

COMPANY PROFILE

Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI)

Name of the organization	Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI)
Office Address	<u>Secretariat:</u> Flat-2 & 3, Plot-2, Road-23/C, Block-C, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh. <u>Training Institute:</u> Women Entrepreneurs Skill Development Center- BWCCI Islampur, Shahpara, Thana-Bashon, Post office-Koddabazar, Gazipur Sadar, Gazipur.
Contact information	Tel: +88-02222261526 Fax: +88-02222290584 Email: womenchamber.office@gmail.com Website: www.bwcci-bd.org
Legal Status of the Organization	Registered with Joint Stock Company, vide registration no. C-644(32)/06 dated 31st January 2006, under the Ministry of Commerce, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh according to Trade Organization Act 1961 section 3 & Company Act 1994 section 28. Affiliated as an "A" class chamber with FBCCI.

Brief Description of BWCCI:

Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) is a non-profit, non-political organization established in June 2001 with an enlightened aim to encourage and strengthen women's participation in the private sector as entrepreneurs through promoting a woman friendly business environment. BWCCI is the country's first women Chamber of Commerce, a trade body exclusively working on women's economic and social empowerment nationally.

BWCCI is a strong community voice, lobbying for micro and macro women entrepreneurs to improve their social and economic prospects. Since its establishment, BWCCI has been providing support to women entrepreneurs of 64 districts of Bangladesh through skill based capacity building and entrepreneurship development training programs, policy advocacy, market linkages, access to finance, networking and business awareness. As a result of its unbroken efforts towards promotion of a gender friendly business environment, private sector development and grassroots women participation in economic sectors, BWCCI has already emerged as a training service provider and advocacy organization with increased acceptance among cross section of people at the national and the international level. In recognition of its contribution, BWCCI has achieved UN consultative status with its Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The women entrepreneurs of Bangladesh are energetic, willing to learn, innovative, hardworking, and are willing to take risks. Small amount of assistance is extremely effective for them to graduate from micro to more sustainable small and medium sized entrepreneurs. Recognizing this potential of women entrepreneurs to play a more effective role in private sector development in the country,

BWCCI was formed to act as a nucleus to assist, activate, inform, organize, and assimilate Bangladesh's women entrepreneurs.

BWCCI is committed to being a leader of broad based economic development in Bangladesh for business women & industrialists. Our will is to support the women business community by providing training, management & financial resource, expertise & support networks that enable small businesses to succeed & prosper. We serve all businesses with a special focus on small, micro rural women entrepreneurs. The members of BWCCI are from the entire range of socio-economic spectrum. Although the members are predominantly engaged in various traditionally women dominated sectors, such as food, beauty, fashion, health products, handicrafts etc., its membership is also increasing among the emerging group of women entrepreneurs in various non-traditional businesses such as IT, media, publication and other services. Starting with only 24 at the time of its inception, BWCCI now has more than 5000 members across the country. The rapid increase in its membership from diversified sectors every year and expansion of its working areas and services across the country may be mentioned here as one of the indicators of its successful and dynamic journey towards its enlightened vision.

BWCCI's Vision

To build a prosperous Bangladesh through progress and economic empowerment of women

BWCCI's Mission

To evolve as a national platform for urban and rural women entrepreneur with an aim to enhance their contribution in all spheres of life through attaining sustainable financial strength, and recognition in family, society, economic and public life.

BWCCI's Objectives

- To mobilize economic growth among the urban and rural women of Bangladesh by 2020;
- To ensure women's strong voice in all spheres of economic and political activity with an aim to build a healthy and prosperous nation;
- Become the most credible and strong voice among stakeholders in bringing about policy, legal, social and regulatory changes;
- Lead the nation towards progress through economic, political and social empowerment of women;
- To promote entrepreneurship among women in rural and urban areas through capacity building programs by counseling, training, product and market development.
- To advocate for a gender friendly environment and policies enabling growth of women owned enterprises.

BWCCI's Structure:

- It has 14 members' Board led by President
- 10 Standing Committees
- 8 Divisional Bodies
- Full time Secretariat

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2022-2024

<i>Sl</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>
1.	<i>Ms. Selima Ahmad MP</i>	<i>President</i>
2.	<i>Ms. Sangita Ahmed</i>	<i>Sr. Vice President</i>
3.	<i>Ms. Sabina Alam</i>	<i>Vice President</i>
4.	<i>Ms. Farkhunda Jabeen Khan</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>
5.	<i>Ms. Selina Quader</i>	<i>Director</i>
6.	<i>Ms. Ridma Khan</i>	<i>Director</i>
7.	<i>Ms. Abida Ali</i>	<i>Director</i>
8.	<i>Tanya Tazeen Karim</i>	<i>Director</i>
9.	<i>Ms. Lipi Khandker</i>	<i>Director</i>
10.	<i>Ms. Shahana Jefreen</i>	<i>Director</i>
11.	<i>Ms. Ulfat Jahan</i>	<i>Director</i>
12.	<i>Ms. Nusrat Amin Mirza</i>	<i>Director</i>
13.	<i>Ms. Priti Chakraborty</i>	<i>Director</i>
14.	<i>Ms. Afroza Parveen</i>	<i>Director</i>

BWCCI's Major Activities

- Capacity building and skill based trainings
- Advocacy and policy dialogues
- Roundtable meetings and workshops on national budget
- Public Private Partnership (PPP)
- Facilitating trade fair participation
- Business counseling and legal literacy services
- Promoting marginalized group
- Voice raising of grassroots' Women
- Livelihood and food security
- Market promotion
- Research and publications
- Anti-corruption activities
- Green initiative: Promoting Renewable Energy and Natural Fiber Based Enterprises

Major Training Programs

Since last 22 years, BWCCI has been conducting various training courses for capacity building of women to enhance their economic empowerment. BWCCI had completed 34 Projects successfully

with 32 development partners till date including different donor agencies, Embassies and Ministries of Bangladesh Government and all the projects worked for women entrepreneurship development through trainings, awareness raising and capacity building for ensuring the employment. Around 60,000 women received business development, capacity and skill development trainings (till the date). BWCCI has its own Training Institute at Islampur, Shahpara, Gazipur Sadar, Gazipur which is an 8th storied permanent skill development training center for women entrepreneurs with hostel facilities. It will be inaugurated soon on June 2023 and will start skill based training program (funded by SEIP, Ministry of Finance, GoB and Asian Development Bank) from July 2023. It has its own trainers' pool consisting of around 50 members.

BWCCI has partnership with 22 Training Institutes in 13 districts of Bangladesh to provide different trainings and to support women for entrepreneurship.

Major training courses include-

- i. Entrepreneurship Development and Business Management
- ii. IT freelancing and entrepreneurship development
- iii. ICT and e-commerce
- iv. Business planning, management and marketing
- v. Need and trade based skill trainings
- vi. Finance and accounts management
- vii. Gender and women rights
- viii. Legal procedures of business including VAT, Tax, insurance
- ix. Linkage and networking
- x. Training on how to avoid corruption and anti- corruption advocacy
- xi. Product diversification and development
- xii. Fashion design, product development and entrepreneurship development
- xiii. Beautification and entrepreneurship development
- xiv. Food and beverage product and entrepreneurship development
- xv. Mobile phone servicing and entrepreneurship development
- xvi. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

Advocacy and Policy Dialogues, Roundtable Meetings and Workshops on National Budget and Public Private Partnership (PPP)

BWCCI has been relentlessly doing advocacy with various stake holders like Bangladesh Bank, Private and Public Banks, NGOs and Media to break down the barriers that prevent women across Bangladesh from gaining access to finance. BWCCI's vigorous efforts and dynamic advocacy paved the way for issuing of a circular by Central Bank of Bangladesh to allocate a separate allocation only for women entrepreneurs and directing all bank and PFIs to disburse loan to women at an interest rate of 10% under the refinancing scheme which is now 5%. A separate allocation of BDT 1 billion (USD 12.88 million) for the development of women entrepreneurship was also made in the national budget 2012-13 by the Government of Bangladesh representing the culmination of a multi-year advocacy effort of BWCCI and its continuing.

Bangladesh Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BWCCI) formed coalition with 180 different organizations and 1500 Grassroots women entrepreneurs which includes trade bodies, women organizations, civil society organizations, NGOs, relevant government organizations who are actively involved in women entrepreneurship development and women empowerment. In 2009, BWCCI developed and published the country's first ever Women National Business Agenda (WNBA) in cooperation with CIPE

BWCCI has long been lobbying with policy makers to have women representative in bank management and boards. Following which, Nazneen Sultana was appointed as the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Bangladesh and the Government of Peoples Republic of Bangladesh has appointed the Founder Selima Ahmad as Director of Sonali Bank, the largest state owned bank, President Sangita Ahmed on the board of Janata Bank and Vice President Hasina Newaaz as Director of Agrani Bank.

Facilitating Participation in Trade Fairs

Identifying local and export potential of members' products in respective domestic and overseas countries, BWCCI facilitates trade fair participation for its members. Facilitation of women entrepreneurs to participate in the national and international trade fairs help members understand the market, buying behavior, quality of the products and marketing methodology. Thus BWCCI enables members develop the quality of their products up to the domestic and international standard and encourage women entrepreneurs in their respective businesses. Total 4,635 Women Entrepreneurs participated in 53 International (461 women) and 294 National (4149 women) trade fairs.

Business Counseling and Legal Literacy Services

In order to make sure that women entrepreneurs apply their knowledge and skills which they have gathered from capacity building trainings, BWCCI provide business counseling support to them to help their business grow. In addition to this, as women entrepreneurs of Bangladesh are less familiar with the existing policies and legal issues regarding entrepreneurship development so BWCCI also helps them in this regard through legal consultation and counseling meetings.

Promoting Marginalized Group

BWCCI always gives emphasis in bringing forward the women belonging to marginalized group e.g. women artisan through building their business capacities and creating economic opportunities with the intention of graduating them from informal to formal sector.

Voice Rising of Grassroots' Women

BWCCI has been working to increase the capacity of local women through networking, training and access to information to ensure women's active participation in socio economic and civil life.

Livelihood and Food Security:

BWCCI also carries out livelihood and food security activities for disaster affected people. Most notably, it contributed to the improvement of livelihood and food security of rural women by increasing availability and access to food and Income generation as well as improving its utilization by the rural women in two SIDR affected districts of Bangladesh.

Market Promotion

BWCCI works to establish marketing networks and channels for member entrepreneurs through visiting the local importers, traders, retail houses and stores for marketing the members' products and also liaise with the business community both national and international level. In this respect, BWCCI maintain a strong link with Export Promotion Bureau (EPB).

BWCCI's Major Achievements

- Selima Ahmad MP- President - BWCCI has been awarded for the “Bangamata Begum Fazilatunnesa Mujib Padak-2022
- BWCCI has won the APAC 2018 International Chamber of Commerce Award
- BWCCI has received award from NBR in 2017 as the honor of creating awareness among its members and contribute to generate government revenue.
- BWCCI has won the 7th CACCI Local Chamber Award in Big Chamber Category in Taiwan.
- Founder & President of BWCCI Ms. Selima Ahmad received Oslo Business for Peace Award 2014 which is considered the highest form of recognition given to individual business leaders for fostering peace and stability through creating shared value between business and society.
- A separate allocation of BDT 1 Billion (USD12.5 million) made in the national budget for women entrepreneurs started from the FY 2012-13.
- Collateral free loan for women entrepreneurs under the Refinancing Scheme of Bangladesh Bank. Now interest rate is 5% for SME loan in the country.

BWCCI's General Achievements

- Activities covered in 64 Districts worked and with 32 development partners till date.
- 34 Projects successfully implemented.
- 04 projects are running smoothly.
- Around 60,000 women received business development, capacity and skill development trainings (till the date).
- Total 4,635 Women Entrepreneurs participated in 53 International (461women) and 294 National (4149 women) trade fairs.

Number of Employee: Total 80 (full time and contractual)

List of Project Funders

From the very beginning of its establishment, BWCCI has been working with various national and international partners. BWCCI's partners include the Ministries of Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE); META-Facebook, SAARC Development Fund, USAID PRODIP; USAID PROGATI; United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); UNDP, European Union; The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); SAWES (South Asian Women Entrepreneur's Symposium); The Asia Foundation, Asian Development Bank (ADB); Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning (HITAL), Canada; US Embassy, Dhaka; The International Republican Institute (IRI),USA; The Royal Danish Embassy, Dhaka; Swiss contact; South Asia Enterprise Development Facility (SEDF)- World Bank; Matching Grant Facilities (MGF), World Bank Group; The Commonwealth

Secretariat; International Development and Relief Foundation (IDRF),Canada; Development Cooperation and Economic Affairs, Embassy of The Kingdom of the Netherlands; Trace International; CUTs International-DFID,UK; SME Foundation, Bangladesh.