

Analyzing the Gender Sensitivity of Rural Advisory Services in Bangladesh

Results from the implementation of the FAO Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool (Enabling Environment component)

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© INGENAES. Asma Parvin, BIID, facilitating a training session with farmers in Kazipur in December 2016.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BIID	Bangladesh Institute for ICT in Development
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
EAS	Extension and Advisory Services
ECNEC	The Executive Committee of National Economic Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FPMU	Food Planning and Monitoring Unit Ministry of Food
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services
GRAST	FAO Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
ICF	Interdisciplinary Centre for Food Security
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INGENAES	Integrating Gender and Nutrition within Agricultural Extension Services
LC	Law Commission
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOWCA	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
NAEP	National Agricultural Extension Policy
NAP	National Agriculture Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRDP	National Rural Development Policy
NWDP	National Women Development Policy
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSHT	Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking
RAS	Rural Advisory Services
SFYP	Seventh Five Year Plan
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Background and Rationale

Gender relations in Bangladesh have been undergoing a process of considerable transformation over the past thirty years as part of a broader process of economic transition and societal change. Women farmers made up 40 percent of the total agricultural labor force in 2010, with a 7 percent growth in women's participation in agriculture between 2005 and 2010 (Akter *et.al.*, 2015). Evidence shows that the wage difference between men and women in agriculture decreased from 40% to 30% for the year 2011/12 to 2013/14, which can be taken as a positive change (FPMU, 2015; BBS Monthly Bulletin, 2015), although the gap is still very high. Despite such progress, Bangladeshi women are still primarily considered to be unpaid family labor (56.3% of women in the labor force), and their contributions to agriculture are not fully recognized, neither in the household and communities nor at the national level (SFYP, 2015). Gender issues in agriculture are complex but it is generally agreed that the major barriers for women to contribute more fully to social and economic development are a.) limited ownership of land by women, b.) inequitable access to infrastructure and services and c.) social and structural (socio-political and cultural) inability of women farmers to negotiate and engage with markets and related stakeholders as farmers in their own right (ICF, 2014). Women are already heavily involved in agriculture; by purposefully supporting them in this role, they will be able to contribute more substantially and more productively to the sustainable development of the country.

Is the policy environment in Bangladesh conducive to leading the country towards that goal? What are the conditions especially for the rural advisory or extension system to provide services that are more equitable to men and women farmers? To attempt to answer these questions we used the pilot version of the "Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool" (GRAST, see Box 1) developed by the Social Policies and Rural Institutions Division, Economic and Social Development Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, Rome). The tool was used to assess the enabling environment dimension of rural advisory services (RAS) in Bangladesh and guide the writing of this discussion paper. The analysis was carried out from March to November 2016.

Based on the GRAST, the following specific questions are addressed in this report:

1. Whether or not high-level commitment to including women in development planning and programming exists in terms of written policies and/or strategies
2. Whether or not national ARD/FS or poverty reduction policies/strategies recognize the important contribution of women to agriculture and rural development (ARD) and food security and nutrition (FSN)
3. Whether or not ARD/FS or poverty reduction policies/strategies include an explicit objective to ensure that women equally with men access and control productive resources, services and income generating opportunities and in particular RAS
4. Whether or not the Ministry of Agriculture has and is implementing a Policy for Gender Equality (or equity)

Box 1: About the FAO Gender and Rural Advisory Services assessment tool (GRAST):

GRAST was designed for development organizations, national rural advisory services providers and private sector companies who wish to assess gender-sensitivity of RAS in order to help introduce improvements. In 2015, the FAO completed a systematic literature review of the major constraints to women's access to RAS, as well as good practices in gender-sensitive approaches for overcoming these constraints. Based on the results of the literature review, FAO identified the need for a tool that can easily but comprehensively assess the gender-sensitivity of the given RAS. The GRAST has two main objectives. On one hand, by assessing the gender-sensitivity of RAS organizations and programs, it aims to understand what works to design and deliver gender-sensitive RAS, and facilitate the sharing of innovative approaches. On the other, the assessment aims to shed light on the areas of the assessed organizations and their programs that require improvement in order to increase gender-responsiveness and thus effectiveness of RAS design and delivery. Both objectives will enable the formulation of recommendations and capacity development materials for gender-sensitive RAS at policy, organizational and individual levels. The GRAST is structured around three areas of inquiry that correspond with three dimensions, namely (1) enabling environment; (2) organizational; and (3) individual. The individual dimension includes both RAS staff and clients, as it is important to account for the clients' perspectives on the service provision in assessing the enabling environment, organization, and individual capacity.

For more information on FAO's work on gender-sensitive RAS visit: www.fao.org/3/a-i5120e.pdf and www.fao.org/3/a-i6194e.pdf.

Results

1. Does a high-level commitment to including women in development planning and programming exist in terms of written policies and/or strategies?

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) ratified the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol in 2000¹. The eighth periodic report (submitted on 9 March, 2016) of Bangladesh to the CEDAW Committee acknowledged (para 85) that it is a challenge to provide all the required support to rural women due to limited resources. It explicitly states that the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWCA) has inadequate human, financial and technical resources and decision-making authority. Hence, it is suggested to ensure adequate human, financial and technical resources and decision-making authority so MOWCA can work effectively for the advancement of women and the promotion of gender equality at all levels (CEDAW, 2016). The ECNEC (The Executive Committee of National Economic Council) in collaboration with MOWCA has issued guidelines for gender responsive planning and review, guiding on how to address gender in technical assistance and investment project documents. The resource allocation for gender

¹ Bangladesh acceded to the CEDAW treaty on November 6, 1984.

is to be aligned with the identified priority areas by the ministries and to be consistent with actions based on set criteria. The department of women affairs (under MOWCA) has prepared national action plan to address above issues through allocation of resources (from the government) and provide gender related training to their staff and the participants. Similarly, the CEDAW shadow report prepared by civil society organizations urges the GoB to establish strong legal measures to ensure women's control over their own earnings and wealth, as well as their right to inheritance given that women are major contributors in the economy and income earners. They also expressed their concern that existing social safety net programs for rural women often fail to reach the most disadvantaged and remote areas (CIC-BD, 2016).

Bangladesh has enacted several legal and policy measures to uphold the rights and opportunities of women at national level. The Constitution of Bangladesh grants equal rights to women and men in all spheres of public life (Article 27, 28(1), 28(2), 28(3), 28(4), 29(1), 29(2) and 29(3)) and has been supplemented by a number of Acts and Ordinances to safeguard women's equal rights. Laws formulated include the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2010, the Domestic Violence Prevention and Protection Rules 2013, Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking (PSHT) Act 2012, Hindu Marriage Registration Act 2012, Child Marriage Control Act-2013 (draft) and National Children's Act 2013 (KfW, 2006; NWDP, 2011, SFYP, 2015).

Another important achievement was the reformulation of the National Women Development Policy (NWDP) 2011 from the National Women Advancement Policy of 1997. A National Action Plan (NAP) for implementing the policy as well as meeting commitments under the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) was approved in 1998. Among the twenty-two objectives of the NWDP 2011, one objective clearly calls for Bangladesh "to innovate and import technology favoring the interest of women and prohibit anti-women technologies". Furthermore, under the "women and farming" section, it suggests "taking initiative to ensure equal wages for the same job and to remove wage discrimination to women in agriculture". Besides, it suggests taking steps to ensure that farming women have equal opportunity in having access to agricultural inputs like fertilizer and seeds, as well as farmers' cards and credit facilities, etc. (NWDP, 2011: page 20, 31.3). There is an ordinance for minimum wages for agricultural laborer ("The minimum rate of wages for agricultural labor per day shall be 3.27 kilograms of rice or such amount of money as is equal to the price of this quantity of rice in the local market") but no concrete measures are formulated to ensure equal wages for male and female.

2. Do national ARD/FS or poverty reduction policies/strategies recognize the important contribution of women to agriculture and rural development (ARD) and FSN?

One of the key objectives of National Rural Development Policy 2001 is "improving the quality of life of women and the poor" besides ensuring a supportive environment for ethnic, marginal, disadvantaged people in the society (NRDP, 2001). In line with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2009 (Policy Matrix 3 and 14), the Policy of Action (PoA) calls for a multi-sectoral set of actions focused on women's skill development, access to productive assets and encourage participation in extension services (PRSP, 2009). This policy highlights continues for the next decade and poverty reduction strategies in sixth five year plan include stimulating women participation in the labor force and improving the access to and quality of education, health and nutrition services (SFYP, 2015). The National Agriculture Policy of 2013 (originated from NAP 1999) recognizes the importance of the involvement of women in different agricultural activities such as post-harvest operations, seed preservation, nursery business, jute stripping, vegetable cultivation, homestead gardening,

floriculture, production of horticultural seeds, establishment and management of cottage industries based on locally produced agricultural commodities. Similarly, the National Food Policy (NFP) Plan of Action agenda is guided to empower rural women by ensuring access to productive resources, income opportunities, extension services, credit, labor and time-saving technologies (NFPMU, 2015). The Government of Bangladesh has implemented targeted social safety net programs such as One House One Farm, Food for Work, Vulnerable Group Development with strong focus on vulnerable women and their families (Rahman, 2014). For instance, “One House One Farm Project” reached more than 2.5 million beneficiaries in 40,527 villages among which 60 percent are women. The Department of Women Affairs (DWA) has allocated micro-credit to 300,000 beneficiaries through 3,525 women organizations during FY 2009 to 2014 (MOWCA, 2015). Similarly, during 2010-2014 period more than 488,356 (50% women) rural people participated in different types of training programs organized by Ministry of Agriculture (MoA, 2015). The stipend programs for girl children up to higher secondary level is regarded a global best practice that achieved dramatic results in gender parity of education. In addition, the enactment of the Local Government (Union Parishad) Second Amendment Act in 1997 that provided for direct elections to reserved seats for women in local level elections (Walker, 2013). Likewise, one of the important objectives of Seventh Five Year Plan (2015-2016 to 2019-2020) is to “encourage wider women’s participation in homestead based agricultural production, post-harvest management, agro/food processing, marketing and decision making to support women’ empowerment in agriculture”. At the strategy level the plan proposes that various subsidy schemes should be reviewed to make sure that they respond to the particular needs of women farmers; extra attention will be needed to ensure that technologies are gender neutral, and that they address all aspects of the production chain (SFYP, 2015). In fact, the Seventh Five Year Plan has clearly identified four strategic objectives and seven action areas towards women’s empowerment and gender equality. More importantly, it has set some indicators for ensuring gender equality (see annex for details).

3. Do national policies/strategies include an explicit objective to ensure that women equally with men access and control productive resources, services and income generating opportunities and in particular RAS?

RAS in Bangladesh is pluralistic, consisting of a government funded, i.e., public, extension network, local and international NGOs, private sector firms, donors and their development projects, and voluntary farmer advisors (Karim, 2009). The government’s extension system has by far the largest coverage². Access to extension services, however, remains spotty, and farmers living in remote areas face challenges in accessing suitable RAS. Hence, the government encourages strengthening Public Private Partnerships in following areas (i) commercial production, processing and marketing; (ii) agro-technology extension services; (iii) market information system (development, expansion and flow); and (iv) establishment and management of agricultural product collection centers, wholesale market etc. (NAEP, 2015). A village level study (nearby a metropolitan city) reported that about 56 percent of rural women had medium awareness on agricultural extension activities (Islam et. al. 2014). However, there is lack of effective demand driven RAS and from the farmers’ side sometimes farmers are unable to

² Governmental statistics on the number of men and women working in specific units within the Ministry of Agriculture in the years 2013-14 to 2014-15 (see Table 1) report that there are 14,682 male and 1,439 female staff working in the Upazila Agricultural Offices, in addition to 1,458 male and 41 female officers. USAID (2015), Sadek (2015), and MEAS (2011) report a lower number, namely that there are 12,600 field extension officers are working throughout the country.

articulate their RAS demand as well as to give feedback. There is a scope for capacity development of RAS providers through networking stakeholders both at individual and institutional level.

The most recent NAEP specifically encourages supporting the participation of women in agriculture through developing women farmer groups, encouraging women SME development in agri-business, developing confidence for raising voice through grassroots level women farmers' organization, creating gender awareness of both women and male farmers (NAEP, 2015). The NAEP (2015) also suggests encouraging women farmers to lead and occupy decision-making positions in higher-level farmer organizations. The performance of rural advisory services (RAS) depends crucially on the conditions that prevail in the environment in which they are embedded (GFRAS, 2012). Clearly, Bangladesh does have policy and legal frameworks that imply an enabling environment for RAS in Bangladesh. However, although these laws and policies provide the essential legal framework for protecting and promoting women's equal rights in the public sphere, women continue to face considerable discrimination in RAS. They lag far behind men in rates of access to RAS. In fact, female farmers are often left out of the traditional extension system-because of gender barriers, many times female farmers do not interact with male extension agents, for example (Sadek, 2015).

From National Extension Coverage Survey (ASIRP 2003) it is evident that the majority of farmers, particularly women in the smaller farm sizes or lower income categories, remain unaware of the main formal ESPs (Extension Service Providers) in both the government and non-government sector. There is considerable gender disparity in access to RAS, even within the NGO community, although NGOs have invested heavily in targeting women (ASIRP, 2003). Hence, the extension services seem to be poorly organized in meeting the needs of women in agriculture. Islam et al. (2014) report that rural women's awareness on extension activities showed significant positive correlations with their education, extension media contact and cosmopolitans. According to Uddin (2008) the interface between and among extension, research and education remain a critical area of concern to increase the efficiency of extension services.

A village level needs assessment survey documented that most of the women needed information on agriculture and animal husbandry (Hossain and Islam, 2012³; SFYP, 2015). Knowledge seeking behavior of women and access to participation of women in planning and marketing of farming production is different from men. Often they first need permission from their husbands or elderly female relatives to participate in these types of activities. With the absence of male family members (due to migration or and other reasons), women's role is changing as farm managers. Now, they have to manage the farm as well as the household. Accordingly, NWDP (2011) and USAID (2011) have identified lack of time due to household responsibilities as a major constraint on women's agricultural productivity. As a result, they recommend the research and extension system should invest in "women friendly technologies", aiming at saving time and reducing drudgery of women 'who are engaged in agricultural work. (USAID, 2011). On the other hand, application of sustainable household technology (e.g., household products, appliances, drinking water etc.) will decrease women's working hours in the household, and this saved times can be allocated in farming. On the issue of women access to technology, Bangladeshi women have relatively easier access to credit (microcredit) than other assets.

³ Hossain and Islam (2012) report that about 87% women's respondents prioritized agricultural information, followed by information on animal husbandry (83%), food and nutrition (75%), health (75%), education (58%), religion (42%), politics (25%), family planning (25%), loan (17%).

Therefore, greater financial access and decision-making ability at household might influence women to purchase women-friendly technologies that will reduce their workload too.

- ***Availability of sex-disaggregated data***

In general, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) compiles sex-disaggregated data synchronized with the national and sectoral indicators and the reporting needs for CEDAW, SDG and such others. The availability of sex-disaggregated data is the basis of baseline and assessment of development results for gender equality and women's empowerment. It has been a constant concern that sex disaggregated data is not available for all areas. Even though data are collected from men and women and can be presented in a disaggregated manner, often data are presented in general terms. It is critical that all agencies, field offices and local government institutions, collect and present data in a sex disaggregated manner, which eventually supports the Government and all to conduct gender analysis and use them for planning and evaluation. As the Government has recognized 'transgender' as a third gender, all data should also reflect that category. Sex-disaggregated data, especially if analyzed by income group, ethnicity, physical ability or geographical location will provide better information of the differential needs of women from different groups and locations (Begum, 2014). It is difficult to obtain gender disaggregated data to see who are receiving government supports in terms of man and women. However, the Ministry of Agriculture has identified five areas with highest spending priorities. Among these, 30% of agricultural subsidy allocated to women farmers, 40% to the special program for irrigation and water logging and a similar rate (40%) for agricultural rehabilitations programs (MoA, 2015).

- ***Gender Responsive Budgets***

A specific gender budget initiated by the government is to gradually ensure gender equity in every policy area through budgetary allocation and implementation. Adequate allocations along with proper implementations in the national budget are the prerequisites to achieving the targets of gender equality and equity. In fact, government is committed to strengthening the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) process and it has taken some incremental steps. The Action Plan developed by the government to implement the National Women Policy strongly emphasized implementation of GRB in a tangible and meaningful manner. The Ministry of Finance is taking up initiatives to work with the Planning Commission to make projects formulation more gender sensitive. It is also allocating resources for the line ministries including MoA to undertake gender disaggregated beneficiary assessment of the implemented projects (Siddique, 2013). However, about 40 percent of total gender budget is unused. Regardless of the enormous allocation, the actual benefits of Gender Budget in Bangladesh have not come into force because of ambiguity of Government policies (Mozdalifa, 2012). For example, the Planning Commission uses 17 sectors for planning, and the Ministry of Finance uses 13 sectors for budget allocation. These together with the division of ministries by three gender equality results areas in gender budget reports pose difficulties in understanding and application of the 14 GRB criteria (Begum, 2014). The gender budget reporting compiles report in three different areas and divides the Ministries in 3 groups, each contributing in one area. This division is problematic as the same ministry can contribute in all three areas. As for gender responsive planning, the agencies are not oriented or aware of the guidelines and its use is limited. The main limitations are lack of purposive gender planning and that the guidelines are not integrated within the project planning formats. Staff capacity is also limited in using the guidelines. Thus, 7th five-year plan emphasizes to enhance capacity for policy makers, existing staff contingent in different institutions has to be continued and expanded.

Private sectors should be encouraged to incorporate gender perspectives in their operation and employ gender specialists, if needed (SFYP, 2015).

4. Does the Ministry of Agriculture have and implement a Policy for Gender Equality (or equity)?

Although there exists a quota system in government jobs to ensure the employment of women, several gender gaps have identified in the activities of the Ministry of Agriculture. For instance, the statistics of male and female officials in different organizations under the Ministry of Agriculture in 2014-15 fiscal years shows that only 5 percent of officers and 9 percent of staff are women (MoA, 2015). The situation is similar in the Department of Agricultural Extension. Here, among officers, at ministry level, during the fiscal year 2014-15, 194 were male and 13 (6.7%) were female. Among education and training officers of the Department of Agricultural Extension on modern technology, only 8.3 percent are women. More importantly, there are 1458 male versus 41 (2.7%) female officers employed at upazilla level. Similarly, number of field staff is 14,682 and 1,439 for male and female (8.9%) respectively. Women's lower participation in the Ministry of Agriculture activities has negatively influenced the formulation of gender-sensitive policies, programs and projects in the agricultural sector. The Ministry of Agriculture recognizes that despite the opportunities for agricultural education, training and research at home and abroad, women's participation is lagging behind in respect to equal opportunities in management (MoA, 2015). In spite of these initiatives, there was no significant increase 2013/14 to 2014/15 in the number of women working in the Ministry (Table 1), the percentage of women among officers now being 5%, and 9% among staff.

Table 1: Number of men and women working in specific units within the Ministry of Agriculture in the years 2013-14 to 2014-15

Employees	Officers				Staff			
	2014/15		2013/14		2014/15		2013/14	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Secretariat	81	17	74	13	55	19	55	16
Department of Agricultural Extension	194	13	194	13	271	38	115	37
Project Implementation Wing	1	0	1	0	21	3	17	1
Field Services Division	352	7	353	7	1,478	173	1,405	162
Plant Protection Department	69	1	62	1	165	23	138	20
Cash Crop Division - Tobacco & Jute	7	0	7	0	42	6	42	6
Food Crops Division	71	1	71	1	923	38	790	28
Agricultural Education & Training	133	12	133	14	410	40	350	33
Upazila Agriculture Office	1,458	41	1,458	40	14,682	1439	14,610	1,410
Seed Certification Agency	43	9	45	6	141	13	144	11

Employees	Officers				Staff			
	2014/15		2013/14		2014/15		2013/14	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Cotton Development Board	65	6	65	6	644	45	444	45
Agricultural Information Service	26	0	24	1	154	19	155	10
Department of Agricultural Marketing	25	7	26	7	380	58	406	49
Soil Resource Development Institute	125	30	131	24	275	34	294	35
Total	2,650	144	2,644	133	19,641	1,948	18,965	1,864
Percentage	95%	5%	95.2%	4.7%	91%	9%	91.1%	8.9%

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, 2015

www.mof.gov.bd/en/budget/15_16/gender_budget/en/G-1_06_43_Agriculture_English.pdf

The Ministry is providing multi-faceted training on agriculture activities to women in order to provide them with opportunities by enabling them to become educated and skilled workforce. Women farmers are supported in different areas alongside men for their contribution in social and economic sphere. In terms of the Ministry's total expenditure, during the fiscal year 2015-16, 26.8% was allotted to women's benefit.

Overall Observations

This discussion paper carefully reviewed different policies and strategies of the government of Bangladesh in line with the Gender and Rural Advisory Services Assessment Tool of FAO. The review shows that there is important political commitment but this is often not accompanied by concrete action. The government policies are found to be extensive but existing documents reported slower progress on implementation. While the government has successfully passed policies that do include passages on gender, {e.g. the National Agriculture Policy, New Agriculture Extension Policy, Rural Development Policy, National Women Development Policy, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers I&II, Seventh Five Year Plan and Two-Year plan (Government's Plan during 1978-1980)}, there is an implementation gap of these policies. Also, coordination among different departments falls short. None of the policy frameworks have a specific implementation strategy that distinctly addresses gender issues in RAS.

For instance, as per CEDAW agreement, the county submits regular report on the progress made in eliminating discrimination against women. However, reservations on articles 2 and 16 pertaining to marriage, divorce and inheritance remain in force. Article 2 (relating to "Obligations to Eliminate Discrimination") is in direct contradiction to Religious Personal Law, which allows members of different faiths to practice marriage, divorce, alimony custody and guardianship in accordance with the religious faith and article 16 ("Equity in Marriage and Family Law"). Withdrawal of existing reservation on Article 2 and Article 16(1)c was considered and the Law Commission (LC) was requested to review the merit of the reservation and to provide appropriate recommendations. The LC recommended government to withdraw her reservation from Article 2 and Article 16.1(c) of CEDAW. However, Bangladesh shall

apply the provisions of these articles in compatibility and harmony with her Constitution and existing laws. The Government is considering the LC recommendation with concern about the potential movements by the Islamic fundamentalist groups are against the withdrawal of the reservations (CEDAW, 2015). Hence, lifting reservation on Article 2 and 16 is a commitment of the GoB to CEDAW is yet to be fulfilled.

Although two significant policies (National Women Development Policy 2011, New Agriculture Extension Policy 2015) create provisions to improve access to productive resource, services and income generating activities for women, these are yet to be implemented due to execution problems. For example, the use of a top-down approach, over-dependence on training and visit approach, limited front line human resources, limited policy guidelines and absence of proper feedback mechanism, lack of ICT use, inadequate training centers, lack of coordination and integration in different departments and ministries, and limited number of female RAS advisors, , etc. hinder implementation.

Despite some favorable policies and strategies, at present RAS is not gender sensitive due to substantial gaps in implementation of policies and lack of proper monitoring. The lack of gender responsive working environment for extension service staff including inadequate facilities of child care, transport, accommodation, occupational health and safety are some of the reasons that discourage women to pursue a career in RAS.

Furthermore, education, research and extension links remain weak, hence the extension system fails to come up with solution that could well improve the gender sensitivity of RAS (SAIC, 2006). Therefore, beside policy supports, coordinated and integrated efforts among education, research, and extension organizations could play substantial role to attain gender sensitive RAS in Bangladesh.

Table 2: GRAST Enabling Environment Overview of Assessment for Bangladesh

POLICY ISSUE	DESCRIPTOR for Bangladesh	OBSERVATION for Bangladesh
<p>Country has ratified CEDAW and makes efforts to implement its article 14</p>	<p> Country has ratified CEDAW without reservations and regularly reports on its implementation including on rural women's situation; the CEDAW Committee's concluding observations state that the Government is making some efforts to improve the life of rural women</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reservations on articles 2 and 16 pertaining to marriage, divorce and inheritance remain in force. • The CEDAW Committee urges the State party to expedite its efforts towards the withdrawal of its reservations to articles 2 and 16, paragraph 1 (c) within a concrete timeframe. (www.refworld.org/publisher,CEDAW,,BGD,4efc90162,0.html)
<p>The Ministry of Agriculture has an approved Policy for Gender Equality and its implementation plan</p>	<p> The MoA does not have a Policy for Gender Equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not have distinct policy but there is key focus area on gender under the NAP and NAEP
<p>Gender equality and women's empowerment in the agriculture policy content</p> <p>Extent to which gender equality and/or women's empowerment feature in the agriculture policy and to which the differentiated needs and priorities of poor rural women and men are reflected in the document</p>	<p> Gender equality and/or women's empowerment is mentioned in the document but inadequate analysis/attention is given to poor women's and men's differentiated roles, needs, constraints and priorities in the agriculture sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality and or women's empowerment is not the key objective in the NAP but it is under women in agriculture section 12. (http://moa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moa.portal.gov.bd/policies/2b1e1832_541c_492e_9764_c2b3c8db5317/Final_NAP%202013_web.pdf) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12.1 Empowerment of rural women is encouraged • 12.2 Participation in Production and Marketing • 12.3 Income generation • SFYP (2016-20) under agriculture section target 20% participation of women in agricultural activities. • NFP (2008) objective 2.5 target to enhance participation of women and disabled people in rural agricultural/other rural activities (p.84); Expanding income generating opportunities for women/female-headed households enhancing their access to productive assets (p.23); Improve coverage of extension serviceswomen (p. 70),

POLICY ISSUE	DESCRIPTOR for Bangladesh	OBSERVATION for Bangladesh
		<p>www.nfpcsp.org/agridrupal/sites/default/files/The National Food Policy Plan of Action (2008-15).pdf)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NRDP 2001 objective is to achieve comprehensive village development rural people, particularly women and the poor (p.10) • www.bard.gov.bd/link_page_doc/Natinal%20RD%20Policy.pdf) • To ensure equal participation of women with men..... (p. 10);
<p>Gender equality and women’s empowerment in the <u>national agricultural extension policy</u></p>	<p> The national agricultural extension policy makes gender equality or rural women’s empowerment, however it recognizes the different needs of women and men and it calls for strategies to address these (include strategies to address these)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender equality and or women’s empowerment is not the key objective in the NAEP but it is under guiding principles • Rural women are among the targeted population • The roles of women as farmers, processors and entrepreneurs are recognized • Women’s and men’s differentiated roles, needs, constraints and priorities are identified and addressed • http://moa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moa.portal.gov.bd/policies/52c27d0f_c33c_4a6a_81b8_7b8288d17a1b/Draft_NAEP-2015.pdf)
<p>Gender equality and women’s empowerment in the <u>agriculture strategy/Investment plan for agriculture</u></p> <p>Extent to which specific instruments/ provisions exist for implementing gender equality and women’s empowerment objectives of agriculture policy</p>	<p> Gender equality is mentioned as an important objective in the agriculture strategy but is not comprehensively articulated across key thematic areas of the strategy/investment plan documents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Women Development Policy and New Agriculture Extension Policy documents- • Gender equality and or women’s empowerment is identified as a priority area and reflected in outputs and outcomes • Women are recognized as farmers, processors and entrepreneurs • Rural women are among the target population for agriculture production, processing and entrepreneurship activities • Women’s and men’s differentiated roles, needs, constraints and priorities are identified • Sex disaggregated data are a priority

POLICY ISSUE	DESCRIPTOR for Bangladesh	OBSERVATION for Bangladesh
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocation of resources (particularly credit) for gender equality or women’s empowerment initiatives • NAEP: (http://moa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moa.portal.gov.bd/policies/52c27d0f_c33c_4a6a_81b8_7b8288d17a1b/Draft_NAEP-2015.pdf) • NWDP: http://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/bgd149160.pdf
<p>Gender-sensitive budget in the Ministry of Agriculture</p> <p>Extent to which explicit provisions exist for allocating resources for gender equality and rural women’s empowerment</p>	<p> Provisions for allocating resources exist but limited gender activities budgeted in the investment plan/work plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-related budgeting present in the Ministry of Agriculture (www.mof.gov.bd/en/budget/15_16/prsp/gender_minwise_summary.pdf) However, it is essential to strengthen the process to ensure that tangible resource mobilisation takes place to improve gender equality (Siddique, 2013) (https://consultations.worldbank.org/Data/hub/files/grb_papers_bangladesh_updf_final.pdf). • About 40 percent of total gender budget is unused. Regardless of the enormous allocation, the actual benefits of Gender Budget in Bangladesh have not come into force because of ambiguity of Government policies. (www.unnayan.org/reports/Gender%20and%20Women%20Rights/GENDER%20Gender_uo.pdf). • Monitoring cell is important for gender budgeting (www.observerbd.com/2014/05/31/22857.php)
<p>Oversight and accountability to monitor gender equality objectives in the implementation of the agricultural policy /strategy</p> <p>Presence of a task force / committee</p>	<p> Existence of a task force or oversight committee with the responsibility for the implementation of agriculture-related policy and strategy but which lacks formal authority (political clout).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, a unit with defined mandate for monitoring implementation of gender equality objectives exists • The responsibilities are not clearly articulated (www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/16_Gender-Equality-and-Womens-Empowerment.pdf) Pages 52-53

POLICY ISSUE	DESCRIPTOR for Bangladesh	OBSERVATION for Bangladesh
<p>for coordinating and monitoring implementation of gender equality objectives of the agriculture policy and strategies</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Report (2015) (www.fao.org/3/a-az470e.pdf) • Pluralistic and De-centralized Approach and Participatory monitoring and Evolution realized in NAEP-2015
<p>Gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system used by Ministry of Agriculture</p> <p>Existence of monitoring and evaluation systems for regular tracking differentiated impacts of agriculture policies and programs on rural women and men</p>	<p> Monitoring and evaluation systems for regular tracking of impacts of agriculture-related policies, strategies and major programs are in place but gender is integrated in an ad hoc or inadequate manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender sensitive indicators • Sex-disaggregated data (www.bbs.gov.bd/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/Health_Development/Gender_Statistics.pdf) Gender Statistics of Bangladesh (2012) • Regular monitoring and evaluation reports on gender suggested to 7th five year plan. (www.plancomm.gov.bd/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/16_Gender-Equality-and-Womens-Empowerment.pdf)

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Annex 1: Major policy and planning documents reviewed

Title of the Policy	Web Links
Seventh Five Year Policy (2016-2020)	www.plancomm.gov.bd/7th-five-year-plan
National Women Advancement Policy, 1997	Not available, it has been converted to NWDP-2011
National Women Development Policy 2011	http://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/bgd149160.pdf
National Food Policy 2008 - Plan of Action (2008-2015)	http://fpmu.gov.bd/agridrupal/sites/default/files/The_National_Food_Policy_Plan_of_Action_(2008-15).pdf
National Food Policy Plan of Action and Country Investment Plan, Monitoring Report-2015	www.fao.org/3/a-az470e.pdf
National Rural Development Policy, 2001	www.bard.gov.bd/link_page_doc/Natinal%20RD%20Policy.pdf
Bangladesh: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper I, 2005	www.preventionweb.net/files/9305_cr05410.pdf
Bangladesh: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper II, 2009	www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2012/cr12293.pdf
National Agricultural Policy, 1999	http://dae.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/dae.portal.gov.bd/page/dd7d2be1_aeef_452f_9774_8c23462ab73a/NAP.pdf
National Agriculture Policy 2013	http://moa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moa.portal.gov.bd/policies/2b1e1832_541c_492e_9764_c2b3c8db5317/Final_NAP%202013_web.pdf
National Agriculture Policy Plan of Action-2003	Not available the link but has summary review www.lcgbangladesh.org/Agriculture/reports/vol-3.pdf
The National Agricultural Extension Policy-2015 (Draft)	http://moa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moa.portal.gov.bd/policies/52c27d0f_c33c_4a6a_81b8_7b8288d17a1b/Draft_NAEP-2015.pdf

Annex 2: Excerpts from Relevant Policy Documents

7th Five Year Plan (from 2015/16-2019/20)

www.plancomm.gov.bd/7th-five-year-plan

Vision

“A country where men and women will have equal opportunities and rights and women will be recognized as equal contributors in economic, social and political development”.

Objectives

1. Improve women’s human capabilities (deals with women’s and girls’ access to health care, life expectancy, nutrition, reproductive health, education, information, training, and other services achieve better health and educational outcomes)
2. Increase women’s economic gains (deals with barriers to women’s economic participation and facilitate support services to improve access to these resources)
3. Enhance women’s voice and agency (women’s role as decision makers in public and private spheres including politics and promotion of their leadership is considered here)
4. Create an enabling environment for women’s advancement (key areas are enforcement of laws, regular collection of sex disaggregated data and understanding of gender issues)

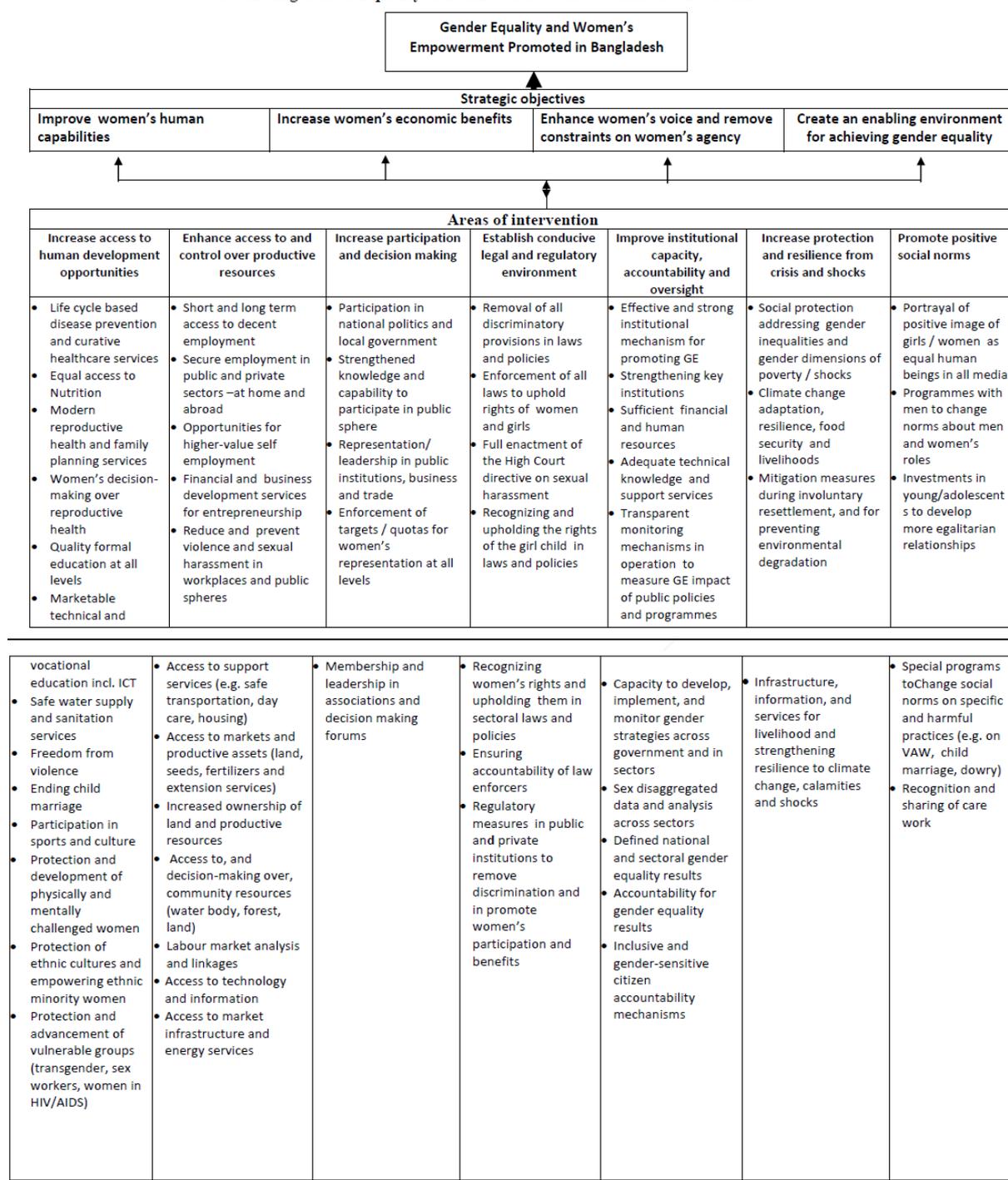
Four strategic objectives of women’s empowerment and gender equality:

1. Improve women’s human capabilities
2. Increase women’s economic gains
3. Enhance women’s voice and agency
4. Create an enabling environment for women’s advancement

Seven action areas that have been identified as critical for achieving results in these four objective

1. Increase access to human development opportunities
2. Enhance access to and control over productive resources
3. Increase participation and decision making
4. Establish conducive legal and regulatory environment
5. Improve institutional capacity, accountability and oversight
6. Increase protection and resilience from crisis and shocks
7. Promote positive social norms

Promoting Gender Equality: A Framework for the Seventh Five Year Plan



Source: 7th Five Year Plan (2016-20)

National Women Development Policy- 2011

<http://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/bgd149160.pdf>

16. The Objectives of National Women Development Policy

16.13. To innovate and import technology favoring the interest of women and prohibit anti-women technologies. (Page 13)

29. Women and Technology

29.1. To reflect gender perspective in the matter of innovation, import and application of new technology.

29.2. To take initiative to purge the harmful elements, if any, from the technology by conducting research on it if the application of such innovated technology affects adversely the interest of the women.

31. Women and Farming

31.1the women labor as farming hands contributing in the national economy need recognition which has to be done.

31.2. To extend all kinds of support and assistance in eliminating bottlenecks created due to climate change and disaster.

31.3. To take initiative to ensure equal wages for the same job and to remove wages discrimination to women in agriculture.

31.4. To take steps to ensure the farming women have equal opportunity in having agricultural inputs like fertilizer, seed, farmer's card and credit facilities etc.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper I (2005)

www.preventionweb.net/files/9305_cr05410.pdf

Key Issues

- Ensuring women's participation in market-oriented economic activities;
- Improving women's efficiency (reducing time use) in performing their household roles and ensuring infrastructure services for women;
- Building women's capacity in health and education towards improving productive capacity;
- Ensuring social protection for women against vulnerability and risk;
- Enhancing women's political empowerment and participation in decision making;
- Ensuring women's participation in the international forums; and
- Strengthening institutions and capacity-building in monitoring and the evaluation of women's development.
- Making governance work for the poor and women

Strategic Block I: Macroeconomic Environment for Pro-poor Economic Growth

- Facilitating entrepreneurship development among women
- Enhancing good quality employment opportunities for women

National Rural Development Policy (2001)

www.bard.gov.bd/link_page_doc/Natinal%20RD%20Policy.pdf

3. Aim and Objective (page 10)

3.2 To achieve comprehensive village development including improvement in the standards of living, increase in income and employment generation of rural people, particularly women and the poor.

3.11 To ensure equal participation of women with men in all socio-economic and cultural development and cultural activities including education, training and income generating activities;

5.12 Empowerment of Rural Women (Page 19):

1. Social and institutional initiatives will be taken for orientation of both men and women on various rules and rights relating to interests of rural women.
2. Side by side with raising women's consciousness, their male counterpart will also be made aware regarding their cooperation and responsibility towards development of women.
3. Gender equity in social, cultural, economic and political matter will be promoted.
4. Expansion of marketing facilities will be ensured for the locally produced commodities of rural women entrepreneurs.
5. Necessary steps will be taken for encouraging concerned rural women involved in all government and non-government programmes to be united through an effective network.
6. Local administration will take initiatives to motivate and provide increased assistance to rural women so that they undertake income-generating activities according to their ability.
7. Motivational training as well as other assistance will be provided for ensuring effective representation of women at all spheres of local government.
8. Priority will be given to implementation of policies regarding women's equal rights, poverty alleviation, economic empowerment and employment as mentioned in National Women Advancement Policy 1997.

National Food Policy 2008 - Plan of Action (2008-2015)

http://moa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moa.portal.gov.bd/policies/2b1e1832_541c_492e_9764_c2b3c8db5317/Final_NAP%202013_web.pdf

Objectives

2.5 Income generation for women and the disabled through enhancing participation of women and disabled people in rural agricultural/other rural activities,

3.2. Balanced and nutritious food for vulnerable people through increasing availability of low-cost items through local production; Improving coverage of poor, distressed and vulnerable women and children by food-based nutrition programs, including Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP).

3.3. Nutrition education on dietary diversification through increasing the % of women educated in nutrition and primary health care activities through formal and non-formal education; increasing home gardening and poultry raising activities by poor households;

Others:

- Expanding income generating opportunities for women/female-headed households and the disabled in agricultural activities as well as in rural micro and small enterprise development, through enhancing their access to productive assets;
- Improve coverage of extension services to disadvantaged segments of the rural population, including women (p. 70);
- Strengthen market information and business development services for agro-processors and micro/small and women entrepreneurs

National Agriculture Policy 2013 (Bengali)

http://moa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moa.portal.gov.bd/policies/2b1e1832_541c_492e_9764_c2b3c8db5317/Final_NAP%202013_web.pdf

12.1 Empowerment of Women

- Necessary support will be provided for capacity building of women in promoting household food and nutrition security.
- The Government will facilitate increased women participation in management decision making and their advancement in agriculture.
- Efforts will be made to ensure women's equal access to agricultural inputs (e.g. seed, fertilizer, credit, education & training, information etc.).

12.2 Participation in Production and Marketing

- The Government will encourage participation of the rural poor women in production of crops particularly in agro-processing and agri-business activities so that they can improve their economic well-being.
- Women's participation in agricultural production system will be facilitated through access to agricultural technologies.
- The Government will take steps to encourage women's participation in various extension programmes like training, farmers' rally and workshop.

12.3 Income Generation

- The Government will provide credit support to women for agricultural activities such as homestead gardening, post-harvest activities, seed production & preservation, nursery, bee-keeping, food processing etc.
- The government will provide micro-credit support to women for small-scale agro processing, storage and preservation.
- Efforts will be made to ensure non-discrimination in wages.

১২.০ কৃষিতে নারী

দেশের মোট মানব-সম্পদের প্রায় অর্ধেক নারী। সেজন্য, সরকারী চাকুরী ও কৃষি ক্ষেত্রে আরো অধিক সংখ্যক নারী কৃষক এবং কৃষি শ্রম-শক্তি হিসেবে অন্তর্ভুক্ত হওয়া প্রয়োজন। যেহেতু কৃষি প্রবৃদ্ধির ক্ষেত্রে নারীর অবদান রাখার যথেষ্ট সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে, তাই কৃষি সংক্রান্ত অর্থাপার্জন কর্মকাণ্ডে নারীকে অর্ধবহুতাবে সম্পৃক্ত করা এবং মানব-সম্পদ উন্নয়নে সরকারের করণীয় নিম্নরূপ:

১২.১ নারীর ক্ষমতায়ন :

- পারিবারিক খাদ্য ও পুষ্টির নিশ্চয়তা বিধান কর্মকাণ্ড উন্নয়নে নারীর দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধিতে প্রয়োজনীয় সহায়তা প্রদান করা হবে ;
- কৃষি ব্যবস্থাপনা বিষয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণে নারীর অধিকতর অংশগ্রহণ উৎসাহিত করা হবে ; এবং
- কৃষি উপকরণ প্রাপ্তি এবং ব্যবস্থাপনার ক্ষেত্রে নারীর সম-অধিকার নিশ্চিত করার বিষয়ে প্রচেষ্টা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

১২.২ উৎপাদন ও বিপণনে অংশগ্রহণ :

- সরকার কৃষি উৎপাদন ক্ষেত্রে, বিশেষত: কৃষি প্রক্রিয়াকরণ এবং কৃষি-ব্যবসা কর্মকাণ্ডে গ্রামীণ দরিদ্র নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ উৎসাহিত করবে যাতে তারা তাদের অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থার উন্নতি করতে পারে ;
- কৃষিতে নারীর প্রযুক্তিগত ক্ষমতায়নকে উৎসাহিত করার প্রচেষ্টা গ্রহণ করা হবে ;
- কৃষি প্রযুক্তি প্রাপ্তিতে নারীর অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠার মাধ্যমে কৃষি উৎপাদন ব্যবস্থায় নারীর অংশগ্রহণকে সহজতর করা হবে; এবং
- বিভিন্ন প্রকার কৃষি সম্প্রসারণ কর্মকাণ্ড যেমন প্রশিক্ষণ, কৃষক সমাবেশ ও কর্মশালায় নারীর অংশগ্রহণ উৎসাহিত করার দক্ষ্যে সরকার পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণ করবে।

১২.৩ আয়ের সুযোগ সৃজন :

- কৃষি বিষয়ক বিভিন্ন কর্মকাণ্ড, যেমন বসতবাড়ীতে বাগান, ফসল কর্তনোত্তর কর্মকাণ্ড, বীজ উৎপাদন ও সংরক্ষণ, নার্সারী, মৌমাছি-পালন, খাদ্য প্রক্রিয়াকরণ ইত্যাদিতে নারীর অংশগ্রহণের ক্ষেত্রে সরকার ঋণ সহায়তা প্রদান করবে;
- সরকার ক্ষুদ্র আকারের কৃষি প্রক্রিয়াকরণ, গুদামজাতকরণ ও সংরক্ষণে মহিলাদের ক্ষুদ্র ঋণ সহায়তা প্রদান করবে; এবং
- নারী ও পুরুষের মধ্যে মজুরী বৈষম্য দূরীকরণ নিশ্চিত করার প্রচেষ্টা গ্রহণ করা হবে।

New Agriculture Extension Policy 2015 (Draft in Bengali)

http://moa.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/moa.portal.gov.bd/policies/52c27d0f_c33c_4a6a_81b8_7b8288d17a1b/Draft_NAEP-2015.pdf

9.1 Agricultural extension services to all farmers: Should ensure agricultural extension services to all farmers. Meanwhile, tenant farmers, young, women and land less families should give especial priority in providing extension services.

9.2 Gender mainstream in Agriculture: women's participation in agriculture should encourage through developing women farmer groups, encouraging women SME development in agri-business, developing confidence for raising voice through grass root level women farmers' organization, creating gender awareness in both women and male farmers. In addition, women farmers are encouraged to lead and occupy decision making positions in higher level farmer organizations.

9.25 Participatory monitoring and Evaluation:

PM&E will focus on the active engagement of primary stakeholders (FG, FOs etc). In the course of PM&E processes, it will be ensured that the (i) primary stakeholders are active participants – not just sources of information, (ii) capacity of local people is build up to analyze, reflect and taking action, (iii) joint learning of stakeholders at various levels have been taken place adequately, and (v) catalyzes commitment for taking corrective actions.

- ৯.১ সকল শ্রেণির কৃষকের জন্য সম্প্রসারণ সেবাঃ কৃষি কাজে নিয়োজিত সকল শ্রেণির কৃষকের জন্য কৃষি সম্প্রসারণ সেবা নিশ্চিত করা হবে। পাশাপাশি বর্গা চাষী, নারী ও তরুণ কৃষক এবং ভূমিহীন পরিবারকে বিশেষ গুরুত্ব দিয়ে সম্প্রসারণ সেবা প্রদান করা হবে।
- ৯.২ নারীদের কৃষির মূল ধারায় সম্পৃক্তকরণঃ কৃষিতে নারীদের অংশগ্রহণ উৎসাহিত করতে নারী কৃষক সংগঠন তৈরি, নারীদের ক্ষুদ্র ও মাঝারি কৃষি-ব্যবসা প্রতিষ্ঠান স্থাপনে উৎসাহিতকরণ, তৃণমূল পর্যায়ের নারী কৃষক সংগঠনের মাধ্যমে তাদের সচেতন ও আত্মবিশ্বাসী করে তোলা এবং নারী ও পুরুষ কৃষকদের মাঝে জেস্তার সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধির প্রয়াস গ্রহণ করা হবে। এছাড়াও, নারী কৃষক সংগঠনসমূহকে উচ্চতর পর্যায়ে সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ ও নেতৃত্বদানে উৎসাহিত করা হবে।
- ৯.২৫ তদারকি ও মূল্যায়ন প্রক্রিয়া জোরদারকরণঃ কৃষি সম্প্রসারণ কার্যক্রমের সকল স্তরে অংশগ্রহণমূলক তদারকি ও মূল্যায়ন পদ্ধতি অনুসরণ করা হবে। এ প্রক্রিয়ায় বিভিন্ন স্তরে অংশীদারগণ নির্দিষ্ট কার্যক্রম তদারকি ও মূল্যায়নে নিয়োজিত থাকবেন ও সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয় নিয়ন্ত্রণ করবেন। মূল্যায়নের এ প্রক্রিয়ায় নিশ্চিত হবে যে-
- (ক) প্রাথমিক অংশীদারগণ সক্রিয় অংশগ্রহণকারী, শুধু তথ্যের উৎস নয়;
- (খ) স্থানীয় জনসাধারণের বিশ্লেষণ, প্রতিফলন ও ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের সক্ষমতা বৃদ্ধি পাবে;
- (গ) বিভিন্ন স্তরে অংশীদারগণের যথাযথ জ্ঞান অর্জন হবে; এবং
- (ঘ) সংশোধনমূলক পদক্ষেপ গ্রহণে প্রত্যয়ী হতে উদ্দীপনা যোগাবে।