

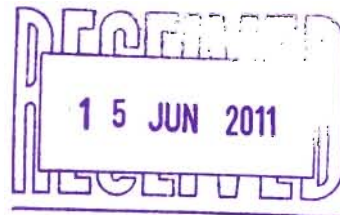
Gender equality promotion within the current development context of Bangladesh

Course: BUS 498

Prepared by

Sabrina Ahmed

ID# 2003-3-10-120



Prepared for

Mr. M Sayeed Alam
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(SIGNATURE OF COURSE INSTRUCTOR)

Department of Business Administration

23 December 2008

EAST WEST UNIVERSITY



Mr. M Sayeed Alam
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21 December 2008

Sabrina Ahmed
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Dear Sabrina:

As the students of Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A) Degree you are supposed to prepare a Project Report and submit that at the end of the semester, you are authorized to do your Report on “Gender equality promotion within the current development context of Bangladesh”.

I will appreciate if you prepare the report according to the instruction given.

Thanks.

Sincerely:

(Mr. M Sayeed Alam)
Senior Lecturer
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21Decemberr 2008

Mr. M Sayeed Alam
Senior Lecturer
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Dear Sir:

Here is My Project report that fulfills partial requirements of my Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A) Degree. It is very helpful as a student of Business Administration to undergo this project writing. I completed my Project Report on “Gender equality promotion within the current development context of Bangladesh”.

As you will find that I have conducted an in-depth investigation and analysis on “Gender equality promotion within the current development context of Bangladesh” which displayed in this report.

I will really appreciate if you go through the report and express your feedback on that.

Thanks

Sincerely

Sabrina Ahmed

Sabrina Ahmed
ID# 2003-3-10-120
Department of Business Administration
East West University

Preface

A Project Report is an essential work of the last platform of completion of BBA Degree. It is a twelve weeks program. The submission of a Report will fulfill the requirements of final degree in Business Administration. It familiarizes students to the real world. It gives student the best opportunity to improve their interpersonal skills as well as they can implement their theoretical enlighten to the real life situation. After graduating, this experience would be very much useful to their Working life.

Acknowledgement

The report is based on the Gender equality promotion within the current development context of Bangladesh. While any an all errors of fact, omission, and emphasis are solely my responsibility. I would remiss, if I did not acknowledge those who helped me to prepare this term paper

First of all I must humbly acknowledge the contribution of my course instructor Mr. M Sayeed Alam for the time and effort to help me. I have had the good fortunate of meeting him in personally and share his views and ideas.

Next I must thank the University for offering this BUS-498 course. I believe it help me in understanding the Gender equality promotion within the current development context of Bangladesh.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contributions of my Parents. They support me, encourage me, and inspire me. This is all of their contribution.

Sabrina Ahmed

Sabrina Ahmed

ID# 2003-3-10-120

Executive Summary

The international development partners are supporting the Government to undertake different development initiatives including promotion of gender equality. The paper examines the role of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as a development partner and its agenda of mainstreaming gender in Bangladesh.

By recognizing and addressing discrimination against girls and women, success in the fight against all forms of discrimination -- class, race, ethnicity and age -- will become more likely, and more lasting. We have learned that entire societies develop when girls and women are enabled to be fully contributing community members.

ADB as a development partner is supporting Bangladesh in its effort for poverty reduction, economic growth and social development. It is important to make the best use of the support so that in the long run the goal of gender equality can be achieved along with the achievement of the other development goals. The Government can consult with the NGOs and design increased number of projects in different sectors including gender features in project design and also undertake projects for women's advancement. The gender equality results of the projects often cannot be determined as sex disaggregated data collection, analysis and reporting are weak.

However, now is as good of a time as ever to challenge those roles. Women are running for president, and people support them. Men are having babies while many women decide they don't

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Chapter -01
Introduction

ORIGIN OF THE REPORT

This report has been prepared by an Undergraduate student as a Project Report in the course of BUS-498 before completion of the BBA program of the Department of Business Administration, at East West University, Dhaka.

OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the report is to find out the socio-economic situation of Bangladesh and sets the development context of the country. The Paper highlights the policy environment of the country and various initiatives taken by the Government to address the development needs and promote economic growth. The paper also presents, achieving the goal of gender equality is a critical factor within the development context.

DATA

The paper has been prepared on the basis of secondary data collected from the website of ADB and the Government and from reports of various government agencies implementing projects with support from ADB

INITIAL VARIABLES

I am conduct an in-depth investigation and analysis on presents, achieving the goal of gender equality is a critical factor within the development context. The international development partners are supporting the Government to undertake different development initiatives including promotion of gender equality. The paper examines the role of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as a development partner and its agenda of mainstreaming gender in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

The paper has been prepared on the basis of secondary data collected from the website of ADB and the Government and from reports of various government agencies implementing projects with support from ADB

Sources of Data:

The following sources had been used for the purpose of collecting data as required for this report:

Primary sources:

- I) Observation of internet,
- ii) Personal communication with Employee

Secondary Sources:

- I) Annual and other periodical reports of this ADB
- ii) Various manual Publications and brochures,

SCOPE

The report is limited to the Boundary of The international development partners are supporting the Government to undertake different development initiatives including promotion of gender equality. The paper examines the role of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as a development partner and its agenda of mainstreaming gender in Bangladesh. It was really easy for me to gather all the necessary information on the overall activities.

LIMITATIONS

As a student of business administration I am doing three months Projects. Three months time is inadequate to learn many things about find out the socio-economic situation of Bangladesh and sets the development context of the country.



Chapter -02
The conceptual Frame work
Of the Study

Gender equality promotion within the current development context of Bangladesh

Socially constructed roles too often thwart the potential of girls and women. Discrimination denies them health care and education. It hides information that they can use to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS. Discrimination robs girls and women of the the power to make decisions, to earn a living and to be free from violence, abuse and exploitation. Often it deprives them of any legal protection.

By recognizing and addressing discrimination against girls and women, success in the fight against all forms of discrimination -- class, race, ethnicity and age -- will become more likely, and more lasting. We have learned that entire societies develop when girls and women are enabled to be fully contributing community members.

I discuss the socio-economic situation of Bangladesh and set the development context of the country. The Paper highlights the policy environment of the country and various initiatives taken by the Government to address the development needs and promote economic growth. The paper also presents, achieving the goal of gender equality is a critical factor within the development context. The international development partners are supporting the Government to undertake different development initiatives including promotion of gender equality. The paper examines the role of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as a development partner and its agenda of mainstreaming gender in Bangladesh.

Overall, men and women should be treated with respect to their biological differences, but not ones that society creates. People should not assume that women are submissive and fragile, and should thus treat them as such, nor should we expect men to be the protectors and breadwinners. We should assume that men and women are capable of the same things. However, this is often not the case

1) Bangladesh: development context and gender equality situation

Bangladesh is a developing country with low socio-economic development and frequent natural calamities result in loss of livelihoods, services and asset base leading to poverty and migration.

Significant progress to reduce poverty has been made over the past decades, and progress in social indicators, including gender equality is visible. But there are various areas that need developmental support. Many of the indicators are linked to social norms and practices.

a. Basic indicators: The size of Gross Domestic Product at \$ 79 billion, 2008 with a Per capita Income of \$ 599 (2008) places the Bangladesh in the middle income group but income disparity and low social indicators depict the need of development intervention in various areas. A population of more than 140 Million residing in an area of 147,570 sq. km. makes Bangladesh a very densely populated (965 per sq. km, 2008) country. The population growth rate of 1.3 (2008) resulting in high population further aggravates poverty. About 40% of the population being poor, poverty reduction efforts from various dimensions is important. About 30% of the rural households are effectively female headed and are vulnerable to economic, social and other risks.

b. Social development indicators: The Gender Index 2008 published by Social Watch showed that Bangladesh was ahead of several South Asian countries assessed on the basis of performance in education, economic participation and empowerment measured by political participation and participation in decision making positions. Even though, improving, the social indicators show that there are many areas needing improvements and gender gaps exist that are related to socially based discrimination. Life expectancy at birth for females has only recently increased to 65.9 years compared to that of male at 64.7 years (2006), a result of different health and social development initiatives. Adult literacy rate is 52.8% but for females it is 48.4% (2006) only. Primary school Gross

Enrollment Ratio has increased to 98.8% (93.4 for boys and 104.6% for girls) and net enrolment to 91.1% (87.8% for boys and 91.1% for girls) in 2007. Human Development Index (HDI):0.55% (HDI rank: 140 in 2005) and Gender Development Index (GDI), 0.54% (GDI rank: 121 in 2005) though improving but still need improvement. Urban population is increasing with low access to services. About 88% of the population use tube well water but many are arsenic contaminated. Only 9.5 % had access to supply water and less than 70% had access to improved sanitation in 2005-06. Total fertility rate (births per woman) was reduced to 2.5 in 2006 from 6.3 in 1975. The Infant Mortality Rate (below 1 year/deaths per 1,000 live births) was 45 in 2006 and gender gap in infant mortality has been closed. Boys now have higher infant mortality, which is natural. The Maternal Mortality Ratio (deaths per 100,000 live births) has a declining trend (290 in 2006) but still high even comparing with many Asian countries. Only 14% of births are attended by skilled health staff, contributing to the high MMRs. Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 children) was 62 in 2006 and Contraceptive prevalence rate (% of women ages 15-49) was 58 in 2005.

- c. Labor force participation:** About 22% households' main income is from day labor. The labor force participation rate was 58.5% (male 85.8% and female 29.2%) in 2005-06. Participation of women has increased over last two decades in labor force and has helped in increasing income levels for many families. The major factors increasing economic participation are expansion of ready made garment (RMG) and microfinance programs of NGOs and the Government and the unemployed women are now contributors. Women wage labor force has increased, in construction and other informal sectors mainly in the

frontline with temporary employment. Disparities exist between the wage for men and women. Women are also participating agricultural work (crop, poultry, livestock, fisheries) in the rural areas, with low or no access to technology and finance. Women's role is increasing with more men shifting towards non-farm employment.

Governance and political participation: People's participation in development is increasing and women's participation in community work has increased, particularly in the local Government institutions, where government has fixed 24% quota for women. Social attitude and practices are changing. With the changing role of women new gender issues are emerging including vulnerability to trafficking and violence. Even though many laws have been enacted, their implementation is limited. The poor and women find it difficult to access justice.

(2) The situation of children and women

a) With a population of over 130 million, Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries. About half of the population (65.3 million) is children under 18 years of age. Bangladesh has been ranked 138th among 177 countries in the Human Development Index 2004. Despite an increase in national income per capita, the poverty gap is widening, with 63 million people living below the food-energy intake poverty line. The adult literacy rate is estimated at 56 per cent for men, 43 for women.

b). The infant mortality rate decreased from 75 to 51 per 1,000 live births from 1995 to 2002, and the under-five mortality rate fell from 116 to 69 between 1995 and 2003. Neonatal deaths account for two thirds of the infant deaths and one half of all under-five deaths. Most deliveries take place at home, in the absence of skilled attendance and access to emergency obstetric care, a fact that underlies one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in South Asia. A national study in 2004 revealed that the leading cause of death among children one to four years old is drowning, followed by pneumonia, malnutrition, and diarrhea. Some 36 per cent of infants are born with low birth weight, 43 per cent of under-five children are stunted, and 48 per cent of under-fives are underweight. Anaemia is a severe public health problem in pre-school children and pregnant women. Health facilities suffer from shortages of supplies and qualified staff.

c) While 97 per cent of households have access to drinking water from an improved source, the overall safe water coverage has been reduced to about 75 per cent because of arsenic contamination. Use of sanitary latrines is increasing; however, promoting hygiene practices, especially proper hand washing, remains a challenge. Solid-waste management is emerging as an important environmental problem, particularly in urban areas.

d). Because of poor parental skills, there are major disparities in the knowledge and practices of caregivers regarding early childhood care and development, particularly psychosocial development. Fewer than 10 per cent of children are registered after birth.

e). The net primary school enrolment rate is 81 per cent for boys and 84 per cent for girls. The dropout rate is high, and fewer than half of the children who complete primary school achieve

expected competencies due to poor teaching-learning methods, overcrowded Classrooms and the lack of support from home.

f). Poverty is the main cause of child labor. An estimated 4.9 million children aged 5-14 years are working, many under hazardous conditions. Gender discrimination determines various societal roles that hamper the advancement of girls and women. Nearly 40 per cent of girls 15 to 17 years old are married, despite a law banning marriage before the age of 18. Dowry and dowry-related violence are widespread and pose serious threats to women. The minimum age of criminal responsibility was raised from seven years, but only to nine years, a fact highlighting the need to improve the juvenile justice system. An estimated 5.3 million orphaned children have lost a mother, father or both parents.

g). While the HIV prevalence rate is still low, behavioral patterns suggest that HIV infection could reach epidemic proportions unless major prevention efforts are undertaken. The Government has finalized the National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS and has received resources from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

h). About half of the urban population of 26 million lives in the poorest communities. With no policy for these people, their access to essential basic services is scarce. Many children in this situation are working, deprived of education and health care, and vulnerable to violence, abuse, and exploitation.



H). In the Chittagong Hill Tracts, where about half of the population is of ethnic minority origins, development has been slower than that of the national average, mainly because of a history of conflict and the more difficult terrain. Malaria is common in this area.

i). Children are also vulnerable to emergencies, such as recurring floods that regularly submerge a large part of the country. Floods in 2004 affected more than 36 million people in 39 districts.

j). Bangladesh has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols. It has also ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and other major international agreements. The Government is committed to addressing children's and women's rights and has set itself on course towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) has been finalized.

3) GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender inequality refers to the obvious or hidden disparity between individuals due to gender performance gender can differ from biological sex; Gender is constructed both socially through social interactions as well as biologically through chromosomes, brain structure, and hormonal differences. The dichotomous nature of gender lends to the creation of inequality that manifests in numerous dimensions of daily life.

a) In the workplace

Income disparities linked to job stratification

Wage discrimination is the perceived discrepancy of wages between two groups due to a bias towards or against a specific trait with all other characteristics of both groups being equivalent. In the case of gender inequality, wage discrimination exists between the male and female gender. Historically, gender inequality has favored men relative to similarly qualified women.

Income disparity between genders stems from processes that determine the quality of jobs and earnings associated with jobs. Earnings associated with jobs will cause income inequality to take form in the placement of individuals into particular jobs through individual qualifications or stereotypical norms.

Placement of men or women into particular job categories can be supported through the **human capital** theories of qualifications of individuals or abilities associated with biological differences in men and women.

Conversely, the placement of men or women into separate job categories is argued to be caused by **social status** groups who desire to keep their position through the placement of those in lower statuses to lower paying positions.

Human capital theories refer to the education, knowledge, training, experience, or skill of a person which makes them potentially valuable to an employer. This has historically been understood as a cause of the gendered wage gap but is no longer a predominant cause as women and men in certain occupations tend to have similar education levels or other credentials. Even when such characteristics of jobs and workers are controlled for, the presence of women within a

certain occupation leads to lower wages. This earnings discrimination is considered to be a part of pollution theory. This theory suggests that jobs which are predominated by women offer lower wages than do jobs simply because of the presence of women within the occupation. As women enter an occupation, this reduces the amount of prestige associated with the job and men subsequently leave these occupations. The entering of women into specific occupations suggests that less competent workers have begun to be hired or that the occupation is becoming deskilled. Men are reluctant to enter female-dominated occupations because of this and similarly resist the entrance of women into male-dominated occupations

The gendered income disparity can also be attributed in part to **occupational segregation**, where groups of people are distributed across occupations according to ascribed characteristics; in this case, gender. Occupational sex segregation can be understood to contain two components or dimensions; horizontal segregation and vertical segregation. With horizontal segregation, occupational sex segregation occurs as men and women are thought to possess different physical, emotional, and mental capabilities. These different capabilities make the genders vary in the types of jobs they are suited for. This can be specifically viewed with the gendered division between manual and non-manual labor. With vertical segregation, occupational sex segregation occurs as occupations are stratified according to the power, authority, income, and prestige associated with the occupation and women are excluded from holding such jobs

As women entered the workforce in larger numbers since the 1960s, occupations have become segregated based on the amount femininity or masculinity presupposed to be associated with each occupation. Census data suggests that while some occupations have become more gender integrated (mail carriers, bartenders, bus drivers, and real estate agents), occupations including

teachers, nurses, secretaries, and librarians have become female-dominated while occupations including architects, electrical engineers, and airplane pilots remain predominately male in composition. Based on the census data, women occupy the **service sector** jobs at higher rates than men.

Women's overrepresentation in service sector jobs as opposed to jobs that require managerial work acts as a reinforcement of women and men into traditional **gender roles** that causes gender inequality.

Once factors such as experience, education, occupation, and other job-relevant characteristics have been taken into account, 41% of the male-female wage gap remains unexplained. As such, considerations of occupational segregation and human capital theories are together not enough to understand the continued existence of a gendered income disparity.

b) The glass ceiling effect is also considered a possible contributor to the gender wage gap or income disparity. This effect suggests that gender provides significant disadvantages towards the top of job hierarchies which become worse as a person's career goes on. The term glass ceiling implies that invisible or artificial barriers exist which prevent women from advancing within their jobs or receiving promotions. These barriers exist in spite of the achievements or qualifications of the women and still exist when other characteristics that are job-relevant such as experience, education, and abilities are controlled for. The inequality effects of the glass ceiling are more prevalent within higher-powered or higher income occupations, with fewer women holding these types of occupations. The glass ceiling effect also indicates the limited chances of women for income raises and promotion or advancement to more prestigious positions or jobs. As women are prevented by these artificial barriers from receiving job promotions or income

raises, the effects of the inequality of the glass ceiling increase over the course of a woman's career.

Statistical discrimination is also cited as a cause for income disparities and gendered inequality in the workplace. Statistical discrimination indicates the likelihood of employers to deny women access to certain occupational tracks because women are more likely than men to leave their job or the labor force when they become married or pregnant. Women are instead given positions that dead-end or jobs that have very little mobility

The gender earnings ratio suggests that there has been an increase in women's earnings comparative to men. Men's plateau in earnings began after the 1970s, allowing for the increase in women's wages to close the ratio between incomes. Despite the smaller ratio between men and women's wages, disparity still exists.

Census data suggests that women's earnings are 71 percent of men's earnings in 1999

The gendered wage gap varies in its width among different races. Whites comparatively have the greatest wage gap between the genders. With whites, women earn 78% of the wages that white men do. With African Americans, women earn 90% of the wages that African American men do. With people of Hispanic origin, women earn 88% of the wages that men of Hispanic origin do.

There are some exceptions where women earn more than men: According to a survey on gender pay inequality by the **International Trade Union Confederation**, female workers in the Gulf state of **Bahrain** earn 40 per cent more than male workers.

c) In the home

Gender roles in parenting and marriage

Gender roles develop through internalization and identification during childhood.

Sigmund Freud suggested that biology (based around the penis) determines gender identity through identification with either the mother or father. While some people agree with Freud, others argue that the development of the gendered self is not completely determined by biology based around one's relationship to the penis, but rather the interactions that one has with the primary caregiver(s). From birth, parents interact differently with children depending on their sex, and through this interaction parents can instill different values or traits in their children on the basis of what is normative for their sex. This internalization of gender norms can be seen through the example of which types of toys children are typically given (“feminine” toys often reinforce interaction, nurturing, and closeness, “masculine” toys often reinforce independence and competitiveness) that parents give to their children. Education also plays an integral role in the creation of gender norms.

Gender roles that are created in childhood permeate throughout life and help to structure parenting and marriage, especially in relation to work in and outside the home. Despite the increase in women in the labor force since the mid-1900s, women are still responsible for the majority of the domestic chores and childcare.

While women are splitting their time between work and care of the home, men are pressured into being the primary economic supporter of the home. Despite the fact that different households may divide chores more evenly, there is evidence that supports that women have retained the

primary caregiver role within familial life despite contributions economically. This evidence suggest that women who work outside the home often put an extra 18 hours a week doing household or childcare related chores as opposed to men who average 12 minutes a day in childcare activities. In addition to a lack of interest in the home on the part of some men, some women may bar men from equal participation in the home which may contribute to this disparity

However, men are assuming the role of "care giver" more and more in todays society. Education plays a major factor in this. The more education a male or female receives, the less likely they are to hold roles within the house distinctly based on one's sex. Males are doing more cooking, cleaning, and house-hold "chores" than they were in the 1950s.

d)Explanations for gender inequality

Cultural stereotypes

Cultural stereotypes are engrained in both men and women and these stereotypes are a possible explanation for gender inequality and the resulting gendered wage disparity. Women have traditionally been viewed as being caring and nurturing and are designated to occupations which require such skills. While these skills are culturally valued, they were typically associated with domesticity, so occupations requiring these same skills are not economically valued. Men have traditionally been viewed as the breadwinner or the worker, so jobs held by men have been historically economically valued and occupations predominated by men continue to be economically valued and pay higher wages.

e) Sexism and discrimination

Gender inequality can further be understood through the mechanisms of **sexism**. **Discrimination** takes place in this manner as men and women are subject to prejudicial treatment on the basis of gender alone. Sexism occurs when men and women are framed within two dimensions of social cognition. To be exploited in this manner, one must be viewed in relation to dimensions of warmth and competency.

Benevolent sexism takes place when women are viewed as possessing low degrees of competency and high degrees of warmth. Although this is the result of a more positive stereotype of women, this still contributes to gender inequality as this stereotype is only applied to women who conform to the caring or nurturing stereotypes, with the remaining women still being discriminated against as they are not viewed in this positive light. Also, this form of sexism has negative effects as well, as these notions of women include the idea that women are weak and in need of the protection of men.

Hostile sexism takes place when women are viewed as having high levels of competency but low degrees of warmth. This form of sexism is framed as an antagonistic attitude toward women, and occurs as women are perceived to be attempting to control men, either through sexual seduction or feminist ideology.

Discrimination also plays out with networking and in preferential treatment within the economic market. Men typically occupy positions of power within the job economy. Due to taste or preference for other men because they share similar characteristics, men in these positions of power are more likely to hire or promote other men, thus discriminating against women

f) Gendered media

The media plays up traditional views of men and women. Boys and/or men are often portrayed as active, aggressive and sexually aggressive persons while women are portrayed as quaint, passive, pretty and incompetent beings. One way of portraying the man is in this 'macho-man' image. The macho-man image relies on a man disrespecting a female in order to show and prove his manliness. As well, there is a serious lack of non-white men in the media. It appears that the only time a non-white man is shown is when he is doing something illegal or highly unconventional. It is also rare to see men doing any type of housework or caring for children in the media. The portrayal of women also has an assumptive aspect that says that whiteness is ideal and standard. Even when black women are shown, they conform to white definitions of beauty which includes straight hair and light skin. Latina and Asian women are shown in a sexual manner which is derogatory to their races. The portrayal of women varies from women sitting around watching men do things to women being dominated by men in music videos. Women are shown as being helpless and wanting guidance. Magazines cater to what they decide or believe women want. They give advice on how to please men, how to cook for them, how to look attractive by lose of weight and care for families

4) How to promote gender equality? What is the true meaning of equality?

Men and women are not the same. They may be equal, but they are not the same.

Of course there are biological differences, including a smaller corpus callosum in men's brains that may result in greater ability to use both sides of the brain... thus the supposed "women's intuition." That claim, however, is often disputed and rather controversial.

Also, all women are not the same, as all men aren't either. Women may take on more masculine qualities, men may have feminine traits, and some do very well being more androgynous.

Overall, men and women should be treated with respect to their biological differences, but not ones that society creates. People should not assume that women are submissive and fragile, and should thus treat them as such, nor should we expect men to be the protectors and breadwinners. We should assume that men and women are capable of the same things. However, this is often not the case

The one thing people can do to promote gender equality is to stop rewarding gendered communication, thinking, and behavior. It is clear that men and women generally act in certain ways, only because of the positive reactions from society they receive for acting as such. For instance, men are praised and admired for being stronger, more aggressive, and less talkative about their feelings, while women are expected to care for children and to be beautiful superwomen who can do anything - including housework - effortlessly. Sarah Palin is a great example; don't you think she would have been less popular if she wasn't so pretty and if she didn't have a baby on her hip while she campaigned?

It's difficult to reverse what one has learned through gender models, social learning, and other experiences from childhood. We have learned the gender roles in our societies, and many of us have tried to conform to those roles so as to avoid censure and rejection. Men are generally attracted to more feminine women while women tend to go more more masculine males for this

reason, not to mention sociobiological reasons that say men want nurturing women to raise their children, men should sow their seeds as much as possible to ensure the survival of their genes, men should be strong to support a family, and so on.

However, now is as good of a time as ever to challenge those roles. Women are running for president, and people support them. Men are having babies while many women decide they don't want babies at all until their careers have taken off through the second shift. The lines are blurring more and more, and we can encourage it and in others and maybe even ourselves.

5)Government's Policy and Strategies for Gender and Development:

The Government of Bangladesh has formulated different strategies and action plans to address the development needs as well as promoting gender equality concerns.

a. The National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR):

The Government of Bangladesh, since independence has implemented various development programs in all sectors. Five year plans were developed and implemented covering poverty reduction, economic growth and human development initiatives. For rural development 3 major areas were focused, rural infrastructure, irrigated agriculture and productive employment. In urban areas, infrastructure and other services were extended. The Government developed its first National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR), in 2005 with a comprehensive approach towards poverty reduction. The goals were identified in consistency with the Millennium Development Goals agreed by the Government. The document identified the key



determinants of poverty and 18 policy matrices indicating action areas were prepared. These included macroeconomic stability and pro-poor economic growth; promoting trade & remittances; private sector and small & medium enterprise development; agricultural growth towards poverty reduction; rural non-farm activities; safety net for poverty reduction; comprehensive disaster management towards poverty reduction and growth; food security; scaling up poverty reduction through micro credit; water resources development & management; infrastructure development and reforms; tourism for poverty reduction; development of ICT and bio-technology policy; education sector; health population, nutrition water and sanitation and food safety sector; women's advancement and rights; children advancement and rights; good governance, environment and sustainable development.

The NSAPR was prepared in 2005 for a three year period until 2007 and it was extended for 1 more year. One of the key issues in its building strategy was strengthening the focus on women's rights and advancement for poverty reduction. The document in the road map included a supporting strategy to ensure participation, social inclusion and empowerment which specifically promotes women's rights and advancement.

The policy matrices mainstream gender and women's advancement and a separate matrix on women's advancement and rights was prepared. The action areas included:

- a) Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education,
- b) Reduce infant and under five mortality rates, and eliminate gender disparity in child mortality,
- c) Reduce the proportion of malnourished children under five by 50 per cent and eliminate gender disparity in child malnutrition;

- d) Reduce maternal mortality rate by 75 per cent;
- e) Access of reproductive health services to all;
- f) Reduce violence against women and children;
- g) Increase of pro-women budgetary allocation and public-expenditure,
- h) Enforce equal pay for equal work;
- i) Skills development, training and credit facilities;
- j) Increase of women's employment in private sector;
- k) Increase number of women entrepreneurs;
- l) Women's participation in IT sector;
- m) Ensure safe and secure working environment for women
- n) Increase the allocation for safety net programs for old age allowance;
- o) Equal participation of women in National Parliament and local political institutions;
- p) Improve women's participation in all kinds of activities in the agriculture sector;

b) The Second NSAPR: The Second NSAPR drafted in 2008 has the similar objectives. the main areas of action as indicated in the policy matrices are: macroeconomic management and pro-poor growth; resource mobilization; improvement of governance; employment generation and labor welfare; private sector development; small and medium enterprise development; environment; social safety net including food security, disaster management, micro credit and rural development/ non-farm activities; technology policy including information and communication technology; women's and children's advancement and rights including social inclusion and empowerment; agricultural growth towards poverty reduction; land use management including land reform; water resources development and management; education

including primary and mass education, female education, vocational and technical education; health, population, nutrition, water and sanitation and food safety sector; housing development; infrastructural development including power, energy and communications.

c) The rationale for the focus on gender equality were identified as-

- (a) To uphold fundamental human right;
- (b) To achieve efficiency in achieving poverty reduction and economic growth;
- (c) To achieve sustainable social development;
- (d) To address gaps in gender dimension of poverty. These dimensions are: economic deprivation in terms of inadequate opportunities; constrained by time Poverty; human deprivation in terms of capability; highly vulnerable to risks and insecurity; political deprivation in terms of inadequate participation and empowerment; international deprivation due to lack of concern about women in international forums and institutional deprivation due to lack of gendered institutions.

In order to overcome the constraints, ten strategic objectives for pro-poor growth and sustainable development have been identified to relate to the various dimensions of gender and poverty.

The ten strategic objectives are:

1. Ensure women's full participation in the mainstream economic activities;
2. Ensure social protection for women against vulnerability and risk.
3. Enhance women's political empowerment and participation in decision making;
4. Eliminate all forms of violence and exploitation against women;

5. Strengthen institutions for improvement of gender mainstreaming
6. Capacity building in availability of sex desegregated data;
7. Integrate gender concern in all national policies/ program /projects;
8. Build women's capacity through health and nutrition services;
9. Build women's capacity through education services; and
10. ensure women's concern in international forum.

The action areas include

- a) Women's economic empowerment through productive employment, b) marketable skill development training
- C) Access to markets, local water resources, micro credit facilities, bank finance and information;
- d) Women friendly technology,
- e) Macroeconomic management: infrastructure and social services,
- f) Enabling environment for women participation in employment,
- g) Social protection: safe shelter and housing, old age allowance,
- h) Political empowerment in national Parliament and local political institutions,
- i) Elimination of violence against women,
- j) One-Stop Crisis Centre and legal and psycho-social counseling,
- k) Strengthen institutions like the National Council for Women's Development (NCWD) WID Focal Points and Department of Women Affairs to be effective for improvement of gender mainstreaming,
- l) Ensure availability of sex disaggregated data,

- m) Integrate women's advancement and rights concern in (MTBF) and the planning tools,
- n) Women's advancements and health through human resource development,
- o) Reduction of maternal and child mortality and reproductive health care,
- p) Awareness activities to address gender issues and HIV/AIDS,
- q) Completion of quality primary and secondary schooling,
- r) Represent women's interest in business agenda
- s) Ensuring women's voice in international forums
- t) Sensitize media to promote positive images of women
- u) Addressing the need of ethnic people specially women, and
- v) Address disables women's concern, integrate them in productive work force and give them preference under the safety net measures.

d) Medium Term Budgetary Framework to Implement PRSP

The Government has introduced a new accountability mechanism for public sector spending through its Medium Term Budgetary Framework (MTBF). Currently 6 Ministries are covered under the MTBF including Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Ministries of Health and Education. The ministries while responding to budget call circular are to determine gender issues and actions to address those issues, assess the effect of the programs on the lives of women and poor and request for necessary resources.

e) National Policy for the Advancement of Women

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The first Policy for the Advancement of Women was declared in 1997, which was revised in 2004 eliminating some key empowerment and right oriented features. Strong advocacy from different quarters resulted into a revised Policy declared in 2008. The Policy sets the goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination against women by empowering them with the ability of being equal partners of development. The policy has been revised keeping in view the MDGs. However, over all development goal of the

Policy for women empowerment now stands at:

- (i) Promoting and protecting women's human rights;
- (ii) Eradicating persistent burden of poverty on women;
- (iii) Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women;
- (iv) Enhancing women's participation in mainstream of economic activities;
- (v) Creating opportunities for education and marketable skills training for enabling them to participate and be competitive in all economic activities;
- (vi) Incorporating women's needs and concerns in all sectoral plans and programmes;
- (vii) Promoting enabling environment at work-place: day care centres for the children of working mothers, career women hostels, safe accommodation for working women;
- (viii) Provisioning safe custody for women and children victims of trafficking, desertion and creating an enabling environment for their integration in the mainstream society;
- (ix) Ensuring women's empowerment in the field of politics and decision making;

- (x) Taking action to acknowledge women's contribution in social and economic spheres;
- (xi) Ensuring women's social security against all vulnerability and risks in the state, society and family;
- (xii) Eliminating all forms of violation and exploitation against women;
- (xiii) Developing women's capacity through health and nutrition care;
- (xiv) Facilitating women's participation in all the national and international bodies;
- (xv) Strengthening existing institutional capacity for coordination and monitoring for women's advancement; and
- (xvi) Taking actions through advocacy and campaign to change mind set of the society on women and depict positive images of women.
- (v) Protect women from the adverse effects of environmental degradation and climate change;
- (vi) Take special measures for skills development of women workers engaged in the export-oriented sectors;
- (vii) Incorporate gender equality concerns in all trade related negotiations and activities; and ensure gender sensitive growth with regional balance.

The national Policy elaborates the institutional framework for implementation at the national and grassroots levels. It envisages partnership with NGOs and women's groups, emphasizes on research and training, gender responsive budget mechanism under medium term budgetary framework and monitoring. It also envisages partnership with national and international partners and stakeholders.

6) Role of development partners in supporting the Government's development initiatives

Since the independence of Bangladesh many development partners (DP) are active in supporting the Government in its development initiatives in various areas that foster economic growth, social development and good governance. There are different types of international organizations. Various arms of the United Nations (UN) including the specialized bodies are working. Multilateral financial institutions like the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) amongst them. There are also bilateral development partners, and international non-government organizations supporting the Government. The Banks mainly support through loans and grants. The bilateral DPs mostly provide grants both to the Government and NGOs. Most of the development partners' support is operationalized within the framework of NSAPR.

Most of the DPs promote gender equality in their programs, some through specific project/programs and some through mainstreaming. Many stand-alone projects to promote gender equality is in operation in the area of capacity building of the Government ministries, combating violence against women, addressing women and child trafficking, improving gender is local governance etc. The UN agencies have also taken specific measures to incorporate women's concerns in more recent years incorporating a gender equality approach. The multilateral banks have taken different approaches to ensuring that women access credit and other economic assets. In the recent years a mainstreaming approach covering many sectors including infrastructure is taken to promote gender equality yielding positive results.



7) Asian Development Bank – A partner in development

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), established in 1966 has been active in helping the developing countries of the Asia Pacific Region in reducing poverty. The ADB is a multilateral membership based institution currently with 67 member countries working for the economic development of its developing member countries of the region. Since about 900 million of the world's poor live in the Asia and Pacific Region, ADB's single main agenda is poverty reduction. Though ADB initially focused on infrastructure for economic growth, it has gradually expanded its operation covering a wide range of social and environmental concerns. Initially ADB used to support sectoral governance issues but in recent years, it has expanded its activities in the core governance areas.

The realization that development and growth often bypasses the poor and special attention and focus are required to eliminate poverty has led ADB to also focus on gender equality as mostly women are amongst the poor. ADB believes that absolute poverty can be eradicated and supports the international development targets for poverty reduction set including the MDG for the Governments and international Communities.

a.ADB's Poverty Reduction Strategy

ADB's poverty reduction strategy includes multi-pronged approach and three main pillars,

- i) Pro-poor, sustainable economic growth
- ii) Social development and
- iii) Good governance.

i) Pro-poor- Sustainable Economic Growth:

ADB considers, growth can reduce poverty by generating employment and incomes. Economic growth is facilitated by infrastructure and increases demand for labor resulting into additional economic opportunities, increased productivity and wages. Labor intensive growth reduces poverty faster and policies and environment that support labor intensive growth needs to be promoted. For this, reduction of dependence on public sector enterprises, creating conducive environment for private sectors for increased employment, income generating/ self-employment opportunities for specially disadvantaged groups like women, minorities etc. are required. ADB support focuses on growth with employment generation for rural and urban poor

ii) Social Development:

ADB considers, economic growth can meaningfully reduce poverty if accompanied by social development programs and targeted economic development for the poor people and bypassed areas. **Human capital** is the main resource of the poor and all should have access to quality basic education, health care and other essential services. **Social capital development** by increased opportunities for the poor to participate community activities and strengthened the social

cohesion. Despite the progress made in the Asian and Pacific region in gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, gender disparities persist in economic, social and political domains. ADB considers, multiple strategies and locally relevant approaches can only narrow gender gaps in poor, rural and disadvantaged communities, migrants and displaced people.

iii) **Good Governance:**

Governance improves when reforms achieve sound legal, regulatory and public financial management systems and institutions. ADB supports programs and projects promoting these kinds of reforms. Development is more effective when a country has the capability to successfully plan and manage its own future economic and social development. ADB includes “capacity development” within the country investment and poverty reduction programs. It is the poor who suffer most when governance is weak and when corruption is rampant. ADB is working with other multilateral development banks to implement a common framework for combating corruption.

b.ADB’s Long-Term Strategic Framework

The Long-Term Strategic Framework of ADB (LTSF) known as Strategy 2020, approved in 2008, states that ADB will pursue its vision and mission focusing on three strategic agenda,

- i) Inclusive economic growth,
- ii) Environmentally sustainable growth and Regional Integration. To maximize returns and results, ADB will focus on five drivers of change:
 - i) Private sector development and private sector operations,

- ii) Good governance and capacity development,
- iii) Gender equality,
- iv) Knowledge solutions and partnership.

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ADB's operation will mainly be in

- i) Infrastructure,
- ii) Environment, including climate change,
- iii) Regional cooperation and integration,
- iv) Financial sector development,
- iv) Education. In other areas ADB will support health, agriculture and disaster and emergency assistance. The Strategy 2020 confirms that ADB will continue to promote gender equity as one of five “drivers of change” to help DMCs achieve inclusive growth and attain the MDGs, guided by the GAD Policy and Plan of Action.

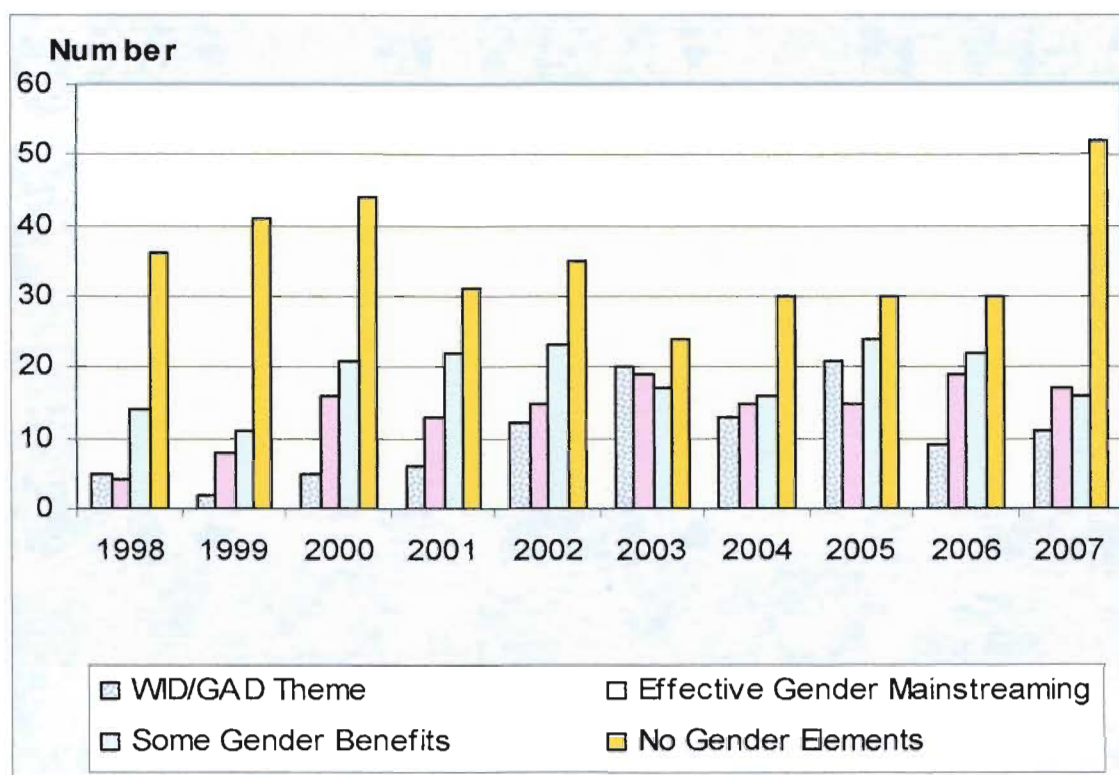
c.ADB's Policy on Gender and Development

In many countries women face discriminatory situations and bear the disproportionate burden of poverty. They are excluded from the essential resources and consist of the majority of the poor. Improvement of the status of women is important to achieving the development goals. ADB's Policy on Gender and Development (GAD) approved in 1998 replaced the Women in Development Policy of 1985. The ADB committed in the Policy to assist the DMCs to implement the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing and

explore opportunities to directly address some of the new and emerging issues for women in the region. ADB through its macro-economic and sector work as well as the loans and technical assistance programs has been supporting initiatives of the DMCs in addressing the areas of concerns raised in the PFA for promoting women's advancement. The GAD Policy implementation was reviewed in 2006 covering the period 1998–2004. Based on the findings of this review, the GAD Plan of Action (2008–2010) was prepared. Gender is seen as a crosscutting issue and the Policy Adopts mainstreaming as the key strategy in promoting gender equity. A country specific approach to gender issues based on needs assessment in the Bank's macroeconomic and programming work is promoted. Gender action plan (GAP) has been a useful tool in implementing the GAD policy at the project/program level.

□ A review of about 700 projects supported since 1998 found that about 32% of all ADB loans were effectively mainstreaming gender in 2007 based on a set of criteria. The Loans are divided in 4 categories: gender theme – gd, gender mainstreaming, some gender benefits and no gender elements based on the criteria The trend declined after 2003 and ADB Management started reemphasizing it. The following figure shows the performance in this area since 1998.

Gender Performance: ADB Loan Projects

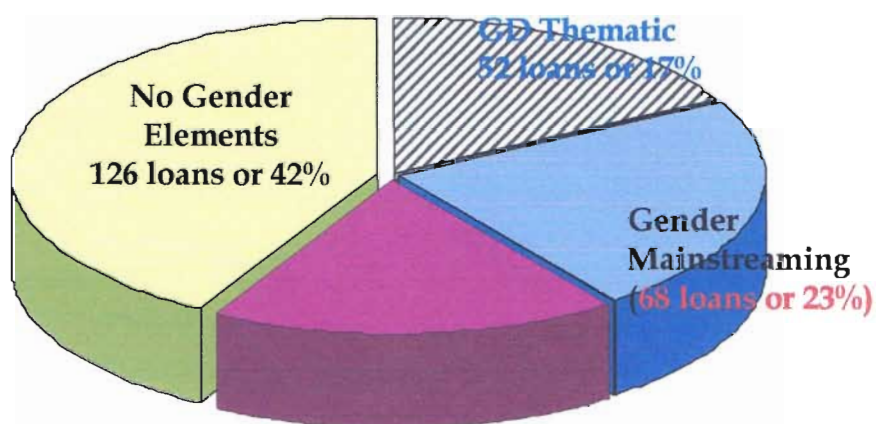


Source: A presentation at the Regional Meeting on Gender and Infrastructure, November 2008

The performance in the area of gender equality is more prominent in the soft term loans called Asian Development Fund (ADF). This fund supports infrastructure and social development in all areas. The performance in gender mainstreaming during the period 1998-2007 is presented in the following figure.

Situation in Asian Development Fund Loans (1998-2007)

40% with GD Mainstreaming; 24% with Some Gender Benefits



Source: A presentation at the Regional Meeting on Gender and Infrastructure, November 2008

8 .ADB in Bangladesh

Bangladesh joined as a member of the ADB in 1973. Over time, Bangladesh has become the largest borrower of concessionary Asian Development Fund resources. Even though ADB's initial support was mainly for infrastructure sectors but gradually almost all the major sectors are supported by ADB.

a. **ADB's Country Strategy and Program (CSP)** for Bangladesh (2006-2010) aims to assist Bangladesh in implementing the goals identified in the NSAPR. The CSP identified the major areas of support which are: sustainable economic growth, social development, Good Governance, disaster mitigation, capacity building, private sector development, gender, regional cooperation and environment. The area of support are: agriculture and natural resources; transport and communication (roads, ports, railways); energy (gas, power); financial sector (including SME); education (primary, secondary, technical), urban water supply, sanitation and urban development; urban health care; and good governance. Gender is considered as a cross cutting issue and a mainstreaming approach has been undertaken.

b. **ADB's Gender Strategy for Bangladesh:** An assessment of the gender equality situation of Bangladesh, titled Poverty, MDG and Gender Equality in Bangladesh, in 2004 was the basis of a gender strategy incorporated in the CSP for Bangladesh.

The Gender Strategy identified the low status of women and the constraints related to it. These included low access and completion of primary and secondary education, low laborforce participation, low wage and concentration in non-formal temporary jobs, low access to primary health care including ante and post natal care services, high maternal mortality, malnutrition,

vulnerability to natural calamities and HIV/AIDS, low participation in decision making, gender-based violence including trafficking of women etc.

The strategy focuses on empowering women and narrowing gender gaps through policy dialogues and mainstreaming activities in ADB supported projects and programs.

The aims are to increase women's participation and benefits from ADB's operation by

- i) increasing the return on women's labor,
- ii) facilitating women's empowerment in decision making,
- iii) Strengthening the gender capacity of institutions, particularly the local government and executing agencies,
- iv) Fostering women's human development,
- v) Providing social protection to the women most vulnerable to economic and social shocks, and
- vi) Promoting a positive image of and role for women as agents of change as well as key economic producers. Building capacity of the partner agencies for designing and delivery of gender sensitive programs, collection and use of gender disaggregated data and monitoring are emphasized by the Strategy.

C) ADB's support in Bangladesh

As of 31 December 2007, cumulative public sector lending from ADB amounted to about \$ 9.27 billion for 186 loan projects and \$178.6 million for technical assistance (TA) grants for 324 projects. The loan and TAs have supported almost all key sectors, including energy, transport, health, education, infrastructure including port, agriculture, water, rural and urban development, governance, finance, small and medium enterprise etc. ADB also has supported eight private sector projects with \$ 242.18 million including Meghnaghat Power Project and Grameen Phone.

ADB's support has helped reduce poverty and increase economic, and social opportunities, especially in the Northwest Region of the country an estimated 1 million people will be lifted out of poverty. It was facilitated by the communication established through Jamuna Bridge and other support.

Table : Cumulative ADB Lending as of December 2007, Bangladesh

Sector	Loans (no.)	Amount (S Million)	%
Agriculture and Natural Resources	51	1,654.06	17.85
Education	17	847.16	9.14
Energy	32	2,529.25	27.30
Finance	10	276.20	2.98
Health, Nutrition and Social Protection	5	164.10	1.77
Industry and Trade	17	516.80	5.58
Law, Economic Management and Public Policy	1	150.00	1.62
Multi-sector	17	1003.82	10.83
Transport and Communication	31	1,837.70	19.83
Water Supply, Sanitation and Waste Management	5	286.40	3.09
Total	186	9,265.49	100.00

Source : ADB Website



9. ADB's support and gender mainstreaming in Bangladesh

The ADB is supporting the Government of Bangladesh in promoting gender equality through its program with a mainstreaming approach. Though significant progress have been achieved but women are confronted with new issues arising out of the changed global and national scenario, such as, the expiry of the Multi Fibre Agreement in 2004, the growth of migration and human trafficking, growth in information technology, issues associated to increased participation of women in the public life. ADB's assistance to GoB took these new issues into consideration. Currently ADB is supporting more than 40 Projects and programs. As per ADB's assessment 50% projects in Bangladesh are effectively mainstreaming gender and another 24% have some gender benefits. Area-wise activities supported by ADB (some are co-financed by other development partners) in Bangladesh are summarized below with examples from a few projects.

a. Women's poverty reduction

Since poverty reduction is the goal of ADB, many projects in Bangladesh aim at poverty reduction. Most of the projects attempt to reduce women's poverty as a way to gender equality. Many projects focus on poverty reduction :

i) Participatory Livestock Development Project implemented by Palli karma Shahayak Foundation (PKSF) implemented through partnership with NGOs. It has a

Performance as of June 2008

Group formation - 25185
Member Enrolment - 508994
Member Training - 554299
Persons received credit - 612690
Ultra poor enrolled - 4242
Ultra poor trained - 4342 (more than one training)

target of supporting 636000 beneficiaries (98% women) in earning their livelihood through the provision of technical training on livestock related enterprises and micro finance. Technical support is provided by Department of livestock.

ii) Small Scale Water Resource Sector Development Project I (1996-2002) and Small Scale Water Resources Sector Development Project II (2001-2009) under Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) created employment for the poor including women in water infrastructure construction, agriculture and fisheries activities through building water related infrastructure and command area development. Short term employment for 16,803 women was created in earthworks and tree plantation and maintenance of infrastructure labour contracting societies (LCS). Besides, women received self employment opportunities in fisheries and agriculture activities including vegetable cultivation and seed preservation.

iii) Third Rural infrastructure Development Project under LGED supported construction of rural roads, markets, ghats and other infrastructure. It has constructed market corners for women and created employment opportunities for rural poor women in infrastructure

construction and maintenance. Gender friendly design of infrastructure was ensured. The Project facilitated women's participation in infrastructure planning, construction and maintenance. It also helped women in accessing infrastructure as users. The box below shows some of the achievements that clearly shows women's empowerment as well. Access to infrastructure facilitated women's mobility and access to services.

Gender based achievements of Third Rural Infrastructure Project

■ Women's increased access to economic resources

- 2,200 destitute women were employed via labor contracting societies
- 1800 shops allocated to women in 183 women market sections
- 1800 women traders received shop management training and became member of market traders' association
- 1334 women received training on income generating activities

■ Women's participation in all project elements

- Decision making about infrastructure designs and locations (women market corners, flood shelters, *ghats*)
- Participation in O&M of infrastructure: 3210 women trained and employed for 2 years in routine maintenance generating 2.34 million days work

■ Practical benefits to women

- Women's employment in construction, tree planting, and maintenance: 4.85 million working days for women vs. 14.90 million for men
- Household nutrition improved

- Privacy for women protected through infra design (26 flood refuge centers, women's waiting corners and toilets in ghats, women's rooms and toilets in UP buildings by changing design)

■ Strategic changes in gender relations

- Enhanced status of women traders in households
- Women in labor contracting societies managed their own bank accounts, gaining confidence
- Progress made towards gender wage parity through motivation of 604 contractors
- Access to local governance structures increased, facilitated by more women UP members and women's rooms in UP offices
- 938 women UP members trained on their role in financial management, local resource mobilization and O&M of markets and ghats
- Women's physical mobility increased and men started accepting the new space

iv) Rural Infrastructure Improvement Project will construct 183 market corners for women in rural markets, and facilitate poor women to participate in the open platforms. It is also constructing UP complexes. Employment opportunities for women are created in road construction and maintenance activities. The Project has a gender action plan and its key objectives are as follows:

- ❖ Allocate shops for women in the Women's Market Section (WMS) . Train them on shop management
- ❖ At least 15 percent of developed market space for the destitute women in the open sheds of the Growth Centres (GCs).

- ❖ Employment of poor women in construction.
- ❖ Employment of poor women in road maintenance and tree plantation
- ❖ Encourage women shop-owners to form an association [Female Traders Association (FTA)]
- ❖ Fostering the elimination of wage differentiation between men and women engaged in equal work
- ❖ Institutional networking to support women for services
- ❖ training, involving female UPMs in different project committees, for capacity building
- ❖ All necessary institutional support including, resting shed for working lactating women, water and sanitation facilities for female staff, labourers
- ❖ Women friendly and environment friendly working condition with safety and security will be ensured.

v) The Chittagong Hill Tract Rural Development Project (2003-2008) under Ministry of CHT Affairs will develop rural infrastructure including roads, markets etc. It is also provide micro-finance through PKSF for employment generation amongst poor and women and implemented by NGOs. The target is to cover 355,300 beneficiaries.

vii) Secondary Towns Infrastructure Development Project II (1996-2003) supported urban slum women in getting access to improved infrastructure. It supported slum dwellers in accessing services like water supply and sanitation.

b. Education and training of women

ADB supports education and training program for social development focusing on human capital development, which is in line with its poverty reduction strategy. The ADB has been a partner of the Government in its efforts towards the goal of education for all by supporting the primary education. Primary Education Development Project (1997-2003) supported 6,678 schools to develop infrastructure to facilitate enrolment and retention of children in schools.

- i) The Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDPII), a multi donor supported program is coordinated by ADB is helping the primary education sector with a comprehensive approach. It aims at improving overall quality of education, development of educational infrastructure and inclusive education. The inclusive education framework of the Program includes 4 different action plans, one being on gender. Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in educational enrolment and now the challenge is to ensure completion of primary education according to the quality. It also includes teachers' education, recruitment of female teachers and now in government primary schools 50% of the teachers are female. Water sanitation facilities for females in educational institutions are being ensured.

Progress under PEDPII

- ❖ Improved access to both free compulsory formal and non-formal primary education through a combination of support system
- ❖ Gross enrolment rate increased from 93.7% to 98.8% (2005 and 2007)
- ❖ Net enrolment 87% to 91% between 2005 and 2007
- ❖ Millennium Development Goal of gender parity in enrollment achieved.
- ❖ More qualified teachers recruited

- ❖ Female teachers increased to 50% in 2007 in government primary schools from around 40% in 2004.
- ❖ Monitoring formats include gender based information
- ❖ Training imparted at various levels

ii) The Post Literacy and Continuing Education Project (2000-2008) aims at delivering literacy and related training to the adults. Women will receive literacy and other skills through this project.

iii) The Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project under Department of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) supports adolescent girls to continue with secondary level education through provision of stipend for girls in rural areas. One of the aims is to retain the girls in schools to reduce child marriage. A total of 765,000 person-years of education for grade 6-10 in 53 Upazillas are being implemented through disbursement of the Female Stipend Program. Besides, infrastructure and teachers' training etc. are also included. Additional learning materials are used and student assessment and examination systems has been reformed and strengthened, teacher education reformed and school management supervision strengthened and improving classroom learning environment in 350 schools for quality improvement. Besides, recruitment of female teachers encouraged and water and sanitation facilities created to encourage more girls to be in schools; Skills training and leadership training in imparted for women through various projects of GoB that are mentioned in other parts of this article.

(iv) The Teaching Quality Improvement Project aims at improving the environment of schools more girls' friendly through quality education; teachers' training; gender sensitization of teachers and School Management Committees; curriculum development and other measures for ensuring quality of secondary education.

c. Women and health

ADB's focus on the health care support is in the area of supporting the Government in delivery of primary and maternal health services in urban areas. The Urban Primary Healthcare Project (1998-2004) provided with preventive and curative healthcare services to 3,027,559 poor women of urban slum and their children who lacked access to healthcare. The services were provided through NGOs managed by the urban local government system. This project also provided healthcare and referral services to victims of violence. Awareness raising activities regarding primary health care, immunization and HIV/AIDS are included in the project.

A second phase of the project is under implementation with wider coverage. Besides, providing reproductive healthcare services, this project includes specific support for HIV/AIDS prevention.

Awareness on HIV/AIDS has been included as a subcomponent in Road Sector Development Project to be implemented in three bordering districts of the country by NGOs.

d. Trafficking in women and children

Emerging concerns like trafficking of women and children is considered with importance and ADB undertook a regional technical assistance project in Bangladesh, India and Nepal to increase the understanding of how to mainstream trafficking concerns in poverty reduction programming through an analysis of key issues, mapping of key stakeholders and their

activities and identification of gaps in legislation, policy, institutional frameworks and other areas. ADB's efforts to reduce poverty is very relevant as many studies have identified poverty as a major cause of human trafficking. ADB has identified trafficking as an issue and aims to systematically mainstreaming the issue in its operations. Specific components have been identified in the road and urban sector infrastructure development projects and efforts will be made to ensure social protection of the vulnerable and victims trafficking. Support was given to Ministry of Women and Children Affairs in preparation of an Action Plan Against Trafficking of Women. Currently another regional project with the International Organization of Migration is working for advocacy for expanding the coverage of SAARC Convention on Trafficking.

e. Women's economic empowerment

ADB supports initiatives endeavors to create an enabling environment for private sector led economic growth. Women can play a vital role as beneficiary and contributor for poverty reduction and economic growth. Higher levels of employment need to be accompanied by an increase in real wages due to the disproportionately high reliance of the poor, on wage income. Women can effectively contribute towards economic growth by participating in the productive sectors. Some such initiatives include:

- i) Northwest Crop Diversification Project under Dept. of Agriculture Extension (DAE) organizes small farmers' in-groups by NGOs. About 55% of the targeted 220,000 farmers supported are be women. They are receiving training on high value crop cultivation and preservation and finance for production and processing. The project is developing



wholesale and retail high value crop markets in the rural areas with women corners.

Agro-based enterprises are also supported;

Performance of NCDP as of As of 30 September 2008

Area	Male	Female	Total
Group formation	6,156	- 6,259	12,415
Beneficiaries	119,512 (49.7%)	120,919 (50.3%)	240,431
Follow up training			57,119
No of loans	147,226(49%)	153,234(51%)]	300,460
Loanee	81,357	84,677	166,834
Amount of loan	Tk739.66 m (48%)	Tk800.33m. (52%)	Tk1,539.99 m
Farmers' training	155,039	157,171	313,210
Farmers Field Training	14,580 (54%)	12,420 (46%)	27,000

A total number of loans amounting Tk1,539.9 million were disbursed amongst trained beneficiaries maintaining over 99% repayment rate. The total accumulated savings of the beneficiaries with the partner NGOs stood at about Tk 232 million. As analyzed, up to 30 September 2008, an additional area of about 70,447 hectares against the target of 40,000 hectares has been brought under HVCs in the Project areas. Women farmers are also members of marketing groups. Women market sections constructed in the improved markets have started allocating shops to women farmers to sell their produce.

2)The Agribusiness Project intends to empower women through enhancing their access to and benefit from agribusiness. It focused on women's participation in economic activities as a strong force for private sector development. The Project is implemented through NGOs to provide entrepreneurs with technology and finance. This project supports entrepreneurs through provision of financial, business development and policy support for agribusiness. The key features of the gender related activities are elaborated in the box:

Gender Features of Agribusiness Development Project

- ii. Ensure small scale agribusiness enterprises receive credit and 30% of this group will comprise women.
- iii. A substantial number of women former micro-credit borrowers are supported to scale up their activities and be involved in agribusiness.
- iv. Information campaign for awareness amongst potential entrepreneurs to inform of the business services and credit line opportunities.
- v. NGOs provide training and guidance to beneficiaries on business planning, preparation of project proposal, business and credit management, formalities, opportunities, tax and tariff etc. for all women borrowers.
- vi. Provide technical training to all women beneficiaries on livestock, fisheries, agronomy, storage, processing etc.
- vii. Forming producer groups and associations and support women entrepreneurs to establish linkage with market and financial institutions.
- viii. Support for women private sector associations/ chambers to improve their capacity
- ix. Identify larger or medium size entities that are willing to enter into supply contracts with the women agribusiness entrepreneurs
- x. Review key regulations, documents to include provisions to facilitate women's participation

vi) Two rural infrastructure improvement projects are supporting women in accessing and contributing in the mainstream of the rural economy through constructing and allocating shops in rural markets. It is ensuring their participation in the rural markets and helping them to build their entrepreneurial capacities. The Projects are also providing training to the poor women on road maintenance, tree plantation and various income generating skills. Disadvantaged women are employed in maintenance work.

vii) ADB supported Small and Medium Enterprise Development Project facilitates access to and increase contribution towards private sector led economic growth. It intends to support in creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs through provision of

Small and Medium Enterprise Project	
i.	Encouraging participation by women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses in policy advocacy.
ii.	Improving access to information, credit and business development services by women entrepreneurs
iii.	Identify potential women borrowers for support
iv.	Simplify procedures to encourage women entrepreneurs
v.	Enhancing women entrepreneurs' capacity, productivity and competitiveness through training
vi.	Promoting networking among women

financial, business development and policy support. The Program also facilitates policy intervention that is conducive to women entrepreneurship development. It also supports networking of women entrepreneurs.

f. Women's empowerment and decision-making

i) ADB's support to facilitate women's participation is at various levels that include grassroots level organizations, own business, rural economy as well as local governance.

The Participatory Livestock Development Projects, Rural Livelihood Project, Small Scale Water Sector Development Projects and the Rural Infrastructure Development Projects support women in participating in groups, development of leadership, management and decision making regarding their business, the cooperative societies, Water Management Cooperative Associations, in traders' associations and in Market Management Committees.

- ii) The Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Project of LGED supports women's participation in urban governance by establishing mechanisms to ensure women's participation in municipal level decision making, in citizen committees, in management of infrastructure and in building capacity of the women ward commissioners in poverty reduction, environment management and other activities. Women are members of Town Level Coordination Committees and they chair some committees at the municipal level as well. Women's participation is a key indicator of the performance based allocation criteria for the participating municipalities. The Project ensures citizens' participation in municipal activities through establishing mechanisms which will be followed throughout the country. Capacities of the female ward commissioners are developed through training and network development as part of Bangladesh Association of Municipalities. The women members are responsible to organize ward level court yard meetings to discuss various issues for raising awareness amongst the citizens including about services provided by the municipalities and citizens' responsibilities about waste management, maintenance of services, taxes, etc. Gender is addressed in different areas:

Infrastructure:

- i) Ensuring women's access to urban infrastructure (markets, bus terminals, water and sanitation facilities through women friendly designs;
- ii) Ensuring women's participation in infrastructure maintenance;
- iii) Ensuring women's participation in construction; and,
- iv) Promotion of wage parity between men and women in construction, operation and maintenance of infrastructure.

Urban Governance:

- i) delineation of responsibilities between male and female ward commissioners; ii) involvement of female ward commissioners and citizens in various committees, such as town level coordination committees;
- iii) assignment of female commissioners as committee chairs, such as, gender and environment committee; and,
- iv) participation of female commissioners and citizens in tax collection and budget preparation.

Environment and Health:

- i) Organizing periodic campaigns and orientation activities on proper disposal of solid waste;
- ii) Organizing rallies for awareness on environment, sanitation and hygiene; and iii) promoting women's participation in sanitation programs;

Poverty Reduction and Slum Development:

- i) prepare poverty reduction action plan considering the needs of poor women;
- ii) including poor women in slum development committees as leaders;
- iii) providing micro finance and skills training for women for income generation; and iv) providing health services for women and children.

ii) The Rural Infrastructure Improvement Projects under LGED helped women in deciding about their own self-employment program, business management through training and support. These projects ensure women's participation in market management committees and traders' associations. Training of the union parishad (UP) members on their roles and responsibilities, local resource mobilization and in addressing the needs of women are imparted. A uniform design of UP building with specific space and facilities for women was adopted that facilitated women to play their role as leaders and listen to the problems of women. Rules for management of Women Market Section was formulated and adopted by GoB that helps women in deciding about their own self-employment program, business management through training and support. Networking of female UP and municipal members are facilitated.

g) Women in environment

Women have been involved in the area of environmental protection through the Forestry Sector Project and Coastal Greenbelt Project under Forest Department. The activities included women's participation in women in social forestry, tree care taking, seed preservation and

plantation etc. and created income-earning opportunities for the poor. These also helped in protecting the coastal areas and improve the greenery of the country. Urban infrastructure development projects involve women in solid waste management, water supply and sanitation activities as users and agents.

Other projects especially the infrastructure development projects have facilitated employment and livelihood of the poor, and also empowerment of the women through increased mobility and access to services by women etc.

ADB supports the executing agencies of the Government to develop gender and development capacity at the institutional level and senior staff are trained on Gender and Development. The executing agencies are supported to develop and implement gender action plans for the projects that include comprehensive target oriented plan for addressing gender issues through the projects. New projects include design features to promote gender equality and support women's participation as beneficiaries, users and agents and gender specialist positions are included for implementation.

10. Gender Action Plan as tool

Gender Action Plans have been used as the tool in integrating gender equality promoting actions in various projects. An assessment of results related to gender equality was done in 2004 based on a few selected projects. The findings were:

- Participation of women in project activities varied at field level based on projects' initiatives and nature of activities. Integration is still difficult at the institutional level due to many regulations and rules.
- Access to resources and services by women has increased and but concern is still there to translate the training and other support into opportunity for high quality return
- Women received practical benefits and some led to strategic benefits changing their status but more is needed
- Gender roles and relations have started to change but still a long way to go
- Increased commitments to gender equality is visible within the executing agencies but their capacity for effective gender mainstreaming is lacking
- Infrastructure sectors have started to recognize the need of integrating gender equality and doing it gradually.

The Assessment found Gender Action Plan (GAP) as an effective tool in mainstreaming gender in ADB supported Project/Programs. GAP has been seen as an opportunity to strengthen rationale and logic for gender mainstreaming. It helps in clarifying action areas, targets and roles of different stakeholders and identifies resource needs. The GAP also facilitates monitoring by identifying indicators.

The Assessment report also talked about the features of effective Gender Action Plan

- A GAP is effective if it integrates component wise action areas and remains consistent with project objectives
- The GAP activities are to be “separate but integrated” which is a challenge

- Activities are to be broken down according to detailed design and sequencing of the project components
- Flexibility in implementation is important
- Capacity building plan to be included as an integrated feature of the project/program
- Resources are to be allocated for gender related activities
- Fostering leadership from senior management is the key to success
- Monitoring indicators consistent with all components should be identified and applied.

11) Conclusion

Of course there are biological differences, including a smaller corpus callosum in men's brains that may result in greater ability to use both sides of the brain... thus the supposed "women's intuition." That claim, however, is often disputed and rather controversial.

Overall, men and women should be treated with respect to their biological differences, but not ones that society creates. People should not assume that women are submissive and fragile, and should thus treat them as such, nor should we expect men to be the protectors and breadwinners. We should assume that men and women are capable of the same things. However, this is often not the case

ADB as a development partner is supporting Bangladesh in its effort for poverty reduction, economic growth and social development. It is important to make the best use of the support so that in the long run the goal of gender equality can be achieved along with the achievement of the other development goals. The Government can consult with the NGOs and design increased number of projects in different sectors including gender features in project design and also undertake projects for women's advancement. The gender equality results of the projects often cannot be determined as sex disaggregated data collection, analysis and reporting are weak. Men and women are not the same. They may be equal, but they are not the same.

It's difficult to reverse what one has learned through gender models, social learning, and other experiences from childhood. We have learned the gender roles in our societies, and many of us have tried to conform to those roles so as to avoid censure and rejection. Men are generally attracted to more feminine women while women tend to go more more masculine males for this reason, not to mention sociobiological reasons that say men want nurturing women to raise their children, men should sow their seeds as much as possible to ensure the survival of their genes, men should be strong to support a family, and so on.

However, now is as good of a time as ever to challenge those roles. Women are running for president, and people support them. Men are having babies while many women decide they don't

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