



National Budget 2023-24: Summary

Women and Children



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**BUDGET
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1. Context: The Budget for the Women and Children

The present government has committed to ensuring women's empowerment, gender equality, and child welfare. In line with this pledge, the government has undertaken various new initiatives in addition to continuing ongoing activities for the well-being of women and children. A medium-term action plan has been developed for the period of FY 2023-24 to FY 2025-26 in order to ensure the welfare of women and children.

Under this plan, daycare centres will be established in 64 districts to support working mothers in caring for their children. Efforts will be made in a number of areas including providing sanitary towels to protect adolescent health, distributing bicycles to school-going girls for their empowerment, and taking measures to prevent violence against women and child marriage. Additionally, working women's hostels will be constructed, child development centres will be established and operated, vocational training will be provided for Qawmi Madrasa children, and programmes such as 'Safe Internet and Safe Children' will be implemented.

The budget for FY 2023-24 was approved by the national parliament on 26 June 2023. The FY 2023-24 budget prioritises women's political, economic, and social empowerment, gender discrimination, children's rights, decent work for women, and safety and development of women and children. The government aims to achieve these goals by implementing various activities following the National Women Development Policy-2011. Strengthening women's empowerment in the face of smart work environments and climate change is also emphasised.

The development of a conducive working environment, along with skill and capacity building through training and awareness activities, has contributed to an increase in the participation rate of the female labour force in the workplace. The rate has risen from 36 per cent in FY 2010 to 42.7 per cent at present, and the government aims to further consolidate this progress.

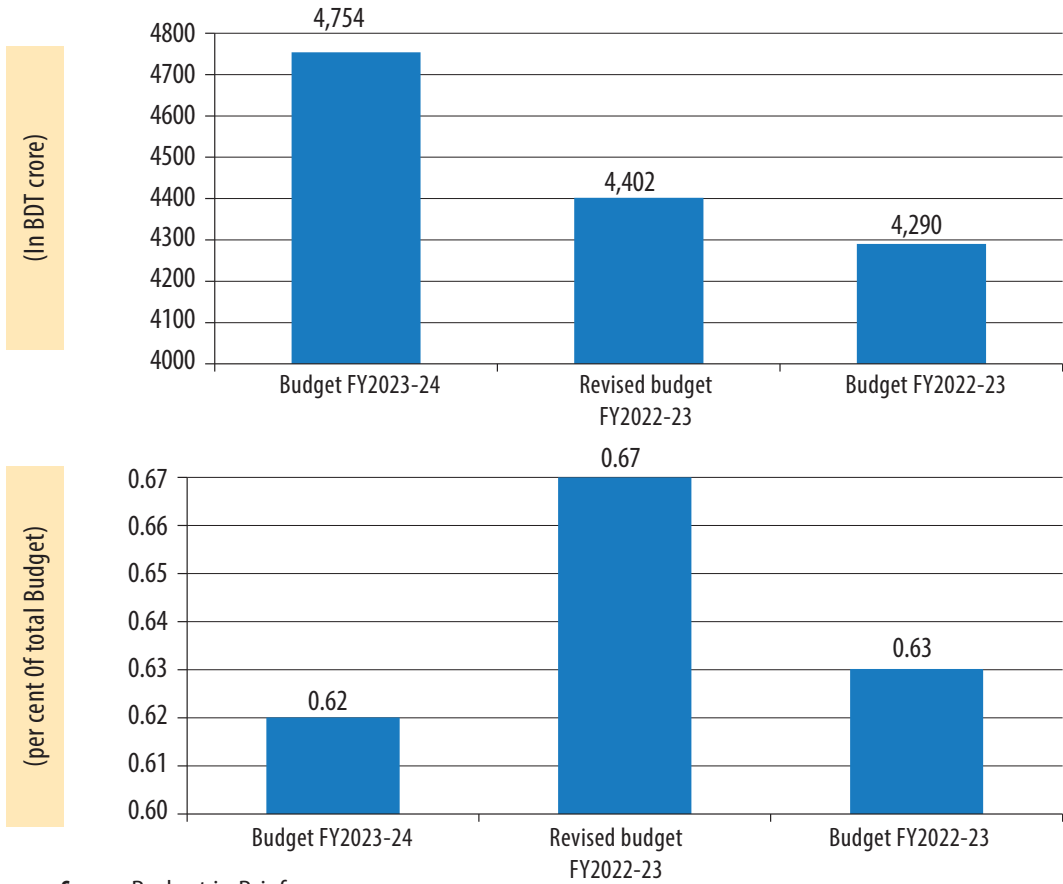
Through the implementation of gender-sensitive policies, Bangladesh has improved its ranking in the 'Gender Gap Index' reported by the World Economic Forum. In 2006, the country was ranked 91st out of 115 countries, but it has now upgraded to the 71st position out of 146 countries. Bangladesh is also ranked 9th in the world for women's political empowerment. The total gender-related allocation for FY 2023-24 amounts to BDT 2,61,787 crore.

In addition to regular social protection programmes for women, the government is conducting micro-credit programmes to enhance self-employment and socio-economic conditions. Loans have already been disbursed to 227,000 women in 488 upazilas across 64 districts. Moreover, self-employment loan activities are being carried out in all 64 districts under the Special Fund of the Honorable Prime Minister.

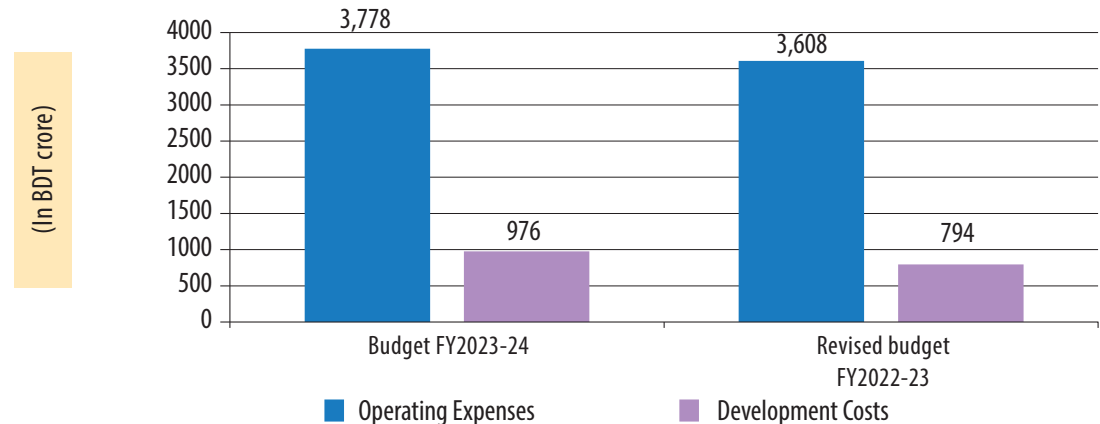
To safeguard women and children, the government has established 'One Stop Crisis Centers' and 'One Stop Cells' to provide services to those who have experienced abuse. Eight regional trauma counselling centres have been set up at divisional and district-level medical college hospitals. Additionally, modern complex buildings have been constructed in six district branches of Bangladesh Shishu Academy, where approximately 35,000 children receive training in various subjects each year, contributing to their development and welfare.

2. The Budget for FY 2023-24 for Women and Children Sector

For the women and children sector in FY 2023-24, an allocation of BDT 4,754 crore has been made, which was BDT 4,402 crore in the revised budget for FY 2022-23. This represents an overall increase of 8 per cent in the budget allocation for FY 2023-24 (Figure 1). The development budget will account for approximately 20.5 per cent of the budget allocation in FY 2023-24 (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Allocation for Women and Children in the National Budget

Source: Budget in Brief.

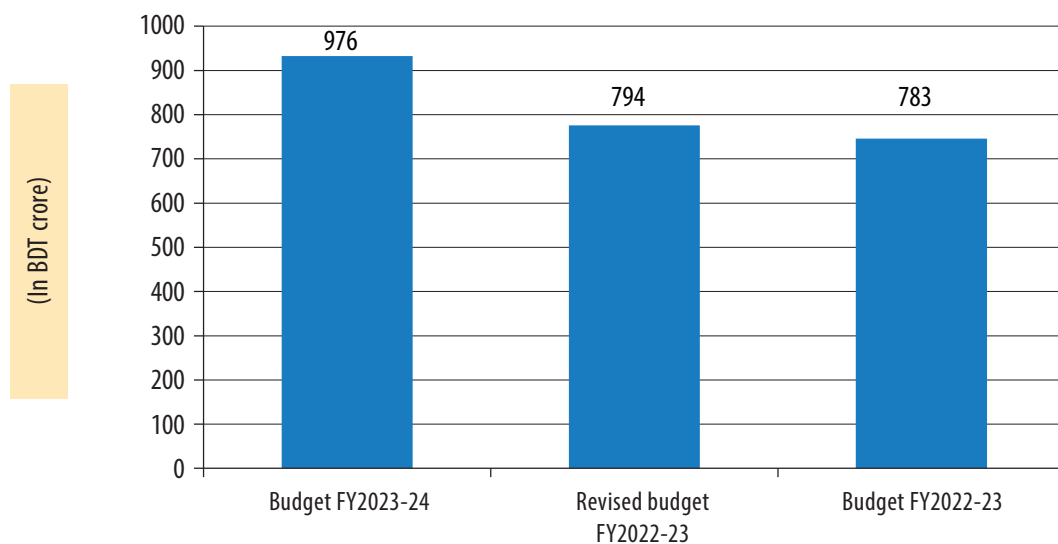
Figure 2: Allocation for Women and Children Sector for Operating and Development Expenditure

Source: Budget in Brief.

3. Allocation for Women and Children Sector under Social Security

Under social security related activities, BDT 976 crore has been allocated for women and children for FY 2023-24 (Figure 3). In FY 2022-23, the allocation was BDT 783 crore; in the revised budget for FY 2022-23, it was BDT 794 crore.

Figure 3: Allocation for Women and Children under Social Protection in the ADP



Source: Annual Development Programme, FY2023-24.

4. Conclusion

The budget for women and children has been formulated to primarily focus on achieving the goals outlined in the 8th Five-Year Plan concerning women and children. The government has established specific targets for developing women and children, encompassing various aspects. These targets include ensuring the rights and progress of children through the implementation of policies and laws, providing essential healthcare facilities for children, ensuring equal opportunities in terms of food and nutrition, offering educational and developmental opportunities for girls, safeguarding children against all forms of abuse, exploitation, and violence, and ensuring public support for children's development. The successful implementation of the the budget for FY 2023-24 will play a crucial role in facilitating the achievement of the objectives outlined in the 8th Five-Year Plan for women and children.