments shall be applied for implementation and monitoring of social security programmes. All documents and criteria will use gender sensitive words and language, ensuring that women are projected not only as victims or receivers but also as contributing individuals.

4.2.2 Empowering women and girls: Rights-based approach and transformative social security

Rights based approach will be used for the delivery of social security aiming at women's empowerment, upholding their rights and harnessing the transformative potentials within various phases of women's lifecycle. Women will be treated as individuals with their rights, not just addressing their practical needs as mothers, wives or household care givers. Elements for upholding their rights, facilitating access to justice, developing women's voice and agency, developing women's leadership and participation in decision making will be integrated in the programme design and delivery. Social security programmes will support establishing women's control over productive resources and their own lives. The programmes will not only address women's easy-to-recognize practical needs, but also consider the more demanding and forward-looking strategic gender needs for tackling gender discrimination and facilitating empowerment.

4.2.3 Ensuring participation and social security decision making

The social security programmes will ensure women's and girls' participation in identification of practical and strategic needs and the ways to address them. Regular engagement with poor households will facilitate participatory needs identification, provision of information, motivational support, behaviour change communication to take advantage of available opportunities and services and about the approach of the delivery of social security. Social security programmes will also support building the demand side and seek accountability. The programmes will facilitate creating opportunity for organizing and capacitating beneficiary women and girls in participation for social security related and community decision making.

4.2.4 Promoting complementarity and partnership for gender focused social security

This Policy emphasizes integration and complementarity to ensure coherent social security delivery for gender equality. The social security programmes will consider the roles of different sectoral actors to foster complementarity and partnerships with different private and public initiatives to leverage the best outcome for the beneficiary women and girls. The programmes will enhance synergies and mutual support to serve women and girls and avoid delivery of services that are ensured through sectoral development programmes. Synchronization of interventions will be promoted for social security programmes that address gender equality and women's lifecycle needs at the community and household levels.

4.2.5 Capacity and capability building for gender responsive social security

Capacity building in this case will be an ongoing process to address the challenges of the beneficiary women and all stakeholders of social security. Capacity building at individual, institutional and societal levels will be incorporated. At the individual level, capacity will include support for women and girls for enhancement of their knowledge, life and vocational skills, competencies to cope with the challenges of life, harnessing benefits from development, accessing information and services, and taking control of resources and lives. Support to build capacity to cope with and recover from crises and shocks, including those induced by climate change, and natural calamities will also be emphasised. At the institutional level, capacity will be enhanced for delivering and managing gender responsive social security programmes and ensuring their results. Attention will be given to strengthening gender analytical capacity for social security programming and monitoring among the staff of different ministries, including Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). At the societal level, capacity building will involve capacity of partners, service providers, local government, civil

society, and communities for enhancing responsiveness supporting gender equality and women's empowerment at the private and public spheres.

4.2.6 Investment in monitoring, upscaling and sustaining results

Attention towards sustainability of gains made will be ensured through investment in monitoring of gender equality results and upscaling of positive results in social security programmes. The principle will be building in monitoring mechanisms in all social security projects/programmes and monitoring their results related to gender equality and women's empowerment by IMED, Ministries and through civic efforts. Monitoring will include development of a credible sex-disaggregated database, defining empowerment indicators and capturing results through MIS, transparent procedures of beneficiary selection, targeting, participation, oversight and grievance mechanism and validation from multiple-sources. Good practice mechanisms will be scaled up and efforts will include building in follow-up mechanism to sustain results.

4.2.7 Resource mobilization

Social security programmes will ensure financing of the components and activities to promote gender equality and empowerment. Financing for gender focused social security programmes under the NSSS is critical to achieve the goal of this Policy. Aside from allocation of resources from the Government's own sources, cost sharing arrangement with development partners, private sector or CSOs will be ensured.

4.3 Policy Priorities

This section outlines a set of policy imperatives. In consistency with the thematic clusters of the NSSS, that is Social Assistance; Food Security and Disaster Assistance; Social Insurance; Labour Market/Livelihood Interventions; Human Development and Social Empowerment. The following areas will be prioritized for addressing women's needs and promoting gender equality through social security programming. It will be ensured that the most vulnerable women are provided with food and income security and opportunities to engage in the labour market.

4.3.1 Food security and nutrition

Food being the first right of human beings, social security programmes will address food security at the household level for all ages of women and children to prevent hunger, malnutrition and morbidity. Food insecurity owing to crop loss, natural calamities, other shocks and unemployment will be addressed. Continuation and expansion of various food security programmes, like food transfer against work, for development like Vulnerable Group Development (VGD); disaster relief or through ensuring food at a low cost like Open Market Sales or Food Cards will be ensured as required. To ensure nutrition for the poor, food support programmes will gradually ensure food fortification like the current rice fortification under Investment Component of VGD (ICVGD).

4.3.2 Human development support for women and girls

As Bangladesh is moving towards a middle-income economy, inclusive human development is an essential means, where everyone becomes a resource and contributor to economic growth and social development. Social security programmes will endeavour fulfilling the rights to health, education, skills and other such opportunities for girls and women, reducing their poverty and inequality. The Government will continue with the human development and enterprise support provided to empower poor and vulnerable women. Immunization, nutrition, health care, education and capacity development of women and all children will be ensured. Access and completion of education and affordable health care for women of all ages will be prioritized.

4.3.3 Access to livelihood activities, resources, income and transfer

Social security programmes will facilitate women's access to livelihood opportunities, income generation, income security, productive skills through mobilization, facilitating cash/asset transfer and providing

training, extension or other services. Livelihood opportunities will be created through self-employment, entrepreneurship, skill enhancement and access to productive resources. The transfer programmes will consider gender specific constraints of transferring benefits such as time, mobility, restrictions, and security of women and girls. Priority will be given to women from the poorest households, remote locations, minority, ethnic and other vulnerable communities to engage in culturally appropriate and non-traditional sustainable livelihoods and increase their chances of moving out of social assistance, if any. Emphasis will be on programme designs with planning for graduation out of extreme poverty with control over resources and sustainable benefits.

4.3.4 Promoting active labour market participation

Women's active participation in the national and international labour market will be pursued. Most vulnerable women will be provided greater opportunities to engage in the labour market through labour-intensive public work schemes. Social security will seek to ensure provisions of workfare programmes, internship, job placement, equal wage, paid leave, skills enhancement, pensions and paid maternity leave. Women and girls will be supported to enhance their endowments/skills as per the needs of the labour market at home and abroad. Decent work for working women will be promoted nationally and internationally and will consider specific needs of women like, child care, recreation, water and sanitation, maternity, safe working conditions, safe mobility, respect for social and family values, health care and insurance for unemployment and sickness. Labour market participation of young people, women and vulnerable groups will be fostered through collaboration with the private sector, recruiting agencies, employers, CSOs and labour receiving countries.

4.3.5 Productive financial inclusion

Financial inclusion of women and girls is a priority and the Government will establish a comprehensive transfer mechanism (G2P) and launch schemes that women can access easily. Financial services will be delivered (micro-credit, bank finance, saving services, education loan) at affordable costs to women and girls, particularly from the disadvantaged and low-income groups as well as for migrant workers. This will also involve specific provisions for women, dissemination of information and simplification of procedures for institutional financing.

4.3.6 Facilitating social empowerment

Social empowerment of women will be supported through social security. Women's confidence, knowledge, learning, creativity and change management capacity will be enhanced through formal and informal education, learning and practical activities. Changing of social norms and practices and ensuring women's social empowerment will be facilitated through supporting women's unity for voice, agency and access to justice. Engagement with boys and men will be ensured to change behaviour towards women and girls, the gender roles and norms including for addressing gender-based violence. Group formation, networking, information about service provisions and linkages with service providers will be prioritized to enable women to demand accountability of the duty bearers. Women's leadership will be facilitated through provisions, information and practice. Collaboration with the private sector and women rights organizations will be sought, where necessary.

4.3.7 Reaching urban women

Women and girls of urban areas face challenges different from those faced by rural women and girls. To address the needs of the urban women and girls, interventions will promote their security and protection, labour market support, housing and shelter, health, water, sanitation, nutrition, etc. Child care, mobility and transportation, street lighting, curbing violence against urban women, access to justice and labour rights are areas that will be given special attention. The social insurance programmes will be expanded to urban women.

4.3.8 Expanding coverage of social insurance system

The social transfers, particularly those providing protection against the risks of old age, disability, unemployment and maternity, will be expanded for all eligible women and girls of specific groups in rural and urban areas. Old age pension, allowances related to vulnerability and disability, allowances for special groups like freedom fighters, insurance against shock and illness will be prioritized for women. Coverage will be expanded to women/girls of socially excluded groups from urban areas. Initiating a social insurance system that enables people to invest in their own social security, providing protection against the risks of old age, disability, unemployment and maternity will be considered.

4.3.9 Emergency preparedness and resilience from shocks

Preparedness for emergencies, especially those related to natural calamities will be emphasized for the people including women and girls of climate hotspots of Bangladesh. The support will be beyond immediate relief and will cover preparedness, resilient livelihood opportunities, risk management, rehabilitation, and anticipatory intervention. Participation of women and girls in disaster management related platforms for decision making will be ensured. Social assistance and provision of critical maternity, health and psycho-social support for victims of disaster will be built in as required. Prevention and support will be ensured for women and girl victims of other shocks like violence, harassment and conflicts.

4.4 Policy Commitments and Actions

The policy commits to provide social security for all including women and girls at all stages of their life and support them in case of other vulnerabilities like disability, disaster, motherhood and facilitate their empowerment by taking efforts for changing traditional social norms of women's subordination. It seeks to respect human rights of girls and women, provide their access to all human development services; and eliminate discrimination and prejudices on grounds of sex, place, ethnicity, religion or physical ability. The programmes will include support that will have short, medium and long-term effects. Starting with the provision of basic services, they will include a reduction of gap in coverage, enhancing welfare and empowerment, establishing preventive and promotive measures, strengthening the demand side, transformative measures and ultimately facilitating universal and transformative social security for all throughout the lifecycle.

4.4.1 Policy Commitment 1: Childhood support

Objective: To provide all children, boys and girls from all backgrounds the opportunity to grow as a complete human being with education, health, skills, knowledge and preparation for adulthood. The following specific social security services for children will be provided:

- a. Ensure birth registration of all children.
- b. Ensure immunization against diseases for all children and full coverage under vitamin supplement and nutrition programmes for children.
- c. Initiate/expand school health programmes in all schools.
- d. Continue school stipend for all primary and secondary school-going children and adolescents belonging to poor and vulnerable households to ensure gender equality.
- e. Continue specific schemes for girls' stipend to ensure girls' retention, completion and transition to the next levels, with special attention to the girls and schools in remote and difficult communities.
- f. Expand services and awareness for prevention of child marriage and child pregnancy.
- g. Introduce/continue meal supplement for children of schools in poor communities.
- h. Expand the coverage of shelter and support for abandoned children and orphans with education and health facilities.
- i. Strengthen outreach and expand supply side interventions relating to immunization, childcare health and nutrition, water supply, sanitation and nutrition in hard to reach communities.

- j. Ensure protection from gender-based violence and sexual harassment at home, in schools or on the way to schools to ensure school attendance and continuity in girls' education.
- k. Ensure education on confidence building and leadership among girls.
- l. Ensure education on personal safety for girls and new technologies including awareness on cyber violence and the ways for protection against them.
- m. Ensure protection of all children from all types of violence, abuse and conflict at household, community and in public facilities.
- n. Address specific needs of girls and boys, especially relating to school, sports and cultural environment, like personal care, safety, water supply, etc. (in schools, sports and cultural complexes).
- o. Promote and enforce the availability of female teachers in schools and communities through sectoral programmes, particularly in conservative rural communities.
- p. Provide standard sanitary facilities for girls in schools/colleges and sensitize them on personal/menstrual hygiene.
- q. Strengthen community awareness, education and training programmes to motivate guardians and the adolescents and youth for completion of education.
- r. Review and enforce re-entry policies for victims of child marriage or early pregnancy to enable them to continue their education after break.
- s. Ensure hostel, shelter and counselling for children victims of violence, domestic or social conflicts or natural disasters.
- t. Provide appropriate education to girls and boys on sexuality and reproductive health and rights to prepare them for their adulthood and to prevent teenage pregnancies.
- u. Develop and implement specific programmes for adolescent girls who are outside school before or after completion of school final (skills, microfinance, saving) and for the adolescent mothers to prepare them for accessing the labour market.
- v. Expand opportunities for technical and vocational education and skills for girls in all districts in non-traditional trades addressing demands in national and international markets. This may also include internship, attachment, etc.
- w. Ensure inclusive and accessible education for children (boys and girls) with disability and from ethnic and marginalized communities.

4.4.2 Policy Commitment 2: Support for working age

Objective: To enable all working age women accessing the labour market with opportunity for decent work, income and a congenial work environment. The Government will take the following initiatives:

- a. Create opportunities for economic participation, income earning and productive employment through self-employment and creation of employment opportunities in different sectors.
- b. Provide women with opportunities for skills acquisition and enhancement including in non-traditional and emerging sectors that support decent employment for all, particularly women at national and international levels.
- c. Strengthen labour intensive public work programmes employing women, with plans for empowerment and graduation out of poverty.
- d. Consider nutritional aspects while converting food-based employment and transfer programmes into cash-based programmes for women's empowerment.
- e. Ensure coverage of formal sector employees under unemployment, sickness, maternity and accidental insurance.
- f. Extend and expand housing, shelter, hostel, dormitory facilities for women workers/job seekers in cities and towns.
- g. Equip women with entrepreneurial skills and financial management to establish control over income and resources.
- h. Ensure financial inclusion of women through expanded coverage of micro-finance for self-employment and specific easy package for institutional loans for business start-up and entrepreneurship.

- i. Extend and increase income transfers for unemployed vulnerable women (widows, divorced, destitute, single mothers and unemployed single women) and facilitate their participation in the labour market.
- j. Expand extension services to women for agricultural and skill services, savings generation, income generation and market awareness.
- k. Ensure implementation of the provisions under the labour market policies for greater inclusion, visibility and equal voice of women and men in employment and the labour market in general.
- l. Improve employment conditions for all, particularly women, by ensuring equal wage for similar work for both women and men, water and sanitation facilities, maternity and health benefits, childcare and rest and protection from sexual harassment and violence as per the High Court's Directives. Ensure oversight and address complaints through establishing mechanisms in all enterprises/institutions.
- m. Explore possibilities of ensuring minimum wage standard for informal sector work.
- n. Develop a low-cost care economy for an affordable and quality child and elderly care. Community based care or mobile care support will be explored to effectively increase labour force participation and reduce hours worked by women.
- o. Establish mechanism to strengthen legal support and grievance redress for all employment related to harassment and complaints, especially those affecting women.
- p. Establish policies and measures to increase women's participation as skilled and unskilled labourers and professionals in international labour market, improve their working conditions and protect their rights.
- q. Establish help desk and ensure support services including safe home, counselling, legal aid, grants, return and rehabilitation services for women workers abroad in case of violence, disability, illness, retrenchment or death.

4.4.3 Policy Commitment 3: Child bearing and maternity

Objective: To support women in this important phase of their life to remain healthy and safe and for delivery and development of healthy future generation. The following support will be provided:

- a. Ensure immunization and nutritional support for all pregnant women and create household and community awareness on this.
- b. Continue and expand the maternity health voucher scheme for the poorest women.
- c. Scale up midwifery services and reinforcement of partnerships to expand access to reproductive health care and safe delivery.
- d. Explore provision of maternity insurance/ care at no or a low premium for women in collaboration with employers.
- e. Implement actions to reduce maternal mortality, continuing beyond reproductive health issues and ensure care against incidence of HIV/AIDS and other infections affecting women and girls.
- f. Strengthen watching of the private sector employers to prevent job loss on the ground of maternity.
- g. Ensure protection from foetus killing based on predetermination of sex of the child.

4.4.4 Policy Commitment 4: Old age and elderly care

Objective: Ensure care, livelihood and health care for the elderly women.

- a. Expand coverage and increase transfer size for old age pension and give special attention to women freedom fighters, elderly women of vulnerable and ethnic communities and hard-to-reach locations.
- b. Continue with contributory pensions for public sector employees.
- c. Undertake programmes to work with private sector employers to create low or non-contributory old-age pension system on a pilot basis.
- d. Explore possibilities of providing senior citizen's healthcare at a subsidized rate in all hospitals, and with low-cost transportation.

- e. Expand geriatric health care facilities and provide care for patients with old age disability or diseases like dementia/Alzheimer's disease, etc.
- f. Review options to facilitate the development of a low cost/subsidized private voluntary pension system open to all citizens irrespective of occupation and terms of employment (formal or informal).

4.4.5 Policy Commitment 5: Affordable healthcare

Objective: To ensure affordable and accessible primary and lifecycle-based care for all vulnerable women and address gender specific health risks and risks due to violence, calamities and accidents.

- a. Expand and enforce the implementation of existing health and nutrition programmes to benefit all, particularly disadvantaged women, men, girls and boys.
- b. Expand coverage of other sectoral programmes targeted at women and girls (e.g. water, sanitation, food, agriculture, skills and extension etc.)
- c. Create and expand emergency health care facilities for victims of violence in all public hospitals and community clinics.
- d. Ensure essential health services at the local level. Define essential services involving participation of women's organizations, based on a thorough analysis of gendered patterns of morbidity and mortality.
- e. Meet the demand of family planning services in the remote areas.
- f. Strengthen affordable life-long health care for all, emphasizing women's specific vulnerabilities like breast/cervical cancer.
- g. Ensure affordable lifelong healthcare for special groups like freedom fighters.
- h. Expand the services of the existing women and child friendly hospitals.
- i. Ensure comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents.
- j. Expand low cost health insurance schemes to excluded groups such as informal workers and poor households.
- k. Strengthen awareness programmes on the importance of health care and nutrition for women/girls.

4.4.6 Policy Commitment 6: Protection from violence, changing gender roles and social norms

Objective: To influence changing the social norm of women's subordination and the role of women and men and promote equality.

- a. Expand mass awareness and campaign programmes for all in the community against women's rights, subordination, child marriage and gender-based violence by using media to motivate treating women/girls as equal citizens.
- b. Strengthen programmes addressing gender-based violence including establishment of one stop crisis centres (OCC) at all upazila and district levels; establish shelters,, provide trauma counselling at hospital and at local levels; legal support, rehabilitation and reintegration services for victims / survivors of domestic / gender-based violence and other forms of abuse of rights,, and victims of parental and social crimes, and human trafficking .
- c. Ensure mass dissemination of information about available services in case of gender-based violence including on hotline, OCCs, legal aid, legal aid fund, shelter and rehabilitation services.
- d. Strengthen programmes that advocate for women's property, inheritance, marriage registration, labour rights and enforcement of laws related to women's rights and protection from VAW. Programmes will include use of media, education curriculum and community awareness to advocate on such issues.
- e. e. Promote programmes that facilitate forming social-accountability networks to ensure social security of women and girls.
- f. Develop legal education programmes and communicate information to promote awareness and access to justice for women/girls including legal aid and services.

- g. Ensure women's representation in livelihood, social security and other poverty reduction sectoral leadership positions to reduce women's under-representation in leadership positions.
- h. Expand programmes that foster participation of women/girls in non-traditional activities and promote their productive and leadership roles, and with men taking responsibilities for household chores and care.
- i. Facilitate gender friendly and safe transportation, mobility and public participation of women/girls.

4.4.7 Policy Commitment 7: Support for women with disability, minority, ethnic and other marginalized groups

Objective: To ensure that persons with disability and from other marginalized groups are assured of their basic rights and receive opportunities for development and leadership. The services will be addressed to different groups, all types of disabled, ethnic, and socially marginalized (sex workers, dalits, HIV/AIDS patients, transgender, prisoners etc.).

- a. Expand social assistance programmes for disabled children, adults of working age and older persons to gradually ensure coverage of all eligible girl/boys and men/women. The process of transfer will also consider their accessibility issues.
- b. Create opportunities for participation of disabled persons, ethnic minority and marginalized groups in education, skills and decision making, in consultation with specific associations.
- c. Strengthen advocacy, awareness and campaigns to ensure the rights of disabled women and women from all ethnic and marginalized communities.
- d. Promote life and disability insurance to protect persons after disability, or in the old age of such ethnic and marginalized communities.
- e. Provide support to families of diseased disabled persons and persons from all marginalized groups.
- f. Create opportunity for technical and vocational training for women/girls with disability in all districts.
- g. Ensure child support focused on social transfers for children with severe disability and from all marginalized groups.
- h. Expand coverage of Disabled Service and Assistance Centres in all districts to support medical treatment of physically and mentally challenged persons with specific facilities for women and girls.
- i. Ensure mobility of disabled persons with relevant infrastructure, support and transportation in all educational institutions, hospitals, and public institutions.
- j. Arrange hostels with facilities for working women and students with disability in all districts and ensure access for women/girls from all marginalized communities.
- k. Train parents of mentally or physically challenged children and teachers of schools on sign language, behaviour modification, and communication.
- l. Arrange assistive devices for persons with all types of disability from poor backgrounds.
- m. Ensure skills, awareness and support to marginalised women like women prisoners, sex workers, women with HIV etc.

4.4.8 Policy Commitment 8: Resilience from climatic and other shocks and vulnerabilities

Objective: To protect women and girls from adverse effects of the climate change and other shocks.

- a. Support gender responsive community-based programmes for disaster preparedness, disaster management and community-based climate change adaptation that benefit women and girls and implement the Climate Change Gender Action Plan
- b. Design and deliver disaster preparedness and early warning activities designed to reach men and women – especially women from marginalized or vulnerable groups – engage them in early warning, preparation, emergency support and rehabilitation and ensure their access to information, education and learning opportunities.

- c. Strengthen women's and girls' capacity and participation in disaster preparedness and response, including women-specific pre-disaster planning, disaster response, and recovery programming interventions addressing sources of vulnerability and needs of women and girls (food, income, information, training, protection of asset, education, security, nutrition and maternal health).
- d. Include women at all levels of decision making in disaster risk and climate change management and in different committees.
- e. Engage vulnerable population including women in climate adaptive agriculture, infrastructure and reforestation programmes to reduce their vulnerability to disasters and loss of livelihood.
- f. Ensure return of children, especially girls, to school as soon as possible after climatic disasters to prevent possible drop-out, child marriage and harassment.
- g. Ensure access to productive assets and resources for women including 50% share for settlement or agriculture on khas lands
- h. Ensure adaptive livelihood training and training on production and marketing of goods in climatic shock-prone areas.
- i. Build women's economic resilience, facilitate the participation and preparedness of women and children in livelihood resilience (e.g. access to and control over assets).
- j. Ensure access to clean water and hygienic and safe toilets during disasters – in shelters, home and community.
- k. Ensure safe energy (gas, power and renewable) with awareness on safety, economic use and protection.
- l. Ensure protection of women/girls from violence and harassment during and after calamities and provide necessary psychosocial support.
- m. Identify women and children affected by disasters and ensure emergency response including psycho-social counselling, and support for rehabilitation ensuring participation of women, girls, boys, people with disability and other vulnerable groups.
- n. Enhance the opportunities for self-protection of women and children (build safe houses, use safe sites).
- o. Ensure that shelters and infrastructure include specific facilities for women, girls, elderly and pregnant women.
- p. Strengthen disaster management programmes incorporating minimum well-being (nutritional status, physical and mental health, morale).
- q. Design and deliver post-disaster assistance and recovery activities to equally reach women and address their specific needs.

5. Institutional and Implementation Framework

The Policy is based on the provisions of the Constitution of Bangladesh on equality of women, ethnic communities and minority groups. It is consistent with the provisions of Vision 2021, the National Women's Development Policy, the National Social Security Strategy, the Seventh Five-Year Plan, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant commitments of the Government of Bangladesh. The social security programmes will be a combination of protective, preventive, promotive and transformative in nature with goal of utilizing the transformative potential for empowerment of poor beneficiaries, especially women and girls of all communities. It will include strengthening the demand side, grievance redress and feed-back mechanisms by strengthening of participation and advocacy by civil society organisations (CSO) and the private sector. It will progressively expand coverage of services and benefits in realizing universal social security for Bangladeshi women and men throughout their lifecycle and ensure meeting their basic needs, promoting human development opportunities and social empowerment. The implementation of this Policy requires participation of different stakeholders at multiple levels for planning, implementation, coordination and oversight.

5.1 Institutions and their roles in implementation, cluster, etc.

National level oversight and support

At the national level, the responsibility for policy coordination rests with the Central Management Committee (CMC) on Social Security Programmes led by the Cabinet Division, as per the NSSS. The General Economics Division (GED) of Planning Commission will provide overall technical and operational guidance on operating standards, collect, collate and disseminate pertinent information and identify social security priorities and trends, by applying a gender lens. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics will support collection of sex-disaggregated data and presentation of gender focused progress reporting.

Implementation

National Level: The various Ministries, Divisions, Departments and Agencies will interpret the policy provisions within the sectoral context and mandate of the Ministry for design and delivery of social security programmes and ensure monitoring and achieving results. The social security focal points of different Ministries and clusters will ensure and oversee that the policy principles are followed to promote gender equality and that the programmes contribute towards fulfilment of policy commitments. The Action Plans of Ministries will integrate gender perspectives and aim at realizing the strategic gender interests by utilizing the transformative potentials of the programmes. All results monitoring and reporting of programmes will ensure use of sex disaggregated data and gender analysis.

Local Level: At the local level, partnership with district level administration, Zilla Parishad, Municipality, Upazilla and Union Parishads, offices of the concerned ministries will be co-ordinated to achieve results based on identified indicators.

Partnership: Cooperation with CSOs will be sought for implementation and monitoring of delivery, capacity building at grassroots level. The women organizations, CSOs, media and NGOs will be involved in awareness raising, training, legal aid, support services, delivery and community mobilization. The private sector's contribution will be sought, coordinated and monitored through the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) mechanism and its guidelines. A review of the guideline will be initiated to ensure that gender equality and women's empowerment is fostered through the CSR.

5.2 Guidelines for gender focused programme design, review and monitoring

Guidelines will be developed for design, review and monitoring of social security programmes and disseminated to all Ministries and Agencies making its use mandatory in preparing the action plans, programme/project design, approval and monitoring.

A set of gender focused minimum indicators will be identified and integrated in the guidelines so that approval and result assessment processes are uniform for all programmes. The indicators will include indicators for measuring results of both practical needs and strategic gender interests.

The Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Finance will work together to identify the indicators (like gender budget indicators), and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs will provide support for integrating gender perspectives.

5.3 Change management

The policy anticipates a wide range of changes required for successful implementation. For social security programmes to be empowering, they need to stimulate behaviour change at different levels, not only for the beneficiaries. Policymakers, service providers and partners should recognize the importance of transformative social security to achieve national growth and the SDGs. The envisaged changes to be managed will include change in mind-set for integration of vulnerable women, strengthening of the key social security programmes with empowerment and graduation agenda, promoting collaborative and complementary efforts amongst programmes and service providers to consider gender focused social security as efforts for achieving the SDGs. Behaviour change communication with various sections of the population will be strengthened for their participation and uptake of social security opportunities and demanding accountability of the duty bearers. The Policy also envisages flexibility in addressing new and emerging types of social security needs as they arise.

5.4 Resource mobilization

To fulfil the commitments of promoting gender equality under this policy, a robust, integrated and coherent social security system is required. Therefore, aside from specific social security programmes, complementarity with sectoral programmes will be sought. Also, partnership and linkage with civil society and private sectors will be facilitated. Social assistance or workfare programmes will be linked with productive, social and financial inclusion programmes. Adequate funding will be secured with support from development partners to sustain gender integrated social security delivery consistent with socio-economic development. Effective, transparent and accountable processes will be used for resource transfer (electronic government-to-person payments) directly to women, girls and other beneficiaries. In kind transfers will gradually be converted to cash that will introduce women with financial management, market, banking system and cash transaction.

6. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

Ensuring women's benefit from programmes not only requires gender-responsive design features but also effective delivery and monitoring mechanisms. Participatory monitoring can improve programme performance and gender-responsiveness. Social audits led by civil society organizations have been successful in other countries on occupational health and safety raising women's participation rates, wages and representation in supervisory roles.

6.1 Monitoring of policy implementation: Role of CMC and stakeholders

The CMC on Social Security Programmes, chaired by the Secretary of Cabinet Division and represented by all Ministries, will monitor the implementation of the Policy including progressing grievance redress, if any. All Ministries implementing social security programmes including the cluster coordinating ministries according to the NSSS will be responsible to assess the gender equality results and report on performance to the CMC as per the gender integrated action plan.

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) will integrate gender perspectives and use indicators in monitoring of social security programmes.

Monitoring of field level targeting, beneficiary identification, and delivery of services will be monitored in partnership with CSOs coordinated at the Upazila and District Coordination Committees.

6.2 Review of policy implementation

The implementation of the Policy will be reviewed and reported annually after its approval. All Ministries implementing social security programmes will prepare reports on the progress of the policy implementation coordinated by the cluster leads. The reports will be submitted to the CMC for its perusal.

A review of the relevance of the Policy will be undertaken after five years to assess that the Policy is consistent with the contemporary social security needs and necessary updating will be undertaken, if so required.

**Part C: Gender Strategy for Implementing Gender Policy of
National Social Security Strategy**

1. Introduction

The right to basic food, nutrition, human development and social security of all citizens has been provided by the Constitution of Bangladesh. The Constitution also provides for equality of all and no discrimination based on sex, age or any other counts. The country has progressed towards becoming a middle-income country, and free from poverty and hunger as per the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Still income inequality is high, and a large proportion of people are under extreme poverty and other vulnerabilities. Therefore, the Government becomes responsible to devise an inclusive, pluralistic, rights-based, and comprehensive social security system for the citizens. Social security programmes provide services and benefits to reduce vulnerability and promote resilience to shocks and stresses at individual, household and community levels. Feminist researchers have found that despite all the potentials, social security programmes have not yet yielded desired results from their transformative potentials for women and girls. Therefore, the unequal situation of women still prevails, which need to be addressed. In Bangladesh, addressing gender in social security becomes critical as women are the majority among poor, face different types of vulnerabilities, and have limited endowments to live as equal citizens. This current document provides strategic directions for design and delivery of social security programmes that will support women's empowerment and reduce the gender gap. It also incorporates an action plan for the Ministries and Divisions of the Government on how they will promote gender equality through social security programmes. Therefore, this document is a combination of both Gender Strategy and Action Plan for social security in Bangladesh.

1.1 Background

The National Social Security Strategy (NSSS) of Bangladesh, approved by the Cabinet of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in 2015, is a step forward towards a comprehensive life cycle-based approach to social security of the poor, vulnerable, and otherwise marginalized men and women of all ages. It is evident that women of all ages and groups experience different types of vulnerabilities compared to their male counterparts and therefore, they need specific attention for social security to reduce gender inequality. This entails intensifying action towards reducing gender gap through social security programmes.

The NSSS recognized the gender disparity in Bangladesh measured by different indicators and the need for specific social security programmes for girls and women. It proposed for a consolidated Vulnerable Women's Benefit (VWB) programme specifically addressing women's needs, which will contribute towards reducing gender inequality. Several other ongoing social security programmes target women, cover various stages of the lifecycle, provide protection and prevention services, and support human development and economic benefits for them.

In the absence of a concrete guidance for gender inclusive social security programming, the gain towards gender equality from social security programmes fell short of possibilities. Therefore, a Gender Policy was developed and approved by the Central Management Committee (CMC) of National Social Security Programmes (NSIS) under the Chair of the Cabinet Secretary in 2018. It was designed within the framework of the NSSS to provide guidelines to address gender aspects in social security programmes considering women's vulnerability and various gendered social security needs. This Strategy and Action Plan is a step forward in realization of the objectives of the NSSS towards reducing gender gap in development by operationalizing the gender policy.

The NSSS is operationalized through 35 Ministries and Divisions of GoB. They provide protection, prevention and promotional services along lifecycle risks of children including early childhood needs, working age people – including a specific focus on youth, vulnerable women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. Some ministries play a supportive role in monitoring, financing and coordinating social security programmes. These Ministries and Divisions have developed their respective action plans to implement the NSSS – a highly-ambitious reform document to bring transformative change in citizens' lives. In the absence of a framework for addressing gender inequality, these action plans need complementary strategies to address gender aspects in social security programming. Hence this strategy and action plan are to support these 35

ministries/divisions in designing and delivering social security programmes aiming at reducing gender gap and empowering women and girls.

This Strategy provides a road map for prioritizing social security programmes, and mode of design and operation to ensure better gender equality results. It provides for progressive but substantive scaling up of the programmes that offer multidimensional opportunities to vulnerable women including support to build human, economic and social capital as well as enhance their voice and confidence.

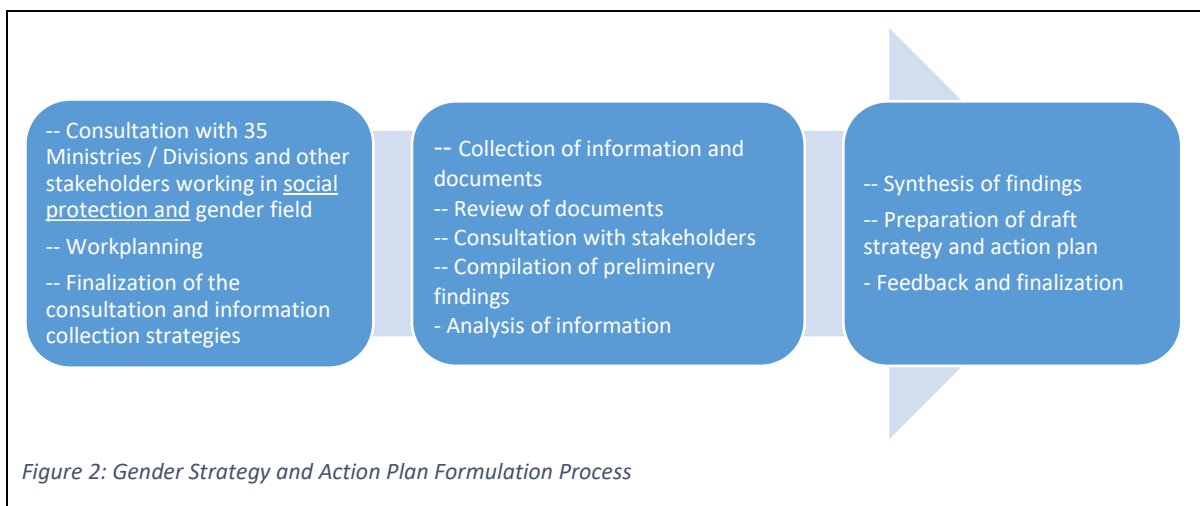
1.2 Gender in Social Security

A diagnostic study on social security programmes identified that besides gender-based discrimination and deprivation, women's vulnerabilities and risks are different even if they live in the same situation. Social norms enforce subordination of women and girls leading to women's low educational and economic accomplishment, weak bargaining capacity, discriminatory legal provisions, low participation in public sphere and politics and thus intensify the nature of disadvantages faced by women and girls.

Gender roles and division of labour, seclusion, lack of mobility, early marriage of girls, child pregnancy, gender-based violence, drudgery of unpaid household work, preference for sons, unequal legal rights and harmful social practices are factors behind continued subordination of women and girls. Vulnerability of working women, widows and separated, elderly, sex workers, transgender, and Dalits are different from other women of society. Women need greater access to services for their own and families' human development; access to resources for economic emancipation; protection from violence, crisis and shocks; and increased self-esteem, confidence and voice in decision-making. Therefore, the Action Plans of different Ministries need to look explicitly into the issue and incorporate specific actions that will contribute towards changing the social norms and facilitate gender equality within the mandates of the ministry/division.

1.3 Gender Strategy and Action Plan Formulation Process

The Gender Strategy and Action Plan are both anchored within the NSSS and the Gender Policy for NSSS. The Gender Strategy and Action Plan has been developed considering the main functions of each Ministry. Social norms, policies and laws related to gender roles, particularly those related to social security have also been considered. The priority challenges that need to be addressed over the medium-term to implement the NSSS have also been considered. This document also maintains consistency with the National Action Plan for Women's Development (2013) to implement the National Policy for Women Development 2011. The National Policy and the Action Plan are also anchored within the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Beijing Platform for Action. The Policy called for inclusion of vulnerable women in social security programmes and ensure their food security and support. Therefore, this Action Plan is also consistent with the international commitments of the Government related to women's rights and gender equality. The updating of the National Action Plan for Women's Development has been taking place at the same time and incorporated specific actions for social security, poverty reduction and human development. The process includes three phases following approval of the inception report: Preparation, Assessment and Finalization. The activities of the three phases are indicated in the following figure.



1.4 Priority Areas for Social Security

The diagnostic study suggested that in addition to human and productive capital development for women, developing social capital and sense of self-respect for women by undertaking motivational and awareness building activities at the household and community level are critical. It is also critical to address individual's needs at appropriate phase of the life cycle. The Gender Policy identified eight different priority areas for social security required by all. In order to reduce the existing gender gap, social security programmes need to ensure them for women and girls. The priorities for lifecycle as identified were:

- Food security and nutrition
- Human development support
- Access to livelihoods activities, income and transfers
- Active labour market participation
- Productive financial inclusion
- Social empowerment
- Reaching urban women
- Expanded coverage of social insurance system
- Emergency preparedness and resilience to shocks

Priorities under the Gender Policy: The Gender Policy takes a step forward and identified areas of commitment based on a life-cycle approach according to the NSSS. As per policy, the key commitment areas of the Government are:

1. Childhood support
2. Support for working-age women
3. Child bearing and maternity
4. Old age and elderly care
5. Affordable healthcare
6. Household care and changing social norms
7. Support for women with disability and socially excluded groups
8. Resilience from climatic and other shocks and vulnerabilities

Gender focused actions under NSSS action plan: The NSSS action plan identified a few areas for gender focused social security for children and women. They are:

- Introduce Child Benefit Programme (allowances to be disbursed to female parents preferentially)
- Introduce Vulnerable Women's Benefit Programme ☐ Workplace Childcare Services
- Child Maintenance

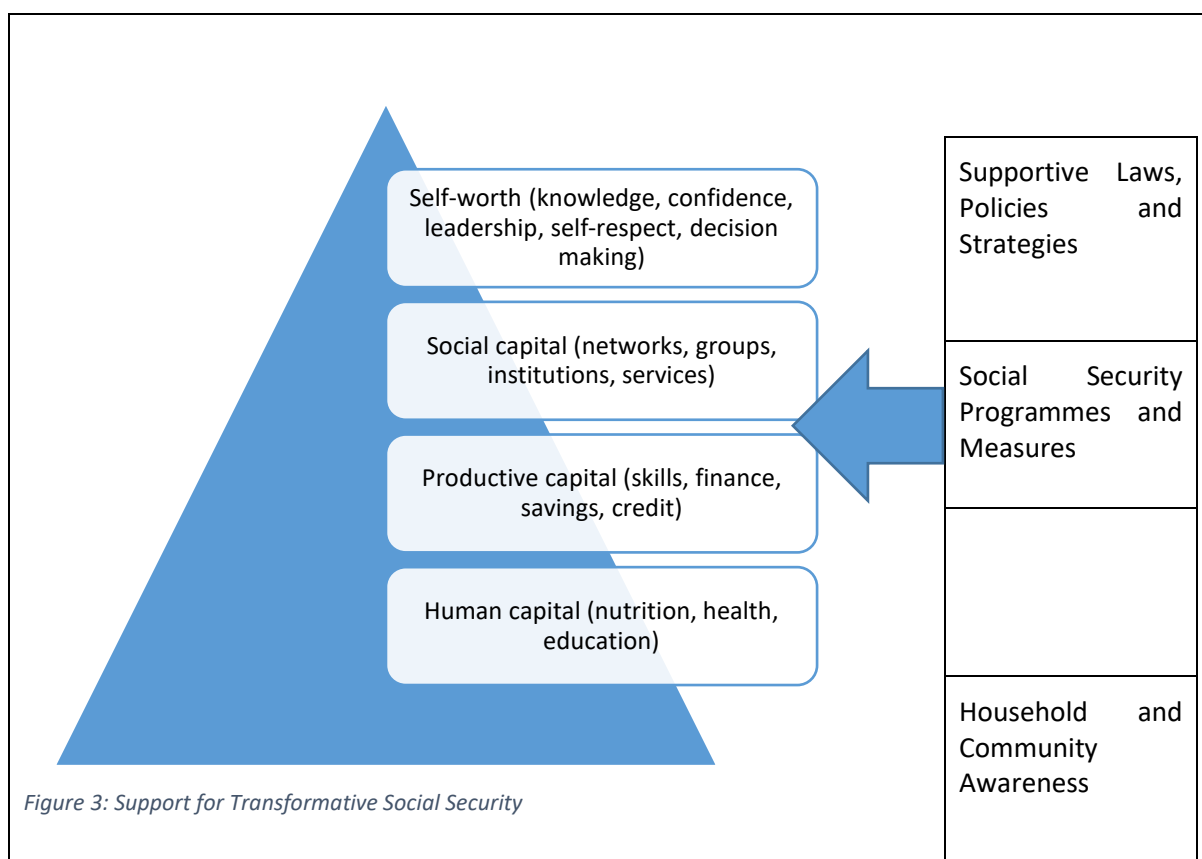
- Maternal Health Care
- Maternity Insurance within National Social Insurance System (NSIS)
- Scale up SWAPNO (Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities) Approach
- Scale up 'One House - One Farm' programme now called "My House - My Farm"
- Strengthen Social Allowance (financial support/assistance/benefits) for the migrant workers and their family members (particularly women)

2. The Gender Strategy

The Gender Strategy is a framework that supports and complements the implementation of NSSS and Gender Policy to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment for the period of 2019-2025. The strategy has been synchronized with other strategic priorities of the country, like employment, development of human resources, food security, maternity and such other. It incorporates ways for application of the priorities from these documents as integral part of the gender action plans of different ministries. The NSSS Action Plan developed by different ministries/divisions provide lists of major actions to be taken by them. This Gender Strategy and Action Plan builds upon those major actions and outlines actions focusing on expanding and spelling out activities of different ministries/divisions to promote gender equality through their social security programmes.

2.1 Approach

The gender diagnostic study like other international studies suggests that in addition to human capital and productive capital development for women, developing social capital and sense of self-respect is important for women’s empowerment. Transformative social security programmes include support starting from the basic needs to developing voice, self-respect, decision-making ability and capacity to overcome risks and vulnerabilities including violence. Towards this end, motivational activities and awareness building at the household and community level are essential. Support of congenial legal and policy framework is also necessary. This has been explained in the figure below.



It is more beneficial for society and individuals to address the origins of gender discrimination and facilitate women’s empowerment as an outcome of social security programmes through multi-dimensional initiatives. The Ministries/Divisions have often referred to social security programmes as programme for gender equality while reporting on gender responsive budget. One must understand the difference between programmes for women’s advancement and protection. Transformative or empowering programmes require design elements and actions that support empowerment and promote gender equality.

2.2 Areas of Social Security Support

The Strategy supports covering the key phases of life as in the NSSS in order to be not only protective but also gradually making them transformative. It also follows the priority support are as of the Gender Policy. They include life-cycle stages and some specific areas requiring focus.

- a) **Childhood support:** To provide all children, boys and girls from all backgrounds the opportunity to grow as a complete human being with education, health, skills, knowledge and preparation for adulthood.
- b) **Support for working age:** To enable all working-age women accessing the labour market with opportunity for decent work, income and a congenial work environment.
- c) **Child bearing and maternity:** To support women in this important phase of their life to remain healthy and safe and for delivery and development of healthy future generation.
- d) **Old age and elderly care:** Ensure care, livelihood and health care for the elderly women.

In addition, addressing some issues that cut across all phases of life is important through social security support or programme:

- a) **Affordable healthcare:** To ensure affordable and accessible primary and lifecycle-based care for all vulnerable females of all ages and address gender specific health risks and risks due to violence, calamities and accidents.
- b) **Protection from violence, changing gender roles and social norms:** To influence changing the social norm of women's subordination and the role of women and men and promote equality.
- c) **Support for women with disability, minority, ethnic and other marginalized groups:** To ensure that women with disability and from other marginalized groups are assured of their basic rights and receive opportunities for development and leadership. The services should address the needs of different groups, all types of disabled, ethnic, and socially marginalized (sex workers, Dalits, HIV/AIDS patients, transgender, prisoners etc.) women.
- d) **Resilience from climatic and other shocks and vulnerabilities:** To protect women and girls from adverse effects of the climate change and other shocks.

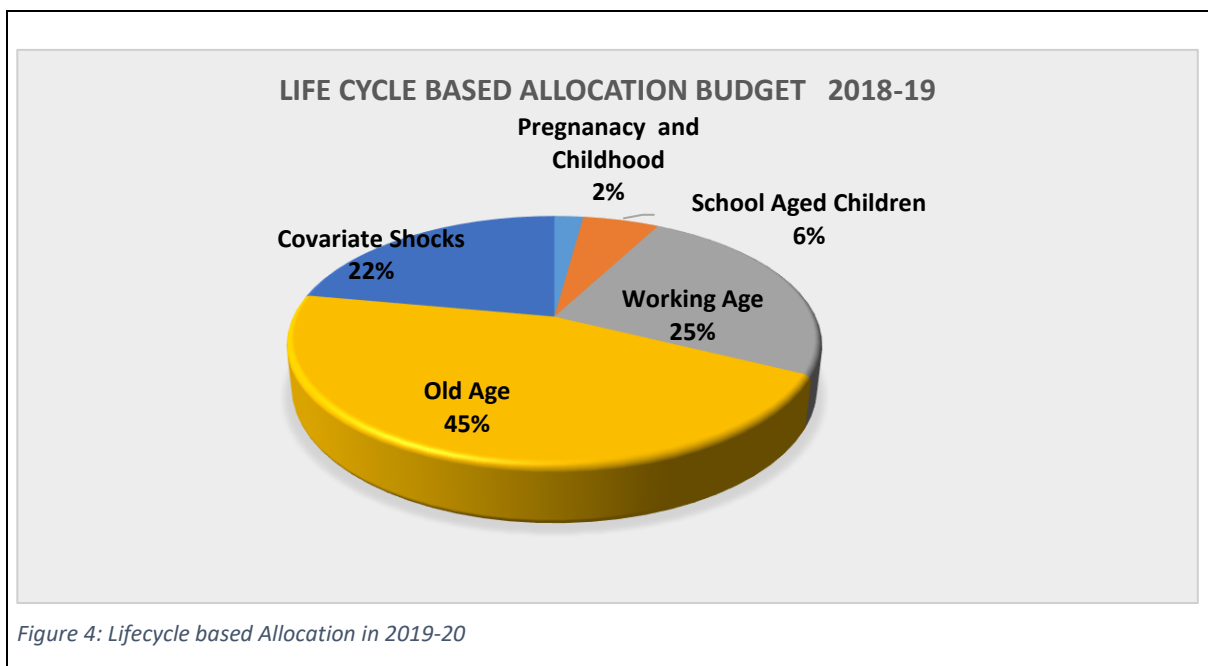
Ensuring all these requires review of existing social security programmes and scaling-up, redesign, harmonization, complementary actions as necessary as well as piloting of new interventions to fill in any gaps. Priority should be given on human capital development and scaling-up of programmes creating job opportunities and incomes for the poor and vulnerable.

2.3 Strategies

2.3.1. Strategies Related to Lifecycle Based Targeting and Support

2.3.1.1. Timely consideration and prioritized investment in life cycle-based needs

The needs of a person vary from before birth through to old age. Social security programmes will ensure access to age, sex and vulnerability specific services and overcoming constraints related to that age including gender-based needs at different ages. Addressing needs of childhood, like nutrition, immunization, health care, prevention of child labour, education, skills, protection from abuse ensure health and prepare them for the working age. Addressing the needs of childhood helps in developing a healthy and capable future generation. The social security needs of children, adolescents, working age and/or old age would be low if health, education, skills and employment related risks are timely addressed. Childhood healthcare and nutrition also reduces vulnerability to disability and morbidity. It also supports old age security, and protection from inter-generational transmission of poverty. Therefore, the social security investment scenario will be reviewed and adjusted accordingly to ensure support for each age group.



Source: Social Security Policy Support Programme, Government of Bangladesh

The support and protection requirement of each age will be fulfilled to reduce the need for charity and transfer at a later age. The coverage of social security programmes within the lifecycle approach of NSSS is still inadequate. Therefore, nutrition, early childhood care, bringing out of school children in education, skills for youth, maternal health care will be prioritized. Requirements at each stage of the life cycle for all with focus on gender-based needs will be addressed for the best gain from social security and for safeguarding/protection from future vulnerability and risks.

2.3.1.2 Prioritize lifecycle-based needs

Various types of supports at different stages of life cycle need to be ensured based on survey and needs assessments.

- **Focus on early childhood and nutrition:** Ensure immunization and nutrition services, care, supplements and include nutrition education and practices in training and maternity and child support programmes.
- **Strengthen educational outcomes at school age:** Support stipends, school feeding, ensure school attendance, complemented by provision of quality teaching for all including disabled, girls, and minorities and in remote locations.
- **Enhance capacity for labour-market access:** Ensure market-based education and skills for employment (formal, informal, wage, service, self-employment, entrepreneurship) among young girls and women including for those who are out of school.
- **Ensure pregnancy and maternity care:** Ensure immunization, nutrition, healthcare, and childbirth under trained persons, and pre and post-delivery care services.
- **Ensure elderly care:** Ensure access to low cost health and care support, provision of pension, insurance, and old age allowance.
- **Specific support for disability:** Support disabled women/girls based on their individual age and need for development. Complement by health and disability care facilities, mobility/sight/communication support, education for children and youth, skill enhancement and labour market support for working age, and old age care designed with gender focus.

2.3.2. Strategies Related to Programme Design and Delivery for Gender Equality

The following strategies are related to design of social security programmes. These include features that will enable the programmes to provide protective services as well as support releasing transformatory potentials

through the programmes to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Short term benefits will be a step towards long-term result and be consistent with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2.3.2.1 Rights-based approach and transformative social security

Women will be treated as individuals with their rights. Not only their practical needs as mothers, wives or household caregivers will be addressed but elements of empowerment with rights-based approach will be incorporated. The design and delivery will aim at women's empowerment, uphold their rights and harness the transformative potentials. Social security programmes will have elements for upholding their rights, facilitating access to justice, developing women's voice and agency, developing leadership and participation in decision making. Programmes will support establishing women's control over productive resources and their own lives; and will consider the more demanding and forward-looking strategic gender needs for tackling gender discrimination and facilitating empowerment.

2.3.2.2 Support for the vulnerable women

The definition of 'female heads of household' will be considered with care. Other categories of vulnerable women will be considered in the selection criteria to prevent exclusion of the most vulnerable women. Additional support will be included based on identified needs of women who are disabled, chronically ill, live in remote locations, belong to ethnic minorities, vulnerable to disasters or otherwise vulnerable (HIV/AIDS, Dalit, transgender, sex worker, orphan and such others). Programmes will explore and provide support for their livelihood, security, health care, education, training, and rights protection etc.

2.3.2.3 Empowerment in programme objective

Women's and girls' empowerment will be integrated explicitly within programme objectives. In order to achieve this, appropriate result indicators will be identified, and activities will be incorporated in relevant social security programmes, particularly in programmes like workfare, human development, Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) or income generation. An assessment of the existing programmes to identify existing objectives and elements for women's or girls' empowerment or having such potentials will be done. The potential programmes will incorporate empowering conditions, such as in workfare programmes, Vulnerable Group Development (example: sending children to school, no child marriage, leadership, family planning, etc.), and will be complemented by supply side interventions. Actions to improve self-esteem, decision-making will be explored and incorporated for women particularly in workfare, human development and CCT programmes.

2.3.2.4 Plan graduation in advance where applicable

Particularly targeted poverty alleviation and workfare programmes will focus on planned graduation out of poverty and transformation instead of only coverage. They will incorporate promotive measures from the outset and include measures of graduation. Plan for expansion will also be incorporated. Programmes will plan and determine graduation criteria, design empowering elements, provide inputs and monitor progress indicators.

2.3.2.5 Mainstreaming gender in programming

The social security programmes will mainstream gender perspectives and attend to the critical elements that are expected to promote and pursue gender equality. Attention will be given to ensuring equal benefits to women and men from all targeted groups considering their needs. Delivery of social security and social transfers will consider women's accessibility to receive them. The design and delivery will consider women's household responsibilities and vulnerabilities and ensure that women's work burden and time poverty is not aggravated. Required gender-based support like child and elderly care etc. will be enhanced in relevant cases. Safety and security issues will be considered and women's participation in implementation and monitoring will be ensured. All documents and criteria will use gender sensitive words and language ensuring women's dignity and that women are projected not only as victims or receivers but also as contributing individuals.

2.3.2.6 Participation and inclusion

Programme designs will ensure active and meaningful participation in, contribution to, and benefit of, civil, economic, social, cultural and political development of women without any discrimination based on sex, ethnicity, age, disability or any other counts. The programmes will ensure women's and girls' participation and engagement in identification of practical and strategic needs and the ways to address them. Engagement to facilitate participatory needs identification, provision of information, participation in implementation and monitoring will be incorporated.

2.3.2.7 Awareness, motivation and behaviour change to reduce discrimination and violence

Actions for awareness, motivation and behaviour change communication will be incorporated with the aim to change discriminatory social norms and practices through social security programmes and services. This will incorporate awareness and actions against practices like child marriage, dowry, sexual harassment, violence against women, preference for male offspring and discrimination and promote safe mobility and sanitation for women. These will also incorporate activities to change traditional gender roles, attitude towards boys and girls, sharing household and care responsibilities. The programmes will include role of men and community awareness component using media and other forums and will provide forum for community members to address questions and concerns about women's empowerment. The programmes will utilize all opportunities to change discriminatory social norms and practices.

2.3.2.8 Voice and social capital

Social security programmes will incorporate women's role as decision makers in public and private spheres including politics and promote their leadership. They will be supported to raise their voice in claiming their rights and entitlements and against discrimination and violation. Actions to support developing their social capital through networks, strengthening their voice, linking them to service providing agencies, building confidence, self-worth, and self-respect will be incorporated in suitable programmes. Dissemination of knowledge on women's and girls' rights and enhancing their bargaining power will be incorporated. The programmes will facilitate creating opportunity for organizing and capacitating beneficiary women and girls in participation in social security related and community decision making. Support will be provided for inter-agency linkages for access to services and forming peer groups of beneficiaries to facilitate learning and mutual support.

2.3.2.9 Labour market interventions

Labour market interventions will be of different types. They can create opportunities for employment including ensuring wage equality, developing skills, and facilitating internship for women. Workfare programmes can be instrumental in addressing strategic interests in developing group dynamics, voicing needs and concerns, and participation in public affairs, etc. The existing programmes will be consolidated and incorporate graduation agenda with provisions of savings, skills, financial inclusion and linkages with market and services. Support services for congenial work environment like child and elderly care facilities, workplace day-care services, shelter and care for the elderly, infirm, disable women, maternity, disability and unemployment insurance, protection from violence and harassment at public places and extension services aimed at effective participation women in economic activities will be undertaken. Specific programmes for informal sector workers including wage equality and minimum wage for different sectors will be explored. This will need extensive research and consultation not to cause retrenchment or curtail benefits. Linking corporate social responsibility with these services will be explored.

2.3.2.10 Reaching urban women

Social security needs of urban women and girls are different from those of rural women and girls. Social security programmes cover more beneficiaries in rural areas but with urbanization, gradually urban population is increasing, and they need different services and support. Urban interventions will address security and protection, labour market support, housing and shelter, health, water, sanitation, nutrition, child care, mobility and transportation, and street lighting. Curbing violence against urban women, increasing

their access to justice and labour rights, and maternity care will be given special attention. Opportunities for social insurance programmes will be explored for urban women.

2.3.2.11 Financial inclusion and resource base

Ensuring access to finance and capital is a priority for social development as generally women have a low resource base. Financial services will be delivered (micro-credit, bank finance, saving services, education and housing loan) at affordable costs to women and girls, particularly from the disadvantaged and low-income groups as well as to migrant workers. Existing facilities will be expanded, and procedures of access will be simplified. A comprehensive transfer mechanism (G2P) through e-payment will be established and schemes that women can access easily will be launched. This will also involve specific provisions for women, dissemination of information to them and setting targets for women in institutional financing. Where the ultra-poor women are not eligible for micro-credit, resource transfer will be considered.

2.3.2.12 Cash transfer for start-up or access to livelihood activities and empowerment

Though conditional cash transfer (CCT) programmes are successful, the design of such transfer programmes often lack actions for long lasting behaviour change and a plan for phasing out. Emphasis will be on motivational, behaviour change and empowerment elements. Therefore, programmes addressing on short-term needs will be reviewed to explore incorporation of elements that bring sustainable changes in behaviour and self-reliance across communities. Therefore, some of these programmes need to be complemented by other sectoral programmes. The CCTs for education is an impressive instrument but needs review to ensure that they are educationally efficient. The transfer should not provide incentives to families who would have enrolled their children in school anyway but should reach families who might enrol their children in school, if given the incentive. The CCTs are insufficient to cover needs of old age or disability and therefore, need increase and complemented by low cost health care services or health insurance coverage. Similarly, Food for Work (FFW) can also be combined with sanitation, financial inclusion and so on. With inclusion of behaviour change elements in CCTs with attention on addressing social/gender norms, long lasting gains may be made towards promoting gender equality. CCT grant for livelihood support will assess initial start-up requirements as per current local market prices and allow for some flexibility in the budget.

2.3.2.13 Expand coverage of social insurance system

The social transfers providing protection for the protection of old age, disability, unemployment and maternity, will be expanded for all eligible persons including women and girls of all relevant groups in rural and urban areas. Old age pension, allowances for vulnerability and disability, allowances for special groups like freedom fighters and cultural activists, insurance against shock and illness will be prioritized for women. Coverage will be expanded to women/girls of the socially excluded groups of urban areas. A social insurance system enabling people to invest in their own social security, providing protection against the risks of old age, disability, unemployment and maternity will be initiated for pilot phase and integrated within the NSIS. Low cost contributory insurance models will be initiated in collaboration with private sector and by providing subsidy, if necessary. Social transfer programmes will be reviewed and adjusted once the NSIS is fully operational.

2.3.2.14 Emergency preparedness and resilience from shocks

Emergency preparedness especially for natural calamities will be emphasized for the people including women and girls of climate hotspots of Bangladesh. The support will include preparedness and post disaster support. It will be beyond immediate relief covering adaptive and resilient livelihood opportunities, risk management, recovery, rehabilitation, and anticipatory intervention. Participation of women and girls in disaster management related platforms for decision making and their capacity building will be ensured. Social assistance and provision of critical maternity, health and psycho-social support for victims of disaster will be built in, as required. Prevention and support will be ensured for women and girl victims of other shocks like unemployment, violence, harassment, conflicts and economic crisis. Coverage and support for economic crisis and depression will be incorporated within macro-economic and social security provisions.

2.3.3. Operational Strategies

2.3.3.1 Harmonization (Consolidation), expansion and sustaining results

According to the NSSS, smaller programmes will be consolidated along lifecycle risks, with programmes for children, working age people including youth and vulnerable women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. In the process of the harmonization, some programmes may be phased out, those running on pilot project basis testing value for money and cost-benefit analysis. Some programmes will be merged into a greater programmes within the Ministry /Division and some programmes may run as social development programme but under the purview of the NSSS. Harmonization will also focus on thematic clusters like food security, livelihood, social allowance based on life cycle and so on. In the harmonization process emphasis will be given on upscaling and sustaining results from programmes yielding better gender equality and empowerment outcomes. Consideration will be given on programme that can complement synergies with other macro and sectoral interventions like other start-up/ financial options in the project areas. Programmes that support once the household has lifted itself out of extreme poverty, having strong capacity development/ training components in skills, vocations, information, marketing etc. will be preferred for upscaling. Programmes having elements of empowerment, social capital building, protection from violence and shocks will be given emphasis. These elements having transformatory potentials will be incorporated in the consolidated and expanded programmes.

2.3.3.2 Promoting complementarity and partnership for gender focused social security

The programmes will emphasize on integration and complementarity among programmes and sectors to ensure coherent social security delivery and greater impacts for gender equality. The roles of different sectoral actors at different stages of life cycle will be considered to foster complementarity and partnerships with different private and public initiatives for the beneficiary women and girls. The programmes will assess prospects of enhancing synergies and mutual support to serve women and girls and avoid delivery of services that are ensured through sectoral development programmes. Synchronization of interventions will be promoted for social security programmes that address gender equality and women's lifecycle needs at the community and household levels. Complementarity with social transfer programmes will be sought for services under sectoral programmes. Skills enhancement programmes will seek support of micro-credit and other start-up/financial options, information and market opportunities for lifting beneficiaries out of extreme poverty. Social transfer and food aid programmes will seek support from capacity development/training in skills, vocations, information, marketing etc. Support for victims of violence and disasters will seek support from rehabilitation, legal aid and such programmes.

2.3.3.3 Invest in capacity and capability building for gender responsive social security

- a. Beneficiary capacity:** Capacity building will be an ongoing process to address the challenges of the beneficiary women and girls. Capacity building activities at individual, and group levels will be incorporated in programmes. At the individual level, capacity will include women's and girls' knowledge, life skills and vocational skills, and other challenges of life, harnessing benefits from development, accessing information and services, and taking control of resources and lives. Capacity to cope with and recover from crises and shocks, especially those induced by climate change, violence and natural calamities will be emphasised. Training and capacity building facilitating transformation towards empowerment, building social capital, enhancing voice and bargaining capacity will be incorporated in relevant social security programme design. Capacity building to address both practical and strategic gender needs emphasizing on women's/girls' leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship/ livelihoods, social support, awareness and risk mitigation will be incorporated.
- b. Capacity at community and societal level:** At the societal level, capacity building will involve capacity of partners, service providers, local government, civil society, and communities for enhancing responsiveness supporting gender equality and women's empowerment at the private and public spheres. This will also involve community awareness and capacity building to prevent and address gender-based discrimination and violation of women's rights.

- c. **Institutional capacity:** At the institutional level, capacity development activities will be undertaken for the ministries and their agencies to enhance efficiency in delivering and managing gender responsive social security programmes and ensuring their results. Attention will be on strengthening gender analytical capacity for social security programming and monitoring among the staff of different ministries, including Finance Division of Ministry of Finance, General Economics Division (GED) of Planning Commission, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) of Statistics and Informative Division (SID) of Ministry of Planning. The Ministries' implementing social security programmes will support building the demand side and seeking accountability.

2.3.3.4 Design and quality assurance

The programmes will consider promoting gender equality as one of the key strategies. The Ministries/Divisions will undertake gender analysis, integrate gender related design features and be accountable for results. With support from Ministry of Women and Children Affairs and technical experts will ensure quality at design before approval of new programmes and improve existing programmes. Programme result frameworks will integrate gender indicators. The guidelines for incorporation of gender equality in Planning and Review by ECNEC will be strictly applied. The Ministries/Divisions will clearly spell out gender equality issues including monitoring indicators in their respective Annual Performance Plan (APA), for which they sign the annual agreement with the Cabinet Division. Relevant staff will be oriented on the use of the guidelines on how to mainstream gender in project and programme cycles. The Cabinet Division will ensure strict adherence to the guidelines, while the Planning Commission will ensure that the guidelines are followed in designing all development plans and projects.

2.3.3.5 Grievance mechanism

A grievance redress mechanism will be established, incorporated and coordinated at the local level preferably at the upazillas level to handle all kinds of grievances related to social security programmes. Information related to social security programmes, mechanism, ways to access and procedures for grievance redressal will be disseminated for awareness at the community level. Awareness raising information will reach women by undertaking specific communication methodology and campaign. The information about the existing grievance redress mechanism under the Cabinet Division will be informed to the beneficiaries of the social security programmes at local level.

2.3.3.6 Investment in monitoring

Monitoring will be emphasized to ensure the best results out of social security programmes. Attention towards sustainability of gains made will be ensured through investment in monitoring of gender quality results. Social security programmes yielding good gender quality and empowering results will be identified for expansion. The principle will be building in monitoring mechanisms in all social security projects/programmes and monitoring their results related to gender quality and women's empowerment by all ministries, Cabinet Division, Finance Division, GED, IMED, SID-BBS and through civic efforts. The NSSS incorporated provision of a task force comprising GED, IMED and Finance Division of the Ministry of Finance to prepare process and procedure for performance-based monitoring of SSPs as per the NSSS and recommend indicators that can be used for designing any new programmes and also for performance-based budgeting. This activity will also include development of credible sex-disaggregated integrated database for all programmes, defining empowerment indicators and capturing results through all MISs. IMED's monitoring will also incorporate social development and gender features. Transparent procedures of beneficiary selection, targeting and participation will be monitored by the Central Management Committee (CMC) for Social Security Programmes through MIS, reviews, oversight and grievance mechanism. Monitoring will include validation of information from multiple sources. The M&E taskforce established comprising of GED, Cabinet Division and Finance Division has specific roles in monitoring of social security Programmes. All the Ministries are to report to the CMC about social security programme implementation and reforms which will again reports to the Prime Minister and her Cabinet as and when necessary.

Mechanisms of good practice will be disseminated, scaled up and efforts will include building in follow-up mechanism to sustain results. The programmes will ensure setting up monitoring system based on a set of

gender focused indicators incorporating both practical and strategic gender needs including those on transformation or empowerment. The indicators will be beyond provision of inputs, with focus on process and results, for transfer, workfare, promotional and other programmes.

2.3.3.7 Resource mobilization

Financing for gender equality in social security programmes under the NSSS is critical to achieve the goal of the Gender Policy. The programmes will ensure financing of the components and activities from the Government's own sources, cost sharing arrangement with development partners, and private sector or Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The corporate social responsibility expenditure will also be explored for integration in social security programming. Considering the resource limitation and the time period, it is important to identify priorities and invest in strategically important areas. Priority areas should be chosen on the basis of possibilities of contribution towards both economic growth and women's empowerment and actions that can facilitate results in more than one area. The major areas will be to accrue equal benefit from quality formal education; employment opportunities; marketable skills to increase productivity; child immunization, nutrition and health care; facilitating positive social norms; reduction of VAW and support to victims and vulnerable groups. The targeted safety net programmes and employment guarantee schemes will focus on the poor households especially the female headed ones. Geographically remote and disadvantaged regions will be prioritized for resource allocation. Better results can be achieved in some areas within existing resources by taking informed and planned initiatives and by ensuring collaboration between and among sectoral initiatives.

Part D: Gender Action Plan of Ministries and Divisions

1. Ministry of Social Welfare

Background

The Ministry of Social Welfare (MoSW) is responsible for formulating and implementing policies related to social welfare and improving the standard of living of disadvantaged segments of the population. It is an important Ministry having the largest number of social security programmes for old age, widows, deserted women, persons with disabilities, acid burnt victims, sex workers, orphans, vagrants and other groups of both rural and urban areas of the country. The Ministry also implements development programmes for socio-economic development of the disadvantaged.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of the Ministry is creating a better life by providing social security, empowerment and development to the poor, vulnerable group of people and persons with disabilities by adopting social security as an important tool for the empowerment of poor and to promote gender equality.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Equitable socio-economic development through inclusion of 50 per cent women beneficiaries in three programmes, and one programme providing interest-free micro-credits for only women. Annually 1.13 lakh women benefit from enhanced social security, self-employment, education and training, and income generating activities. These women also have opportunities to access capital and government resources and services for their advancement. Priority is given to enhancing the well-being and rehabilitation of helpless and vulnerable girl children.
- b. Social security services for disadvantaged people include allowances for 34.27 lakh widows, deserted and distressed women and 50 per cent of the allowances for elderly and disabled allowances programmes. Therefore, food security and poverty risks are reduced, and social dignity is maintained. Programmes provide shelter support programmes for orphans, and elderly include accommodation, clothing, health and services, and protect women from repression, child marriage and dowry.
- c. Social justice and social inclusion: Safe shelters and maintenance is provided to women who come into contact with the legal system in order to increase social security and reduce the risk of harm. Annually, 12,000 women are helped through Government/non-Government organizations to access fair justice and for rehabilitation. Through training and rehabilitation programmes, annually 600 disadvantaged women and adolescents gain access to safe home programmes. In addition, support services, and legal aid are provided to women affected by social maladies (dowry, sexual harassment, child marriage and drug addiction).

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The Ministry of Social Welfare will assume the responsibility of leading lifecycle based social security. Thus, the Ministry has a huge responsibility for coordination and transition of social security programmes towards that goal. Initially the Ministry has been assigned with the responsibility of coordinating the thematic cluster on social allowance, while also participating in most of the other clusters as an important member. It is a challenge to consolidate the social allowance programmes ensuring equity as well as ensuring empowerment of women.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to support achieving the goal of coordinated social allowance programmes and consolidating the major lifecycle programmes, making them more gender inclusive, efficient as well as empowering for the poor and women.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 51.38 percent of the Ministry budget, 62.15 percent of the development budget, and 50.84 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Ministry implements several social allowance programmes for different groups of people, such as— old age allowance, disability allowance, and allowance for widows and vulnerable women. Over the years, the coverage has increased, but it is still inadequate. Several orphanages, and shelter homes for elderly, vagrants and socially-disabled are operated. Several labour and livelihood interventions provide training and economic opportunities. The Ministry has many small and fragmented programmes to support different groups of people. These programmes need to be consolidated. Other programmes like children's allowance, vulnerable women's allowance needs to integrate within the overall child benefit programme and the vulnerable women's benefit programme. There is no comprehensive database on disable persons with their types of disability and age. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring. Many of the programmes which have potential to facilitate women's empowerment have not incorporated such elements.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Child and adolescents support	Expand shelter support for orphan, destitute and disabled children, children of migrant labourers, ethnic minority groups and other vulnerable groups	Continuous	Annual 10% increase of service coverage	MoHFW, MoPME, MoE, LGD, Finance Division
	Ensure nutrition, health care, education, recreation and moral development of orphan and destitute children in orphanage and on the streets	Continuous	Annual 10% increase of service coverage; MoU with different divisions for services	
	Increase amount of support for non-government orphanages	Continuous	Annual 10% increase of services coverage	
	Expand coverage of stipends for students with disabilities and from transgender communities	Continuous	Annual 10% increase	
	Integrate disable and transgender student stipend programmes into regular stipend support for education under MoPME and MoE.	Jan 2024	Disabled students' stipend integrated within regular stipend programme	
	Enhance capacity of schools for visually, speaking and hearing impaired, autistic and other children at upazilla level	Jan 2022 continuous	Coverage expanded by 10% in upazillas	

Vulnerable women's benefit	Expand support to deserted and marginalized women	Continuous	Annual 10% increase of coverage	MoHFW, LGD, Finance Division, MoWCA
	Establish linkage for providing training and healthcare support to disadvantaged women through institutions like Rural Mother's Center	Continuous	Percentage of self-reliant beneficiaries	
	Determine a term for allowance for the widows and deserted women for 3 to 5 years and include graduation and empowering elements and targets	Continuous till 2026	Proposal approved; Percentage of beneficiaries becoming self-reliant	
Old-age support	Expand coverage of old-age allowance	Continuous	Annual increase 10%; Ensure 50% for women beneficiaries	LGD, Finance Division, MoHFW, PMO
	Assess feasibility of healthcare support/insurance	December 2020	Assessment prepared with recommendations	
	Link old women and men with health service providers and issue of health card	December 2021	MoU with MoHFW and health card issued	
	Support Finance Division to develop a universal old age pension programme	December 2022	Programme developed	
	Work with HSD and MoWCA and develop a low-cost care economy for community level elderly care	December 2020	Programme developed	
Mobility support	Work with Housing and Public Works, Roads and Highways, Railway, Shipping and Police to ensure safe mobility for the disabled (ramp, wheel chair-friendly footpaths, low railway locomotives, buses with ramps, traffic signals for blinds on roads etc.)	Dec 2022	MoU with these ministries; Guidelines issued for buildings, signals and transports	Finance Division, RHD, MoR, MoS, PSD
Labour and Livelihood intervention	Expand coverage of income-generating training for rural and urban women, persons with disability (including burn survivors) and other vulnerable people (transgender, bede, {gypsy}, sex workers and other socially disadvantaged communities)	Continuous	Annual 10% increase	Finance Division
	Review and consolidate training programme and incorporate empowering elements (including graduation plan, collective bargaining capacity, social capital etc.)	Continuous	All consolidated programmes integrate these elements	
Support to disadvantaged communities	Expand old-age support for transgender, Bede, tea-garden labourers, and other socially-disadvantaged communities;	Continuous	Annual increase 10%; women are 50% of beneficiaries	LGD, Finance Division, MoHFW
	Link with health service providers and issue health cards for men/ women and boys/girls of disadvantaged communities	December 2021	MoU with MoHFW and health card issued	
	Expand support for the insolvent persons with disabilities	Continuous	100% coverage by 2026	
	Provide shelter and livelihood-enhancement support (incl. training, credit etc.) for shelter-less and socially disadvantaged persons, especially women and elderly persons	Continuous	Annual 10% increase in beneficiaries	

	Link with healthcare services and ensure health care services for the disadvantaged groups (socially-disabled, bede and tea workers and others)	Continuous	MoU with different service providers; Women constitute 50% of the beneficiaries;	
Grievance redress system	Build in a complain mechanism at the field level for social security and violation of rights of the disadvantaged	Beginning July 2020	System developed and field offices instructed	Field offices, LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	Instruct field offices July 2020	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for disabled and disadvantaged women and girls (leadership, entrepreneurship, income generation, marketable skills, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	December 2020 Continuous	Increase by 10% annually for each group	Finance Division, MoYS, Planning Commission
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme (design, delivery and monitoring)	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021 continuous	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission, ECNEC
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021 Continuous	All new programme designs incorporate these	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2020	Instruction given to planning unit	IMED, MoWCA, GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and upscaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list	Cabinet Division, Planning Commission, Finance Division
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified List for scaling up prepared	
	Determine a term (3-5 years) for allowance of widow and deserted women and incorporate graduation criteria and empowering elements in programme design and operation	June 2022	Guidelines prepared	

Table 2: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Social Welfare

Key Actions

- Scale up old age programme by increasing coverage from present 31 lakh in last year to 65 lac in 2022. The threshold age limit will be set at 60 from present 65 for male and 62 for female. Provisions will be made for citizens above 90+ years
- Work with MoHPW, MOHFW and other relevant ministries and divisions for safe mobility for persons with disability.
- Support development of a low cost care economy with standard care giving protocol and trained caregivers.
- Introduce a consolidated VWB programme in coordination with MoWCA ensuring all kinds of social security needs of women.
- Continue and expand programmes for marginalized people and orphans to address their rights to human development, safety and other development.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.
- Establish a strong grievance redress system.
- Ensure gender responsive project/programme design features and ensure gender focused results monitoring with sex disaggregated data.

Box 1: Key Actions of Ministry of Social Welfare

2. Ministry of Food

Background

Food is the first basic need of human being and the Ministry of Food (MOF) is responsible for ensuring food security in the country. The responsibilities include legislations, policies, plans, procedures, etc. related to food procurement, storage and distribution for a dependable national food security system. The activities are performed in collaboration with other Ministries like the Ministries of Agriculture, Commerce, Disaster Management and Relief, Local Government, Women and Children Affairs etc. They are also closely associated in implementation of food security programmes. The country's overall food management and strengthening of food security system is done considering the possible adverse effect of environment and climate change. Ensuring supply of food for food-based social security programmes, during disasters and at a low price during lean season are important functions which contribute towards nutritional support for the poor, women and children.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission is to ensure adequate and stable supply of safe and nutritious food through integrated public food management ensuring supply at a low-cost among poor people.

Role in social security for gender equality and women's empowerment

- a. Ensuring supply of food and price stability during disasters, and continue stable supply of food for the safety net programmes targeted towards poor, especially destitute women;
- b. Stabilizing food price by procuring food grains from farmers at a fair price and sell through Open Market Sales (OMS) during lean period to ensure access to food and nutrition by the poor, including women;
- c. Ensuring access to food and nutrition for the poor including women in food-based workfare programmes and thereby ensuring social security, of women and their families including children; and
- d. Ensuring nutritional status of the poor by providing micro-nutrients enriched fortified food through government food aid programmes to the destitute people, especially poor women and children.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

Food security situation has substantially improved in Bangladesh. International experience has proved that cash-transfer programmes are advantageous over direct food supply programmes for social security. Therefore, transition from food-transfer to cash-transfer has become important to enable families to spend social allowances to meet their priority needs. On the other hand, in view of the climate change related uncertainties, it is important to ensure food supply in the market at a low price for the poor.

Another challenge is to ensure fulfillment of the nutritional needs of women and children in the family through cash transfer programmes. Addressing the nutritional needs of pregnant/lactating women, and as well as protecting women and children from food insecurity and malnutrition should not be compromised because of poverty and disaster.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to streamline the food security type programmes, ensuring access to food and taking into consideration the nutritional needs and price stability.

Gender responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019–2020 is 3.36 percent of the Ministry budget, 7.87 percent of the development budget and 2.34 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

This Ministry mainly operates OMS and ensures food supply for programmes of other ministries. The Ministry also operates Food-friendly Programme for the Ultra Poor where women are also beneficiaries. The Ministry is trying to gradually convert to cash transfer instead of food transfer. In this context, it is also important that people are not deprived of nutritional support. Therefore, it is important to ensure information about low-cost nutritional elements and supply of fortified rice and food for food-based programmes in emergency situation, even in the OMS. Since women are responsible for food security of their families, they should constitute at least 50% of the recipients under the Food Friendly Card (FFC) programmes.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Strengthening Open Market Sales (OMS)	Provide basic information on nutrition with OMS (distributing leaflets and micing)	January 2021 and continue	Leaflets distributed with OMS	LGD
	Ensure women are beneficiary of the Food Friendly Card (FFC)	July 2021	Women are 50% of FFC recipients	
	Use poverty-mapping, identify areas with maximum poor female-headed households	June 2021	Areas identified	
	Expand OMS and FFC in poverty prone areas	June 2022Continue	Programme expanded	
Vulnerable women benefit Programme	Convert all food-based workfare and livelihood programmes into cash-based programmes	End of current cycle of VGD by 2022	Eligible beneficiaries covered by cash based programme and 10% increase per annum	MoWCA, MoSW, LGD
	Ensure cash for access of all eligible women for VGD and ICVGD in the converted cash-based social security programmes	July 2022	All eligible women for VGD and ICVG included	
Disaster relief Programmes	Ensure retaining nutrition in disaster relief and emergency programmes (provision of fortified food and food for children)	Continuous	Food based relief ensured nutrition components	MoF, MoC
	Supply fortified rice to support increased number of beneficiaries in disaster relief and rehabilitation programmes	January 2021	Annually increase supply of fortified rice in disaster relief and rehabilitation programmes	

Workfare Based Programmes	Convert food-based workfare programmes to cash	December 2022	Conversion with approved	MOF LGD MOWCA MODMR
	Incorporate nutritional information in cash based programmes ensuring participation and benefit of women.	December 2022	Nutrition information incorporated	
	Introduce supply of fortified rice for food-based workfare programmes in emergency situation	December 2022	Fortified rice distributed in food-based workfare programmes only in emergency situation	
Grievance redressal system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2021	Instruct field offices	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women in programmes (leadership, nutrition, self-respect, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 201	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. participation, awareness, nutrition information, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission, Cabinet Division, LGD, ECNEC
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2020	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA, GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect and compile sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and upscaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list	All Coordinating ministries

	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potentials in the consolidated and expanded programmes	January 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared
--	---	--------------	---

Table 3: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Food

Key Actions

- Strengthen Open Market Sales (OMS) and Food Friendly Card (FFC) Programme with nutritional information.
- Convert food supply programmes to cash based programmes.
- Ensure supply of food providing fortified rice for nutrition in disaster relief and rehabilitation programmes.
- Ensure conversion to cash in consistent with the demand and expansion of food based programmes
- Consolidate smaller programmes and incorporate empowering elements for women in workfare programmes and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.

Box 2: Key Actions of Ministry of Food

3. Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief

Background

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief (MODMR) is responsible for disaster risk management and response. This include disaster preparedness, warning, relief, rehabilitation and support for resilience. MODMR operates workfare programmes for employment of the poor for their food security. The relief and workfare programmes in collaboration with Ministry of Food and Local Government Division (LGD) ensure supply and distribution of food grain for the programmes and support employment for the ultra-poor during the lean period of the year to reduce their poverty and vulnerability. Many of the beneficiaries of such programmes are women and they are engaged in repairing and rehabilitation of small-scale infrastructures.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission is to manage a shift in disaster management from conventional response of relief to a more comprehensive risk reduction culture, to promote food security and ensure the resilience of community men and women to hazards by enhancing their capacity for preparation, adaptation and response addressing gender- based needs.

Role in social security for gender equality and women's empowerment

- a. Reducing risk of disasters by institutionalizing disaster management system and increasing the capability of people including women to face natural disasters. Through awareness activities and livelihood training they learn about lives and properties and empower women to perform response management activities including relocation and restoration.
- b. Construction of physical infrastructure like flood and cyclone shelters, cyclone-tolerant houses, village connecting roads (pucca), small culverts/bridges and other physical infrastructure in disaster prone areas to support economic resilience, recovery of livelihood and employment. Ensure that the infrastructure is children-, disabled- and women-friendly. Women, children and handicapped people are prioritized for shelter, food and medicines. The infrastructure development create employment for men and women as well.
- c. Reducing the sufferings and disaster risks for vulnerable people through ensuring supply of food for the extreme poor through workfare programmes during slumps and disaster periods. At least 30 percent of the beneficiaries are women under the targeted and women friendly programmes.
- d. Food safety support to the lactating mother/children is provided to the lactating mothers/children to fulfil their nutritional needs.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The nature and incidence of disaster is not the same indifferent geographical locations of the country, depending on hazard zones. The sufferings also vary by sex, age group, ability and location. Therefore, it is very important to identify the nature of disaster-prone areas and take necessary measures to ensure food security and livelihood option for women and men. On the other hand, cash-based programmes have proven to be advantageous over food-based social security programmes. Therefore, the main challenge is to prepare disaster maps/update vulnerability maps to make the cash, food and livelihood support more effective.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The strategic objective of this GAP is to ensure that the Ministry's social safety security programmes, the disaster relief, rehabilitation and workfare programmes address gender-based needs, involve and empower women as agents and beneficiaries in disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation activities.

Gender responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 69.71 percent of the Ministry budget, 66.81 percent of the development budget and 71.28 percent of the non-development budget.

Budget needs to be enhanced to ensure food security, safety, disaster preparedness, relief and recovery activities aimed at empowering women and girls.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The Ministry is emphasizing on women’s participation in disaster management activities. Still women’s specific needs are overlooked during disaster relief, recovery, and rehabilitation programmes. Sometimes women are not targeted, or targets are not ensured. In absence of a map identifying disaster-prone areas with risk and vulnerability of women, disaster preparedness and relief activities may not be consistent with the needs. Workfare programmes usually do not include elements to facilitate women’s empowerment and graduation which could be easily incorporated. Disaster preparedness, recovery and rehabilitation requires coordinated actions from different ministries for food, health, livelihood, agricultural inputs, safety and security of women, girls and disables. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women’s benefits are not monitored. The Ministry also requires strengthening capacity of its staff to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibilities
Hazard Zone Mapping	Prepare a map identifying disaster-prone areas with risk and vulnerabilities of women	July 2022	Map prepared with vulnerability types	BBS
Workfare Programmes	Consolidate workfare programmes identifying elements of empowerment	December 2022	List prepared and approved	MoF, Finance Division
	Convert from food to cash for all major programmes	July 2022 and continuous	Budget allocation ensured	
	Incorporate empowerment as an objective and include elements of graduation in the consolidated programmes	July 2021 and continuous	Major programmes incorporate elements	
	Include training, savings, confidence building and social capital development activities in major and consolidated programmes	July 2021 and continuous	Programme designs include these	
	Conduct a study to assess the possibility of enhancing workdays and incorporation of rotational saving and credit model for alternative income	December 2021	Study report available	
Disaster Preparedness	Take special measures for safety and security of girls and women before disaster especially for disabled girls, women and elderly	July 2021 and continuous	Issue instruction	LGD, MoSW
	Impart comprehensive disaster awareness and preparedness training among women/girls	July 2021 and continuous	% of women’s in disaster preparedness training	
	Prioritize sick, elderly, pregnant, and disable women for transfer to the shelters, relief distribution and safety	December 2021 continuous	Issue instruction	
Recovery and rehabilitation	Rehabilitate girls and women affected by river erosion and other natural calamities	July 2021 and after calamities	Livelihood support programmes expanded	MoWR, LGD,

	Ensure women's share in workfare programmes	December 2021 continuous	% of women in workfare programmes	Other Ministries
	Coordinate with other relevant ministries for food, health, nutrition, employment, credit, agricultural input, and safety of women and girls	December 2021	MoUs with other ministries	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2020	Instruct field offices	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2020 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (agriculture management, crop protection, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation etc.)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Internal circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission, ECNEC
	Apply and enforce gender integrated design features during approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	GED, BBS All programmes
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and list prepared	Cabinet Division
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 4: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Disaster Management

Key Actions

- Prepare a hazard-zone map identifying risk and vulnerabilities of women
- Convert most of the food-based workfare programmes to cash transfer where possible.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.
- Impart comprehensive awareness and training programmes to ensure disaster preparedness among women/girls.
- Provide rehabilitation support to girls and women affected by river erosion and other natural calamities.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and ensure G2P payment.

4. Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

Background

Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) is involved in ensuring primary education as well as mass education in Bangladesh. The Ministry is assigned to formulate and implement policies related to primary and mass education; prepare, publish and distribute textbooks to students at the pre-primary and primary level. Thus, the Ministry MOPME contributes to the development of human resources of the country. The Ministry has been assigned the responsibility of coordinating the thematic cluster on 'Human Development and Social Empowerment'. The Ministry implements primary stipend programmes and school meal programmes for social security, which has contributed towards increasing literacy rate in the country.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Ministry has the mission to expand facilities of primary and life-long education for all aiming at gender equality in primary education and creating opportunities for continuing education for women.

Role in gender equality and women's development

Extending universal access to primary education for all school age children including girls. Improving quality of primary education for better learning outcome for all children. Increase literacy rate and create opportunity for continuing and lifelong education for out of school children and adults, which includes income generating skills training for women as well.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

Still now many children are out of school and most of them are girls. Besides, many children with disability and special needs could not be covered. Safe water and sanitation facilities for all children and especially girls are inadequate. Around 13 million children receive stipends, with the majority at primary school. Coverage is around 24 per cent of primary school age children. Therefore, both the coverage and the transfer level are low.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The strategic objective of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education is to raise the coverage of stipend to 50 per cent of primary school students and to increase the stipend amount. Another challenge is to bring all children to school especially those living in hard to reach locations.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 57.74 percent of the Ministry budget, 36.77 percent of the development budget, and 70.9 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

Though gender parity has been achieved in primary education enrolment, dropout continues. Therefore, government has introduced stipend programme for students at primary levels. It is important to expand the Primary School Stipend Programme nationwide with an especial emphasis on children who live in urban areas and with disability. Children of primary-school age easily learn about beneficial and harmful practices. Therefore, a review of the national curriculum is necessary to incorporate gender equality aspects. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The Ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Stipend Programme	Increase coverage of stipend programme, particularly in urban areas	Continuous	Annual 10% increase in coverage ensuring 50% girls	Finance Division
	Ensure that at least 50% of the beneficiaries are girls	Continuous	50% beneficiaries are girls	
	Create a database of disabled children in schools and increase the amount of stipends provided to disabled students, specially girls living in remote areas	July 2021	Database prepared and proposal for increased number of students approved	
Addressing social norms	Involve girls of all schools in sports and extra curriculum activities	Continuous	Number of schools arranging outdoor sports for girls	MoYS, Finance Division
Reaching children out of the school system	Include girls in hard-to-reach communities in ROSC	Continuous	Girls are 50% of students from hard to reach communities	Finance Division LGD
	Undertake new programme to ensure participation of working girls in the school system	Continuous	New programmes for working girls	
School feeding/meal programme	Extend school meal programmes for schools serving hard-to-reach children, especially in poverty pockets outside 104 upazillas	Continuous	Increased no of schools covered	Finance Division, MoF, IMED
	Organize mass campaign and disseminate information about the existing facilities for hard-to-reach children, particularly girls.	July 2022 Continuous	No of campaigns, TVCs	
Continue education in disaster situation	Provide guidelines to children regarding survival technique in disaster-prone areas and incorporate in curriculum	July 2020 2022 Continuous	Curriculum/materials prepared, incorporated in books, children oriented	NCTB Schools, Finance Division
	Inform girl children about their vulnerabilities during and after disasters, and prepare them to stay safe	July 2020 2022 Continuous	Materials prepared and distributed in schools	
	Orient children about protection of their books and educational materials	July 2020 2022 Continuous	Guidance given to schools; children informed	
	Create a buffer stock of books and educational material in disaster-prone areas	July 2020 2022 Continuous	Stock preserved	
Continued education for the adults	Expanding basic literacy and life skills development among women	July 2020 2022 Continuous	Reduction of illiteracy among women by 5% annually	MoFL, MoWCA, MoYS, NGOs
	Incorporate empowering elements (confidence, self-respect, group action, linkage with service agencies, leadership) in programmes	January 2021 2023 Continuous	Number of programmes incorporating these in design	

	Establish linkage with relevant agencies and NGOs for life skills		Agencies and NGOs identified, and linkage established	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level on violence/harassment and deprivation	Beginning July 20192021	Instruct field offices and schools	LGD, Field offices, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 20192021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women in education (protection, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 20192021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA, NGOs
	Strengthen staff capacity of staff to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 20192021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 20192021	Internal circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender integrated design features during Ensure that programme approval and review process apply and enforce the aforesaid designs	July 20192021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 20192021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA, GED, BBS
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results Ensure collection and use of sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results and	January 20202022	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	

Table 5: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

Key Actions

- Scale up Primary Stipend Programme in terms of coverage and benefit amount ensuring at least 50% for girls.
- Extend school meal programmes for schools serving hard-to-reach children especially in poverty pockets
- Involve girls of all schools in sports and extra curriculum activities.
- Orient girl children about their vulnerabilities during and after disasters, and prepare them to stay safe
- Enhance capacity of girls for protection, leadership, self-respect, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.
- Provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and ensure G2P payment.

Box 4: Key Actions of Ministry of Primary and Mass Education

5. Financial Institution Division

Background

The Financial Institution Division (FID) is responsible for developing financial market and institutions and deals with the laws and policies related to banks, non-bank financial institutions, capital market, insurance sector and microcredit sector. The Division monitors and evaluates performance of the state-owned banks and financial institutions and creates mass awareness to expand coverage of insurance. The Division is also involved in social security programmes like creating employment and reducing poverty through micro-finance programmes. Establishment of a National Social Insurance System has been assigned to this Division by the NSSS as the coordinator of the Social Insurance Thematic Cluster.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Division has the mission of strengthening regulatory and institutional framework for the development of financial market and services system ensuring access of women to social insurance system and institutional finance for social security.

Role in gender equality and women's development

The role of the Division in gender equality and women's empowerment includes ensuring financial inclusion for the poor and facilitating women's access to institutional finance at affordable cost.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The NSSS entrusts upon the FID the responsibility of introducing a suitable framework of social insurance. As the concept of social insurance is almost new in the Bangladesh, it is a challenge to motivate people to invest for their own social security. For this to happen, on the one hand a strong legal and institutional framework is required, and people's motivation/inspiration is required on the other. As women have low resource base and income, their investment capacity is low, which needs to be considered while designing the social insurance system.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The NSSS strategic objective of the Division is to institutionalize a social security system suitable for women and launch a social insurance system that is affordable for women in Bangladesh.

Gender-responsive budget

This Division has not prepared a gender responsive budget report and therefore, the share in gender budget has not yet determined, which will be done in future. However, a large share of the bank and financial institutions' investment goes for women entrepreneurship and self-employment through banks and micro-finance institutions.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Division has some collaborative programmes with NGOs and banks to provide financial services to the poor including women. These programmes have potential facilitate graduation and empowerment which needs to be specifically planned. This Division is responsible for designing and implementing a national social insurance scheme. The scheme needs to consider women's perspectives and needs specially incorporating unemployment, maternity, livelihood and disability requirement, and build them into the NSIS. In the context of women's low participation in economic activities. The provision of their contribution needs to be examined and subsidies, if necessary, should be considered. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The Division also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
National Social Insurance Scheme (NSIS)	Undertake a study to identify social insurance requirements of women	December 2020	Study Report submitted	BIDS/Research agencies
	Introduce low-cost national social insurance scheme incorporating unemployment, disability, loss of livelihood, accident and maternity	July 2021	Pilot project launched	Finance Division
	Subsidize the insurance schemes considering capacity (specially of women)	July 2021	Subsidy incorporated in National Budget	
	Formulate law on NSIS incorporating women's perspectives	December 2021	Law approved	
	Roll out nationwide NIS system considering women's needs and subsidy (as necessary)	July 2023	NIS rolled out	
Shock-resilient livelihood support	Review existing financial services for poor (if necessary, redesign) and include easy services for poor women and vulnerable to disaster and shocks	July 2021	Existing services reviewed and modified	
	Expand low-cost, easy term and simplified financial services (for poor women affected by or vulnerable to disasters and shocks)	December 2020 Continuous	Specific financial services rolled out	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level on harassment/corruption related to financial inclusion and other issues	Beginning July 2020	Instruction issued to banks/PFIs, LGD	Banks/PFIs, LGD Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2020 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building /information activities for women (business management, market, loan opportunities/terms, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation).	July 2020 Continuous	New programme for orientation and training of women launched incorporating these	Banks/PFIs Chambers MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission ECNEC
	Apply and enforce gender integrated design features during approval and review process.	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators for programmes addressing practical and strategic needs of women	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED, IMED, BBS

result monitoring	Collect and use of sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all bank/PFIs to collect and report based on sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet Division
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 6: Gender Action Plan of Financial Institutions Division

Key Actions

- Conduct a study on deciding a suitable framework for National Social Insurance System (NSIS).
- Roll out NSIS incorporating low-cost provisions for women’s participation and addressing their gender-based needs.
- Expand low-cost financial services for financial inclusion of poor women and women affected by or vulnerable to disaster or shocks.
- Enhance capacity of Women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 5: Key Actions of Financial Institution Division

6. Secondary and Higher Education Division

Background

The Secondary and Higher Education Division (SHED), under Ministry of Education is responsible for managing and expansion of post-primary and tertiary education. It formulates and implements policy and programmes with focus on improving the quality of secondary, higher secondary and tertiary education. It also undertakes reforms and overall development of education systems as per the Education Policy 2010. The responsibilities include developing and updating curriculum for secondary levels and printing and distribution for free text books for primary and secondary levels. The Division supports establishing specialized universities at the private sector and plays an important role in development of human resources of the country. As one of the implementers of social security programmes, the Division disburses stipends to the secondary-level students. Girls receive specific stipends for graduation and post graduate levels based on criteria, which has helped in achieving gender parity in secondary school enrolment and increased girls' participation in higher education.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of this Division is “to expand facilities of secondary education to all” and expand higher education and thereby enhance human development opportunities for boys and girls.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Improve access to quality secondary education for girls;
- b. Ensuring equity & equality in all levels of education;
- c. Improvement of the overall quality of tertiary education focusing on general science, applied science, technical and business administration education and ensuring access of women to these;
- d. Strengthening governance in education and ensuring women's participation in education management.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

Though gender parity has been achieved in secondary education enrollment, completion rate and transition to higher levels for girls is not satisfactory. Coverage of school stipend programmes at secondary level is only 17% and the transfer amount is low. Besides, girls' drop out due to child marriage and insecurity is a common concern. The pace of change in the education system to cater to the market needs is slow.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to support continuity and completion of secondary education by girls through increased coverage of stipends, support continuation of education in disaster situation and promote gender equality through education system.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 36.55 percent of the Ministry budget, 34.91 percent of the development budget, and 37.37 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

Though gender parity has been achieved in secondary education enrolment, still secondary education completion and transition to higher education is not as per expectation. Therefore, government has introduced stipend programme for girls at secondary and bachelor levels. Continuation of education often becomes difficult for children with disability, especially girls and in disaster situation. Social norms also restrict women from participating in STEM. Several stipend programmes for girls are operating in the country in a fragmented manner. It is important to consolidate these stipend programmes and reach out to eligible girls nationwide. Education can play a vital role in changing social norms. So, a review of the national

curriculum is necessary. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The Division also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Expand secondary education stipend programme	Disseminate selection criteria for stipend at institutions and local level	Continuous	Selection criteria known to the people of the community	Finance Division MoF BBS MoSW
	Continue and increase the coverage of stipend programme for girls in both rural and urban areas	Continuous	Annual 20% increase of recipients at secondary levels	
	Increase the amount of stipend	Continuous	Transfer amount increased	
	Continue girls' stipend programmes at higher education level from Prime Minister's Trust	Continuous	Number of girls receiving stipend at higher levels	
	Introduce G2P electronic transfer for all	July 2022	Electronic transfer for all	
Continue education in disaster situation	Provide guidelines to children regarding survival technique in disaster-prone areas	July 2021 Continuous	Curriculum/materials prepared, incorporated in books, children oriented	MoDMR MoWCA
	Inform girl children about their vulnerabilities and prepare them to stay safe during and after disasters	July 2021 Continuous	Materials prepared and distributed in schools	
	Orient children about protection of their books and educational materials	July 2021 Continuous	Guidance given to school; children informed	
	Create a buffer stock of books and educational material in disaster-prone areas	July 2021 Continuous	Stock created and preserved	
	Develop volunteers to support/rescue disabled children during disasters ensuring safety of girls	July 2021 Continuous	Volunteer group formed and trained in schools	
Addressing social norms	Review curriculum and incorporate gender equality aspects in curriculum	July 2022	Curriculum review and revision completes	MoPME TMED MoWCA MoYS MoCA MoI
	Increase girl's participation in sports, culture and other outdoor activities	Continuous	Sports and cultural competitions in all schools and institutions	

	Encourage girls to enter STEM-related disciplines	January 2022 and continuous	Equip schools in rural areas with scientific and technological elements	
Support for disabled students	Create a sex-disaggregated database of disabled students, their types of disability and identify their specific need for support based on the types of disability	January 2022	Database prepared with specific needs of children with disability	Finance Division MoF BBS MoSW
	Increase number of stipends for disabled children, specially girls and those living in remote areas based on database	July 2022	Proposal for increased amount of student approved based on survey data	
	Provide required support for children based on their types of disability (e.g. impaired in hearing, mobility, vision, speech etc. in coordination with other ministries and finance division as necessary)	July 2022	Specific MoU/linkage established with other ministries to support disable children	
Grievance redress system	Transparently finalize list of beneficiaries by local level selection committee	December 2021 continuous	List of beneficiaries is known to the public	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Strengthen the complaint mechanism at the field level on violence/harassment and other issues	Continuous	Instruct field offices	
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	December 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (education management, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, social support and risk-mitigation etc.)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness, voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission MoWCA NGOs
	Apply and enforce gender integrated design features during approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED

result monitoring	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Make an assessment and identify list of programmes for phasing-out, up-scaling and continuation of programmes	June 2022	Assessment completed	IMED Cabinet Division
	Finalize a list of programmes in three parts for continuation, up-scaling and phasing-out	December 2022	List prepared and submitted with three parts	
	Expand the coverage of consolidated programmes	July 2022	Number of beneficiaries increase under consolidated programmes	

Table 7: Gender Action Plan of Secondary and Higher Education Division

Key Actions

- Scale up Secondary Stipend Programme in terms of coverage and benefit amount.
- Introduce and expand girls' stipend programmes at higher level.
- Create a sex disaggregated database of disabled children (girls) and provide support based on their types of disability.
- Address discriminatory social norms through review of curriculum and encouraging girls to enter STEM education and to participate in sports and cultural activities.
- Enhance capacity of Women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 6: Key Actions of Secondary and Higher Education Division

7. Technical and Madrassah Education Division

Background

Technical and Madrassah Education Division (TMED) under Ministry of Education is responsible for development, administration and improving the quality of technical and madrassah education. Responsibilities also include reforming and formulating policy related to technical, vocational and madrassah education; developing and updating curriculum for different levels of technical and madrasah education; and printing and distributing free textbooks for several levels of technical and madrasah education. As one of the implementers of social security programmes, the Division disburses stipends to the secondary-level students.

Mission for Gender-focused social security

The mission of this division is to expand facilities of technical and madrassah education, increase participation of boys and girls in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, and support enhancement of human development.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Expansion of quality technical and madrasah education facilities for boys and girls and promote gender equality in education/STEM to enhance human development;
- b. Creating skilled human resources for national and international labour market;
- c. Strengthening women's participation in education management.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

Participation of girls in technical education is less than one-third. Coverage of secondary school stipend is only 17% and stipend for higher education is inadequate. Both the coverage and transfer amount are low. In addition, social norms prevent girls from entering and continuing in technical fields.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to:

- a. increase participation, continuation and completion of girls in technical and madrassah education;
- b. raise the coverage and increase the amount of stipends and ensure continuation of education in disaster situation.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 30.49 percent of the ministry budget, 36.23 percent of the development budget and 29.02 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

Girls' participation in technical education is lower compared to boys. Therefore, government has introduced stipend programme for girls at secondary and bachelor levels. Access to technical education for children with disability is low, especially girls and in disaster situation. Social norms also restrict women for participating in technical education. Several stipend programmes for girls are operating in the country in a fragmented manner. It is important to consolidate these stipend programmes and reach out to eligible girls nationwide. Technical education can play a vital role in changing social norms. Madrassah education has been recognized. It can play a key role in changing discriminatory social roles. Therefore, a review of the madrassah curriculum is necessary to incorporate gender equality promoting aspects. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring. Targets for women's benefits are also not monitored. The Division also requires strengthening capacity of staff to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility	
Expand stipend in technical and madrasah education	Continue and expand current stipend programmes for girls	Continuous	Girl beneficiaries are 50% of the total recipients	Finance Division BBS MoSW ICT division	
	Introduce and expand stipend programmes for girls at higher level, specially those entering the STEM disciplines	Continuous	No. of girl beneficiaries increased to 50%		
	Create sex disaggregated database of disabled children in schools and children living in remote locations	July 2022	Database prepared		
	Increase the amount of stipends for disabled students, specially girls and those living in remote areas based on database	Jan 2022	Amount increased for disabled and girls in remote areas		
	Introduce G2P electronic transfer of stipend for all	July 2023	Electronic transfer for all		
Continue education in disaster situation	Provide guidelines to children regarding survival technique in disaster-prone areas	July 2021 continuous	Curriculum/materials prepared, incorporated in books, children oriented	MoDMR MoWCA	
	Inform girl children about their vulnerabilities and prepare them to stay safe during and after disasters,	July 2021 continuous	Materials prepared and distributed in schools		
	Orient children about protection of their books and educational materials	July 2021 continuous	Guidance given to schools; children informed		
	Create a buffer stock of books and educational material in disaster-prone areas	July 2021 continuous	Stock created and preserved		
Addressing social norms	Review curriculum and incorporate gender equality aspects in curriculum	July 2023	Curriculum review and revision completed	MoPME, TMED MoWCA MoYS, MoCA Moi	
	Increase girl's participation in sports, culture and other outdoor activities	Continuous	Sports and cultural competitions in all schools and institutions		LGD Cabinet Division Field offices, Educational institutions and NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level		
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (education management, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA	

	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Internal circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Grievance redress system	Transparently finalize list of beneficiaries for stipend by local level selection committee	December 2021 continuous	List of beneficiaries is known to the public	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Strengthen the complaint mechanism at the field level on violence/ harassment and other issues	Continuous	Instruct field offices	
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	December 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 8: Gender Action Plan of Technical and Madrasah Education Division

Key Actions

- Continue and expand secondary stipend programme in rural and urban madrasa and technical schools for girls.
- Expand stipend programmes for girls at higher level
- Orient girls about their vulnerabilities during and after disasters, and prepare them to stay safe
- Review curriculum and incorporate gender equality aspects to change discriminatory social norms
- Increase girl's participation in sports, culture and other outdoor activities
- Ensure continuation of education in disaster situation.
- Enhance capacity of girls for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 7: Key Actions of Technical and Madrasah Education Division

8. Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

Background

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MOWCA) is mandated to implement various programmes for development of women and children. It works for empowerment of women, promoting gender equality and ending violence against women. Upholding of the rights of women and children: facilitation of employment opportunities through training and capacity building; coordination and monitoring of activities and policies of other ministries related to women's development through policy advocacy are the key functions of the Ministry. The programmes undertaken by the Ministry include capacity building of women, facilitation in labour market participation through skills enhancement, microfinance and entrepreneurship development support. Child protection and development is also included in the list of activities. This Ministry implements a number of social security programmes and is one of the most important ministries in the implementation of the NSSS.

Mission for gender-focused social security

In order to achieve the vision, the Ministry has the mission of establishing the rights of women and children and ensure women empowerment through ensuring mainstreaming gender in all development programmes of the government of Bangladesh.

Roles related to gender equality and women's development

- a. Creation of equal opportunities for women in social and economic activities.
- b. Ensure social security and justice for vulnerable women and children.
- c. Facilitate social and political empowerment of women.
- d. Development of children and adolescents into good citizen

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The Ministry is responsible for overall development of women, including social security and providing services to victims of violence and trafficking. A major challenge of the ministry is to ensure women's equal share and empowerment through the activities of other Ministries. The budget for ensuring substantive equality is inadequate and all ministries do not equally prioritize gender equality in operation or in social security programming and some do not ensure gender budget reporting. Sex disaggregated data is not kept for all programmes. Violence and discrimination against women and girls are widespread. Gender based discriminatory norms limit women's possibilities of development and ultimately their social security requirements becomes high. Another challenge is to introduce two new programmes—a Child Benefit Programme (CBP) and a Vulnerable Women's Benefit Programme (VWBP), which has been set as objectives by the NSSS for the Ministry. This will require consolidation, harmonization, elimination and upscaling of programmes. The Ministry is also assigned to take measures for ensuring workplace child care services and formulating legislation for child maintenance payments.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objectives of this GAP are to ensure the rights to social security for women and children, and to support consolidation of the vulnerable women's benefits. Besides, it also supports incorporation of transformatory elements in social security programming for women's empowerment.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 76.36 percent of the Ministry budget, 78 percent of the development budget, and 73.72 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

This Ministry implements several cash-based and food-based social security programmes for women and children. The Ministry also provides daycare and shelter support to children and women respectively. Different ministries are implementing child-support programmes, which need to be coordinated to avoid duplication and expand coverage. A comprehensive child benefit programme is therefore, to be designed

with especial emphasis on pregnancy and early childhood development. A component for adolescence support needs to be integrated to ensure appropriate empowering services and skills. There are many programmes supporting vulnerable benefits. These programmes need to be assessed and consolidated in a vulnerable women's benefit programme. The consolidated programme should include human development, financial inclusion, livelihood enhancement, risk mitigation and other empowering components. Provisions for disabled, elderly and vulnerable women need to be incorporated. Also, actions for challenging social norms need to be incorporated within the CBD and VWBP. Ensuring workplace childcare is essential for women's economic participation and empowerment. To design and implement effective CBP and VWD, coordination with several other ministries will be essential. The Ministry needs to strengthen its capacity to provide technical support to other ministries and divisions.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Child Benefit Programmes (CBP)	Assess all child benefit programmes for consolidation and expanded coverage	December 2022	Report and recommendations submitted	<input type="checkbox"/> IMED, GED, BBS <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Finance <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Health and Family Welfare <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Social Welfare
	Design a consolidated and comprehensive child benefit programme with expanded coverage for all groups of children	July 2023	Design submitted	
	Incorporate shelter, education and healthcare support for all deserving children in the child benefit programme (abandoned, orphan, and disabled children including those from migrant workers, ethnic minority or socially vulnerable families)	July 2022	Integrated provisions for abandoned, orphan and disabled children and nutrition information/ support	
	Integrate provisions nutrition awareness in all child benefit components of the child benefit programme	July 2023	Provisions integrated in all programmes	
	Establish linkage for complementary support from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on pre- and post-natal care	December 2023	MoUs with HSD and MEFWD	
	Review Children Policy and integrate policy on child maintenance payments	January 2022	Review report submitted	
	Prepare a guideline of child maintenance payments	July 2022	Guidelines prepared and issued	
Programmes for adolescents as part of school age programme	Assess all programmes for adolescents for consolidation and expansion of need-based services for urban and rural adolescent girls	December 2022	Adolescent programme assessment report submitted	IMED, GED, BBS, Planning Commission, Finance Division, RDCD, MoYS, HSD, MoHFW, PKSF
	Incorporate an adolescent's component for deserving adolescents (awareness, skills training, leadership, reproductive	July 2023	Integrated provisions in the adolescent girls' component in school	
	health care, confidence building, safety and security for girls) in coordination with the School Age Programme and Human Development and Social Empowerment Cluster		age programme and Human Development and Social Empowerment Cluster	
	Establish complementary support for services from other ministries for adolescents under school age programme	December 2023	MoUs with HSD, MEFWD, MoSW, MoYS with defined support	

Vulnerable Women's Benefit (VWB)	Convert food-based social security programmes to a cash-based programme ensuring access of all women fulfilling criteria (like VGD)	December 2022	Food based programmes converted to cash based programmes	MoF, Finance Division RCD, LGD, MDMR, MoLE, MoEWOE, HSD, MEFWD, PKSF
	Assess vulnerable women's benefit programmes for consolidation and expanded coverage	July 2023	Report and recommendations submitted	
	Design a consolidates and comprehensive vulnerable women's benefit programme with expanded coverage	December 2023	Design submitted	
	Design vulnerable women benefit programme (including nutrition awareness, empowering components and criteria, micro-credit, skills training, grants for rural/urban women, indicators, social capital-building activities and graduation plan in applicable cases) in VWB	July 2023	Integrated provisions for abandoned, orphan & disabled children. Nutrition information/ support	
	Integrate community motivation for changing social norms and behavior in social security programmes and VWBP	July 2023	Components / campaign plans integrated	
	Incorporate additional support for women with disability, illness, living in remote areas, belonging to ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups and elderly women	July 2022	Additional support components integrated in VWBP	
	Establish collaboration with other sectoral ministries (MoHFW, MoPME, MoFL, MoYS, MOEWOE, RHD) for services and support for women and girls	July 2023	MOUs with HSD, MEFWD, MoSW, MoYS with defined support	
	Integrate conditions in VWB and in cash transfer programmes (vaccination, stopping child marriage, dowry, and incorporate individual savings utilization schemes)	July 2023	Cash transfer guidelines incorporate provisions	
	Workplace Support and Childcare	Expand workplace childcare services at district level	December 2023	
Establish collaboration with MoPA and relevant ministries (e.g. MoI, MoLE, MoC) to ensure expanded coverage of		July 2023	Government directives issued to agencies and corporations	
	workplace childcare and accommodation			
	Initiate a policy for developing a low-cost care economy and community level child care	July 2022	Concept note and proposal prepared	MoPA, MoI, PMO, MoLE, MoC, NGOs
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level for all programmes	Beginning July 2021	Programme design and Instruction to field offices	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	

Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	DWA, DPs and NGOs	
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff		
Gender-responsive programme design	Work with ECNEC and ensure following guidelines for gender-responsive planning and review (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	December 2021 Continuous	Circular issued for adherence to the existing guideline	Planning Commission Cabinet Division ECNEC	
	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Internal circular issued and instruction given		Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit		
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes in different sectors	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED	
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data		
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Consolidate Maternity Allowance Programme for the Poor Lactating Mothers and the Allowances for Urban Low- income Lactating Mothers in one programme and include nutrition information for mothers	July 2022	Decision made and programme consolidated	IMED, Cabinet	
	Identify similar programmes for rural and urban areas, assess and propose for consolidation	July 2022	Assessment report and proposal for consolidation prepared		
	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list		
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared		

Table 9: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

Key Actions

- Design child benefit programme together with other ministries and introduce child benefit programmes in phases for around 75 lac children of 0-4 years of age.
- Consolidate vulnerable women benefit programmes in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Welfare and others incorporating all aspects of social security for vulnerable women with provision of capacity and empowerment of women.
- Support developing a protocol for standard care and introducing standard courses on child, elderly and disability care.
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Work with other relevant stakeholders to develop a standard care giving protocol, training and certification of care givers.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 8: Key Actions of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

7. Finance Division

Background

The Finance Division (FD) is responsible for the Government's macro-economic management, formulation and implementation of monetary policies, formulation of budget, and approval of budget of autonomous institutions. The Division formulates financial rules manages benefits of the government servants. Finance Division allocates budget for all ministries and has introduced gender responsive budgeting system. Annually a report is prepared on the gender budget and the Division is to ensure transfer of social security allowances through electronic system from the Government to the Persons (G2P).

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Finance Division has the mission of fostering growth and reducing poverty by ensuring prudent and efficient fiscal management through macro-economic stability and fiscal discipline to support reducing poverty and fostering growth addressing gender-based vulnerabilities supporting women's empowerment.

Role in social security for gender equality and women's empowerment

Gender issues are embedded in the Medium Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF) process. Emphasis is given on the linkages between a ministry's stated objectives and activities and advancement of women's rights.

The Recurrent, Capital, Gender and Poverty (RCGP) Model has been rolled out that established database where all expenditure items are disaggregated to indicate the percentage of allocation benefiting women. The gender and poverty proportioned percentage data for both recurrent and development budget is estimated separately from a standard defined logic incorporated in database. The proportion of women workforce serves as the basis for computing women's allocation in non-development budget.

The Finance Division ensures the government in presenting a gender budget report to the Parliament explaining the policies and strategies for women's advancement, activities of various ministries/ divisions that have implications on women development, KPIs connected with women's welfare attained, major achievement in women's rights, and allocation for women's development etc. All allocation of other ministries and divisions related to gender responsive budget activities are reliant upon their following the MTBF and RCGP frameworks.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The NSSS provides for specific reforms in the social security sector, obligating simultaneous reform in policy of fiscal allocation. The NSSS asks to maintain the level of 2 per cent of GDP in social security programme expenditure. Therefore, it will be a challenging task to ensure the present share of social security expenditure in GDP by readjusting allocations among reformed programmes.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The NSSS objective for the Finance Division is to provide enhanced budgetary allocation to social security programmes. Continuation of the government pension programme is another objective of the Division. Most important objective is to transform the current payment systems towards Government to Person (G2P) payment system in order to ensure financial inclusions of all recipients.

Gender responsive budget

In the fiscal year 2019-2020, 30.82 percent of the total budget and 5.56 percent of the gross domestic product was allocated for gender and 43 ministries/divisions submitted gender budget report. This Division is not yet covered by gender-responsive budgeting and therefore share of gender-responsive budget is not analysed.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

Finance Division ensures preparation of gender responsive budget for 43 ministries and prepares an annual report on gender budget for presentation at the Parliament. Preparation of gender budget and reporting has

not been ensured for all ministries. Also, the utilization of gender budget and for result has not yet been ensured, which will be initiated shortly.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibilities
Government service pension	Simplify approval and fund transfer process ensuring G2P	January 2024	Digital G2P ensured for all	MoPA
Private pension	Undertake assessment with private sector to identify their needs and get agreement on private contributory pension	December 2021	Assessment done with identified needs and agreed	PMO MoC Mol
	Design a feasible private pension scheme considering women's needs and capacity to pay	December 2022	Private pension scheme prepared	
	Allocate funds for subsidy, if necessary, to ensure private pension considering women's needs and capacity	June 2024	Plan approved; subsidy allocated	
Livelihood support	Prepare a guideline to incorporate empowerment as an explicit objective, defining graduation criteria, and taking actions for social capital building in relevant social security programmes	June 2022	Directives given with guidelines	All Ministries Social Development Foundation Swanirvar Bangladesh
	Apply the guideline for disbursement fund to institutions (e.g. Social Development Foundation, Swanirvar Bangladesh, Palli Karma Sahayok Foundation)	December 2022	Applied guideline for disbursement	
	Allocate funds for skills development programme for out-of-school adolescent girls for their protection and to eliminate child marriage	July 2022	Guidance given; New programmes funded	
Strengthen social security management through digitization	Pilot G2P for two core cash transfer programmes (at least one gender-focused programme) programme	July 2021	G2P pilot programme include at least one programme for women	Relevant Ministries
	Roll out G2P for all cash transfer to 100% beneficiaries	June 2022	G2P to 100% beneficiaries for all cash transfer programmes	
	Digital payment system covers for all social security programmes	January 2025	All programmes payments are digitized	
Ensure timely support based on lifecycle needs	Assess lifecycle based programmes and ensure timely support to all age groups (based on identified needs of the lifecycle stage using census data)	July 2021	Assessment completed and recommendations prepared	BBS All relevant Ministries

	Expand allocation for maternity, early childhood, school-age and working-age groups to reduce needs of health, old-age and other such support	June 2022 continuous	Allocation increased for maternity, child support, school age and working age	
Enhance budget for social security	Increase allocation of budget for social security considering the lifecycle based needs and insurance	Annual	Increase by 5% annually	BBS FID
Grievance redressal system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2023	Instruct all programmes/ field offices	LGD Cabinet Division
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2023 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building and skills development activities for women (protection, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation through SFEF and such others)	Beginning July 2021	All new programmes designs incorporate these	MoYS MoWCA Others
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given to planning unit	Planning Commission Relevant Ministries
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED, BBS All relevant Ministries and Agencies
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all programmes to collect and present sex disaggregated data	
	Monitor the utilization of gender budget allocation and the result achieved	June 2020	System established to monitor results	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify Programmes eligible for phasing-out and upscaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling-up prepared	

Table 10: Gender Action Plan of Finance Division

Key Actions

- Improve the government pension system with simpler disposal system and G2P payment.
- Design a feasible private pension scheme considering women's needs and capacity to pay.
- Enhance budget to ensure timely support at each stage of life cycle .
- Prepare a guideline to incorporate empowerment as an explicit objective, defining graduation criteria, and taking actions for social capital building in relevant social security programmes.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 9: Key Actions of Finance Division

8. Health Services Division

Background

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) has recently been divided into two separate Divisions: a) Health Services Division (HSD); and b) Medical Education and Family Welfare Division (MEFWD). Health Services Division is responsible for improving public health by providing health care services; ensuring quality medicine; building, maintaining and expanding healthcare infrastructure; and ensuring proper distribution of human resources to ensure health services. Expansion of child and maternal care, vaccination and nutrition improvement programmes are also performed by this Division. Some of the activities are still similar in the two divisions. But HSD, in particular, implements some unique social security programmes.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission is to ensure quality health care service for all at an affordable cost by developing the service sectors in health, and nutrition including low cost health services by poor and women.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Ensuring expansion of improved health services including improved maternal and child health care, and thereby, reduce maternal, neonatal and child mortality and improve women and children's health;
- b. Developing women-friendly facilities in hospitals across the country by phases and ensuring services among the people in remote and isolated regions;
- c. Improving immunization and nutritional situation of women and children throughout the country;
- d. Deploying efficient human resources in the health sector and to increase and develop women as catalyst in health services as officials, physicians, health workers in different institutions and health centers;
- e. Ensuring emergency services and care for victims of violence in One Stop Crisis Centers, and One Stop Crisis Cells in hospitals together with the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs;
- f. A gender equality strategy provides guidance for effective and target based programmes and activities towards promoting gender equality in health sector.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The main challenges facing the Division are to ensure affordable health care and nutrition for all. Universal health insurance and elderly care are vital issues for this Division. Ensuring health care support for all victims of violence is another challenge.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to ensure coverage of lifelong health care services including geriatric care for all the poor and vulnerable women and to continue the nutrition programmes.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2010-2020 is 29.31 percent of the division budget, 31.66 percent of the development budget and 26.97 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Division provides healthcare services for all. Still quality services are not available for the poor at an affordable cost. Health insurance is limited. Adolescence healthcare in urban and rural areas is inadequate. Lack of awareness about adolescence and women's healthcare within the community results into low access to healthcare services for women and girls. Expansion of health insurance and integration within the NSIS is important. Although sex-disaggregated data is available in many cases, but often the presentations lack disaggregation. The Division also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Affordable healthcare for all	Expand programmes and provide quality healthcare to poor and destitute community and women	Continuous	No of patients covered Patient's satisfaction	MoF, MEFWD LGD
Affordable health insurance	Establish collaboration with FID to incorporate health insurance in the NSIS	July 2021	Proposal prepared and sent	MoHFW, FID, Finance Division
	Coordinate with private sector to ensure cost sharing and introduction of health insurance for workers.	December 2021	Agreement reached and proposal sent	
Adolescent healthcare	Assess healthcare needs of adolescent girls in urban and rural areas.	July 2021	Needs assessment report submitted	MoF, MEFWD, MoWCA, Planning Commission
	Design and launch pilot programme based on the need-assessment.	July 2022	Pilot project launched	
Healthcare Services	Expand coverage of midwifery and care service with special emphasis on pediatric, geriatric and disability care	December 2022	Service expanded at upazilla level	MoF, MEFWD
	Support MOEWOE to ensure health/pregnancy checkup and care of returnee migrants	July 2021	Service facilities at ports of entry	MOEWOE, MOFA
Strengthen capacity	Integrate orientation activities for women (health care, reproductive health, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2020	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring and in orienting clients on key health issues	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, reproductive health rights, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2020	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2020	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs in health programmes	December 2020	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate)	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet Division

smaller programmes	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2021	Field offices Received instruction	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs, Field Offices
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	

Table 11: Gender Action Plan of Health Services Division

Key Actions

- Assess needs and undertake necessary expansion of the coverage of maternity health care.
- Expand programmes to provide quality healthcare to poor and destitute community and ensure services to women with special emphasis on pediatric, geriatric and disability care.
- Initiate adolescent health care programme incorporating reproductive health on pilot basis based on needs.
- Identify needs and coordinate to integrate affordable health Insurance and maternity insurance system within the framework of the NSIS.
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, health care, reproductive health, , nutrition, , social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.
- Strengthen community capacity o use the grievance redress system

Box 10: Key Actions of Health Services Division

9. Medical Education and Family Welfare Division

Background

Medical Education and Family Welfare Division (MEFWD) is responsible for the preparation and implementation of policies related to family planning and providing family planning services through health care institution and centers. The Division is also responsible for providing child and maternal health services; alternative medical care; procurement, storage and distribution of birth control materials. MEFWD is responsible for ensuring quality medical, dental, nursing, midwifery and alternative medical education. Pertinent health issues of women like reproductive health care and maternal mortality are also looked after by this Division.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Division has the mission to ensure quality family planning and reproductive health service for all at an affordable cost by developing the service sectors in health, population and nutrition and to ensure quality medical, dental, nursing & midwifery, alternative medical education.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Ensuring improved maternal and child health care, population control and expansion of improved reproductive health services and thereby, reduce maternal, neonatal and child mortality and improve women and children's health.
- b. Developing women-friendly facilities in hospitals across the country by phases and ensuring services among the people in remote and isolated regions.
- c. Improving immunization and nutritional situation of women and children throughout the country.
- d. Developing efficient human resources in the health, population and nutrition sector and to increase and develop women as catalyst in health services as officials, physicians, technicians and health workers in different institutions and health centers.
- e. Providing services to victims of violence through eight One Stop Crisis Centers (seven in Divisional Cities and one in Faridpur). In addition, with the help of the MOWCA, One Stop Crisis Cells have been established in forty Districts and twenty Upazilla level hospitals.
- f. A gender equality strategy provides guidance for effective and target based programmes and activities towards promoting gender equality.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The main challenges facing the Division are to ensure adequate supply of human resources in different areas of health services to ensure appropriate lifecycle-based services for all. Ensuring maternity health care and nutrition for all is another key challenge. To build up a maternity health insurance system is also a vital issue to be implemented by the Division.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to support development of human resources, coverage of maternal health care services for all the poor and vulnerable women who need them and to continue the nutrition programmes.

Gender responsive budget

In the 2019-2020 budget the proportion of gender budget for the division is 27.73 percent, development budget 28.64 percent and operation is 27.12 percent.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Division implements maternity health voucher scheme, but the number of beneficiaries is low and does not cover all the upazillas. Adequate number of trained personnel for lifelong healthcare could not ensure at local levels. Nutritional maternal healthcare for the poor is inadequate and maternity insurance is absent. Integration of maternity insurance within the NSIS is necessary. Pediatrics, geriatric, and disability care services are inadequate and trained caregivers in these areas are also in short supply. Although sex-disaggregated data is available in many cases, but the presentation lacks disaggregation. The Division also

requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Healthcare education	Expand coverage of midwifery and care education with special emphasis on pediatric, geriatric and disability care	July 2021 Continuous	No of hospitals having personnel trained on these disciplines	DHS Finance Division
	Expand stipend support for education in these disciplines	July 2021 Continuous	Stipend introduced	
Nutrition and maternal health care for poor	Provide nutrition, reproductive health care services at a low cost for poor women, elderly and children	July 2021 Continuous	MoU with other social security programmes	HSD, LGD, NGOs MoCA, MoSW, MoDMR, Finance Divisions Other Ministries
	Expand coverage of Maternity Health Voucher Scheme in coordination with other programmes	July 2021 Continuous	Annual 10% increase MoU with other social security programmes	
Adolescent healthcare	Assess healthcare needs of adolescent girls particularly reproductive care in urban and rural areas and provide services	July 2021	Needs assessment; report submitted; services initiated	MoF, LGD HSD, MoWCA, Planning Commission
Maternity insurance	Establish collaboration with FID to incorporate maternity insurance in the NSIS	July 2021	Proposal prepared and dispatched	MoHFW, Finance Division
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2021	Field offices received instruction	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (awareness on immunization, primary health care, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, reproductive health care, emergency care, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these criteria	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission MoWCA

	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED SID
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and list prepared	IMED, Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling-up prepared	

Table 12: Gender Action Plan of Medical Education and Family Welfare Division

Key Actions

- Assess needs in coordination with the Health Service Division to ensure adequate number of trained and professional health service personnel
- Assess needs and expand coverage of maternity health and reproductive health care
- Expand coverage of midwifery and care education with special emphasis on pediatric, geriatric and disability care—provide stipend for education in these disciplines
- Introduce adolescent reproductive health care services
- Coordinate with FID to incorporate maternity insurance in the NSIS
- Enhance capacity of Women for protection, leadership, self-respect, health care, reproductive health, nutrition, social support and risk mitigation
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.
- Enhance community awareness about the grievance system

Box 11: Key Actions of Medical Education and Family Welfare Division

10. Local Government Division

Background

Local Government Division (LGD) is responsible for enacting laws, promulgating rules and policies, and managing all matters relating to local government and local government institutions. It is an important hand of the government, charged to enhance local governance and socio-economic development of the people, both in urban and rural areas. LGD is responsible for the construction and management of roads, bridges/culverts, growth centres and market infrastructures through local government. Ensuring supply of water, sanitation and sewerage facilities in rural and urban areas; and developing, maintaining and managing small scale water resource infrastructures also fall within the responsibilities of the Division. These infrastructures provide protection and support for livelihood, employment and economic emancipation of women and men. LGD implements different social security schemes including work fare, and wage or self-employment itself and supports other ministries in rolling out their social security programmes in the field where women constitute a large share of the beneficiaries.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of the LGD is to improve living standard of people by strengthening local government system, rural and urban infrastructural development and socio-economic development of the rural and urban population ensuring women's participation in local decision-making, economic activities, and access to infrastructure, services and social security.

Role in Social Security for gender equality and women's empowerment

- a. Consolidation of good governance at local level by providing training for local female representatives to enhance their efficiency and awareness and encouraging women's participation in the development activities.
- b. Generation of employment opportunities for women through rural, urban and water infrastructure development projects. In addition, to enhance provision of infrastructure services like markets, water supply, sanitation, flood/cyclone shelters, for women and thus improve their social status and participation in decision-making. Employment opportunities are created in infrastructure construction, maintenance and as entrepreneurs in markets.
- c. Socio-economic development of women through ensuring employment in workfare programmes for rural road maintenance, tree planting and care, and earthen road construction.
- d. Civic facilities like distributing free or low-cost safe water and sanitation facilities to help improving health and nutrition of women and their families and reducing their drudgery. Providing training and deployment of women to create employment opportunities as caretakers in repair and maintenance of water sources.
- e. Inclusion of women in the Water Management Cooperative Associations to ensure their participation in decision-making, and access to water resources and credit for income generation.
- f. Planned environment-friendly urbanization ensures women's participation in urban infrastructure development and helps increase their incomes. They are oriented on water use, safe waste disposal, sanitation, tax payments and registrations of births, deaths and marriages.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The challenges include consolidation of the workfare programmes in collaboration with other ministries, especially with the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief and to ensure graduation and empowerment of women. An important challenge is the improvement of the targeting process for social security programmes and establishment of a grievance redress mechanism at the grass roots level. Besides, this

Division also has the challenge to ensure women’s employment and social security opportunities through infrastructure and the activities of the local government institutions.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objectives of this GAP are to support women’s empowerment through social security programmes, especially consolidated workfare programmes, improved targeting, and providing support in resolving grievances and disputes related to implementation of social security programmes and harassment of women. Ensuring empowerment of rural and urban women through employment in infrastructure services and local government and programmes is also a major objective.

Gender-responsive budget

Women’s share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 41.73 percent of the Ministry budget, 36.08 percent of the development budget and 80.85 percent of the non-development/operating budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Division undertakes different types of programmes that facilitate livelihood, infrastructure, water supply, sanitation, training, and information support. Employment is created for the poor in infrastructure through several workfare programmes of different types and designs. Some of them incorporate empowering elements for women. It is important all the workfare programmes are consolidated within a design that incorporates empowering elements for women and facilitates graduation from poverty. So far, social security programmes mainly cover the rural poor. In the context of rapid increase in urban population, the social security needs of urban people are increasing. Therefore, introduction and expansion of social security programmes for urban poor is becoming necessary. The Division is generally responsible for identifying eligible beneficiaries and delivering support under different social security programmes. Therefore, ensuring transparent identification of beneficiaries and proper grievance redress is essential. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women’s benefits are not monitored. The Division also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Consolidate and strengthen workfare programmes	Coordinate within agencies LGD, LGED, for merging programmes	June 2021	Internal merger proposal approved	LGD, LGED, MoDMR, MoF
	Collaborate with MoDMR to review and prepare proposal for possible merger	June 2021	Proposal sent to Cabinet Division	MoWCA, MoYS
	Integrate SWAPNO’s graduation approach in consolidated workfare project/programme design	December 2023	Introduced in all operating workfare programmes	MoFL, MoRDC
	Incorporate empowerment as an objective and include elements of graduation in consolidated workfare programmes (include training, savings, confidence building and social capital development activities)	July 2024	Elements and targets introduced in all programmes	
Workplace child care	Incorporate community/group level child care as in Labour Contracting Society for working women	December 2021	Guidance provided Child care in major construction sites	MoWCA

	Establish child care facilities in all major departments/offices like LGED, DWASA, DPHE, DNCC, SNCC, NCC	July 2022	Child care support in all major offices	Finance Division
Reaching urban women	Conduct study on social security in urban areas and identify social security needs of women and girls	June 2021	Report with recommendations submitted	MoF Cabinet Division
	Design and deliver urban social security programmes for urban poor, especially women and girls	July 2022	Roll our pilot programme	
Scale up graduation programme like SWAPNO project	Expand coverage of graduation programmes like SWAPNO project in other upazillas	July 2022	200 upazillas covered	MoF
Support for targeting	Ensure transparent identification of beneficiaries of social security programmes	Continuous	Guideline for open selection provided	Local Govt. institutions
	Support publishing beneficiary lists for all programmes publicly at the local level	Continuous	Lists displayed in UPs/LGIs	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2021	Field offices/LGIs instructed	LGIs NGOs Cabinet Division
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women in all programmes (business management, savings, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, legal info, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA NGOs
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff of agencies/LGIs	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	All Divisions of Planning Commission, ECNEC
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	January 2022	Indicators developed	MoWCA GED, IMED SID
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all agencies to collect sex	
			disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate)	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet

smaller programmes	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared
---------------------------	--	-----------	---

Table 13: Gender Action Plan of Local Government Division

Key Actions

- Coordinate with MoDMR and consolidate all workfare programmes incorporating graduation and empowering elements
- Assess need of social security in urban women and roll out pilot programme including child and elderly care services
- Incorporate graduation approach like SWAPNO in other workfare programmes and expand coverage
- Ensure workplace child care for key agencies under the Division.
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 12: Key Actions of Local Government Division

11. Rural Development and Co-operatives Division

Background

The Rural Development and Co-operatives Division (RDCD) formulates and implements acts and rules related to cooperatives and formal and informal groups for the socio-economic development of rural people including youth and women. The Division undertakes development programmes that include a range of activities like rural employment generation, skills development, awareness raising, and operation of micro and agricultural credit services for productive employment generation. Several models of micro-finance have been developed by the institutions under this Division and it has played important role in poverty reduction and social security including for women and men in remote and char lands. Facilitating micro-saving, cooperative banking, and building small and cottage industries on cooperative basis are also included. One of the large social security programmes “One House, One Farm” now renamed as ‘My House, My Farm’ is being implemented by this Division where women constitute 60% of the beneficiaries for self-employment.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of the Division is to eradicate poverty by means of cooperatives and integrated rural development activities and promote economic and social emancipation of rural women and men.

Role in gender equality and women’s development

- a. Bringing ultra-poor women under the coverage of social safety nets;
- b. Organizing poor women workforce to enhance their capacity and to create new and alternative economic and social development opportunities by providing training to them;
- c. Involving poor women in productive process and mainstream economic activities through cooperatives and linking them with markets;
- d. Creating provision of safe drinking water and drainage systems for the rural poor;
- e. Developing capacity of women for leadership and decision-making positions.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment

Eradication of rural poverty is still a great challenge. Majority of the rural poor are women. Unemployment or rather under-employment is common in the rural areas. The challenge is to create employment and income-generating opportunities through livelihood interventions, and support to graduation from poverty. Ensuring social safety nets for the rural poor is a challenge as well.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to assist rural poor, especially women for their social security and to move out of poverty by facilitating income generating activities.

Gender-responsive budget

Women’s share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 25.11 percent of the Ministry budget, 18.33 percent of the development budget, and 46.73 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

This Division implements several social security programmes that incorporate social capital building, leadership, training etc. These programmes facilitate women’s participation and leadership development. Yet, the true potential of women’s leadership has not been properly utilized. The largest programme is titled “My House, My Farm” (formerly “One House, One Farm”) which needs to ensure proper training for beneficiaries and strong monitoring for better results. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women’s benefits are not monitored. The Division also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Scale up 'My House, My Farm' Programme	Review and increase the coverage of the programme incorporating empowerment and graduation approach	Continuous	Annual 10% increase with and graduation approach integrated	Finance Division Line agencies for service delivery
	Integrate effective training design for beneficiaries	Continuous	Modules developed and budget enhanced for training	
	Strengthen follow-up and monitoring of better GE results	Continuous	Annual reports based on sex-disaggregated results	
Financial inclusion of the poor	Design and deliver low-cost and simple micro-finance programmes (support for market, production, skills, confidence-building and decision-making)	Continuous	Increased women's share in cooperative credit and micro-finance programme	Finance Division Financial Institutions Division
Social capital building	Orient and link beneficiaries to service-providing agencies, financial institutions and NGOs	Continuous	Sign MoUs with service agencies	MoHFW MoPME, MoYS MoFL, ICT Division, NGOs,
Service for remote-areas and excluded communities	Expand coverage of livelihood programme to char, haor, coastal and other vulnerable areas	Continuous	Annual 10% increase	LGD PMO MoCHTA
	Expand livelihood programmes for ethnic minority/tribal communities	July 2023	Coverage expanded and new programmes launched	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level including for gender-based	Beginning July 2021	Field offices instructed	Field offices LGED NGOs Cabinet Division
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (agriculture, crop protection, fisheries, livestock, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support, risk-mitigation, ICT and legal support)	Beginning July 2021	Both new and old programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff and institutional capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes and	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	include graduation criteria for relevant programmes			

	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes in rural development sector	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED IMED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 14: Gender Action Plan of Rural Development and Co-operatives Division

Key Actions

- Scale up 'My House, My Farm' programme incorporating empowerment and graduation approach.
- Expand simplified financial inclusion of poor women.
- Support beneficiaries in social capital building.
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, nutrition, agriculture, market, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 13: Key Actions of Rural Development and Co-operatives Division

12. Ministry of Labour and Employment

Background

Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) is responsible for formulating and implementing labour related laws including for ensuring occupational health and safety and elimination of child labour. The Ministry is also responsible for ensuring education and training to develop skilled human resources, scope of employment, and welfare and social security of the labourers. Registration of trade unions, resolving labour conflicts and fixing and implementing minimum wages are also among its responsibilities. The Ministry is to ensure congenial work environment for women ensuring health and child care.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Ministry has the mission of enhancing productivity through creation of safe work environment for both women and men maintaining peaceful labour relations, ensuring occupational health and safety and developing women and men as skilled labour force.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Developing work environment in the industries and ensuring welfare of women labourers including childcare and maternity benefits, providing training programmes for workers in different sectors—such as tea garden and readymade garments to enhance marketable skills and for women's empowerment;
- b. Ensuring gender equality in employment through capacity developments in different sectors and in labour management;
- c. Eradication of child labour for both male and female children by providing different skills for decent jobs;
- d. Social safety and economic security of women are ensured through different social, economic and safety net programmes including maternity allowances, educational stipends etc.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The main challenge facing the Ministry is to ensure social security for women and ensuring the implementation of Labour Law, Labour Act and Occupational Health and Safety Rules. Unequal wage, absence of daycare services, unemployment benefits/insurance, and congenial work environment are some of the other challenges faced by this ministry.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to create a congenial work environment for women with safety, security and benefits. To build up a social insurance system for workers and thereby tackle their socio-economic risks and vulnerability is another challenge.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 39.55 percent of the ministry budget, 43.61 percent of the development budget and 32.56 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Labour Law and the Occupational Health and Safety Policy provide several provisions in facilitating women's participation in the labour force. Congenial work environment with facilities for water sanitation, childcare and occupational health and safety have not been ensured in all factories and organizations. The Ministry has taken several initiatives for skills enhancement, healthcare, allowance and improvement of working conditions. However, these initiatives are fragmented and often labour laws and maternity benefits related measures are not applied. Occupational health and safety measures are inadequate. Therefore, a comprehensive social insurance system for private sector employees is under consideration. This requires an assessment of the needs and possibilities and participation of women. Day care services, maternity care, and occupational health services need to be ensured and maternity insurance needs to be incorporated in the NSIS. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for

women's benefits are not monitored. The ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Initiate social insurance scheme				MoF FID MoC
	Compile the recommendations gathered from labour insurance-related workshops and review applicability.	December 2021	Reviewed and ways for application identified	
	Study on and identify possible options of unemployment and maternity insurance	December 2022	Recommendations submitted	
	Introduce unemployment and maternity insurance on pilot basis (in sectors where women are working in large numbers)	July 2024	Programmes introduced	
	Labour			
	Expand unemployment and maternity insurance, and provide subsidy, if necessary, to ensure access for women in coordination with NSIS by FID	July 2025	Programme expanded based on experience	
Childcare at workplace	Provide day care, private space, and maternity leave in factories of sector corporations by <u>strengthening regular inspection</u>	December 2023	Provisions increased in factories	MoF MoI FID
	Strengthen regular inspection of private sector industries and ensure day care support (consider coordination for use of CSR)	July 2022	Provisions increased in private sector industries/	MoC MoWCA
	Initiate dialogue and undertake assessment for use of CSR fund for daycare maternity, disability and such benefits for workers	June 2022	Assessment done and proposals developed	
	Introduce community-based or collective day care support for all employees	July 2023	Programme introduced	
Occupational health, safety and shelter services	Direct private industries/economic zones to build daycare centers and provisions for maternity and occupational health and safety (consider <u>government subsidy and use of CSR, if necessary</u>)	December 2022	Directives issued	Private Sector, MoF, PMO, FID, BB
	Negotiate with other ministries like MoHPW to build dormitories for women near factories, and economic zones	December 2024	Increased shelter for women in new areas	MoWCA, MoI, MoC, CSOs
	Instruct and monitor private factories to supervise provision of facilities according to labour laws, and Occupational Health and Safety Policy	December 2024	Directives issued and facilities increased	
	Establish an institution for research on occupational health and safety issues in industrial sectors	December 2022	Institution established	

	Establish third-party reviews of gender-focused occupational health and safety situation in different sectors, and reporting to the CMC/parliamentary standing committee	June 2022	Third-party monitoring system established	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field/factory level on sexual harassment/violence, deprivation, and deviations from labour laws	Beginning July 2021	Instruct field offices/ industries	LGD, Field offices, factories Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women in industries (production methods, leadership, self-respect, labour rules, trade union, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	Finance Division NGOs
Strengthen capacity	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	MoWCA, NGOs
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Field offices Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 15: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Labour and Employment

Key Actions

- Negotiate to introduce contributory unemployment insurance on pilot basis and then integrate into NSIS and roll it out nationally
- Create public awareness and negotiate with other ministries to ensure child care and housing services in the workplaces
- Ensure housing and occupational health and safety services at the work place
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, social support and risk mitigation
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

13. Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment

Background

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MOEWOE) is responsible to ensure the overall welfare and to protect the rights of migrant workers. It is also responsible for skills development of potential and aspirant migrant workers. The Ministry is working for facilitating their overseas employment to reduce unemployment in the country and to foster economic growth. Providing comprehensive training, modernizing the overall training system in order to create a skilled labour force as per the demand of the foreign labour market and expand new labour market by finding scope for overseas employment are also among the Ministry's functions. The number of women migrant workers is increasing, and their families have benefited economically and socially. The social security programmes of the Ministry include skills development, providing legal and other necessary support to the stranded and abused women migrant workers, extending financial assistance to the families of the deceased workers, providing scholarships to the children of migrant workers and undertaking reintegration and rehabilitation programmes for the returnee migrant workers.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Mission of MoEWOE is to ensure safe, orderly, regular, responsible and ethical migration; to enhance the skills of female migrant workers in accordance to the demand of the global labour market; to protect the rights and interests of them at all stages of migration; to ensure the welfare of the female migrant workers and their families left behind in the country; and to rehabilitate and to reintegrate the returnee women migrant workers in the mainstream socio-economy of the country.

Role in social security for gender equality and women's empowerment

- a. Women's overseas employment opportunities have been created in the context of the growing demand for female domestic workers in Hong Kong and the Middle Eastern countries. Therefore, women are being trained in house-keeping and language for developing them as skilled human resource with technical knowledge as per demand of foreign labour markets.
- b. Increase opportunities for overseas employment leading to poverty reduction of women and their families through exploring new overseas employment opportunities. This also makes women financially self-sufficient, improves their status and makes them eligible for decision making in the family. The technical, vocational and income generating training for the poor women makes them more productive and enables them to get employment and earn more.
- c. Ensuring welfare of the expatriates and potential workers through the various steps taken by the government for the welfare of the women expatriates and their families. Expatriate welfare bank ensures inflow of remittances by expatriates and effective use of remittances in income-generating and profitable investments. Expatriate women workers are also able to take advantage of improving their financial condition through this bank.
- d. Ensuring rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for the returnee women migrant workers in the mainstream socio-economy of the country.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The domestic labour market cannot accommodate the growing number of job seekers every year. On the other hand, most of the aspirant migrants do not have appropriate skills required for entering the global labour markets. Therefore, creation of overseas employment for the aspirant migrants, skill development, ensuring and protecting the rights, interests and welfare of migrant workers and their families are the main challenges of the Ministry. Women form insignificant part of migrants in professional category due to not having appropriate skills. Violence and sexual harassment towards women migrant workers in the destination countries is common, and adequate support to reduce or address these could not be ensured. As there is no comprehensive database of returnee migrant workers, the Ministry has taken initiatives to develop a sex-disaggregated database.

Objectives of Gender Action plan

The objectives of this GAP are to support the Ministry to explore overseas employment opportunities for the aspirant migrant men and women, develop their skills, protection of their rights and interests, and ensuring welfare and social security of migrant workers and their families.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the 2019-2020 FY budget is 46.27 percent of the ministry budget, 76.93 percent of the development budget and 15.71 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Ministry implements many different programmes for the prospective migrants as well as for returnee workers. Training programmes are operated for external markets. The programme also includes allowance for sick, injured, disabled and incapable migrant workers. The support provided to the children of expatriate workers needs to be coordinated with the upcoming child benefit programme. Migrant workers need to be brought under a compulsory insurance programme, which should be part of the NSIS. Safety and security of female expatriate workers are often threatened in the destination countries which should be strongly dealt with by the Ministry. Training, rehabilitation and reintegration programme need to be coordinated and consolidated to facilitate better empowerment prospects for women. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Strengthen social allowance for migrant workers and their families	Increase the coverage of social allowance programmes for the sick, injured, disabled, incapable migrant workers and their families	Continuous	Increased number of programmes Increased number of women beneficiaries.	Finance Division
	Expand stipend support to migrant workers' children (in JSC, PSC, SSC, and HSC).	Continuous	Increased number of girl children receiving stipends	
	Increase allowance for the families of expatriate workers who are deported due to natural calamities and social and political unrest	Continuous	Women deportees are included	
	Provide assistances to victim of violence abroad (specially female migrant workers)	Continuous	Increased no of women supported	
Mandatory Insurance coverage for all migrant workers	Issue circular for providing mandatory insurance coverage for all migrant workers	December 2020	Circular issued	Finance Division
	Build in budget provisions for insurance subsidy for migrant workers, if necessary	July 201	Insurance programme designed and launched	FID
	Provide additional health and rehabilitation insurance coverage for women victims of abuse abroad	July 2021	Insurance programme designed and launched	

Facilitate safe, orderly and responsible labor migration	Disseminate information on work opportunities transparently through digital and other means specifying the details	June 201	Digital dissemination system and platform established	MoFA Finance Division FID MoIC ICTD MoWCA LGD NGOs Recruiting agencies	
	Provide loan to outbound migrant workers and disseminate information	Continuous	Increase number of female beneficiaries		
	Raise awareness on safe migration (provide information about overseas work opportunities, benefits and risk for women through campaigns and mass media)	July 2021	All recruiting agencies instructed		
	Register for all outbound migrant workers including women	Continuous	All migrants are registered		
	Provide pre-departure clearance (smart card) for all aspirant migrant workers including women	Continuous	All migrants have clearance		
	Monitor conditions of all migrants abroad, specially women, through embassies/labour wings	July 2021	Provision created for monthly reporting by labourer/employer		
Support to women victims abroad	Form an inter-ministerial committee with MoFA, MoWCA, MoHFW, MOHA, LJD and MoSW to support migrant workers abroad and upon return.	December 2020	Committee formed	MoFA LJD SSD, PSD MoHFW, MoWCA MoSW	
	Provide shelter, rescue, and return support for women victims including support for their babies abroad	Continuous	All victims received services		
	Provide legal service to the victims abroad	Continuous	All victims received services		
	Increase shelter and support mechanism in selected countries for women who have been sexually abused or harassed otherwise in collaboration with MoFA	December 2021	Shelter and service facilities for women in 3 more countries abroad		
Support for returnee migrants, rehabilitation reintegration	Receive male and female migrant victims at the airport during return by inter-ministerial representatives	Continuous	Presence of representatives is ensured	MoFA, MoSW, MoWCA, HSD, SSD, LJD	
	Establish quarantine and checkup facility for returnee migrants at the airport and border posts to identify pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases	July 2022	Arrangement for quarantine and medical check-up ensured at entry points		
	Assess types of support needed by returnee migrant workers for their rehabilitation and integration	Continuous	All returnees' needs identified and enlisted		Finance Division FID NGOs
	Provide support, information, motivation, training to the returnee migrant workers for social inclusion, reintegration and/or rehabilitation as per need.	Continuous	Women form 30% of the beneficiaries		
	Provide loan to returnee migrant workers in simple terms & conditions for livelihood/economic empowerment	Continuous	Women form 30% of the beneficiaries		

Enhance skills and obtain international standards and accreditation	Identify sectors of overseas employment, especially those suitable for women	December 2020	Increased trade avenues identified	TMED MoYS MoWCA MoF MoFA BITAC
	Enhance skills of prospective migrant workers (both men and women) through providing training in required trades/skills	December 2020 Continuous	Increases no of women trained in identified trades/skills	
	Collaborate with other skills-providing agencies and ensure skills training for women as per the needs of international market	December 2020 Continuous	MoUs / agreements reached	
	Provide mandatory pre-departure training to all outbound migrant workers	Continuous	All migrants received predeparture training	
Grievance redress system	Advocate and collaborate with MoFA, PSD and SSD to build in a complain mechanism at the embassies in receiving countries and at district level in the country	December 2020 Continuous	System established in embassies in collaboration with MoFA	Field offices MoFA, PSD, SSD, LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2020 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (technical skills, complain mechanism, rules related to employment in receiving countries, loan facilities, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All training programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA Agencies
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all social security programmes	July 2021	Internal Circular issued and instruction given to planning unit	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2020	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED, SID, IMED
	Create a sex-disaggregated database of returnee workers and their needs	June 2021	Sex disaggregated database with needs prepared	
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate)	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet MoSW, MoWCA

smaller programmes	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	NGOs
	Link and collaborate with MoSW, MoWCA and NGOs to provide support to children (including disabled and autistic of workers working abroad)	June 2021	MoUs signed	

Table 16: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment

Key Actions

- Increase the coverage of social allowance for migrant workers and their family members.
- Introduce mandatory insurance coverage for all migrant workers.
- Enhance skills development and obtain international standard of skills and accreditation.
- Provide rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation and legal support to victims of violence and other harassment.
- Ensure required support for returnee migrant workers for health checkup, rehabilitation and reintegration.
- Provide compulsory predeparture training to enhance capacity of women for protection, self-respect, , social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 15: Key Actions of Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment

14. Ministry of Youth and Sports

Background

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) is assigned with the responsibility to turn the youth into skilled human resources and integrate them into mainstream development through implementation of training, development and welfare-oriented activities. The Ministry creates self-employment opportunities and entrepreneurship for the unemployed youth and encourage their voluntary participation in development activities to accelerate youth empowerment. This also ensures social security of the young generation and their families. The Ministry also promotes sports, fosters youth participation in sports and identifies sports talents, develops skilled athlete, organizes sports events and ensures participation at national and international level. This ministry has a critical role in social security by challenging gender discriminatory social norms, motivating community and championing positive image of women through promoting scope for non-traditional employment opportunities and sports activities. Enhancing women's participation in sports activities can influence changing social norms.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Ministry's mission is to create skilled and productive young generation, both women and men, by developing their skills, employment opportunities and to support in achieving excellence in sports at national and international levels.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Develop skilled and productive youth society through training of young men and women on various income generating skills. The awareness raising programme on legal rights, health and other social issues help women in knowing their rights and responsibilities. Their participation in the "National Service" programme facilitates economic participation and support women's advancement.
- b. Improvement of the standard of sports for both boys/girls and women/men facilitate their outdoor participation and enhances confidence and ability. Women sporting talents are identified from the grass roots level and through age-group training they are groomed as skilled sports persons. Distribution of grants/allowances and sports equipment encourages women's participation in sports and open avenues to raise their income. In addition, elderly and distressed sports women are given allowance.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The NSSS challenge for the Ministry is to ensure welfare and empowerment of the vulnerable segments of the youth including protection from unemployment. In addition, challenging social norms by encouraging women's role in sports is difficult task, which need to continue.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objectives of this action plan are to support young men and women for their development as human resources and becoming self-reliant. Skill development programmes address the growing concern of ensuring best services to the working age youth, educated, school drop-outs, unemployed or underemployed. An important challenge for the government is to put in place adequate institutional and other arrangements for such young women and men for training them in marketable skills and for effectively linking them to employment in the country or outside. The Government also attaches importance on collaborating with development partners and NGOs in undertaking focused training programmes to equip the youth with skills that would help them access the labour market both at home and abroad.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 201-2020 is 20.27 percent of the ministry budget, 17.01 percent of the development budget, and 20.81 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

A major portion of Bangladesh population fall within youth category. Every year they come to job market, but employment opportunities are limited. Therefore, several skills development programmes for young boys and girls are operating, which enable them to participate in labour market as employees and entrepreneurs. The government has taken National Service Programme to create temporary employment opportunities for unemployed youth in selected upazillas. However, women's participation in marketable technical skills development training is limited. Therefore, it is important to identify and provide training in non-traditional and emerging fields for their employment in local and international markets. Generally, women's participation in sports is not encouraged in Bangladesh. Still, in recent years, girls have shown notable success in different fields of sports. Both training and sports can be used as vehicles for challenging the traditional social norms. Thus, sports need to be encouraged and training needs to incorporate empowering elements for women and girls. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The Ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Expansion of National Service Programme	Expand National Service Programme (NSP) to all upazillas in the country	Continuous	Coverage in all upazillas	MoF
	Increase women's access and participation opportunity for women in NSP	Continuous	50% beneficiaries of NSP are women	
Skills development programmes for young men and women	Increase women's share in skills development training in non-traditional areas and where there is market demand	Continuous	Marked demand identified; 50% beneficiaries of training are women	TMED MoWCA MoFL RDCC MoDMR
	Incorporate disaster-preparedness and disease prevention issues in trainings for young women and men	July 2021 and Continuous	Materials and curriculum revised to integrate these	
	Incorporate empowering elements (e.g. self-respect, leadership, social capital building) in training programmes	July 2021 and Continuous	Materials and curriculum revised to integrate these	
Sports for challenging social norms	Collaborate with relevant ministries to arrange sports training and competition for girls in all educational institutions	Continuous	Sports arranged in all schools for girls	MoPME, MoE
	Arrange sports programmes for girls at upazilla, district, and national levels	Continuous	Sports arranged in all districts, upazillas for girls	
Support to distressed players	Enhance allowance for poor, retired, injured and sick players with inclusion of women	Continuous	Make list and cover with annual 10% increase and 30% women	Finance Division
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2021	Field offices received instruction	

	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (ICT, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	LGD, MoFL, MoFECC, MoDMR, MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 21021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2020	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data and report	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet Division
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	
Grievance redressal system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 202	Instruct field offices	Cabinet Division
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2020 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	

Table 17: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Youth and Sports

Key Actions

- Identify skills requirement and increase women's share in the training programmes for enhancing skills
- Ensure women's access and participation of women in National Service Programme
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation
- Ensure girls' participation in sports for challenging social norms
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 16: Key Actions of Ministry of Youth and Sports

15. Ministry of Liberation War Affairs

Background

The Ministry of Liberation War Affairs (MOLWA) is responsible for preparing the list of freedom fighters; formulating and implementing acts, rules and guidelines related to rights and benefits of the freedom fighters; preserving history and memories of the liberation war; and developing new infrastructure as memorial of the war and upholding the glory of the freedom fighters.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of the Ministry is to ensure the welfare of the heroic freedom fighters and their dependents by creating safety nets for them.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Ensuring overall welfare of the freedom fighters by providing self-employment generating training and micro finance facilities to the women freedom fighters and their families to ensure their socio-economic security and empowerment;
- b. Upholding the history of liberation war, updating the list of freedom fighters, registering liberation war-based organization and celebrating national days. Inclusion of women freedom fighters in the list and ensuring their equal rights;
- c. Ensuring women's participation in preservation of history and memorials of liberation war, and physical infrastructure development;
- d. Providing monthly honorarium to the spouse in case of death of a freedom fighter and equal distribution of such honorarium among children of a freedom fighter where his/her spouse is absent, thus removing any discrimination of wealth distribution among male and female and it will empower the women.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The main challenges for the Ministry are to:

- a. continue social security programmes for the freedom fighters and their dependents;
- b. identify women freedom fighters and include their names in the updated list;
- c. identify and include in the official gazette the names of all 'Beerangana' those women who were physically tortured and brutally abused by Pakistani occupation forces and their local collaborators during the liberation war);
- d. ensure quick delivery and distribution of monthly honorarium among the recipients by removing the hands of vested quarters in the identification of the freedom fighters and the beneficiaries.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The NSSS objective of the Ministry is to consolidate social security programmes for all the freedom fighters and their descendants.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 10.26 percent of the ministry budget, 23.39 percent of the development budget, and 8.73 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

This Ministry provides allowances to freedom fighters and their families. It is essential to include all women freedom fighters in the list, provide allowances to them and incorporate them in the ration recipient list. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits

are not monitored. The ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Continue Freedom Fighters Benefit Programme	Identify all women freedom fighters and include them in the updated list	July 2021	All women freedom fighters are included in the updated list	MoF LGD MoHPW Cabinet Division RDCD HSWD MEFWD
	Provide Freedom Fighters' Allowance Programme to all women freedom fighters	July 2022	All women freedom fighters receive allowance	
	Provide ration benefits to all women freedom fighters	December 2022	All women freedom fighters receive allowance	
	Provide income-generating training and microcredit to girls from freedom fighter families	Continuous	Percentages of girls receiving training and credit	
	Provide abashan/house to all women freedom fighters	December 2022	All women freedom fighters receive house/shelters	
	Ensure medical facilities to all sick women freedom fighters	Continuous	All sick women freedom fighters received medical support	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mitigation mechanism down to the field level redressing any harassment	July 2020	Field offices instructed	Cabinet Division NGOs LGD
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2020 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women and girls (freedom fighter's families on leadership, entrepreneurship, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2020	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes for the freedom fighter families	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	

Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for the programmes	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED IMED BBS
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 201	Assessment completed and list prepared	IMED Cabinet Division
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 18: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Liberation War Affairs

Key Actions

- Identify all female freedom fighters, incorporate them in the list, include them in Freedom Fighters' Benefit Programme like housing, rations etc.
- Enhance capacity of women/girls of freedom fighter families for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 17: Key Actions of Ministry of Liberation War Affairs

16. Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tract Affairs

Background

The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts (MOCHT) was established in 1998 after the Chittagong Hill Tract Peace Accord and is responsible for the socio-economic development of the people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Region. It is also responsible to uphold the social customs, culture and language of tribal/non-tribal people living in the CHT areas. The Ministry provides secretariat services to Council Committees for development of the CHT and coordinates activities related to social safety net, relief, rehabilitation and deals with crisis situations arising from any calamity and conflict in the CHT areas. Development of biodiversity and eco-friendly tourism in CHT is also within its mandate.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of the Ministry is to ensure socio-economic, political and educational rights of the CHT people by implementing socio-economic development programmes and eco-tourism for women and men.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Women in CHT traditionally are hard-working, they take household responsibilities and play vital roles for enhancing the quality of living in the CHT area. The development activities and expansion of services for water, sanitation, health, education and awareness benefit women and create opportunities for them. These services save women's work time, drudgery and improve their standard of living. Technical education and various vocational training programmes targeting women are creating employment opportunities for them in CHT region.
- b. Upholding of tribal culture and protection of their language enables the tribal children to receive education in their language. Introduction of multi-language curriculum has expanded educational opportunities for tribal/non-tribal boys and girls. Conservation of natural resources and eco-tourism is increasing income of the tribal/non-tribal women. Development and marketing of tribal products also create economic opportunities for women. Targeted food security programmes has reduced malnutrition and health-care services for children and pregnant women has decreased infant and maternal mortality.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The challenges for the Ministry are to overcome the existing food poverty, ensuring healthcare, education, safety and other services for the people of the CHT region.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of the GAP is to ensure food security and expansion of services for the people of the CHT, specially women and children.

Gender responsive budget

In the 2019–2020 budget the proportion of gender budget for the ministry is 47.53 percent in development budget 59.69 percent and in operation is 18.56 percent.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

Violence against women is high in the hilly regions and scope for economic participation is limited. It is important to integrate the food security and social security programmes within the mainstream women's benefit and child support programmes. Ensuring water, sanitation and health services in the remote areas is also essential.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Strengthen food security in CHT	Expand special food security programme in CHT to women and children in need	June 2021	Increase coverage by 10% annually	Finance Division MoF MoDMR
	Shift gradually to cash transfer programmes instead of food as per discussion with stakeholders	July 2021 continuous	Plan prepared Plan implemented	
Vulnerable women's benefit programme in CHT	Identify and enlist women eligible for old-age allowance, disability allowance, maternity allowance and VGD	July 2021	List prepared Proposal submitted	MoF MoSW MoWCA MoDMR
	Collaborate with other ministries and enlist all poor and female-headed families under mainstream social security programmes	January 2022	Increased of CHT women in mainstream social security programmes by 5%	
Expansion of health services	Provide nutrition, immunization and healthcare services to women and children through para-centers	January 2021 continuous	80% of families accessing services	MoHFW LGD
	Expand water and sanitation services in CHT	January 2021 continuous	70% Coverage of water and sanitation services	
Grievance redressal system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2021	Instruct field offices	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (agriculture management, crop protection, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation, disaster preparedness etc.)	Beginning January 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA District councils Agencies NGOs
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued with instruction to agencies and planning unit	MoWCA District councils NGOs
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED
	Collect and use of sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results in all programmes	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate)	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and upscaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet

smaller programmes	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	
---------------------------	--	-----------	---	--

Table 19: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs

Key Actions

- Strengthen food security programmes in CHT.
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation through social security programmes.
- Incorporate services for women in CHT in the vulnerable Women Benefit Programme
- Expand health care, immunization, water, sanitation and literacy services for women and children of CHT region
- Integrate women of CHT in mainstream social security programmes
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller Programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 18: Key Actions of Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs

17. Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Background

Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock (MOFL) is one of the key ministries for ensuring food and nutrition security and for reducing poverty. This ministry has different programmes for human development, livelihood interventions and for increasing production of fish, meat, milk and egg for attaining self-sufficiency in protein. Ensuring animal nutrition, disease control, quality fish, dairy and poultry supply is within its mandate. The Ministry has many programmes that ensure participation of women and support their social security, poverty reduction, employment and thus ensure their protein consumption and nutrition of their families.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Ministry has the mission to meet the demand of animal protein by increasing fish and animal products and value addition ensuring women's participation and ensure their nutrition and social security.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Increasing production and productivity of fisheries, livestock, dairy, and poultry sectors and involve women in their production and business.
- b. Enabling women in prevention and control of fisheries and livestock diseases.
- c. Developing human resources and creating employment opportunities in the sector, including for women.
- d. Increasing export of fish, fish products and livestock products and involve women in the process.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

A major challenge is to reach out to the fishermen community, ensuring their food security and employment during lean seasons. The proportion of widows and single women in this community is higher than national average. Livestock is a means of livelihood for the poor women. Facilitating women's access to capital and inputs for livestock and fisheries is a challenge. Risk mitigation ensuring empowerment of women is another challenge.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of the Ministry in social security is to provide social security to the fishermen during their seasonal unemployment. The food security programmes taken by this ministry need to be converted to cash transfer, where possible. The livestock and fisheries development programmes need to facilitate women's self-reliance, empowerment, voice and social capital building.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 43.10 percent of the ministry budget 33.56 percent of the development budget and 55.12 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The participation of women is increasing in fisheries and livestock sector. But they lack technical training. Since the number of widows and single mothers is high in coastal fisherman communities therefore, it is important to arrange specific social security programmes for these women. The available training for women on livestock and fisheries focus on rearing and production but would yield better results by incorporating empowering elements like leadership, social capital building, marketing etc. Disaster rehabilitation programme needs coordination with MoDMR and addressing rehabilitation support for women. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Protection and adaptive livelihood support for women in fisheries communities	Provide income-generating training to women in fisheries communities (incorporating confidence building, leadership, financial management, marketing etc.)	Continuous	Training modules developed	MDMR MoYS NGOs FID
	Register all fishermen including women for identification	December 2020	ID card distributed	
	Incorporate disaster-preparedness and disease prevention issues in trainings fishermen community including women	December 2020 Continuous	Information incorporated in training	
	Launch specific programmes for disadvantaged women (e.g. widows, single mothers) of the fisheries community for livelihood support and empowerment	July 2021	Programmes launched with specific designs	
	Facilitate financial inclusion for women in poor fisherman families	Continuous	MoU with banks & NGOs	
Livelihood support for women in livestock sector	Provide income-generating training to women in livestock communities (incorporating confidence building, leadership, financial management, marketing etc.)	Continuous	Women are provided training	FID MDMR MoYS NGOs
	Ensure involvement of women in livestock related agri-business	Continuous	Increased no of women in livestock value chain	
	Incorporate disaster-preparedness and disease prevention issues in livestock and in training for women	December 2020 Continuous	Issue incorporated in training design	
	Facilitate financial inclusion for women in poor rearing livestock families	Continuous	Percentage of women received finance	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2021	Instruct field offices	LGD Cabinet Division NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meetings at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (fisheries and livestock management, protection, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, livelihood, entrepreneurship, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 201	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes on livestock and fisheries	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission MoWCA

	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes in fisheries and livestock	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2022	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	BBS, IMED
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2022	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet Division
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2022	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 20: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Key Actions

- Ensure protection and adaptive livelihood support for women in fisheries communities
- Incorporate disaster-preparedness and disease prevention issues in livestock and fisheries training for women
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation through livestock and fisheries based social security and livelihood programmes.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 19: Key Actions of Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

18. Ministry of Land

Background

The Ministry of Land (MOL) is mainly responsible for administrating land related matters including the preservation of land rights and ownership. It also manages Khas (Government) lands, vested and abandoned properties, Jal Mahal, Sand Mahal, Stone Mahal, and Shrimp Mahal and undertakes land reform and land use policies. It has a limited range of social security programmes, which includes providing homestead to landless families, especially in the names of both spouses.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Ministry has a mission to ensure the best possible use of land and provide pro-people land services through efficient, modern and sustainable land management and allocation of khas land/homes at guchchagram (cluster villages) for rehabilitation of the poor and women.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Modernization of land records to reduce the possibilities of exclusion of women's names from land records, which is helping to secure women's rights to land and thus enhancing their social security;
- b. Incorporating names both of husband and wife in the settlement deed of land in Guchchagram ensures their 50% right and provides women's social security;
- c. Efficient land revenue administration is leading to increase realization of land revenue which in turn enabling government to enhance/target its spending towards poverty reduction and women's advancement related programmes/projects.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

Every year people are losing their shelter and homestead due to river erosion, cyclone and other calamities. Their rehabilitation is a challenge. Generally, women do not own land and often are bypassed while allocating khas land.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to prevent marginalization of landless people especially women. Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 10.38 percent of the ministry budget, 3.70 percent of the development budget, and 15.56 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

A large portion of the population in Bangladesh are landless, a majority of whom are women. The need of women to have proper shelter is higher for security, privacy and safety. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The Ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Scale up programmes	Expand coverage and provide housing with safety, water and sanitation facility for poor women under Guchchagram programme	Continuous	Number of houses registered in women's name	Finance Division,

for landless people	Increase provision of khas lands to women for agricultural and livelihood activities as part of post-disaster rehabilitation programme	Continuous	50% share of women headed households in khas land distribution	LGD, MoDMR, MoHFWPA
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2020	Instruct field offices	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (livelihood, productive activities, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, livelihood, entrepreneurship, social support and risk-mitigation for beneficiaries)	Beginning July 201	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA, Finance Division
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission, MoWCA
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes like Guchchagram	December 2020	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA, GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and upscaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 201	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet Division
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 21: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Land

Key Actions

- Scale up coverage of programmes for landless poor women
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS.

Box 20: Key Actions of Ministry of Land

19. Ministry of Agriculture

Background

Agriculture sector plays a critical role in providing employment of the largest segment of population of Bangladesh. Agriculture directly contributes in ensuring food and nutritional security, reducing poverty and in ensuring economic growth. Rural women play a critical role in agricultural farming and post-harvest activities. The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) works for agricultural development through research; extension and training; production, standardization, certification, preservation and distribution of quality seeds; preservation and marketing of agricultural products; agricultural support and rehabilitation; collection, distribution, innovation, procurement and management of agricultural inputs and machinery; and minor irrigation programmes. The ministry is also responsible to ensure participation, employment and benefits of women in agriculture.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of the Ministry is to ensure food security by increasing productivity and production of the crop sector, improving marketing system, as well as diversification of crops, production of nutritious crops, and women's economic emancipation, empowerment and food security through these activities.

Role in social security for gender equality and women's empowerment

The role of the Ministry in promoting gender equality and women's development are:

- a. Empowering women by developing their skills in agriculture management and decision-making process, agribusiness and in agricultural marketing;
- b. Ensuring women's participation in agricultural production and agro-processing through developing their skills and increasing their access to agricultural inputs, technology, credit facility, and agricultural extension services; and
- c. Ensuring food security and nutrition of the families by creating women's earning opportunities in agriculture, in homestead gardening, production and post-harvest activities.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

- a. Women have not been recognized yet as farmers;
- b. Majority of the women agricultural workers are unpaid family labourers';
- c. Women's wage is lower than that of men in agricultural sector;
- d. Women's low access to agricultural technology, skills, inputs, and finance;
- e. Insecurity due to climate-related disasters;
- f. Inadequate attention towards gender issues in agriculture sector.

Objective of the Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to support women's enhanced food security and nutrition, their involvement in agricultural production, employment, and protection from livelihood climate-induced vulnerabilities and thus promote empowerment and gender equality.

Gender responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 44.91 percent of the ministry budget, 20.20 percent of the development budget and 48.85 percent of the operating budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Ministry implements different projects and programmes for the growth of agricultural production that are creating informal jobs in the agricultural sectors. Women are engaged in agriculture sector but often as unpaid labourers and most of them lacks skills and techniques of agricultural management. Women are

responsible for ensuring food security of the family. Their capacity in agriculture management, crop protection, adaptive livelihood and risk-mitigation is important. This, in turn can facilitate women's economic ability and empowerment along with ensuring food security. It is more important as men are shifting toward non-agricultural activities and women are taking the lion's share of responsibilities at the farms. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The ministry also needs to build its staff capacity in addressing gender issues in the sector.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Labor and livelihood intervention	Create employment opportunities in agriculture (providing training to women farmers including in char/remote areas on production techniques, markets and related areas)	By January 2021 and continuous	All programmes ensure such features and women's share in training and extension	MoRDC NGOs
	Develop women's ability in agricultural management, market and agribusiness	Continuous	All relevant programmes incorporate features	
	Provide women with access to agricultural inputs and finance	Continuous	Women's share in inputs and loan (30%)?	
Food security/ disaster response	Provide agricultural inputs and relief assistance to women farmers during post-disaster rehabilitation	Post -disaster and Continuous	Rehab programmes target women	MoDMR
	Distribute short-gestation seeds and information about climate-adaptive farming to women of disaster-prone areas	Continuous	Women's share in climate adaptation training	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2020	Instruct field offices	Cabinet Division
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (agriculture management, crop protection, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	

Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes in agriculture	December 2020	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results and	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and upscaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 22: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Agriculture

Key Actions

- Strengthen and consolidate programmes for assisting food availability and nutrition.
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation in agriculture sector.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and ensure G2P payment.

Box 21: Key Actions of Ministry of Agriculture

20. Ministry of Cultural Affairs

Background

The Ministry of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) is responsible for preserving, and nourishing development of the cultural heritage of the country and anthropological artefacts of the Liberation War and contemporary period. Its responsibilities also include preservation of archaeological heritage sites, promoting creative works, expanding and developing libraries; celebrating nationally important days and cultural exchange and cooperation in the international arena. This Ministry has a critical role in social security by challenging gender discriminatory social norms, motivating community and promoting positive image of women through cultural activities. Enhancing women's participation in cultural activities can also influence changing social norms.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of the Ministry is to preserve, expand and develop cultures and heritages including native languages; uphold the tradition and history of the country and ensure women's participation and change gender discriminatory social norms through cultural activities.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Arranging different programmes for expansion, conservation and development of indigenous cultures and mother tongues through training and workshops and facilitate women's participation in music, dance, fine arts etc.
- b. To ensure financial support for the poor and vulnerable artists for their social security. Reservation of traditional crafts cultures and archeological sites, and creation of employment opportunities for women.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The challenge of this Ministry is to ensure benefit of women from infrastructure and cultural activities ensuring their positive portrayal.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to facilitate social security support for cultural activists and to break traditional social norms.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 22.81 percent of the ministry budget, 24.99 percent of the development budget, and 21.01 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Ministry plays a critical role in challenging the social norms by encouraging women's participation in cultural programmes and projecting positive image of women through different cultural means. The Ministry provides allowance for poor and distressed cultural personalities which is inadequate. It is important to expand the allowance programme. The Ministry needs to promote more cultural activities to break social barriers and support women's empowerment. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The Ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Challenging social norms	Arrange cultural programmes at community levels for creating awareness on gender equality, women leadership, upbringing of girls and against violence	June 2022	A guideline prepared and provided	MoWCA MoPME MoE
	Enhance women's participation in cultural activities (arranging cultural programmes and competition at local and school-level)	June 2022	Guidelines prepared and provided	
Social allowance/ support for cultural personalities	Expand the coverage of "Allowance for distressed cultural personalities"	Continuous	Increase by 10% every year	Finance Division
	Include more women cultural personalities in this programme	Continuous	50% entitlement of women	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level for violation of women's rights and safety	Beginning July 2020	Instruct field offices	Cabinet Division LGED NGOs Field offices
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women in gender perspective in cultural context (direction, scripting, writing, presentation), leadership, social support and risk-mitigation,	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA NGOs MoPME MoE
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 201 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes in agriculture	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED IMED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	

Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED Cabinet Division
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 23: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Cultural Affairs

Key Actions

- Increase participation of girls in cultural activities and challenge discriminatory social norms through cultural activities.
- Enhance capacity of women for participation, protection, leadership, self-respect, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.

Box 22: Key Actions of Ministry of Cultural Affairs

21. Ministry of Industries

Background

The Ministry of Industries (MOI) formulates and implements policy to ensure environment-friendly industrialization and supports improvement of labours' skills and productivity through entrepreneurship and industrial management. Facilitation of employment through development of cottage, small and medium enterprises and through the chemical, steel, and such government managed industries. These industries create employment opportunities for people and there is ample opportunity to ensure employment and social security of women through them.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Mission of the Ministry is to facilitate industrial growth of the country increasing productivity; and develop women and men as skilled labour force and entrepreneurs; and ensure work related social security.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Supporting rapid industrial growth and development to create a healthy and safe working environment by strengthening the industrial policy and legal framework. This is expected to ensure participation of women as workers as well as entrepreneurs for industrial production and thus empower them.
- b. Improving quality of Bangladesh products consistent with international standards to create demand and in turn to increase income and purchasing power. Women will benefit as workers and consumers which will enhance their social security and improve their economic conditions.
- c. Promoting environment-friendly industrial development to reduce health risks for people and benefit women.
- d. Promoting industrial growth has a positive impact on agriculture and employment. It reduces overall unemployment of men and women, reduces pressure on agriculture and ensure access to affordable fertilizer and inputs. Different training programmes develop women as entrepreneurs and skilled labour force and thus improve their economic and social status.
- e. Growth of small and cottage industries enhances opportunities for generating employment of youth and women at a low investment.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The challenges include ensuring women friendly work environment with social security particularly with medical, maternity and child care, health benefits, occupational health and safety and decent wage in industrial setting especially in the smaller ventures.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to enhance social security measures for women working in industrial sector and facilitate women entrepreneurship.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 22.92 percent of the ministry budget, 5.92 percent of the development budget, and 84.12 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

Women's participation as entrepreneurs and workers in the industrial sectors is lower compared to men excepting in readymade garments (RMG). The Ministry facilitates women entrepreneurship through training and facilitating access to finance and market. The lack of childcare facilities, women-friendly work environments, shelters etc. limits women's participation in labour force. On the other hand, maternity care, occupational health and safety provisions are limited in the private sector. Therefore, there is a need of creating support services for women in their work area, develop their skills and provide maternity care and such other benefits. It is also essential to initiate unemployment insurance scheme for all especially within the NSIS. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for

women's benefits are not monitored. The Ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Improve skills and productivity for social empowerment	Enhance women's income-generating skills through training	Continuous	% of women as recipients of training	BSCIC, SMEF SCITI Finance Division
	Enhance women's entrepreneurship by providing business development skills, finance and other supports	Continuous	No. of women provided with entrepreneurial support	
	Incorporate disaster preparedness, and business, finance management to empower women in training programmes for women	July 2021 Continuous	Training modules incorporated these	
Childcare at workplace	Provide day care, build private space and provide maternity leave in factories of sector corporations	December 2022	Provisions increased in factories	Finance Division Sector Corporations Private industries
	Assess needs and identify ways to provide day care support in private sector industries (consider use of CSR)	July 2021	Proposal developed	
Vulnerable women benefits	Direct private industries to build daycare centers and provisions for maternity and occupational health and safety as a criteria for registration and industrial plot (consider subsidy if necessary)	December 2021	Directives/criteria modified and issued	Private Sector, MoF, PMO, FID, BB
	Build dormitories for women near factories, near/in industrial estates and economic zones	December 2023	Increased shelter for women in new areas	
	Monitor private factories to provide for facilities according to labour laws, and occupational health and safety policy	December 2023	Directives issued	
Initiate unemployment insurance scheme	Study on possible options of unemployment insurance	December 2021	Recommendations submitted	MoF, MoC MoF, MoC
	Introduce unemployment insurance on pilot basis in sectors where women are working in large numbers	July 2022	Programmes introduced	
	Expand unemployment insurance, and provide subsidy, if necessary, to ensure access of women within the NSIS.	July 2025	Incorporated within NSIS.	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level on violence/harassment and other issues	Beginning July 2020	Instruct field offices/corporations/industries	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	

Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (production management, labour rules, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA, NGOs
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	MoWCA, NGOs
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes in agriculture	December 201	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED, BBS
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 24: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Industries

Key Actions

- Improve skills and productivity of women for social empowerment and enhance capacity for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation through social security programmes.
- Incorporate affordable health, unemployment and maternity insurance in NSIS for women
- Enhance support facilities like shelter, day care, health service in industrial areas
- Ensure child care facilities in corporations and guide private sector to ensure day care and services
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and ensure G2P payment.

Box 23: Key Actions of Ministry of Industries

22. Ministry of Water Resources

Background

The key responsibilities of the Ministry of Water Resources (MOWR) are to formulate and implement policy for water management including irrigation, flood control, mitigation of water logging, improvement of drainage system, protection from river erosion and prevention of salinity and desertification. The responsibilities also include flood forecasting and warning; flood control and management; construction of water control infrastructures for flood control, river basin maintenance, managing damages owing to floods and disasters, and development of water resources. Works related to trans-boundary rivers by Joint River Commission are also the responsibility of this Ministry. The Ministry also deals with land conservation and reclamation, drainage, water logging, integrated development of haor and wetlands, water reservoirs, embankments and barrages and protection from erosion. As water management is closely associated with agriculture, food security, livelihood and survival, therefore, the activities of this ministry have large stake on survival, livelihood and asset protection of the public and of people including poor, women and children. The ministry implements social security programmes for erosion/flood affected and landless people.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of this Ministry is to protect the country from damages due to flooding, cyclone and draught; protection of river, wetlands and haors and crops, support smooth livelihood of people, and ensure women's participation and benefits from water management-related works and infrastructure.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Ensure balanced, integrated and sustainable management of water resources and include women's engagement in irrigation activities to create employment opportunities. Women's employment opportunities are generated in civil works and 20% in smartcard recharge vending, which improves their financial and social status;
- b. Enhancing navigability of rivers, reducing rate of river erosion, ensuring water supply in dry season, flood control and township protection and thus reduction of the poverty among women and men. Excavation and re-excavation of rivers, irrigation canals, construction/repair of irrigation structures, construction of barrage/rubber dam prevents floods, saline water intrusion, water logging and reduce loss of crops and property of the poor people including men and women;
- c. Development of haor and wetlands, water management in coastal region, and the fair distribution of reclaimed land to the destitute women ensures their social security. Construction and distribution of houses in Char and wetlands, and involvement of women in river bank protection work enhances women's social security. Participation of women in water resource management groups empowers them in planning and in use of water resources. Training in water management, income-generating activities, and participation in earth-works through Labour Contracting Society (LCS) generates employment for poor rural women.
- d. Damages caused by floods, storms and tidal surges are reduced through strengthening flood forecasting and warning system where women also participate as whistleblowers.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The challenges in this sector include women's low participation in water management due to their low ownership of land and less participation in infrastructure work. Protection of women and children, and loss of their livelihood caused by floods, storms and other water-borne calamities is another challenge.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to protect property and livelihood of the communities and ensure women's through water and -water infrastructure management. Another objective is to rehabilitation of disaster-affected families and thereby ensuring their social security.

Gender-responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019-2020 is 45.86 percent of the ministry budget, 38.20 percent of the development budget, and 69.73 percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

Bangladesh is a country which has been experiencing a series of humanmade and natural water-related disasters. Water management is critical for agricultural productivity and livelihood. Women's participation in water management is low, though they form the majority of household-level water resource managers. It is important to ensure availability of water for agriculture and maintaining the water flow. This Ministry has several programmes for water management from which women benefit. Water management programmes can protect from disasters, provide livelihood opportunities, social support, and can facilitate women's empowerment by incorporating appropriate elements. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Disaster rehabilitation and livelihood support	Create employment opportunities for women through water infrastructure and LCS ensuring equal wage for similar works	Continuous	25% of all earthworks is reserved for landless workers of whom minimum 30% must be women	RCD MoWCA LGD Finance Division
	Ensure women's participation in water management groups	Continuous	Women constitutes 33% of water management groups	
	Prepare a list of women and children affected by river erosion and other natural disasters	June 2021	List prepared and submitted	
	Formulate a rehabilitation plan for affected families and distribute land/house among them, ensuring title for women	December 2021	Rehabilitation plan prepared and submitted	
	Review and update training programmes for women on income-generation and other areas (incorporating empowerment elements)	Continuous	Training programme reviewed, modules updated	
	Enhance women's share in all income-generation and similar programmes	Continuous	Women's share in the training programmes is at least 50%	
	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2020	Field offices instructed	

Grievance redress system	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at district and upazilla level	Field offices LGD NGOs
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (water management, agriculture management, crop protection, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA MoA MoFL MoYS Finance Division
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and implementation	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED IMED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results and	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list of projects for scaling up prepared	

Table 25: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Water Resources

Key Actions

- Ensure provision of disaster resilience, rehabilitation and livelihood support for women
- Enhance capacity of women for disaster preparedness, protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 24: Key Actions of Prime Minister's Office

23. Prime Minister's Office

Background

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) provides assistance to the Honourable Prime Minister related to political, administrative, parliamentary affairs and other related duties and responsibilities. It liaises with international organizations and execute treaties and agreements with different countries and international organizations related to the functions of the Prime Minister's Office. Undertaking special programmes for small ethnic community living in the plain lands in order to improve their socio-economic condition and rehabilitation of the homeless, impoverished, poor and vulnerable families are done by this Office. Besides, through the NGO Affairs Bureau, the PMO coordinates with NGOs regarding their activities and often the activities are for social security and empowerment of women. It also coordinates matters relating to Bangladesh Investment Development Authority, export processing zones and economic zones.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of this Office is to ensure shelter and rehabilitation for homeless, poor and vulnerable families of small ethnic communities from plain land, provide opportunities for socio-economic development of the women of these ethnic communities and observe matters relating to congenial work environment for women in export processing zones and economic zones.

Role in promoting gender equality and women's development

- a. Creating scope of employment by training on information technology for employment and services as entrepreneurs. Fifty percent of the entrepreneurs in Union Digital Centres are women.
- b. Creating labour market participation opportunities of women in the export processing zones and thereby positively impact on their income, empowerment and promotion of social security. Establishment of economic zones (nine Government & seventeen Private) will create greater scope for women's employment, socio-economic development and the quality of life. Training of women in munga-prone areas of northern districts supports women for their employment.
- c. Economic growth, infrastructure facilities and employment opportunities are created for both man and women through PPP activities.
- d. Ensuring women's access to health services, nutrition, education, training, microcredit, legal aid and protection against torture and violence and other services, community awareness is done through NGO activities.
- e. Providing public resources to the poor through the Ashrayan Project in joint name of husband and wife.
- f. Operating income generating projects for women of minor indigenous communities of plain land create self-employment. Both boys and girls of these communities are provided educational assistance

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The challenges are to provide adequate support covering the deserving ethnic minority, and to provide shelter support for the disadvantaged, homeless and disable people.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objectives of this GAP are to support the division in identifying and incorporating gender-focused elements in social security programmes.

Gender responsive budget

In the 2019–2020 budget the proportion of budget for the ministry was 9.00, development 9.98 and operation was 3.90 percent.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

Support is provided to develop skills and education for the children of plain lands, ethnic minority groups and area development. Other supports include shelter for the poor and development of special areas. However, coverage of these programmes is inadequate and with appropriate design elements the programmes can become more empowering for women. Sex-disaggregated data on benefits of the tribal communities will support managing the programme. Enhancing staff capacity to design gender-integrated programmes is also important.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Programmes for women of special areas, plain land minority groups	Expand educational/skills support to indigenous children and children of remote areas (other than CHT) especially girls	Continuous	Annual 10% increase in children from ethnic and remote communities receiving support	NGOs NGOAB
	Expand extension, training and access to finance for indigenous women other than in CHT	December 2021 continuous	Annual 10% increase in women beneficiaries in skills development, income generation and self-employment progs.	
	Integrate training activities to enhance women's capacity, voice, self-confidence and leadership in projects implemented by NGOs for women	December 2021 continuous	Direct NGOs through NGOAB to undertake transformative activities for gender equality	
Shelter for disaster-affected	Integrate issues (e.g. leadership, capacity, confidence, voice) in the training modules of Ashroyon-2	Continuous	Module developed and training imparted	NGOs
Grievance redressal system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2020	Instruct field offices	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (ICT leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2019	All new programme designs incorporate these	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	

Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	December 2020	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and upscaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 26: Gender Action Plan of Prime Minister's Office

Key Actions

- Provide educational support to ethnic minority children other than in CHT area
- Ethnic minority women supported for socio-economic development through training, orientation, financial support etc.
- Enhance shelter support and land ownership for landless women through Ashrayan projects.
- Enhance capacity of women for employment, protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and ensure G2P payment.

Box 25: Key Actions of Prime Minister's Office

24. Ministry of Housing and Public Works

Background

The Ministry of Housing and Public Works (MOHPW) is responsible to prepare policies, laws, codes of planned housing sector and public buildings, take measures to ensure planned urbanization, proper use of land and to solve the accommodation problem of government officers and staff. Management of land and abandoned property is under this Ministry. The Ministry is to ensure that building and infrastructure designs consider the needs of women and persons with disabilities.

Mission for gender-focused social security

To ensure affordable and safe housing for all ensuring better utilization of land, protection of environment, planned urbanization, promotion of low-cost sustainable building technology and provision of shelter for the urban poor including ultra-poor and working women.

Role in gender equality and women's development

- a. Planned urbanization to ensure proper use of land and protection of environment ensuring healthy habitat for all including women and thus facilitate women's advancement.
- b. Ensuring affordable and safe housing for different income groups including dormitories and residential buildings for the working women and housing for homeless and ultra-poor. Thereby, their safety and facilitate opportunity for their public participation and empowerment are ensured. Construction of women and children-friendly infrastructure in the rural and urban areas and improvement of the sanitation system are also included.
- c. Innovation of technology in planned housing and house construction techniques: Training is being provided to women on innovative technology and they are being involved in marketing of these products as small entrepreneurs, which facilitates their development and empowerment.
- d. Ensuring women friendly appropriate infrastructural facilities in governmental buildings and employment of women in the construction of government infrastructure.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

Still now the safe accommodation facilities for working or poor women and dormitories for workers, students or job seekers is inadequate. Most of the buildings still lack safe sanitation, prayer or private facilities for women. Buildings are yet to ensure access and mobility for the disabled.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objective of this action plan is to ensure women's safety and mobility through provision of safe shelter support and to ensure that gender-based needs are addressed in all building design and construction and that employment opportunities are generated for women.

Gender responsive budget

In the 2019-2020 budget, the proportion of gender budget for the ministry was 33.00 percent, development budget, 34.23 percent and in operation is 29.19 percent.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

Adequate shelter could not be provided to the poor. Therefore, they live in slums with inadequate safety water and sanitation facilities. Despite giving guidance, most of the buildings are not disable-friendly. Most of the public buildings lack facilities for women. The construction sector provides employment opportunities for both men and women. But women face discriminations in terms of wages. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The Ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Shelter and support for poor women	Build housing for poor and slum-dwelling women with safe water and sanitation facilities	Continuous	5% increase in shelter support for the poor and share of poor women 50%	Other departments Finance Division
	Build private dormitories and old age homes with women and disable-friendly infrastructure, including water and sanitation	Continuous	No. of new facilities and 50% share for women	
	Ensure safe women and disable friendly design in all infrastructure (fire safety, sanitation, private corner, day care in public buildings)	December 2020	Guideline for public and private buildings issued;	
	Incorporate disable and women-friendly design for new public buildings	December 2025	Designs of all new buildings follow guidelines	
	Create employment opportunities for women in construction	July 2021 continuous	Instruction issued for 25% women in labour force	
	Reduce wage discrimination and improve work environment for women in construction sites	December 2024	Equal pay for equal work practiced; on-site occupational health and safety ensured	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2021	Instruct field offices	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Strengthen staff capacity to ensure gender friendly infrastructure design, address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	MoWCA, IMED and
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, wage equality etc.) in all programmes	January 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	All ministries
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning/design and approval unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused checklist for building design and land use planning	December 2020	Instruction given to planning unit, ministries/ builders and public	LGD
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate)	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and upscaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet

smaller programmes	Integrate tested empowering/gender friendly elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared
---------------------------	--	-----------	---

Table 27: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Housing and Public Works

Key Actions

- Ensure shelter, housing, dormitory and support for poor women especially in urban areas with water, sanitation facilities.
- Ensure women and disable-friendly infrastructure, improve sanitation facilities in buildings, government and private dormitories, old-age homes, and daycare centers.
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, , social support and risk mitigation.
- Ensure women and disable friendly building code, gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS.

Box 26: Key Actions of Ministry of Housing and Public Works

25. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Background

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC) is responsible for conservation and improvement of the quality of the environment and control of environmental pollution. Implementation of different regional and international conventions, agreements, and protocols relating to environment, forestry and wildlife is within its responsibilities. Plantation of trees, creation of new forest areas, extraction of re-generated forest resources, implementation of social forestry programmes, conservation of wildlife and bio-diversity, expansion and development of both Government and private forest resources are also among its tasks. It ensures participation of community women and men in environment and biodiversity conservation, eco tourism, and forestry.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of the Ministry is to conserve bio-diversity, and environment to protect people from calamities and ensuring their livelihood and enhance their income opportunities through ensuring community men's and women's participation.

Role in social security for gender equality and women's empowerment

Protect agriculture and water resources from the adverse effects of climate change and implement adaptation and mitigation programmes to reduce climate vulnerabilities, hazards and health risks among women and children. Employment opportunities are created through technician's training programmes and conservation and sustainable management of forest resources and tree plantation. Awareness is increased through training programmes on social forestation and conservation of forest resources. Interventions to address the impact of climate change including control of pollution are also run to have positive impact on women's health and employment opportunities. Women's participation in the participatory biodiversity preservation activities create employment opportunities for poor and destitute women. Women's empowerment is facilitated through ensuring their participation in local planning committees.

Challenges related to gender equality promotion in social security

The main challenge is to ensure that women and girls are not adversely affected by climate change and that their access to resources are sustained.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The objectives of this GAP are to ensure that gender perspectives are incorporated in social security programmes of the Ministry. It will support reducing women's vulnerability to disaster, environmental pollution and climate change and enhance their social security prospects.

Gender responsive budget

Women's share in the budget of 2019–2020 was **41.16** percent of the ministry budget, **37.24** percent of the development budget and **44.40** percent of the non-development budget.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Ministry has several programmes to involve women in biodiversity conservation, social forestry expansion of coastal greenbelt which generates employment and income for women. There is a climate-change gender action plan which needs to be implemented in collaboration with other ministries. Even though the Ministry is aware of the climate-related vulnerabilities of women, many of them are not addressed through the programmes. Some of the programmes generally target women for income, but do not adequately address empowering elements which can lead women to self-reliance. It is important to integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potentials while consolidating the smaller programmes. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The Ministry also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Adaption and bio-diversity conservation	Involve women in biodiversity conservation in adaptation platforms	Continuous	Women form one-third of the platform members	MoA MoDMR
Labour and livelihood intervention	Involve women in eco-tourism programmes	Continuous	Women constitute one third of the participants in eco-tourism	NGOs MoWCA
	Expand women's participation in coastal green belt, social and mangrove forestry, and forest management	Continuous	Women constitute one third of the participants in green belt social forestry	
	Review and modify contents of training programmes eco-tourism and biodiversity conservation (incorporating women's self-confidence, bargaining capacity, leadership and nutrition)	June 2021 Continuous	Training modules incorporated these elements	
Disaster preparedness	Train women to enhance their adaptive capability with climate change	Continuous	Annual 10% increase in trained women	MoDMR MoWCA, NGOs
Grievance redressal system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level including for harassment and abuse	Beginning July 2021	Instruct field offices	Field offices, LGED, NGOs Cabinet Division
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Integrate capacity-building activities for women (biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptive agriculture, crop protection, leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	Programme designs incorporate these; Engage women in leadership in groups for forest management, conservation etc.	MoWCA. MoDMR NGOs
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	
Gender-responsive programme design	Establish mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	July 2021	Circular issued and instruction given	Planning Commission
	Apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes in agriculture	December 2021	Instruction given to planning unit	MoWCA GED, BBS, IMED
	Collect and use sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect sex disaggregated data	

Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Identify programmes eligible for phasing-out and upscaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2021	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet
	Integrate tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 28: Gender Action Plan of Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

Key Actions

- Involve women in biodiversity conservation and adaptation platforms.
- Support women's livelihood and protection through forestry, eco-tourism, coastal green-belt etc. and provide rehabilitation support
- Enhance capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation through social security programmes.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.

Box 27: Key Actions of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

26. Cabinet Division

Background

The Cabinet Division (CD) is the apex body of the Government responsible for secretarial work for the Cabinet and its committees. It performs overall coordination of functions of the Government across ministries and oversees the functions of the field administration. As the coordinating authority, the Division is responsible for monitoring of criminal justice, enhancing good governance, and implement administrative reforms in the country. The Division uses various instruments like Government Performance Management System, Grievance Redress System, and National Integrity Strategy in managing the affairs. The Division leads the Central Management Committee (CMC), coordinates and monitors the implementation of the social security system of the country.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The mission of the Division is to coordinate and oversee and monitor the implementation of a consolidated and efficient social security system ensuring promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

Role in Social Security for gender equality and women's empowerment

The role of the Division is to mobilize the Central Management Committee (CMC) on Social Security Programmes to streamline the social security system of the country and to implement the Social Security Action Plan and the Gender Policy for NSSS. Facilitating the establishment of a modern and efficient delivery mechanism of social benefits to the appropriate targeted people is another role of the Division. Redressal of grievances related to operation, deprivation and harassment related to social security is included in the role of the Division.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The main challenge for the Cabinet Division is to establish coordination among line ministries to establish an inclusive social security system by consolidating the fragmented and discordant social security schemes along a lifecycle framework. This also entails ensuring participation and share of women in social security programmes and empowerment of women as results of the consolidated programmes.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan (GAP)

The major objective of this GAP is to ensure that the Central Management Committee (CMC) on Social Security Programmes streamlines the social security system of the country facilitating gender equality and women's empowerment and ensures implementation of the Gender Policy for the NSSS.

Gender-responsive budget

This Division has not been included in the Ministries/Divisions to report on Gender Responsive Budget and has not prepared a gender responsive budget report. Therefore, the share in gender budget has not yet determined, which will be done in future.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

This Division is responsible for overall coordination of all social security programmes and ensuring all reforms. The Division is also responsible for maintaining the central Grievance Redress System. Currently the social security programmes are fragmented with erroneous targeting. Though many social security programmes support women and girls, but the overall gender-focused result assessment is missing in many cases. Therefore, this Division needs to ensure addressing women's empowerment and gender equality through different programmes of the ministries, and gender-focused result assessment by the ministries and the thematic clusters. In the process of consolidating smaller programmes, the Division will ensure that the tested elements that empower women are considered for incorporation in the up-scaled and consolidated programmes. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's benefits are not monitored. The Division will oversee this, which also requires strengthening of its staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Strengthening coordination of social security programmes for gender equality	Promote gender equality in social security programming	July 2021	CMC's approval of the Gender Action Plan	All Ministries
	Review implementation of the gender action plans of ministries by the CMC	December 2021	CMC decided and guided to present annual reports on gender equality results	
	Coordinate and follow-up implementation of the gender policy in social security programmes	January 2021 onwards	Annual review includes GE performance	
	Oversee coordination between social security programmes and sectorial programmes	December 2020	CMC's guidance issued for establishing coordination between programmes	
Gender Equality in thematic Clusters' programmes	Oversee gender integration in the action areas of the thematic clusters	December 2020	The Action Plans of thematic clusters incorporate action for GE promotion	All Clusters
	Coordinate and follow-up implementation of the gender policy in thematic programmes	January 2021 onwards	Annual review includes GE performance	
Coordinating the Field Committees on social security	Update TORs of the district and upazilla-level committees to look after gender perspectives.	January 2020 onwards	Updated ToR of the Committees	
Review and propose the expansion of scope of work of IMED	Review current scope of work of IMED and assign responsibilities to monitor and evaluate social security Programmes under revenue budget	December 2020	Proposal approved by CMC for further action	IMED, PMO, MoPA
Grievance redress system	Oversee the functions of ministries in addressing grievances related to targeting, delivery of benefits, and harassments etc.	Beginning July 2021	All ministries guided to establish grievance redressal system	All Ministries LGD, NGOs, Cabinet Division
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
	Strengthen grievance redressal system to ensure quick disposal of grievances	January 2021 Continuous	Guidance provided and staff identified	
Strengthen capacity	Guide all ministries to integrate capacity-building activities for women (leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, skills, social support and risk-mitigation etc. for empowerment)	Beginning July 2021	CMC's guidance given to all ministries to incorporate these in all programme designs	All ministries MoWCA
	Guide all ministries to strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2021 Continuous	CMC's guidance given to all ministries	

Gender-responsive programme design	Coordinate with Planning Commission to ensure that TPP and DPP formats mainstream gender and include a gender action plan	December 2020	TPP and DPP formats reviewed	Planning Commission ECNEC, All ministries
	Issue instruction to use Guidelines for Gender Responsive programme design and integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all programmes	December 2020	Circular issued and instruction given	
	Coordinate with Planning Commission to apply and enforce gender-focused design features in programme approval and review process	July 2021	Gender-focused programme review mechanism established	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Oversee that a set of gender-focused indicators is developed and applied	December 2021	Instruction given to MOWCA and GED	MoWCA GED
	Oversee collection and use of sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results of social security programmes	January 2021	Instruct all agencies to collect and present sex disaggregated data	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Oversee identification of programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment for CMC's approval	June 2021	Assessment completed, list prepared, and approved by CMC	IMED, Cabinet
	Oversee integration of tested empowering elements with transformatory potential in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2021	Empowering features incorporated in the consolidated and expanded programmes	

Table 29: Gender Action Plan of Cabinet Division

Key Actions

- Strengthening the coordination of social security programme implementation
- Review the master plan of GED for single registry MIS and M&E and obtain CMC approval
- Collect proposals for consolidation of smaller programmes with gender integrated designs and get them approved by CMC
- Develop a second generation of GRS with compatibility for handling social security related grievances
- Guide and ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data.
- Consolidate smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women and provide services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 28: Key Actions of Cabinet Division

27. General Economics Division

Background

General Economics Division (GED) is the prime policy-planning organ of the Government of Bangladesh. It is responsible for formulating medium- and long-term plans and strategies for socio-economic development of the country in accordance with government policies. As part of the Bangladesh Planning Commission, it provides secretarial assistance to the Planning Commission as well as to the NEC (National Economic Council) and the ECNEC (Executive Committee of the National Economic Council) in all matters concerning plan preparation and economic policy/strategy formulation. GED led the NSSS preparation process, set the road map of establishing a strong social security system and monitors the effectiveness of the system in Bangladesh. The Division is responsible for developing indicators, setting targets and assessing results of the impacts of the poverty reduction efforts, the Five Year Plans and the SDGs. The Division prepares progress reports for national and international stakeholders.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The NSSS mission of GED is to ensure that the national plans and targets ensure equality and to reform the social security system in consistency with the national goals of higher growth and elimination of poverty reducing gender disparities and ensuring women's benefits.

Role in with gender equality and women's development

Monitoring consistency of social security programmes with the Five Year Plan, NSSS, SDG and sectoral policies and assessment of the results of social security programmes with emphasis on reduction of gender gap.

Challenges related to promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment

The main challenge for GED is to ensure that the major policies of the Government are consistent with the NSSS. It is also imperative to ensure that a single registry MIS is in place encompassing all women and men beneficiaries in time so that the M&E framework can operate properly to facilitate NSSS implementation and support women's empowerment. A major challenge is to identify and assess gender equality results of all social security programmes as sex disaggregated data and gender focused result assessment are still inadequate.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan

The GAP considered the GED's responsibility as devising a results-based M&E system for social security programmes with gender focus. It also considers GED catalyzing the establishment of a single registry MIS encompassing all, facilitating the consolidation of small schemes keeping an eye on gender equality and women's empowerment perspectives. Reviewing the current selection processes of recipients of social security schemes with strict adherence to guidelines and carrying out social security planning functions with emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment is critical. Also, GED is to ensure consolidating child support programmes, vulnerable women's benefits and labour and livelihood programmes with specific emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment. Ensuring sex disaggregated data for gender analysis of results is also an agenda.

Gender-responsive budget

This Division has not been included in the ministries/divisions to report on Gender Responsive Budget and has not prepared a gender responsive budget report and therefore, the share in gender budget has not yet determined, which will be done in future.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

This Division is responsible for ensuring and monitoring the implementation of the NSSS. It is also responsible for monitoring of SDG goals. Therefore, a gender-focused, M&E framework needs to be prepared with appropriate indicators to assess the social security programmes in light of the gender policy for NSSS and the SDGs. Often sex-disaggregated data is not maintained for programme monitoring and targets for women's

benefits are not monitored. The Division will ensure monitoring SDGs based on disaggregated data. It also requires strengthening of staff capacity to incorporate gender equality and women empowerment elements in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Devising and instituting a gender-focused and results-based M&E System	Include a gender specialist in the M&E task force	July 2020	Gender Specialist joined task force	IMED, BBS All ministries with social security programmes
	Identify gender-focused and result-based M&E indicators for social security programmes	December 2020	M&E indicators identified	
	Formulate a results-based framework for M&E with use of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis of social security programmes	December 2020	M&E indicators and instruments prepared	
	Compile annual reports on performance of social security programmes integrating progress on gender equality and women's empowerment based on the identified indicators	January 2021 Continuous	Annual reports include gender equality results of social security programmes	
Recommend a sex-disaggregated single-registry MIS	Prepare a master plan for a single-registry MIS consolidating social security database from all ministries disaggregated by sex, age, geographical locations etc.	July 2021	Master plan prepared considering the said criteria	
Review the consistency of national policies with NSSS	Review the consistency of sectoral policies and programmes with the NSSS, NWDP and the Gender policy for NSSS	January 2021	Review report submitted	All Ministries
	Orient all ministries to align their policies in line with NSSS and Gender Policy for NSSS	June 2021	All ministries oriented	
Grievance redress system	Build in complain mechanism at the field level in all programmes	Beginning July 2020	All agencies instructed	All ministries Planning Commission Cabinet Division, NGOs
	Create public awareness including among women about complain mechanism and the central GRS of Cabinet Division	July 2021 Continuous	Public meeting at upazilla level	
Strengthen capacity	Orient all ministries to incorporate women's capacity building and empowerment aspects in all social security programmes (leadership, nutrition, self-respect, entrepreneurship, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	All new programme designs incorporate these	All Ministries Planning Division MoWCA
	Work with Planning Division to strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, delivery and monitoring	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff of Planning Commission/other Ministries	

Gender-responsive programme design	Coordinate with Planning Division and ECNEC to establish a mechanism to integrate gender-related design features (e.g. empowering elements, participation, awareness voice, social capital etc.) in all social security programmes	July 2021	Proposal sent to Planning Commission	Planning Division, other ministries
	Coordinate with Planning Division and ECNEC to apply and enforce gender-focused design features during programme approval and review process	July 2021	Instruction issued by the government	
Strengthen gender-focused result monitoring	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs of women for social security programmes	December 2020	Indicators identified and approved	MOWCA, IMED BBS
	Enforce collection and use of sex-disaggregated data for monitoring and reporting of gender-focused results	January 2021	Issue guidance to all ministries to collect sex disaggregated data and gender based report	
Harmonize (consolidate) smaller programmes	Support identifying programmes eligible for phasing-out and up-scaling based on gender-focused result assessment	June 2023	Assessment completed and prepared list	IMED, Cabinet
	Support integration of tested women's empowering elements with transformatory potentials in the consolidated and expanded programmes	June 2023	Empowering features identified and list for scaling up prepared	

Table 30: Gender Action Plan of General Economics Division

Key Actions

- Prepare master plan for single registry MIS and M&E
- Conduct study to review the current selection processes, aligned to the eligibility criteria to be used for each scheme
- Support assessment and collection of proposals for consolidation of smaller programmes for approval by the CMC
- Prepare assessment and reports on consolidation of small scale programmes
- Guide and support establishing a system by the Planning Commission to ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data
- Guide consolidation of smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women.
- Support in policy decision and assessment of services through a digitized single registry MIS and G2P payment.

Box 29: Key Actions of General Economics Division

28. Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED)

Background

The Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) is a division of the Ministry of Planning and supports socio-economic development of the country by monitoring implementation and evaluating the impacts of the development projects/programmes. It also ensures proper utilization of investment. The responsibilities include preparing quarterly, annual and periodical progress reports for information of the President, NEC, ECNEC, ministries and other concerned. The responsibilities also include spot verification of implementation status and such other necessary co-ordination works for the removal of implementation problems, if any. This also Divisions to ensure applies to the monitoring of social security programmes, with the assistance of related Ministries/ that the impacts are ensuring social security of the targeted women and men groups.

Mission for gender-focused social security

IMED has a mission to support the attainment of socio-economic development of the country through effective implementation, monitoring, and qualitative evaluation of development projects ensuring impacts on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Role in social security for gender equality and women's empowerment

IMED's role in social security is to ensure that results are achieved through implementation monitoring and evaluation of social security programmes achieve their poverty reduction targets and goals. In this process poverty reduction and social security of women is also to be ensured.

Challenges related to gender equality promotion in social security

The challenge for the IMED in social security programming is to ensure their monitoring and evaluation ensuring outcomes. The gender equality outcomes are to be also captured in the process to determine whether social security of women and girls is ensured

Objectives of the Gender Action Plan

The objective of this GAP is to support integration of gender perspectives to monitor and evaluate implementation of the social security programmes, following the M&E framework to be developed by the GED.

Gender-responsive budget

This Division has not been included in the ministries/divisions to report on Gender Responsive Budget and has not prepared a gender responsive budget report and therefore, the share in gender budget has not yet determined, which will be done in future.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The Division is responsible for implementation and monitoring of all programmes. Currently gender equality results are not monitored. In collaboration with GED an overall M&E framework needs to be developed integrating gender-perspectives for monitoring of all programmes including the social security programmes. This Division should also assess the effectiveness of the existing social security programmes under the revenue budget and the Grievance Redress System at the field level. The Division should assess benefits of women from all social security programmes.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Gender-focused performance monitoring of social security programmes	Coordinate with GED to develop an M&E framework integrating gender perspectives	July 2021	Agreement reached with GED	CMC, GED, All Ministries
	Coordinate with GED to identify gender-focused result sectoral indicators	January 2021	GED Indicators identified for sectoral social security	
	Formulate instruments to capture sex-disaggregated data and gender equality progress of social security programmes	July 2021	Instruments include GED perspectives	
	Orient all ministries to ensure sex-disaggregated data-based reporting on the implementation of social security programmes	December 2021	All ministry staff oriented	
	Monitor the implementation progress of social security programmes	July 2022	Monitoring reports integrate information	
	Evaluate impacts of social security programmes capturing gender equality results	Annually	Reports integrate GED results	
Review and propose the expansion of scope of work of IMED	Review current allocation of business and prepare a proposal to monitor and evaluate social security programmes under revenue budget	December 2020	Proposal prepared and sent for approval	Cabinet Division, PMO, MoPA
Grievance redress system	Review the effectiveness of the complaint mechanism at the field level	Beginning July 2021	Staff oriented on review	LGD, Cabinet Division, NGOs, GED, field offices of ministries
Strengthen GE capacity	Evaluate the capacity-building activities of social security programmes (whether they integrate empowering elements, leadership, self-respect, livelihood, social support and risk-mitigation)	Beginning July 2021	Gender focus in monitoring reports	MoWCA
	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme design, implementation and monitoring	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to planning and supervising staff	

Table 31: Gender Action Plan of Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED)

Key Actions

- Formulate a M&E framework and evaluate impacts of social security programmes
- Incorporate gender aspects in IMED monitoring formats and instruments
- Assess enhancement of capacity of women for decision making, participation, protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation through the social security programmes.
- Ensure gender-responsive programme design with strengthened gender-focused result monitoring using sex-disaggregated data and ensure review of results.
- Provide assessment of gender aspects and provide inputs for consolidation of smaller programmes incorporating empowering elements for women
- Assess the effectiveness of grievance redress, capacity building, digitized single registry MIS and the G2P payment for social security.

Box 30: Key Actions of Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED)

29. Statistics and Informatics Division

Background

Statistics and Informatics Division (SID) is depository of official statistics and responsible for producing official statistics to support monitoring of progress of development initiatives and to help in decision making. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) under the Division is responsible for providing reliable and up to date data and information for development planning, national assessment and reporting. The Division conducts population censuses and surveys on agriculture, household Income and expenditure, economic affairs, socio-economic affairs, demography, environment and other matters. The Division guides and coordinates with other ministries and divisions on statistical standards and methods. This Division estimates national accounts, compiles price indices; and publishes domestic and international trade statistics. It is responsible for establishing, maintaining and updating National Population Register (NPR) and establishing a statistical network and strengthening it to facilitate a single registry based social security system. It also publishes a gender compendium of statistics and conducts survey on violence against women.

Mission for gender-focused social security

The Division has the mission to collect, process, analyse, and publish statistical information for the development of the country and welfare of the people by ensuring sex-disaggregated data collection, gender analysis and reporting to ensure social security and promote gender equality. It is to support monitoring of SDGs through collection and collation of relevant statistics.

Role in social security for gender equality and women's empowerment

The role of the Division is to ensure collection of gender focused information on the agreed GE statistics by the UN, incorporate gender perspectives in surveys and censuses and publication of reports and statistics.

Challenges related to gender equality promotion in social security

There is no single registry database for social security programmes accessible by all the social security implementing authorities. Besides, sex disaggregated data is not maintained or reported by many agencies/programmes. A sex disaggregated database is necessary to avoid duplication in beneficiary coverage, ensure equal benefits for women and to capture gender equality results. A targeted universal approach requires a social registry from where eligible beneficiaries can be sourced.

Objectives of Gender Action Plan (GAP)

The objective for the GAP is to develop, maintain and update the social security beneficiary database through creating a sex disaggregated single registry MIS. Besides SID is to ensure sex disaggregated data base and present gender focused results for social security programmes and all major surveys and censuses.

Gender-responsive budget

This Division has not been included in the ministries/divisions to report on Gender Responsive Budget and has not prepared a gender responsive budget report and therefore, the share in gender budget has not yet determined, which will be done in future.

Situation analysis in addressing gender equality

The division is responsible for all types of data collection, collation and presentation. Currently sex-disaggregated data is being collected in many sectors. Still many of the relevant information is not available in disaggregated manner. Therefore, household database is important, and all the data related to beneficiaries and benefits of social security programmes need to be presented in a disaggregated manner with gender analysis. The Division should ensure sex disaggregated data collection and analysis for all surveys and censuses.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Timeframe	Indicators	Shared Responsibility
Create the Bangladesh Household Database	Create the database with GIS and socioeconomic condition of people disaggregated by sex	December 2020	Data base incorporates sex disaggregated data	
Reporting gender-based results of social security programmes	Map sex disaggregated data needs for social security programmes and ensure collection through all major surveys/censuses	June 2021	Data needs identified	All social security ministries, GED
	Collaborate with GED in developing and identify a set of gender-focused indicators	December 2020	Studies identified for sex disaggregated data	GED
	Develop a set of gender-focused indicators addressing practical and strategic needs for programmes	July 2020	Gender focused indicators agreed for all social security programmes	GED, all ministries
	Include gender-based information and analysis for social security programme impacts, in all major surveys/censuses and in SDG reporting	December 2020 Continuous	All reports present gender focused results and sex disaggregated data	All ministries IMED
Strengthening GE capacity	Strengthen staff capacity to address gender equality and women empowerment in social security programme monitoring and in all survey and studies	December 2020 Continuous	Gender training imparted to staff	MoWCA, GED

Table 32: Gender Action Plan of Statistics and Informatics Division

Key Actions

- Conduct Bangladesh household survey for creating a single registry of beneficiaries.
- Develop an ideal framework of single registry-based MIS for social security
- Assess the capacity of women for protection, leadership, self-respect, entrepreneurship, social support and risk mitigation through survey and studies.
- Support gender-responsive programme design and gender focused progress assessment by providing relevant and updated sex-disaggregated data
- Ensure collection of sex disaggregated data and ensure collation and gender analysis in all studies, census and survey.
- Use digitized single registry for all statistical analysis of social security programmes.

Box 31: Key Actions of Statistics and Informatics Division

Gender Action Plan for Thematic Clusters

The NSSS has divided the social security programmes into five specific clusters. These include, a. Social Allowance, b. Food Security and Disaster Assistance, c. Social Insurance, d. Labour/Livelihood Intervention, and e. Human Development and Social Empowerment. Several ministries form one cluster led by one ministry. Promoting gender equality through the action plans of the clusters is also important.

Terms of Reference of the Thematic Clusters

The terms of reference of the thematic clusters are as follows:

- To reform, consolidate and integrate social security programmes in the light of the NSSS and to coordinate the action plans of ministries within each thematic cluster;
- To coordinate NSSS action plans of the Ministries/Divisions within the cluster and to submit the integrated action plans to Central Management Committee;
- To coordinate with the Finance Division for securing necessary budgetary allocations for implementation of action plans;
- To identify rules and regulations relating to the social security programmes of the cluster to be amended for the sake of implementing the NSSS;
- To monitor and evaluate the progress of implementation of the action plans of the Ministries/Divisions within the clusters; and
- To design integrative plans for different programmes to ensure correct targeting and their effective implementation.

Within the above, the responsibilities of the clusters include addressing gender issues, reducing gender gap and facilitating women's and girls' benefits and empowerment through the social security programmes by bringing in transformatory elements in the programme design and delivery as per the Gender Policy of the NSSS.

The following section presents the logic and the action plans for the thematic clusters.

1. Social Allowance Cluster

In Bangladesh, several social allowance or social assistance programmes are implemented by different ministries which transfer cash or in kind to the poor and vulnerable individuals or households. These include non-contributory, cash or in-kind allowances to vulnerable or distressed persons, like elderly, disabled, pregnant women, lactating mothers, old and distressed artists, freedom fighters, students and such others. School feeding is also included in this type of programmes.

The ministries having programmes/projects or activities focusing on transfer of social allowances are included in the cluster of social allowance. The list of ministries under this cluster is given below.

1. Ministry of Social Welfare – Coordinator
2. Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
3. Ministry of Cultural Affairs
4. Ministry of Liberation War Affairs
5. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
6. Local Government Division
7. Ministry of Labour and Employment
8. Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs

Since the Ministry of Social Welfare implements many social allowance types of programmes, this ministry is assigned to take the coordination role of the cluster.

Mission to address gender equality and women's empowerment in social security programmes

The mission of the cluster is to regularly coordinate with member-ministries to implement social allowance programmes in a more efficient and effective way. This includes identification of overlaps and duplications of similar programmes and to gradually consolidating them within one umbrella programme. This cluster is also responsible for overseeing how the allowances can be integrated within the lifecycle programmes and work as an integrated system. Within these responsibilities it is also an important agenda to facilitate gender equality, promote women and girls' empowerment and enhance their social security.

Challenge related to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

The main challenge for the cluster is to consolidate similar programmes, introduce Child Benefit programme and ensure women's empowerment through ensuring transformatory elements. It is a challenge to identify relevant actions and services for integration that can facilitate women's benefits and empower them.

Objective of the Gender Action Plan

The objectives of this GAP include ensuring social security of the different vulnerable sections of population, especially children, vulnerable women, elderly, tribal community, poor and sick artists, people with disability by means of social allowance. In addition, this cluster will facilitate integration of the various life cycle programmes, allowing access of the vulnerable people including women/girls to benefits across their lifecycle.

The cluster will negotiate with other clusters, for instance Human Development on health care support for the children, elderly, pregnant women, and disable persons. Eligible social allowance recipients will be referred to skills training and labour /livelihoods for employment, community resources and financial inclusion programmes within or outside the cluster. Elements of empowerment, social capital building, and self-reliance will be built within programmes or through collaboration for benefits and empowerment of women and girls.

Situation analysis

The Social allowance programmes are run by different ministries for different groups of people. Some of them are fragmented and not coordinated. Some programmes are not integrated within the main lifecycle based programmes. Therefore, it is important to consolidate the programmes considering the needs at different stages of the life cycle and coordinate with different ministries to ensure different services for the beneficiaries. Many of the programmes have scope to yield better results for women's empowerment and gender equality, which is not often harnessed. Design of programmes incorporating empowering elements, monitoring and coordination with other ministries is necessary.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Responsible Ministry	Shared Responsibility
Introduce Child Benefit Programme	Support and coordinate with the responsible ministry in designing and implementing a comprehensive child benefit programme	Agreement reached;	July 2021	MoWCA	HSD, MEFWD, MoE, MoPME,
	Including allowance, health, nutrition, education, shelter, maternity and care services for all children in the comprehensive programme design	project/ programme designed	October 2022		LGD, MoCHTA Finance Division

	Establish collaboration among ministries/programmes for skills, employment, community resources, financial inclusion, social capital building, self-reliance of women and girls	MOU signed; services ensured	December 2021		
Introduce Vulnerable Women's Benefit programme	Coordinate with MOSW and other ministries to consolidate and design a programme for vulnerable women	Agreement reached; project/programme designed	July 2021	MoWCA	HSD, MEFWD, MoE, MoPME, LGD, MoCHTA, MoYS, RDCD, Finance Division
	Include skills, allowance, health, nutrition, shelter, maternity and child care services for all women in the comprehensive programme	CMC approved design with these elements	October 2022		
	Establish collaboration within ministries for skills, employment, community resources, financial inclusion, social capital building, self-reliance of women and girls	MOU signed; Services ensured	December 2021		
Scale up Old Age Allowance	Support in expanding coverage of Old Age Allowance	Number of beneficiaries increased	July 2021	MOSW	LGD Finance Division HSD
	Establish collaboration for health care support for elderly	MOU signed; Services ensured	July 2021	MOSW	
Scale up programmes for people with disabilities	Update policies for disability benefits integrating within lifecycle based programmes (child, school age, working age, maternity, old age, stipend)	Policy updated	December 2022	MOSW	HSD, MEFWD, MOE, MOPME, LGD, MOCHTA, MoYS, RCCD Finance Division
	Design and launch programmes integrating disability benefits within lifecycle based programmes (child, school age, working age, pregnancy old age including in CBP	Agreement reached; project/programme launched	July 2023	MoSW	
	Establish collaboration among ministries for employment, skills, community resources, financial inclusion, social capital building, self-reliance of disabled persons including women and girls	MOU signed; Services ensured	July 2021	MoSW	
Review of GE results	Organize bi-monthly meeting and ensure review of progress in integration and results related to GE	Bi-monthly meetings held, and GED progress /actions reviewed	Continuous	MoSW	All members of the cluster
Transition of beneficiaries to other programme	Plan and coordinate transition with number of beneficiaries and cost of support for women's empowerment	Plan prepared and updated	Yearly	MoSW	Cluster members, FDs, Other Ministries

Strengthen capacity	Strengthen capacity of the staff of cluster member ministry to address GED	Training/orientation arranged	December 2020	MoSW	MoWCA Cluster members
Gender-responsive programme design	Coordinate to apply and enforce GED elements in social allowance programme design, approval and review	Guidance given for cluster members	December 2021	MoSW	MoWCA Cluster members
	Coordinate to up-scale tested gender-focused elements for empowerment in the consolidated programmes	Guidance given for cluster members	December 2021	MoSW	MoWCA Cluster members
Gender Focused Monitoring	Coordinate for the use of sex-disaggregated data and, presentation of reports/results on gender equality and women's empowerment	Guidance given for cluster members	December 2021	MoSW	Cluster members

Table 33: Gender Action Plan of Social Allowance Cluster

2. Food Security and Disaster Response Cluster

Food security is the first demand of a human being. Normally food security of the poor and vulnerable is ensured by guaranteeing access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. Involvement in production, access to commodity support or purchasing power are means to food security to meet the dietary needs and food preferences to run an active and healthy life. Ensuring access to enough food supply at an affordable cost is, therefore, essential. For social security and disaster response food supply in market is not enough but access to food needs to be assured. This becomes more important for women as they are generally responsible for managing household food distribution and nutrition. Therefore, several ministries play different roles in maintaining adequate food supply in the country and in ensuring access to food by the poor.

The ministries having contribution in ensuring food security are in the second cluster. The Ministry of Food is responsible for coordination of the cluster as this ministry is responsible for ensuring food supply for all through import-export, procurement, storage, distribution and movement of food. The other ministries implement food based social security programmes, support production and procurement.

1. Ministry of Food - Coordinator
2. Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief
3. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
4. Ministry of Agriculture
5. Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
6. Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock
7. Finance Division
8. Ministry of Social Welfare
9. Ministry of Commerce

Mission to address gender equality and women's empowerment in social security programmes

The mission of the cluster is to ensure food security by supply of food grains or financial supports to the poor and vulnerable including people affected by disaster and price shocks. The cluster is responsible for ensuring food and nutrition of the poor especially the vulnerable women and children and supporting during and after disaster situations.

Challenge related to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

The challenge faced by this cluster is to ensure food security by efficient management and consolidation of food based programmes. Another challenge is to ensure nutrition and empowerment of vulnerable population including women and children during conversion of food-based to cash-based programmes according to the NSSS.

Objective of the gender action plan

The main objective of the cluster GAP is to support a social security system that ensures food security maintaining nutritional needs of women and children and support food security of people affected by disasters. It will support facilitating women's empowerment within food security programming.

Situation Analysis

Several programmes are being implemented by different ministries to ensure food security. Some are for protection from hunger and others facilitate self-reliance and reduction of poverty. The designs are fragmented and not coordinated. Some programmes integrate empowering elements but the results are loosely monitored. Many of the programmes can yield better results for women's empowerment and gender equality, with some modifications. There is an effort to convert food-based programmes into cash-based programme. Therefore, it is essential to design of programmes in a way that it does not compromise the nutritional needs. It is also important to consider the empowering elements of existing programmes and incorporate them in consolidated programmes.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Responsible Ministry	Shared Responsibility
Food security through increased production	Expand coverage of agriculture, fisheries and livestock production programmes ensuring women's participation and empowerment	Increased number of women in agriculture, fisheries, livestock training, finance, employment; programmes include empowering elements	Continuous	MoFL, MoA	MOYS MOHFW MOWCA MOWCA Finance Division
Promote GE in consolidated food security type programmes	Coordinate with the implementing ministries to consolidate the food security programmes ensuring nutrition and women's empowerment elements	Programmes consolidated with such design features	July 2021	Ministry of Food, MoDMR	Finance Division MOWCA
GE in Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB)	Convert food-based transfers into cash-based transfer ensuring nutrition and training and women's empowerment elements in design for results	Cash transfer is introduced with support for GE knowledge and empowerment elements	July 2022	MoWCA, Ministry of Food	MODMR Finance Division
Food supply in areas of food shortage and in disaster areas	Provide food supply in disaster and drought affected areas ensuring nutrition and food cards for women	Food supply continued; women received food cards; no. of beneficiaries received fortified rice	July 2021	Ministry of Food	MOWCA MODMR Finance Division
	Include and gradually increase the proportion of fortified rice in disaster relief programmes	No. of beneficiaries received fortified rice in relief programmes	July 2022 onwards	Ministry of Food	MODMR Finance Division

	Use poverty-mapping, and expand OMS in areas with maximum poor female-headed households, including rural areas	OMS expanded in other areas	Continuous	Ministry of Food	MODMR
Transition of beneficiaries to other programme	Plan and coordinate transition with number of beneficiaries and cost of support for women's empowerment	Plan prepared and updated	Yearly	MoDMR	Cluster members FDs
Strengthen GE capacity	Strengthen capacity of the staff of member-ministries in the cluster to address GED	Training/orientation arranged	December 2021	MoDMR	MOWCA MOF MOA MOFL Cluster members
Gender-responsive programme design	Coordinate to apply and enforce GE elements in food security and disaster management programme design, approval and review	Guidance given for cluster members	December 2021	MoF	MoWCA Cluster members
	Coordinate to up-scale tested gender-focused elements for empowerment in the consolidated programmes	Guidance given for cluster members	December 2021	MoF	Cluster members Cabinet Division
Gender Focused Monitoring	Coordinate for the use of sex-disaggregated data and, presentation of reports/results on gender equality and women's empowerment	Guidance given for cluster members	December 2021	MoSW	Cluster members

Table 34: Gender Action Plan for Food Security and Disaster Response Cluster

3. Social Insurance Cluster

In Bangladesh, the system of social insurance is yet to be introduced. The NSSS provides for introducing a suitable framework of social insurance. Contributory social insurance also needs to be introduced and popularized. The FID is assessing the possibilities and structure of a NSIS for different groups of people to address different types of shocks and risks.

Social insurance is usually contributory, and risks are shared by an institution. The services, benefits, eligibility requirements, and contribution etc. are defined and provision is made to covers risks like unemployment, maternity, accidents, health care, old age, disability or illness. Sometimes costs are matched or subsidized by the employers, scheme providers or the Government. In Bangladesh, women face different types of risks. Women working in various sectors are generally low paid and have low capacity to participate in contributory insurance schemes. Employers are also often not willing to pay for the insurance. Therefore, there is need to subsidize the cost especially for the maternity leave and care.

The social insurance cluster comprise of the ministries having responsibility or are implementing programmes/projects on social insurance. Both the Finance Division and the FID are the focal points for implementing social insurance. The FID is assigned to coordinate the activities of the cluster. The following ministries are members of the cluster:

1. Financial Institutions Division – Coordinator
2. Finance Division
3. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
4. Ministry of Labour and Employment
5. Ministry of Social Welfare
6. Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment

Mission to address gender equality and women's empowerment in social security programmes

The mission of the cluster is assessing the possibilities and options for social security and design a national social insurance and private pension system for the country. An important area is to ensure insurance support for women in the critical phases of their life like maternity, reproductive health services, unemployment, and old age care.

Challenge related to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

In Bangladesh most of the people work in the informal sector. Women's participation in labour force is low and majority of women work as unpaid family workers or as informal sector workers including in domestic services. Social insurance best fits with formal economy employment. It is a big challenge even in formal sector as in many formal enterprises the employment conditions are informal. This brings a big challenge to initiate social insurance systems for people with informal employment. This especially is critical for women as they are in the informal sector and their income and resource base is low compared to men to be able to contribute. Therefore, concerted efforts from stakeholders including employers will be required to introduce such system. It may also require subsidy from the Government.

Objective of the Gender Action Plan

The objective of the GAP is to facilitate formulation of a social insurance and social pension programme that would consider women's participation and affordability.

Situation Analysis

Social insurance is almost non-existent in Bangladesh. The Government is trying to design a suitable national system. In this system, it is important to address the differential needs of men and women at different stages of their life and build appropriate components in the system. The FID is going to conduct a study, which also need to identify the needs of women at different stages, their affordability and appropriate delivery methodology.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Responsible Ministry	Shared Responsibility
National Social Insurance Scheme (NSIS)	Conduct study to determine viability of a NSIS identifying the needs of women at different stages, their affordability and effective ways to integrate in NSIS for delivery.	Study conducted	July 2021	Financial Institution Division	Finance Division PMO
	Design and launch NSIS addressing women's need at different ages ensuring their participation and provision of subsidy, if necessary	NSIS designed and launched	December 2021		

Private pension	Assess the viability of private pension and needs and ways to ensure women's participation	Study conducted	July 2021	Finance Division	Financial Institution Division
Strengthen GE capacity	Enhance capacity of the staff of FID and FD to identify and address women's needs in the NSIS implementation	Training/orientation arranged; guidance provided	December 2021 ongoing	Financial Institution Division	MOWCA Finance Division
Gender-responsive programme design	Coordinate to apply and enforce GE elements in social insurance programme design, approval and review	Guidance/training given for staff	December 2020	Financial Institution Division	MOWCA Finance Division
Gender Focused Monitoring	Coordinate for the use of sex-disaggregated data and, presentation of reports/results on gender equality and women's empowerment	Guidance given for cluster members	December 2020	MOSW	Cluster members

Table 35: Gender Action Plan for Social Insurance Cluster

4. Labour/Livelihood Intervention Cluster

Labour and livelihood programmes support people to get economic opportunities who suffer from unemployment, under employment, or lose economic opportunities and livelihood options due to calamities. People facing insecurity of livelihoods and low income are supported by labour and livelihood programmes of different ministries to help them in coming out of poverty. Women generally suffer from gender discriminatory norms and deprivation that prevents their entry in the labour market for gainful employment. Women's low educational and skills attainments, lack of productive assets, lack of access to resources, and lack of support from family and community are responsible for their confinement in traditional work and receiving low economic return. Several social security programmes under different ministries are helping people including women to gain skills, engage in gainful employment, access capital and different life skills. The ministries involved in this cluster are as follows:

1. Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief — Coordinator
2. Local Government Division
3. Rural Development and Cooperatives Division
4. Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
5. Ministry of Social Welfare
6. Finance Division
7. Ministry of Labour and Employment
8. Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock

Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief implements several programmes for creating temporary or short-term employment opportunities for poor men and women. Therefore, this ministry has been given the leading role in this cluster. LGD also implements workfare programmes to provide employment in infrastructure.

Mission to address gender equality and women's empowerment in social security programmes

The mission for GE of the cluster is to improve livelihoods options for poor women, ensure access to labour market and facilitate their empowerment.

Challenge related to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

The challenge for this cluster is to create gainful livelihood options for deserving poor people including women and young population. On the other hand, overcoming the social and capacity barriers for accessing productive and gainful employment opportunities by women is another challenge. Consolidation of workfare programmes ensuring women's benefits and their empowerment is a major challenge for the cluster.

Objective of the Gender Action Plan

The main objectives of the GAP are to support the cluster to strengthen livelihood support for women and men and facilitate empowerment of women through these programmes. Access of the poor in labour market, ensuring congenial working environment for all including women and support for creating social capital and empowerment will be facilitated.

Situation Analysis

The ministries under this cluster are implementing different types of labour and livelihood programmes including skills training, financial inclusion, asset transfer, self-employment, workfare, awareness raising, and service provisions. Some programmes like SWAPNO under LGD has provisions for providing wage employment and prepare women for self-employment and facilitate their empowerment and building social capital. Several workfare programmes are under implementation with different components in various modes of operation. They are not coordinated and many of them have the potential to empower beneficiaries and make them self-reliant, but such elements are not included. Some programmes only provide training without support for accessing labour market. Consolidation of the workfare programmes incorporating tested empowerment elements is important. Coordination with other programmes is necessary for better benefits of the beneficiaries. On the other hand, the rights of workers are often ignored in the private sector. Congenial work environment, labour benefits, child care facilities are lacking in many sectors.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Responsible Ministry	Shared Responsibility
Workfare programmes	Assess workfare programmes for consolidation and effective GE results	Study report and recommendations	July 2021	MODMR	LGD MOWR
	Strengthen and consolidate all workfare programmes	Programmes consolidated	Dec 2021	MODMR	LGD MOWR Finance Division
	Incorporate tested empowerment elements like in SWAPNO in all workfare and consolidated programmes	Programmes consolidated with such elements	Dec 2021	MODMR LGD	LGD MOWR Finance Division
Provision of childcare across all	Establish childcare facilities in all government offices, private enterprises and industrial/economic zones	Guidance issued to all ministries and private sector	July 2021	MOWCA, MODMR	MOPA Cluster members All other ministries

formal & informal employment		Childcare facilities increased in government offices, industries and private sector	July 2021continuous	MODMR	MoPA All other ministries
Facilitation in accessing labour market	Provide skills enhancement opportunity for women beneficiaries catering to the market demand	Market assessment report; provision of skills for women	July 2021continuous	MODMR	LGD Cluster members Finance Division
	Coordinate with relevant ministries and other thematic clusters to ensure better access of women beneficiaries to labour markets.	More beneficiaries access labour market	Continuous	MODMR	LGD Cluster members Finance Division
	To oversee that the ministries strictly adhere to project guidelines like Amar Bari, Amar Khamar, VGD and others	Monitoring reports	Continuous	MODMR	Cluster members IMED
Ensure labour rights	Oversee and coordinate for strict implementation of the provisions under labour law and Occupational Health and Safety Policy	Independent monitoring ensured	Annually	MOLA and MODMR	Other members
Strengthen GE capacity	Strengthen capacity of the staff of member-ministries in the cluster to address GE	Training/orientation arranged; guidance provided	December 2020 ongoing	MODMR	MOWCA Cluster members Finance Division
Gender-responsive programme design	Coordinate to apply and enforce GE elements in labor, livelihood and workfare programme design, approval and review	Guidance/training given for staff	December 2021	MODMR	MOWCA Cluster members Finance Division
Gender Focused Monitoring	Coordinate for the use of sex-disaggregated data and, presentation of reports/results on gender equality and women's empowerment	Guidance given for cluster members	December 2021	MOSW	Cluster members

Table 36: Gender Action Plan for Labour/Livelihood Intervention Cluster

5. Human Development and Social Empowerment Cluster

Social security programmes have supported women and girls' access to public services, particularly in nutrition, health and education, and have helped increasing women's educational attainments and reducing child and maternal mortality. The programmes have also supported women's access to labour market by enhancing their productive capacity.

The cluster on human development has been formed with the ministries which have mandates in human development activities. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education has the largest programmes for schools stipend and school feeding. Therefore, this ministry has been identified as the cluster coordinator. The membership of the cluster is as follows:

1. Ministry of Primary and Mass Education - Coordinator
2. Prime Minister's Office
3. Ministry of Land
4. Ministry of Education
5. Ministry of Social Welfare
6. Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
7. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
8. Ministry of Labour and Employment Ministry of Industry
9. Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
10. Information and Communication Technology Division
11. Ministry of Youth and Sports

Mission to address gender equality and women's empowerment in social security programmes

The mission of this cluster is to coordinate with the line ministries to enhance education and training for children and young people including women for enhancing their access to job market, public sector activities and their empowerment. Ensuring inclusive education and health services and thereby upholding the rights of the poor especially, women and children is within the mandate.

Challenge related to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment

The main challenge of the cluster is to consolidate efforts of different ministries in formulating a robust system of human development and to ensure social justice for marginalized groups. This includes assurance of completion of education, ensuring health care, skills development and facilitating women's empowerment and control of their own lives.

Objective of the Gender Action Plan

Main objectives of the GAP are to support the cluster in coordinating the school stipend programmes and other social security programmes like training to develop young men and women as human resources. Support for women and girls in completion of education and their training for accessing job market are to be ensured. An important aspect is to support children to grow as healthy human beings and gain skills and training that enable them for economic participation and thus facilitate their empowerment, social justice and equity.

Situation analysis

Due to introduction of stipend programmes and school meals programme, Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in enrolment in primary and secondary levels. Still secondary completion rate among girls is low and their participation in higher and technical education is even lower. Despite many initiatives, malnutrition among children and women is high and maternal mortality is still higher than expected. On the one hand there is high unemployment rate and there is lack of skilled human resources in the market on the other. Therefore, it is important to work in a coordinated manner to prepare the young men and women to be able to cater to the market demand and to meet the challenges of a middle income country. Women need to be developed as agents for change.

Gender Action Plan

Objectives	Activities	Performance Indicators	Timeframe	Responsible Ministry	Shared Responsibility
School Stipend Programme	Monitor the progress in scaling up the number of beneficiaries	Number of boys and girls beneficiaries increased	December 2020	MoPME and MoE	Finance Division

Coordinate with Child Benefit Programme	Consolidate the programmes related to child development (e.g. orphan's and school meals, child healthcare, immunization, nutrition, water and sanitation, etc.)	Child development programmes consolidated	December 201	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, MoWCA	Cluster members
	Coordinate the consolidated programme with the Child Benefit Programme for better results	Coordination established with child support programme	July 201	MoPME and MoE	Cluster members
Adolescent empowerment	Consolidate, plan and launch programmes for adolescents (incorporating skills, reproductive health, self-development for empowerment, leadership, banking)	Programme for adolescents launched and running	July 2022 Continuous	MoPME MoWCA	Cluster members
Skills and employment	Coordinate among ministries about skills training for women imparted for employment	Training programmes streamlined; more women trained	Continuous	MoLE MoE MoYS	Cluster members MoI
					Finance Division
	Coordinate with different ministries and clusters for internship, attachment, training, and employment	Increase in employed young men and women	Continuous	MoLE MoI MoYS	Cluster members MoI Finance Division
Social empowerment	Oversee and coordinate with training providers to ensure inclusiveness and incorporate empowering elements in all training	Social empowerment and inclusion efforts incorporated in all programmes	Continuous	MoPME MoYS	Cluster members MoI Finance Division
Care for sick, children, elderly, and disabled	Initiate a study to formulate policy for developing a low-cost care economy to ensure community level child, elderly and disability care	Study completed; policy formulation initiated	July 2021 July 2022	PMO MoWCA, MoHFW MoSW	Cluster members Cabinet Division
Transition of beneficiaries to different programmes	Assess needs for transition in other programmes with number of beneficiaries men and women and cost of empowerment elements	Need assessed and proposal prepared	Yearly	MoPME	Cluster members MoI Finance Division
	Roll out transition plan addressing the specific needs of women and girls	Plan prepared, rolled out and updated	Yearly	MoPME	Cluster members MoI Finance Division
Strengthen GE capacity	Ensure that the capacity of the staff of the cluster member ministries is enhanced to identify and address women's needs in the education, skills, and health-related programmes	Training/orientation arranged; guidance provided	December 2020 ongoing	MoDMR	MoWCA Cluster members Finance Division

Gender-responsive programme design	Coordinate to apply and enforce GE elements in human development and social empowerment programme design, approval and review	Guidance/training given for staff	December 2020	MoDMR	MoWCA Cluster members Finance Division
Gender Focused Monitoring	Ensure that all programmes keep sex-disaggregated data and present/report results on gender equality and women's empowerment	Guidance given for cluster members	December 2021	MoSW	Cluster members

Table 37: Gender Action Plan for Human Development and Social Empowerment Cluster

Part E: Implementation and Monitoring

Implementation

Effective implementation of the Gender Strategy and Action Plan to implement the Gender Policy of the NSSS is dependent upon the leadership, efficiency, coordination, and proper use of resources by the stakeholders. The main responsibility of implementation of the Action Plan primarily rests on the 35 ministries of the Government.

I. Institutions and their roles in implementation

- a. **Ministries/divisions:** The relevant Ministries/Divisions will be responsible for the implementation of the actions identified for their own areas. This responsibility will be discharged through building a well-collaborated system and partnership amongst the ministries, clusters and where necessary with local government, civil society organizations (CSO) and the private sector.

The ministries will identify ways for action and allocate resources to implement the actions towards women and children's benefits, facilitate women's participation and empowerment in all the programmes and activities efficiently. Each ministry will develop an annual work plan integrating social security considering the provisions of the Social Security Action Plan and the Gender Action Plan. This work plan will be an integral part of the Annual Performance Agreements (APA) of the ministry/division. The Ministries/Divisions will undertake measures as per the decision of the Cluster coordination meetings, and the guidance of the Central Coordination Committee in fulfilling the aims, goals, and targets of the NSSS with specific attention to the Gender Policy for NSSS. Each Ministry and Division will establish and maintain communication with the CSOs and private sector for effective implementation of the Action Plan. They will ensure sharing and dissemination of information at the division, district and upazilla levels in a planned way, as necessary in consultation with local administration, field offices, elected local government representatives, and the representatives of women's organizations and other CSOs. The annual work plan of each ministry/division will identify the requirements of financial, human and technical resources and will ensure allocation and mobilization of all resources.

- b. **Ministry of Women and Children Affairs:** MOWCA will provide support for mainstream gender in policies, projects and programmes, gender capacity building, and performance monitoring, where necessary. As the Action Plan is consistent with the National Women Development Policy 2011, while coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan for Women's Development, MOWCA will take cognizance of this Action Plan. MOWCA will lead the process in developing the Child Benefit Programme and the Vulnerable Women Benefit Programmes. Therefore, it will consider all programmes of other ministries that can be consolidated and can be a part of these two programmes. Hence, MOWCA will maintain regular communication with the Gender Focal Points of the concerned ministries/divisions or the nominated officials.
- c. **General Economics Division:** GED of the Planning Commission will provide overall technical and operational guidance on operating standards, and assist in identifying social security priorities and trends, applying a gender lens. GED will ensure identification of indicators of gender equality and empowerment in different sectors and support assessment of performances of the ministries and at the national level.
- d. **Statistics and Informatics Division:** SID will help develop a data base by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics on eligible individuals for different types of social security and prepare a consolidated list of social security recipients in a sex-disaggregated manner. BBS will ensure collection and collation of sex-disaggregated data by all statistical agencies including BANBEIS or NIPSOM and presentation of gender focused progress reporting. This Division with support from BBS will also help in compiling a single registry of social security support recipients of Bangladesh.
- e. **Finance Division:** By strengthening Gender Responsive Budgeting with poverty and social security focus better impact on gender equality through social security will be pursued. The gender responsive budgeting process will be continued and improved. Focus will be shifted from at-entry allocation to utilization of gender budget for gender equality results. A mechanism to assess the

utilization and results will be developed and applied. Allocation for different stages of lifecycle will be ensured to provide timely support for lifecycle-based needs like child development, school age, working age, reproductive age, and disability to ensure their social security support and to safeguard that social security requirements of individuals at their later stages of lifecycle are low. Allocation for pursuing gender equality and women's empowerment will be enhanced to protect women and girls from vulnerabilities. This Division will also ensure that all beneficiaries of all cash transfer programmes are covered by G2P repayment system.

II. Roles in coordination

a. **Central Management Committee (CMC):** The CMC under the Cabinet Division is a powerful committee for the coordination and evaluation of social security programmes. The CMC will lead the process by ensuring smooth coordination between ministries and clusters to achieve the objectives of the Gender Action Plan and to implement the Gender Policy of NSSS. This responsibility will be discharged through building a well-collaborated institutional system and partnership amongst the ministries, clusters and where necessary with local government, CSOs and the private sector. CMC in its regular meetings chaired by the Secretary, Coordination and Reforms of the Cabinet Division will meet with the representatives of the different ministries to follow up, monitor and advise on the future programme implementation. The CMC will coordinate the inter-ministerial activities and approve the programme consolidation plans of different ministries. The CMC will review the annual reports of different ministries relating to the implementation of annual work plan on social security and the Gender Action Plan. Annual performance report on social security will be prepared annually for presentation to the higher authorities. Modification of work plans, if necessary, will be guided by the CMC's observation and decision. Any matter implicating more than one cluster will be placed to the CMC for coordination.

b. **The General Economics Division:** GED will provide overall technical guidance on operating standards, collection, collation and dissemination of pertinent information. GED will act as a think-tank on social security incorporating gender equality and women's empowerment issues and will offer intellectual assistance to further strengthen the social security programmes. GED will review policies of different ministries and divisions to ensure consistency with the NSSS, its Gender Policy and the Action Plan. GED will help identify social security priorities and trends, for the country, applying a gender lens. Support will be given through the CMC and meetings will be held periodically with the Social Security /Gender Focal Points of the ministries/divisions to guide on these issues.

Cluster coordinating ministries/divisions: The programmes under different thematic clusters will be coordinated by the lead coordinating ministry or division to ensure that the objectives are achieved. The clusters will coordinate within the cluster and if necessary, with other ministries and clusters to implement the action plan. The lead ministry will coordinate the Gender Action Plans of the ministries/divisions within the cluster and submit the integrated action plans to CMC. The clusters will maintain that the progress of implementation of the Gender Action Plan is followed up. Particularly, the coordination and collaboration between ministries for consolidation of programmes and mutual support will be followed up during cluster meetings ensuring follow up and guidance for addressing gender equality in programmes and gender focused reporting. The decisions of the cluster committees will be sent to the CMC. Consolidation plans of the clusters will incorporate tested methodologies and components that support promoting gender equality, women's empowerment and transformation. The Clusters will also support proper targeting and transition of beneficiaries from one programme to the other as per decisions. The Clusters will also coordinate with the Finance Division for securing necessary budgetary allocations for implementation of the action plans. Any matter implicating more than one cluster will be placed to the CMC for coordination.

c. **Social Security /Gender Focal Points of the ministries/divisions:** The Social Security /Gender Focal Points of the Ministries/divisions will be responsible for inclusion of the gender perspectives within projects/programmes as per the Government Guideline, coordination of women's empowerment

aspects within the ministry, guiding for preservation of sex disaggregated data and statistics and gender-based results monitoring and reporting.

Monitoring and Capturing Results

Monitoring is the regular process of systematic and purposeful observation for assessment of activities taking place in projects or programmes. Monitoring will be conducted for analyzing the effects on the community; determining the utilization of the inputs/resources of the project/programmes; identifying challenges/problems and finding solutions; ensuring completion of all targeted activities by the right people and in time; capturing/sharing lessons from one project/programme experience on to another; and determining the most appropriate way of addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in social security programmes.

In this case, information will be gathered routinely to find out how activities of different ministries are progressing towards gender focused social security. Information from different sources will be collected to report and provide feedback to the ministries/divisions for making decisions for effective implementation and improving project performance.

Currently, monitoring systems review progress of the programmes in isolation, count how many beneficiaries are reached but do not assess the impact of the programmes on gender equality and women's empowerment. There are a few gender indicators but the social security programmes do not have nationally-agreed gender focused outcome indicators. There is almost no information of reduction of women's poverty and social security. The NSSS recommends preparing a results-based monitoring framework using a matrix of specific indicators and preparing annual reports for the CMC. Therefore, it is important to identify nationally applicable sector-based gender indicators and use them for assessments. This system will integrate gender perspectives and introduce indicators for results- based monitoring. For these to happen, capacity building of staff of all ministries and divisions will be necessary.

The CMC on Social Security Programmes, chaired by the Secretary of the Cabinet Division and represented by all Ministries, will monitor the implementation of the Policy and Action Plan including progress in grievance (if any) redressal.

All Ministries implementing social security programmes including the cluster coordinating ministries according to the NSSS will be responsible to monitor implementation and assess the gender equality results and report on performance to the CMC as per the gender action plan. The Annual Performance Agreement (APA) is a results-based performance management system used by the Government. The activities of the Gender Action Plan will be integrated in the APA of the respective ministries and divisions and routinely monitored for optimal output and impacts.

Monitoring of field level targeting, beneficiary identification, and delivery of services will be monitored in partnership with local government and CSOs coordinated at the Upazila and District Coordination Committees, as necessary.

The GED together with MOWCA and relevant ministries will support developing nationally agreed gender indicator for each sector and empowerment of women.

The Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) currently only review the development projects that too do not investigate gender aspects. IMED will be responsible to integrate gender perspectives and use indicators in monitoring of social security programmes. The CMC will work towards ensuring that IMED also is responsible for monitoring of the social security programmes under review budget of different ministries.

The new platform for GO-NGO Collaboration for Social Security Programme will support the ministries in implementing the programmes and assist the ministries and the Cabinet Division in monitoring and addressing grievances at the local and national levels.

The monitoring framework proposed in the Social Security Action Plan will be reviewed to integrate gender aspects and include indicators for gender equality and empowerment.

Impact evaluation of this policy after every five year.

Annex

1. Asadullah, Md. Niaz, Return to Education in Bangladesh, QEH Working Paper 130, 2005.
2. Asian Development Bank, Social Protection for Older Persons Social Pensions in Asia, 2012
3. AusAid, UN-Women, UNFPA, and KWDI, Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls Through Social Norm Change, Learning Paper from The Asia-Pacific Forum on Preventing Violence Against Women and Girls: Evidence and Tools for Social Norm Change, Bangkok, 2015
4. Babajanian, B., Hagen-Zanker, J. & Holmes, R. (2014). How do Social Protection and Labour Programmes Contribute to Social Inclusion? Evidence from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal. London: ODI, 2014.
5. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Government of Bangladesh and UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 2012-13.
6. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Government of Bangladesh, Sample Vital Registration System, 2011.
7. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Government of the Peoples Republic Bangladesh, Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2010.
8. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Government of the Peoples Republic Bangladesh, Labour Force Survey, 2013.
9. Beazley, Rodolfo and Kirit Vaidya, Social Protection Through Work: Supporting the Rural Working Poor in Lower Income Countries, Oxford Policy Management, 2015.
10. Bellows, Anne C. et al, Gender, Nutrition, and the Human Right to Adequate Food: Toward an Inclusive Framework, Taylor & Francis, 2016.
11. Browne, Evie. Social Protection: Topic Guide. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC), University of Birmingham, 2015.
12. Chant, Sylvia, The 'Feminisation of Poverty' and the 'Feminisation' of Anti-Poverty Programmes: Room for Revision? Journal of Development Studies, 2008.
13. Dutt, Kuntala Lahirit, Experiencing and Coping with Change: Women-Headed Farming Households in the Eastern Gangetic Plains, Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, 2014.
14. General Economics Division, Planning Commission, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh, National Social Security Strategy, 2015.
15. Hashemi, Syed M. and Wamiq Umaira, New Pathways for The Poorest: The Graduation Model From BRAC, Institute of Development Studies and Centre for Social Protection, CSP Research Report, 2011.
16. Hertz, Tom, The Effect of Minimum Wages on the Employment and Earnings of South Africa's Domestic Service Workers, Upjohn Institute Working Paper No. 05-120. 2005.
17. Holmes, Rebecca and Nicola Jones, Rethinking Social Protection Using A Gender Lens, Overseas Development Institute, 2010.
18. International Labour Organization (ILO), Decent Work for Women and Men in the Informal Economy: Profile and Good Practices in Cambodia. Bangkok and Phnom Penh, 2006.
19. Janvry, Alain de, et al., Effects on School Enrollment and Performance of a Conditional Transfers Program in Mexico, Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics, UCB UC Berkeley, 2003.
20. Kabeer, Naila, Social Protection Strategies for an Inclusive Society: A Citizen-Centred Approach, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex UK, Note prepared for UN Expert Group Meeting on Promoting Social Integration, Helsinki, 2008.
21. Khan, A.H.M. Noman et al., Employment Situation of People with Disabilities in Bangladesh, Centre for Services and Information on Disability and ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB), 2014.
22. Koehler, Gabriele, Transformative Social Protection: Reflections on South Asian Policy, IDS Bulletin Volume 42, Issue 6, 2011.
23. Levine, Ruth et. al., Girls Count, A Global Investment & Action Agenda, Center for Global Development, 2008.
24. Lund, Francie, Social Protection and the Informal Economy: Linkages and Good Practices for Poverty Reduction and Empowerment, OECD, 2009.
25. Luttrell, Cecilia and Caroline Moser, Gender and Social Protection, Overseas Development Institute, Draft 2004.

26. Mahmud, Simeen, Female Secondary School Stipend Programme in Bangladesh: A critical assessment, 2003.
27. New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Women and the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation System, Comments to the Independent Review Panel on the New Brunswick Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation System, 2007.
28. Osmani, Siddiqur R. et al., Strategic Review of Food Security and Nutrition in Bangladesh, World Food Programme, 2016.
29. Overseas Development Institute, Why Social Protection is “Gender Blind”, **Gender, Politics and Social Protection** Briefing paper, 2010.
30. Rahman, Hossain Zillur and David Hulme, National Social Protection Strategy- A Political Economy Assessment, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2014.
31. Reimers, Fernando, et al., Where is the “Education” in Conditional Cash Transfers in Education, UIS Working Paper No. 4, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006.
32. Saavedra, Juan Esteban and Sandra Garcia, Impacts of Conditional Cash Transfer Programs on Educational Outcomes in Developing Countries: A Meta-analysis, RAND Labour and Population working paper series, 2012.
33. Sabates-Wheeler, Rachel and Stephen Devereux, Transformative Social Protection, IDS Working Paper 232, 2004.
34. Shafiq, M. Najeeb, Household Rates of Return to Education in Rural Bangladesh: Accounting for Direct Costs, Child Labour, and Option Value, Education Economics, Vol. 15, No. 3, 343–358, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Virginia, USA, 2007.
35. Skolnik, Richard, Conditional Cash Transfers – Learning as We Go, Global Network, 2011, <http://endtheneglect.org/2011/03/conditional-cash-transfers-%E2%80%93-learning-as-we-go/>.
36. Thakur Sarojini Ganju, Catherine Arnold and Tina Johnson, Gender and Social Protection, 2009.
37. The World Bank, Bangladesh- Poverty Assessment for Bangladesh: Creating Opportunities and Bridging the East-West Divide, Washington DC., 2008.
38. The World Bank, Bolsa Família: Brazil’s Quiet Revolution, 2013, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2013/11/04/bolsa-familia-Brazil-quiet-revolution>
39. UNESCO, Secondary Education Information Base Country Profile: Bangladesh, 2007.
40. UN Women, The Progress of Women 2015-16, Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights, BOX 2.2.
41. Werner, Wendy J., Micro-insurance in Bangladesh: Risk Protection for the Poor? Journal of Healthy Population and Nutrition, 2009.
42. Yoong, Joanne et al., The Impact of Economic Resource Transfers to Women Versus Men, Technical report 2001, EPPI-Centre, University of London, 2012.
43. Zhang, Xiaobo et al., Rising Wages in Bangladesh, IFPRI Discussion Paper 01249, International Food Policy Research Institute, 2013.

Glossary of Terms

Affirmative Action: A set of procedures designed to eliminate discrimination against members of a disadvantaged group within a society, mainly by enhancing their priorities, visibility and interests towards a holistic development of the community and society.

Care Work encompasses care provided to dependent children, the elderly, the sick and the disabled requiring care at home or in care institutions. Sharing of care work and provision of care services are essentially related to the achievement of equality between women and men. The lack of affordable, accessible and high-quality care services and the fact that care work is not equally shared between women and men have a direct negative impact on women's ability to participate in all aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life.

Development: a process by which the members of society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable improvements in their quality of life. Development process and its results are determined by the vision of society, the availability of resources, and the available approaches, strategies and methods. To foster development for gender equality efforts need to address gender-based constraints and foster equality.

Empowerment refers to the process and outcome of actions taken by men and women towards taking control of their lives (setting their own agenda, gaining skills, increasing self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance). Empowerment of women is an essential process in the transformation of gender relations including division of labour. The process addresses the structural, systemic and underlying causes of subordination and discrimination through increased women's capability to make strategic life choices.

Engendering refers to the process of integrating gender considerations and concerns into words, actions and assessments.

Equality of opportunity refers to human rights and aims towards the achievement of equality of opportunity, in access to and share of employment opportunities, services and resources as well as in equality of treatment by employers and service providers.

Gender refers to socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to women and men on a differential basis. Whereas biological sex is determined by genetic and anatomical characteristics, gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them.

Gender Analysis is a systematic way of looking at the different impacts of development, policies, programmes and legislation on women and men that entails, first and foremost, collecting sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive information about the population concerned. Gender analysis also examines the multiple ways in which women and men, as social actors, engage in strategies to transform existing roles, relationships, and processes in their own interest and in the interest of others.

Gender Awareness refers to a state of knowledge of the differences in roles and relations of women and men and how this results in differences in power relations, status, privileges and needs.

Gender Discrimination means providing differential treatment to individuals on the ground of their sex.

Gender Division of Labour is an overall social pattern where women are allocated a set of gender roles and men given another set. This division is given on the basis of sex and not by acquired skills.

Gender Equality considers that all human beings, both men and women, are equally free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without the limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender roles, or prejudices. Gender equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are considered, valued and favoured equally. It does not mean that women and men have

to become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female.

Gender Equity means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities. In the development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in special measures to compensate for the historical and social disadvantages of women.

Gender Gap means a difference in any aspect of socio-economic status of women and men; it is not just a male/female gap. It is a gap that arises from the different social roles ascribed by society to women and men.

Gender Mainstreaming refers to a goal oriented process that recognizes that most institutions consciously and unconsciously serve the interests of men and encourages institutions to adopt a gender perspective in transforming themselves. It promotes the full participation of women in decision-making, moving women from the margins to the centre of development and seeks to ensure equal implications for women and men of any planned action, legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels.

Gender Perspective refers to an approach in which the ultimate goal is to create equity and equality between women and men.

Gender Policy refers to guiding principles to a course of action arrived at by decision makers to address issue or issues within the organization's policy that integrates gender in the mainstream of its activities. The policy also designates institutional arrangements, responsibilities, management functions and tools/guidelines for mainstreaming gender.

Gender Relation refers to the relations between men and women acquired in the process of socialization, in terms of power sharing, decision-making, access to resources, privileges, rights, benefits, division of labour, their roles at the household and the community levels in relative terms. The use of gender relations as analytic category shifts the focus from viewing women in isolation from men.

Gender Responsive refers to a planning process in which programmes and policy actions are developed to deal with and counteract problems which arises out of socially constructed differences between women and men.

Gender Sensitive refers to the state of knowledge of the socially constructed differences between women and men, including differences in their needs, as well as to the use of such knowledge to identify and understand the problems arising from such differences and to act purposefully to address them. It also refers to a mind-set where people recognize or are aware of gender based discrimination which hinders enjoyment of human rights. It is an understanding and routine consideration of the socio economy cultural factors underlying discrimination based on sex whether against women or men.

Gender Stereotyping refers to constant portrayal in the media, the press or in education of women and men occupying certain roles according to the socially constructed gender division of labour and expectation in behaviour. It also means confusing what is believed to be natural with what is expected of individuals of their gender roles.

Practical Gender Needs are identified by women within their socially defined roles, as a response to an immediate perceived necessity. They usually relate to inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care and employment, and they do not challenge gender divisions of labour and women's subordinate position in society.

Inclusive programme is understood as the extent to which a programme includes people from diverse backgrounds or communities involved as beneficiaries, service providers and in decision-making. Inclusive programmes, not only serve individuals from diverse backgrounds but, more importantly, they value the perspectives and contributions of people from all communities and sexes, and they incorporate their needs, assets, and perspectives into the design and implementation of programmes. Furthermore, inclusive organizations recruit diverse staff and serve all ethnic compositions and hard-to-reach groups.

Human development is the process of enlarging people's freedoms and opportunities and improving their well-being. Central to the human development approach is the concept of capabilities. Capabilities – what people can do and what they can become – are the equipment one has to pursue for a life of value. Basic capabilities valued by virtually everyone include good health and nutrition, education and skills, access to knowledge and a decent material standard of living. Other capabilities central to a fulfilling life could include the ability to participate in the decisions that affect one's life, to have control over one's living environment, to enjoy freedom from violence, to have societal respect and to relax and have fun. Capabilities are expanded (or constrained) by one's own efforts and by the institutions and conditions of the society.

Sex-disaggregated data means all data should be separated by sex in order for gender analysis or to measure differential impacts on men and women.

Social Security involves support to people who are in need of support, to provide them with a guaranteed minimum income, a comprehensive safety net for those who suffer shocks and crises that may push them into poverty, build an inclusive system for all that effectively tackles and prevents poverty and inequality and contributes to broader human development, employment and economic growth.

Strategic Gender needs are identified by women as a result of their subordinate social status and tend to challenge gender divisions of labour power and control, and traditionally defined norms and roles. Strategic Gender needs vary according to particular contexts and may include such issues as equal inheritance, legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages, and women's control over their bodies.

Voice and Agency encompass women's role as decision makers in public and private spheres including politics and promotion of their leadership. Changed attitudes on women's and girls' rights, women's enhanced knowledge of their rights and increasing their bargaining power, the understanding and support for enforcing women's rights among men and boys are also included.

Gender Diagnostics, Policy, Strategy and Action Plan

For National Social Security Strategy of Bangladesh

Contribution:

Gender Focal Points of 35 social security implementing Ministries / Divisions of the Government of Bangladesh

Strategy Developed by:

Gender / Central Management Committee (CMC) Focal Points of 35 Ministries and Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme Team

Compiled by

Ferdousi Sultana Begum, Social Development and Gender Expert, Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme, Cabinet Division, General Economics Division, and UNDP

Reviewed by:

1. Mr. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Secretary, Coordination and Reforms, Cabinet Division
2. Mr. A K Mohiuddin Ahmad, Additional Secretary, Coordination, Cabinet Division
3. Dr. Shahnaz Arefin, Joint Secretary, Social Security Branch, Coordination Wing, Cabinet Division
4. Mr. Faizul Islam, Joint Chief, General Economics Division (GED), and National Project Director, Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme, Cabinet Division and GED
5. Mr. Ashfaque Amin Mukut, Deputy Secretary, Social Security Branch, Coordination Wing, Cabinet Division
6. Mr. Md. Shahidul Islam, Deputy Secretary, Civil Registration Branch, Coordination Wing, and Deputy National Project Director, SSPS Programme, Cabinet Division
7. Mr. Md. Mahbulul Alam Siddique, Senior Assistant Chief, GED, and Assistant National Project Director, SSPS Programme, Cabinet Division
8. Mr. Sheikh Moinul Islam, Senior Assistant Chief, GED, and Assistant National Project Director, SSPS Programme, Cabinet Division
9. Mr. Shahriar Jamil, Senior Assistant Secretary, PS to Senior Secretary, Coordination and Reforms, and Assistant Project Director, SSPS Programme, Cabinet Division
10. Mr. Mohammad Khaled Hasan, Deputy Secretary (on-lien) Social Protection Specialist, Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme, Cabinet Division, General Economics Division, and UNDP
11. Mr. Aminul Arifeen, Project Manager, Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme, Cabinet Division, General Economics Division and UNDP

This strategy and action plan have been developed under the guidance of Sub-committee headed by the Secretary, Coordination and Reforms of the Cabinet Division with the technical support of “Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme”, under a TA support project of United National Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh funded by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Government of Australia.



Social Security Policy Support (SSPS) Programme
Cabinet Division and General Economics Division (GED) of Planning
Commission Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.