

INAUGURAL FUNCTION OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF STIPEND TO FEMALE STUDENTS OF HIGHER SECONDARY LEVEL

17 SRABON 1409 ■ AUGUST 1, 2002

DIRECTORATE OF SECONDARY AND HIGHER EDUCATION
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION



শেখ হাসিনা



Hon'ble President
People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Message

I welcome the initiatives to introduce the Stipend and Free Tuition Program for creating educational opportunities for girls at the Higher Secondary level.

With a view to creating extensive educational opportunities for the women-folk who constitute about a half of the population of the country, Stipend and Free Tuition Program for girl students at the Higher Secondary level was launched in 1994. This epoch-making step taken by the then Government accelerated the development process of female education in Bangladesh. This program opened up the scope of formal education for those girls who had otherwise little opportunities for education because of financial problems. This is why the Female Stipend Program of the Government introduced for the welfare of the relatively backward women-folk of the country has been acclaimed by all.

With the launching of the Stipend Program for the girl students at the Higher Secondary level the on-going stipend program is being extended. I think, this will not only create eagerness for education among the girls, but also helps them realise the importance of higher education.

I wish the program a success.

শ্রী জামিরুদ্দিন সিরকার

Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar

girls studying in classes 6 to 8 in the schools outside the municipal areas from January 1990. Later on in 1994, the Government introduced the Nation-wide Female Stipend Program at Secondary level in 178 thanas (now Upazilas) with the assistance of donor agencies and in 282 thanas under Government's own financing. The Projects under this program are as follows:

| Sl. No. | The Name of the Project | Sources of Financing | Number of Thanas (Upazilas) |
|---------|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP) | World Bank and GOB | 119 |
| 2. | Female Secondary Stipend Project (FSSP) | GOB | 270 |
| 3. | Secondary Education Development Project (SEDP) now Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP) | Asian Development Bank & GOB | 53 |
| 4. | Female Secondary Education Stipend Project (FESP) | NORAD | 19 |

The enrollment rate of girls at the secondary level has increased tremendously as a result of the introduction of this stipend program by the government. At present the ratio of access to secondary education between boys and girls is 46:54. Stipend recipient girls were 7,08,886 in 1994, which rose to 42,72,036 in 2001. The figure will further go up to about 5 million now after the 11th and 12th grade girls are also included.

Being inspired by the success of this Female Stipend program, the Government of Bangladesh has extended the duration of these projects for five more years with own finance and with the financial assistance from donor agencies. The Government has laid special emphasis on improving the quality of secondary education along with increasing access and retention of girls through these projects designed in the new perspective. With a view to improving the quality of education at secondary level, the IDA-assisted Female Secondary School Assistance Project: Phase-II has made provisions for subject-specific teacher training programs for Assistant Teachers, academic supervision and management training for Head Teachers, incentive awards for students achievement, and incentive awards for institutions performance and quality awareness training for different stakeholders. The ADB-assisted Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP) has kept provision for development of infrastructure of educational institutions, establishing new educational institutions, teacher training and curriculum development and reforms in the examination system.

5. Scope, Prospect and Future of Higher Education for Females:

Government has undertaken many important programs for promoting opportunities for female education. Schools, Colleges and Universities are being established for girls at different areas of the country. Besides, Government is encouraging private investment in this sector. Congenial atmosphere and facilities are being created for increasing girls enrollment at higher educational institutions in the country. Although girls of our country are deprived of many opportunities in the family and society, achievements of many of them at various stages of education can be envied by boys. Our girls have been able to prove their knowledge and efficiency in the field of science and technology. But these achievements are made mostly in the urban areas. There is no scope of self-contentment until and unless the prospects of human resource development that have started to open up through the provision of educational opportunities are extended to the people of all areas of Bangladesh.

Our endeavor will be to ensure education for the prospective girls of remote rural areas so that they are also found to hold important national positions side-by-side with men in the days ahead. But employment opportunities for women have to be created along with the creation of educational opportunities for them. Government and non-Government initiatives are required in this regard. Moreover, it is



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Hon'ble Prime Minister
Government of the people's Republic of Bangladesh

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Message

It gives me immense pleasure to launch the Female Stipend Program for the girl students of the 11th and 12th classes at the higher secondary level. It fulfills another of our election pledges. This stipend program at the higher secondary level along with similar programs at the primary and secondary levels will open the door for higher education for girls in the country. It will expedite the women empowerment process. I appreciate the initiatives to publish a special supplement on the occasion.

We have firm commitment for the expansion and development of female education in the Country. We believe, empowerment of women is not possible without education the women-folk. Education has no alternative to unite the women-folk and transform them into a workforce and so we have made the highest investment in the education sector and accorded top-most priority to female education.

The Nation-wide Female Stipend Programme has brought about substantial changes in our education system. Enrollment of girls at the secondary level has increased significantly. This has now been recognized as an epoch-making programme and highly acclaimed at home and abroad.

I extend my heart-felt thanks to all those who are involved with the implementation of this programme. I hope, their sincere endeavor, honesty and diligence will ensure successful implementation of this Programme and will be considered as a milestone in achieving the desired development goals.

I wish the stipend programme all success.

Allah Hafez, Bangladesh Zindabad
Khaleda Zia

Role of Female Stipend Program in the Development of Female Education in Bangladesh

Mohammad Shadidul Alam
Secretary
Ministry of Education

1. Education System of Bangladesh: There has been no basic qualitative change in the education system of Bangladesh during the last several decades. A number of Education Commissions were formed and education policies formulated during the period. But none of the policies could be implemented in full. The present education system of Bangladesh is comprised of 5 years of schooling at the primary level, 3 years at junior secondary level, 2 years at secondary level, 2 years at higher secondary level and 2 to 5 years at the higher level. Besides, there are madrasa-based Ebtadae (primary), Dakhil (Secondary), Alim (Higher Secondary), Fazil (Degree) streams for Muslims, Sanskrit-based Tol education for the Hindus, Poli for the Buddhists and English Seminary education for the Christians in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has achieved remarkable quantitative change in the field of education over the last two decades. Top-most priority has been given to send the school-going-aged children to school. As per BANBEIS data, there are 76,809 primary schools, 3063 Junior High Schools, 12,657 Secondary Schools, 1466 Higher Secondary Colleges, 10 Cadet Colleges, 1400 General Degree Colleges, 1,077 Technical and Vocational Institutions, 13,351 Ebtadae Madrasahs, 5,015 Dakhil Madrasahs, 1,087 Alim Madrasahs, 1,029 Fazil Madrasahs, 148 Kamil Madrasahs, 16 Government Universities and 31 Non-government Universities in the country.

2. Bangladeshi Females and Education: Almost half of the population of Bangladesh are female. Most of them are deprived of the formal educational opportunities. As a result, they remain neglected and backward socially. Their contributions to the economy of Bangladesh are not properly determined and evaluated in terms of economic indicators. The socio-economic development of the country is quite hard to achieve keeping this huge number of manpower illiterate and neglected. Female literacy rate in Bangladesh was 16% just on the eve of Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-1995). The ratio of access to the secondary education between boys and girls was 67:33 in the early 90s. Of these 33% girls only 5% could pass the 10th grade. Poverty, early marriage, socio-economic conditions, social prejudice etc. served as impediments to increasing the female literacy rate at secondary and higher educational levels. Because of their very low rate of literacy at the Secondary and Higher Secondary levels, the women-folk of Bangladesh were unable to join the mainstream economic development process of the country. Female representation at the higher decision-making level of political, socio-economic, administrative, scientific and technological sphere is very negligible.

3. Importance of Female Education: Sustainable improvement in national productivity is not possible without the participation of females, who constitute almost half of the total population. In order to involve women-folk in the development stream, it is essential to create formal educational opportunities for them. Besides, enhancement of educational opportunities for females is needed in order to generate employment opportunities for them in different service sectors. An educated woman is an educated mother, on the one hand and she is also a skilled worker for national development, on the other hand.

4. Steps Taken for the Development of Female Education: The Government of Bangladesh introduced a number of programs for the development of female education in the early '90s. The Government made education free for



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Message

"Girls Students' Stipend and Exemption of Tuition Fees Programme" for the secondary level girls studying from class six to ten was launched in January, 1994 by the then Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia with a view to expand the participation of girl students in education. Since that epoch making decision the number of secondary level female students has significantly increased.

However, the participation of girls students at higher secondary still remains low. Introduction of the stipend programme and exemption of tuition fees at the higher secondary level will no doubt encourage increasing enrollment at the 11th Grades. This will play an important role in further improving the socio-economic status of women and their participation in the economic development activities of the country.

Education for women not only will lead to their social empowerment but it will also turnout educated mothers, thereby ensuring proper development of our future generation.

শ্রী ড. ম. ওসমান ফারোকে

(Dr. M. Osman Farooque, M.P)
Minister

necessary to make them confident and provide appropriate support for generation of their self-employment opportunities.

6. Importance of Higher Secondary Education Project for Creating Scope of Higher Education for Females:

The improvement of female education is now being considered with priority in the present-day world. The Government of Bangladesh has also undertaken a number of steps in this regard. Bangladesh is a role model for the developing countries in this field. It can definitely be said that the number of girls with higher education in science, technology and other specialized areas will increase in the years ahead through the creation of educational opportunities for girls at the Higher Secondary level, particularly through motivating them to study science. Since the Higher Secondary level is the gateway to higher education, the Government is determined to ensure participation of all girls at this level, so that a qualitative change may be brought about with the quantitative increase.

Being inspired by the successful implementation of the Nation-wide Female Stipend Program the Government of Bangladesh has decided to expand the stipend program for girl students to the Higher Secondary level in 461 upazilas. All the girl students from classes 6 to 12 will come under the purview of Nation-wide Female Stipend Program, once the metropolitan areas are also brought under the program.

The Government has undertaken extensive programs for poverty alleviation through human resource development. Development of human resource is a pre-requisite for undertaking development programs aiming at poverty alleviation. Meanwhile, the working capability of women in many important industrial arena has been considered unquestionably indispensable. The country has been earning valuable foreign exchange at the cost of their relentless labour.

The nation will realize the benefits of this program instantly. The Higher Secondary girl graduates will get the opportunity to work as teachers in primary schools, as workers in health sector, and also in information and technology sectors and in different industries. This initiative of the Government will have positive impact on reducing birth rate in the country.

7. Conclusion: If the women-folk of Bangladesh can become self-reliant through the Government initiatives of expansion of female education, the empowerment of women will definitely be possible. Only empowerment of women can reduce the disparity between men and women and ensure their dignity in society.

Educated women-folk is an invaluable resource of a country. The educated young women of Bangladesh through the Female Stipend Program have travelled a long way through a Silent Revolution to meet the challenge of the 21st century. Today social awareness about political rights has also improved along with a remarkable improvement of literacy rate of the country. This bears testimony to the fact that a large number of women went to the polling centre to cast their votes in the last General Election of 2001.

About 50% girl students from grades VI to XII under Female Stipend Programs generally drop-out from the educational institutions. If self-employment opportunities for this large number of drop-outs can be generated through training in different trades under different Government and NGO programs and making available micro credits, they will be able to play a significant role in alleviating the poverty of the country.

EDUCATE YOUR DAUGHTER FOR HER HAPPY FUTURE

SEND YOUR DAUGHTER TO THE COLLEGE AFTER SHE PASSES S.S.C EXAMINATION