



Government of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh

National Children Policy 2011

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
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National Children Policy 2011

1. Introduction

Children constitute foundation of a nation. The Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had undertaken a number of initiatives for overall development of the children with a firm resolve to build a happy, prosperous and Golden Bangladesh. Provisions for fundamental rights of all citizens of Bangladesh including the children are included in the Constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh. The Chapter three of the Charter contains guarantee of basic human rights of all citizens. In the Article 28(4) particular emphases have been given in making specific provisions concerning the advancement of the children. And also the provisions for free and compulsory education of the children including meeting basic needs, equality of opportunity, rights and duties, public health and morality have been emphasized in running the affairs of the state. Children Act 1974 was passed to ensure overall protection of the children and their rights. Initiatives have been taken already to update this piece of legislation consistent with the multidimensional development. Bangladesh is one of the countries that signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child [CRC] 1989 in 1989. The National Child Policy was made in 1994.

It is essential that the rights and status of the child to be upheld in all related areas beginning from the family and educational institutions. The Government of Bangladesh has been caring and active in building up honest, patriotic and able future generation through ensuring comprehensive development and preservation of child rights. The populations under 18 in Bangladesh constitute 45% of the total population i.e. 630 million¹. Bangladesh has made notable strides ahead in human resources development in recent times. Bangladesh has achieved appreciable progress in reducing child and maternal death rates. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was honored with UN Millennium Award for success of Bangladesh in reducing child and maternal death rates. 87% children are now covered by Expanded Program on Immunization [EPI]. Gender equality has been achieved in the primary level of education which fulfilled Millennium Development Goal 3. A particular emphasis is being given to reduce child school drop-outs to retain access achieved in education sector.

1. The State of the World's Children Report 2008 by UNICEF, 2008

Poverty has been the main bottleneck to ensuring child rights. The Government has undertaken different action plan and programs to ensure facilities and amenities like alleviation of poverty, nutrition, health care services, safe shelter and sewerage for the larger segment of the children. Different programs are in operation to ensure the rehabilitation of the dead poor and uprooted children, mitigation of child labor in phases, prohibition of exploiting children in political purposes, and appropriate opportunities of education and recreation for physical and mental development of the children.

In 2006 the UN Charter concerning the rights of the disabled has ensured the enjoyment of fundamental and human rights of the disabled children equally with other children. The government of Bangladesh has signed and ratified this Charter. The charter has laid emphasis on the protection of the interests of the disabled children vis-à-vis those of all other children in the Charter. One of the objectives of this Charter has been to eliminate child abuse and in particular all forms of discrimination to and abuse of female child and ensuring their safety.

The global changes taking place, new and often arising needs and, in view of the recommendations of the UNCRC committee the government of Bangladesh has decided to prepare a modern and timely child policy by updating the National Child Policy adopted in 1994. The National Child Policy 2011 has been a far reaching vision in building the present and future of the children of Bangladesh. In making all national development policies, planning, program implementation and budgeting shall take into due consideration the contextual importance of the National Child policy 2011.

2. Definition

- 2.1. Children: shall include all individuals under 18.
- 2.2. Adolescents: 14-18 age group children (male & female) shall constitute adolescents

3. Scope

The National Child Policy shall be applicable to all children - the citizen of Bangladesh without any discrimination.

4. Fundamental Principles

- 4.1. Ensuring child rights in the light of the constitution of Bangladesh, Child Act and International Charters/ Conventions.
- 4.2. Poverty alleviation of the children.
- 4.3. Elimination of all forms of child abuse and discrimination.
- 4.4. Elimination of all forms of abuse of and discrimination to female child.
- 4.5. Participation of the children and accepting their views into consideration in overall protection and, in the best interest of the children.

5. Aims and Objectives

- 5.1. The best development and growth of the children shall be ensured by providing needed standard services to the children and adolescents irrespective of their age, sex, religion, and occupation, social, regional and small ethnic group identities in matter of rights concerning education, health, nutrition, safety, recreation and other rights.
- 5.2. Initiatives shall be taken to extend facilities to the female child, disabled child and child with special needs.
- 5.3. The children shall be developed interested about his/her country and conscious of it through creation of educational and child friendly environment so that they can flourish as honest, patriotic and responsible citizen of this country.
- 5.4. The children shall be developed as a scientifically inquisitive generation considering science and technology to be inseparable ingredients of education to make them capable of keeping pace with the demand of the nation and the world in future.
- 5.5. Initiatives shall be undertaken to ensure creation of congenial family environment.
- 5.6. Initiatives shall be undertaken to reflect their views in deciding and planning that affect the lives of the children and adolescents.
- 5.7. Initiatives shall be undertaken to make necessary legislations and provisions to materialize child rights.

6. Specific planning and Undertaking Programs

Specific plan shall be made s and programs be implemented for ensuring and protecting the following rights of the children:

6.1. Ensuring safe birth and overall growth of the children

- 6.1.1. In order o ensure the child right to safe birth and live, the steps shall be taken to ensure safe child birth through nutrition, health care of the expectant and post natal mothers and the growth of the child and necessary pre-natal,, natal and post natal care.
- 6.1.2. All kinds of necessary steps shall be taken to check and prevent child deaths and accidental deaths.
- 6.1.3. A minimum 6(six) month's maternity leave shall be ensured to affirm the maternal health and child care.
- 6.1.4. The employment authority shall have to arrange day care center for lactating and working mothers so that can breast feed child,
- 6.1.5. Initiatives shall be taken to ensure required nutritious food for child.
- 6.1.6. Initiatives for providing counseling services at the educational institutions for development of mental health of the adolescents.

6.2. Alleviation of Child Poverty

(a) Nutrition, (b) health, (c) overall protection, (d) education and (e) social security of the child shall be given priority for the poverty alleviation of the children.

- 6.2.1. The National Food and Nutrition Policy and National Plan of Action for Nutritional Intervention program has to be expanded and different nutrition programs recognized at the national level have to be coordinated. The parents of the child have to be made aware and given incentives to ensure nutrition of their children.
- 6.2.2. Necessary steps shall be taken for redeeming protein energy malnutrition (U2PEM) of the under two children and their low birth weight.
- 6.2.3. The Social Safety Net has to be expanded to ensure the rehabilitation of all poor children and street children. Extremely poor families shall have to be brought under the net so that the children of such families do not get separated and can grow up in the family surroundings.

6.3. Child Health

- 6.3.1. The programs including Expanded Program of Immunization [EPI], integrated management of Child Illness [IMCI], Newborn health [NBH]. Reproductive Health, Sexually Transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS and other timely programs shall be undertaken and implemented as preventive measures.
- 6.3.2. Safe Child birth shall be ensured through raising efficiency via training of the Health and Family Planning workers, nurses and physicians and by increasing number of the efficient and trained Birth Attendants.
- 6.3.3. Necessary measures shall be taken to include basic information on health, nutrition and reproductive health, competitiveness, physical and mental health in the school syllabus.
- 6.3.4. Regular awareness Program shall be conducted all over the country at the grass-root levels about the ways and means of upholding child rights and Mother& Child Health (MCH).
- 6.3.5. Special measures shall be taken to make available sources of safe water and to supply pure drinking water in the saline coastal and arsenic affected zones for the children.
- 6.3.6. Child friendly sewerage facilities and supply of water shall be ensured in the schools.
- 6.3.7. Separate sewerage system shall be ensured in the educational institutions and work place for female children and adolescents.

6.4. Pre-Primary education for child development (3-5 year)

- 6.4.1. Initiatives shall be taken to ensure environment for sound growth of universal human faculties and pre-primary education shall be strengthened and expanded to make formal education fruitful.
- 6.4.2. Pre-primary education centers shall be opened and initiatives shall be taken to impart basic training of the teachers of these centers.
- 6.4.3. Child development program shall be conducted for the children of 3-5 year age group.

6.5. Child Education

- 6.5.1. Primary education shall be free. For economically or otherwise small ethnic group children shall be given special incentives including education material.
- 6.5.2. Necessary steps shall be taken to bring all children under secondary education and to bring an end to drop outs at the primary and secondary levels.
- 6.5.3. Standard quality primary and secondary education alongside vocational and technical education shall be ensured to harmonize with the modern world.
- 6.5.4. Measures shall be ensured for reflection of constitutional guarantee in all levels of education and making the children aware of the independence, sovereignty and integrity.
- 6.5.5. Special steps shall be taken at the primary and secondary level so that children and the adolescents could attain proficiency in English alongside the mother tongue.
- 6.5.6. All forms of physical and mental punishment in educational institutions shall be prohibited and a child friendly system of imparting lessons be introduced so that the children and the adolescents do not have any physical and mental injury.
- 6.5.7. The prevalent systems of education in the country shall be coordinated to allow all students have equal opportunity of receiving higher education enabling them to fill in the need of national development.
- 6.5.8. The government shall take steps for raising the quality and standard of education and with his end in view, necessary steps shall be taken for imparting improved training to the teachers and maintaining child friendly improved surroundings in the educational institutions.
- 6.5.9. Steps shall be taken to supply child friendly books, magazines, papers and cinema matters, Creative art practice and materials for articulating and practicing fine arts either free of cost or at subsidy supported price to establish moral, human, cultural, scientific and social values in the individual and national life.
- 6.5.10. Arrangements shall be ensured for non-formal or special learning like sports, scouting, Girl's Guide activities etc. along side formal education in the educational institutions.

- 6.5.11. Measures shall be taken to impart children education on their respective religion and ethics in mosque, temple, church and pagoda.
- 6.5.12. Necessary steps shall be taken to further improvement for the administration system to ensure intensive monitoring and effective assistance to the programs run by the educational institution.

6.6. Recreation, sports and cultural programs for Children

- 6.6.1. Measures shall be taken to ensure quality recreational, sport and cultural activity for the children. Each educational institution shall have play ground, sports equipments. There shall be children park and sports center area wise. The town planning shall include compulsory play ground for the children. Arrangements shall be made to have recreational facilities in disaster shelters during disaster and afterwards for the children.
- 6.6.2. Ample opportunities shall be ensured for the children cultivating different areas of performing arts like child affable movies, drama, paintings etc to grow and have a clear understanding of the life and ideals of the Father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the life and works of 4 national leaders and the contribution of the freedom fighters to imbue the children with the spirit of War of Liberation, patriotism, human and social sense of values.
- 6.6.3. Each school shall have recreational programs wherein the idea of a library shall be inculcated. The disabled children shall have appropriate recreational facilities.

6.7. Child Protection

- 6.7.1. Steps shall be taken to ensure security and safety of the children against all forms of violence, alms mongering and physical, mental and sexual abuses. Effective public awareness program shall be undertaken to stop violence on children and abuse of them.
- 6.7.2. The rights of the children coming in conflict with law or keep in touch with same and rights of the children to participate in the judicial process pertaining to them.
- 6.7.3. Proper steps to prevent children from use of drugs and initiatives for rehabilitation of the addicted ones shall be taken.

- 6.7.4. The children can not be used in the political activity, neither they could be lured and compelled to be involved in such activity.

6.8. Special Program for the Disabled Children

- 6.8.1. The rights of all types of disabled children to recognition and respectable living as enshrined in the UN Charter on the rights of the disabled shall be ensured.
- 6.8.2. Measures shall be taken for mainstreaming of the disabled children in the society and for ensuring their active participation in each area of life including education. Education is major concerned, according to the types of disability shall be given due importance.
- 6.8.3. The children who cannot be mainstreamed in education for the reason obvious for them only special education arrangement shall be considered.
- 6.8.4. Appropriate institutional programs shall adopt for education, treatment, training and rehabilitation of the disabled children.
- 6.8.5. The families of the disabled children shall be given special assistance and co-operation by undertaking programs in the matter of preventing and assessing of such disability and for their upbringing and growth.
- 6.8.6. All infrastructures, facilities and services shall be made accessible to all to ensure that no child is deprived of any kinds of rights and receiving services under the National Child Policy because of their disability.

6.9. Special Program for the Autistic Children

- 6.9.1. Most autistic children have normal intelligence. So measures shall be taken to their mainstreaming in the society and their active participation in all areas of live including education.
- 6.9.2. Measures shall be ensured to make provisions for specific educational institution, educational method and material, if necessary for the autistic children.
- 6.9.3. As the autistic children home lacking in the social development. So, the age appropriate training shall be ensuring to the parents and their family members for overall development.
- 6.9.4. Appropriate institutional programs shall be taken for education, treatment, training and rehabilitation of the autistic children

- 6.9.5. Importance shall be given to the special needs of the autistic children during and after disaster.

6.10. Birth Registration of the Children

- 6.10.1. The birth registration shall be ensured for all children immediately after their birth.
- 6.10.2. The proper implementation of the birth registration act and its publicity and awareness shall be increased.

6.11 Special Program for the backward and small ethnic group children

- 6.11.1. All rights of child's progress and development for under privileged community and minor ethnic groups shall be ensured.
- 6.11.2. Steps shall be taken for the children with minor ethnic groups may developed and maintain alongside their own tradition and culture.

6.12. Child Protection during and after a disaster

- 6.12.1. Due steps shall be taken for rehabilitation considering child safety and security on a priority basis while preparing to deal with impending disasters and after the disaster. In this case, the disabled children shall have special consideration.
- 6.12.2. Appropriate measures shall be taken for safety and security of the female children during disaster emergencies. Necessary steps shall also be taken for ensuring availability of health material and sewerage facilities.
- 6.12.3. During Disaster emergencies, necessary psycho-social support with the logistic aids as well as the ability of the children and their guardians how to get rides the crisis shall be extended.
- 6.12.4. Strategy of actions to protect the orphan and helpless children through making the social safety program more child friendly and supportive management.
- 6.12.5. Steps shall be taken to ensure and enable the food distribution program during disaster emergencies so that the need of the children is fulfilled. In addition, the distribution material shall include toys so that the children can overcome the disaster associated fear and make their life normal.

- 6.12.6. Special stress shall be given to the education of the children and their health alongside food during post-disaster emergencies.
- 6.12.7. There shall be provision such as breast feeding corner for the pregnant and post partum mothers and the newborns.
- 6.12.8. The community members shall be involved in the welfare program of the disadvantaged children that belong to the community during and after disaster.

6.13. Opinion Sharing and Participation of the Children

The opinion and participation of the children in all programs shall be stressed for ensuring Child Rights and Development in the agencies/institutions which is involved with this issue.

7. Adolescents Development

- 7.1. Necessary steps shall be taken stressing the special needs of the adolescent boys and girls.
- 7.2. Necessary steps shall be taken for appropriate development of physical and mental health of the adolescents.
- 7.3. Necessary steps shall be taken to impart adolescents in surrounding environment education on reproductive health and other necessary education taking into consideration of the physiological and emotional issues of the adolescents.
- 7.4. The right of protection of the adolescents shall be ensured by protecting them from violence, marriage, trafficking and forcing into commercial sex etc.

8. Development of the Female Children

The following steps shall be taken to remove or eliminate the existing discrimination in between the male and female child a fact in our socio-economic perspective:

- 8.1. Necessary rights of the female children shall be ensured for proper development of their physical and mental health.
- 8.2. All discriminatory behavior towards female child shall be eliminated and gender equality in the family be ensured.

- 8.3. Regular attendance of the female children in educational institutions shall be ensured.
- 8.4. Necessary arrangements shall be ensured so that the female children do not victimize of any sexual harassment, pornography and physical and mental abuses in various situations such as in the streets including inside educational institutions.
- 8.5. Safe and quality recreation, sports and cultural practice facilities shall be ensured.
- 8.6. The elimination of discriminatory attitude to disabled female children and safety in all areas shall be ensured.

9. Steps to Mitigate the Child Labor

The child labor shall be eliminated in all phases. The following necessary steps shall be taken in the light of the National Child Labor Alleviation Policy 2010 to mitigate child labor:

- 9.1. Congenial work place environment for the sake of sound physical and mental health of the working children has to be ensured. In these cases, it shall be ensured that the child is not engaged in unsocial, disgraceful and risky job. The daily working hours and break between work sat specific times have to be ensured.
- 9.2. The arrangement for education and recreation of the children has to be ensured after the working hours are over.
- 9.3. The owner/owners or employing authority have to arrange for necessary medical care and meeting with the family when any child worker have an experience of accidents or feel sick.
- 9.4. It has to be made sure, the children working any household or engaged in any other household job have arrangement to see his/her parents or family members at least once a month.
- 9.5. As children engaged in household jobs they are employed as whole time worker and, therefore, owner or head of the household shall arrange his/her education, food and lodge and recreation. He/she should not be made to perform any risky job.
- 9.6. It has to be made sure that the children employed in various establishments do not victimized to any kind of physical, mental or sexual assault.

- 9.7. The parents of the working child/children should be involved in income generating activity to bring the children out of poverty cycle.
- 9.8. The working children should be given scholarships and stipends to bring them back to school.
- 9.9. Awareness should be raised in parents and among the general population about harmful effects of child labor.
- 9.10. Short, mid and long term planning; implementation strategy and program have to be undertaken for the mitigation of child labor.
- 9.11. The children should be encouraged to participate in various activities of the family occupation alongside the formal education.

10. Implementation Strategies

- 10.1. The program of National Committee for Women and Child Development (NCWCD) formed at national level shall be continued for ensuring the Child Rights and Development. Through this committee necessary directions shall be given in matters of best development and protection of women and children, implementation of Child rights Charter and sound application of related laws and provisions.
- 10.2. The working efficiency of the offices under Ministry of Women and Children Affairs shall increase through the development of infrastructures and necessary expansion of such offices.
- 10.3. 'Ombudsman for the Children' shall be appointed under legislation at the national level. For the monitoring implementation of UN convention and maintaining the child right welfare activity in National Action Plan, Ombudsman for the children shall to be played an important role.
- 10.4. An officer with the rank of Deputy Secretary or above in each of the ministries and divisions shall given responsibility of focal point and another official shall be given responsibility of alternate focal point. These officials shall send quarterly Progress Report to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs for coordination of programs related to children.

11. GO and NGO Activity Coordination

The NGOs' cooperation shall be encouraged to make the government initiatives even integrated and more effective for establishing child rights. The activities of the Government and NGO's shall be ensured in both policy making and implementation.

12. Transparency and Accountability

Effective methods shall be followed and regular evaluation of the progress of programs to be made to ensure transparency and accountability in the implementation of child development and rights issues.

13. Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

For the sake of unabated and steady progress of the child programs measures shall be take for research needed, due monitoring and evaluation of the continuing initiatives and evaluation.

14. Financing Implementation of the Child Policy

The issue of child development shall be considered as prioritized one in the national development program. In this perspective, initiatives shall be to specifically include implementation of child rights and issues of children development in all the perspective development plans and to allocate enough funds on this account in the national budget.

15. Making Legislations and Provisions

Necessary legislations, provisions and guides etc shall be prepared aiming at the implementation of the National Child Policy.