

# THE BUSINESS STANDARD

## **Awareness, sensitisation, crucial to participation of women in economic activity: Study**

**TBS Report**

03 August, 2022, 05:29 pm



Photo: WFP/ Sayed Asif Mahmud

**Awareness and sensitisation of women beneficiaries and their family members to promote the participation of women in economic activity and decision-making has been emphasised in a study unveiled on Wednesday.**

This will help empower women against social barriers such as restricted mobility, cultural norms, and low control over family finances, mentioned the study conducted to understand the current status of women's digital financial inclusion and Government to People or G2P payments of various social safety net programmes.

LightCastle Partners conducted the study in collaboration with the Brac James P Grant School of Public Health.

The recommendation came at a strategic consultation session on "Enabling Digital Financial Inclusion and Women's Economic Empowerment", jointly organised by the Department of Women Affairs (DWA) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

Researchers also emphasised building digital financial capacity with an integrated support system which will help equip vulnerable women with the necessary knowledge and technical assistance to access and utilise digital financial services.

They also stressed focusing on the design of digital financial products with the needs of vulnerable women in mind in order to facilitate access, adoption, and repeat usage, since vulnerable women groups have low digital literacy and require specialised products, and thus there is low organic adoption of financial services.

Speakers at the programme said the WFP and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs have partnered for more than 20 years on establishing a safety net programme to enhance food security and nutrition.

Looking at building a better and more financially inclusive ecosystem for women, WFP Bangladesh and the DWA are jointly designing the Vulnerable Women Benefit (VWB) Program of the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs.

As per the National Social Security Strategy, the existing Vulnerable Group Development (VGD) programme transformed into the VWB programme targeting to assist one million women in rural areas from January 2023.

The VWB programme's overall aim is to ensure that the essential needs of the targeted vulnerable women are provided for, including food and nutrition needs, for themselves and their families.

This programme will also catalyse improving their resilience and overall livelihoods through the creation of a more accessible and enabling financial ecosystem, bringing women from an informal economy into a formal one.

At the programme, Md Hasanuzzaman Kallol, secretary to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, said, "We want to engage more women in economic activity to increase our GDP. The traditional swing is not enough for them. They have to engage in agricultural activities and food processing to expand their earnings."

Piet Vochten, deputy country director of World Food Programme, Bangladesh, also spoke at the programme with Director General of Department of Women Affairs, Farida Pervin, in the chair.