

## **International Women's Day-2019**

Speech by

**HE Sheikh Hasina**

**Prime Minister**

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

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Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Chairperson,

Dear colleagues,

Representatives of women society,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**Assalamu Alaikum and a very good morning to you all.**

I would like to greet all women of the world, including women of Bangladesh, marking the International Women's Day-2019 today. On this occasion, I also welcome the audience present in this program. I also congratulate "Joyita" awardees of this year.

March is the month of achieving our great independence. I pay deep homage to the Greatest Bangalee of all times, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. I recall with gratitude the four national leaders, 3-million martyrs and 200 thousand women, who sacrificed their modesty for the cause of independence. I pay deep sympathy to the wounded freedom fighters and martyrs family members.

I remember with profound respect those valiant women freedom fighters, who fought for independence, the women who gave healthcare and other services to the freedom fighters.

I pay homage to Begum Rokeya, pioneer of the women's education. I remember with great respect, my mother Begum Sheikh Fazilatun Nesa Mujib, who worked for the country along with my Father all the time giving him inspiration, courage and suggestions.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

For ages, women of the country were under discrimination, prejudice and repression. Half of the people of our country are women. We cannot prosper leaving country's half of the population, women, behind. To achieve the target of the SDGs, we are working for women development and to abolish all kinds of discrimination and inequality against women in our manifesto.

From state management to administrating the parliament, residing top positions in police and the military, flying airplanes, health, engineering, business, entrepreneurship, everywhere women are successful. Today's higher courts have notable number of women judges. In UN peacekeeping mission 190 women officers are carrying out their duties with vigilance.

Our girls are not behind in sports either. Our girls became undefeated champions of 2018 Jockey-club girls' international tournament, Hong Kong's. Elsewhere the national women's team has qualified for the ICC World T20 cricket in 2020. Bangladesh women football team has qualified for the 'FIFA under-17' which will be held in Thailand in September 2019.

In the 11th National parliament, 72 seats are occupied by women parliamentarians. The current cabinet has 4 women ministers. A Vice Chairman's post has been created for women in Upazila Parishad under the Local Government infrastructure. Union, Upazila, and City Corporation has one third of its' seats reserved for women.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

A number of women in our country lost their modesty and became victim of direct or indirect indescribable torture in the war of liberation in 1971.

The girl victims of the liberation war whose families were unwilling to take them back in their families, Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Bangamata Sheikh Fazilatun Nesa Mujib provided shelter and treatment to them and also rehabilitated them.

Father of the Nation formed "Women Rehabilitation Board" in 1972 for the rehabilitation and empowerment of those women. Father of the Nation ensured equal opportunity for women in the constitution.

We have been implementing various projects and programs for women to bring them into the main stream of the society and the national development.

Our important programs for women development include:

- 'National Women Development Policy 2011' has been formulated. For implementing this policy 'National Action Plan-2013' has been adopted.
- In the fiscal year 2018-2019 about BDT 1377.42 billion gender budget has been allocated for women development.
- Maternity leave has been increased up to 6 months with salary.
- Mother's name has also been introduced along with father's name in every aspect.
- 8 working women's hostels have been established to facilitate 19,929 working women.
- Women in service are assisted with 94 Child day care centers. About 36,183 children have been providing with these child day care centers.
- From 2009-10 fiscal year to 2018 June 8 divisions, 64 districts and 426 Upazilas have given income generating training to 2,17,440 underprivileged women.
- From 2009 to 2019 around 5 million 40 thousand women are trained with nutrition, health, financial and social awareness program.
- 2.8 million 75 thousand 780 women are trained under the Lactating Mother Facilitation Fund Program.
- Under 'the Investment component for vulnerable group development (ICVGD) project' per head BDT 15,000 donation and training has been provided to 8 thousand beneficiary women in 7 districts and 8 Upazilas for their self-dependency and empowerment.
- In Upazila level Income Generating Activities (IGA) project has been taken with BDT 28322.60 lacs approximately.
- To encourage women entrepreneurs 'Joyeeta' Foundation has been formed.
- To enroll women into the mainstream of development aiming for self-dependency of women BDT 126 crore 91 lacs 62 thousand has been distributed among the distressed women. The total beneficiaries are 1,29,390 women.
- 'Tathya Apa (Info Lady)' project has targeted no less than 10 million underprivileged women who are to be given access to information technology.
- Under the district level women training project across all 64 districts of Bangladesh 28,070 women have been given training in information technology.

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

To resist women and child abuse and to give safety from domestic violence our government has pledged severe punishment if found guilty. Our government has enacted "Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) 2010, Domestic violence (Prevention and Protection) Regulations- 2013 and DNA Act-2014, Child marriage prevention Act-2017 and Dowry Restraint Act-2018 has been legislated. In addition Child marriage prevention Act-2017 and its relevant sections have been scheduled in the Mobile Court Act-2009.

Women and Children Violence Prevention and Protection Act (Amendment)-2003, in order to prevent domestic violence against women through multi-sectoral program, 67 one-stop-crisis centers have been set up. A toll free national helpline 109 has opened in order to prevent women and children abuse.

Women abuse resistance cells and women assistance programs have been established in 6 divisions to ensure quick justice of victim women. There is a refugee center for women, children and teenage girls who are under custody in Gazipur.

About 4,883 adolescent clubs has been formed across the country for positive changes in the lifestyle of teenage girls and boys. Accelerating action to child marriage in Bangladesh project has been initiated.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Only law cannot prevent discrimination and violence against women. Social awareness is necessary for this. At first women are to be think as a human being. It has to be implemented by the male society.

Who is a woman? Every woman is of somebody's mother, sister and beloved one. So, why they would be repressed by man? Not women only men can prevent torture and all kind of violence against women.

When I see innocent girl child become a rape victim, I cannot control myself. What kind of illness enter in our society that increases man's distorted desire? We have to find out the remedy. I urge to all concerned to be careful in this matter.

Women economical empowerment will enhance their honour in family and society.

We have to take care of every girl child so that they can grow up with all facilities without discrimination. The lesson to respect women and their safety is to be practiced in every family. Only then mind setup about women will be change positively. Then, women will be able to perform with their merit, qualification and talent in every sphere of life.

I urge to women to work with honesty and sincerity lagging behind all the obstacles to build Bangladesh as a 'Golden Bangladesh' as dreamt by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

I wish all around success of the 'International Women's Day-2019'.

Thank you all.

Khoda Hafez  
Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu  
May Bangladesh Live Forever.

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