

## Mother and Child Benefit Programme



Two separate programs under the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs - the maternity allowance for poor mothers and the working lactating mother assistance in urban areas have been merged into a single program – Mother and Child Benefit Programme from fiscal year 2022-23. This reform has been done in line with National Social Security Strategy (NSSS). The main objective of this programme is to extend support for nutrition and intellectual development of the children aged 00 to 04 years. Total GoB allocation for this program is BDT 1243.07 crore in 2022-23 and the total beneficiaries are 12.54 lakh.

This program is digitally managed through Management Information System.

Following specific criteria, the pregnant and lactating mothers are selected by the selection

### Key features of the Mother and Child Benefit Programme

#### Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Number of beneficiaries	1.25 Million
Amount of monthly allowance	BDT 800 (USD 8) for 36 months
Target Groups	The children of 00 to 04 years (for nutrition and intellectual development) and their mothers
Budget (2022-2023)	1243.07 crore
Implementing agency	Department of Women Affairs

committee every month and the beneficiaries receive BDT 800 in every month for a 36 months' period through G2P modalities.

One of the key objective of this program is to contribute towards Behavioral Change Communication among the pregnant mother and family members.

The mother gets monthly allowance to cover required food cost and nutrition need from pregnancy period to 04 years of the child. Due to this strategic approach, birth to healthy children is facilitated which is also a commitment for achieving SDG 03 ( Good Health and Welfare ) .

Currently this program is being implemented in 68 Upazilas, 42 Municipalities, 02 city corporation and 06 RMG factories covering 200,000 beneficiaries of the country. Ministry of Women and Children Affairs is working to expand the coverage to six million children during 2nd phase implementation of NSSS 2021-26.

### **Reflection of MJF Social Accountability Tools in GoB Operational Guideline for Implication of Best Practices**

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has been promoting different Social Accountability tools i.e. social audit, community score card, public hearing, social dialogue and courtyard meeting etc. for making the mother and child benefit programme interventions more participatory and community led. These citizen-led social vigilance roles leverage the transparency and accountability of local government institutions.

Social accountability tools contribute towards transparency in beneficiary selection process. Besides, the methodological nature of each SA tool involves citizen involvement, the institutional engagement and community mobilization which leads reducing local political disturbance, bribery and nepotism during the beneficiary selection. For instance, Kakoli Begum (26), a maternity allowance beneficiary of Khulna City Corporation gets back the bribery money of BDT 5000 from a local political

leader as consequence of social audit and local level advocacy.

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs also guided Public Hearing to ensure highest accuracy, integrity and accountability in implementation of social protection schemes, though this tool is not fully regularized yet.

Regarding Grievance Redress System the NSSS Phase ii acknowledged that lack of awareness and confidence among the people on complain procedure and redress mechanism, people cannot lodge their grievance through the call center or service centers.

### **Issues to be considered by policy makers**

- As the program is being reformed with revised implementation modalities, so this is recommended for external review after every 2 financial years.
- Citizen engagement in monitoring mechanism can be institutionalized
- Enhance capacity of beneficiaries and duty bearers on Grievance Redress System
- Enhance knowledge on digital literacy for effective use of digital inclusion and payment system
- Multiple cash transfer options can be deployed considering beneficiaries' convenience
- Digital literacy of the selected beneficiaries is to be ensured.
- Policy should be adopted so that other organizations can be engaged in monitoring and evaluation mechanism
- To resolve grievances in a short time, the GRS should be at the local level in addition to logging online.
- Introduce community monitoring by using Social Accountability Tools during implementation phase.