

Ferdous Ara Begum (Bangladesh)

Name: Ferdous Ara Begum

Nationality: Bangladeshi

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Current positions

- Expert consultant on gender issues, UNFPA
 - Coordinate and facilitate awareness, training and capacity-building to end gender based violence
 - Facilitate workshops and seminars promoting awareness against dowry related issues
 - Enable incorporation of reproductive health and rights awareness in government policies
 - Facilitate the dissemination of UNFPA supported research reports and findings
 - Network, coordinate and liaise with various United Nations agencies, NGOs and government officials
- Member, Board of Directors, Grameen Bank
 - Advise on policies, directions and strategies on microcredit and other issues
 - Advocate for empowering women through enabling access to financial services

Academic qualifications

- MPA, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, USA
- BA (Honors) and MA in Economics, Dhaka University, Bangladesh
- Certificate Course on Development Administration (Nine Months), Princeton University, USA
- Certificate Course on Gender Issues and Participatory Governance, KIT, The Netherlands

Scholarships and grants

- Ford Foundation Scholarship, Parvin Fellow, Princeton University, USA, 1979
- USAID Scholarship, Mason Fellow, Harvard University, USA, 1982
- DANIDA Scholarship for Development Studies Training, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1983
- Dutch Government Scholarship for Gender Studies at KIT, The Netherlands, 2004

Employment history

2005-2005:	Director General, Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Government
2004-2005:	Additional Secretary, Ministry of Establishment, Bangladesh Government
2002-2004:	Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh Government
2003-2003:	Director General, Department of Women Affairs (Additional Charge)
1999-2002:	Commissioner of Taxes, National Board of Revenue, Bangladesh Government
1997-1999:	Inspecting Additional Commissioner of Taxes, National Board of Revenue
1994-1997:	Additional Commissioner of Taxes, National Board of Revenue
1990-1994:	Joint Commissioner of Taxes, National Board of Revenue
1989-1990:	Second Secretary, National Board of Revenue
1981-1989:	Deputy Commissioner of Taxes, National Board of Revenue
1977-1981:	Assistant Commissioner of Taxes, National Board of Revenue
1973-1974:	Assistant Editor, Daily Janapad (Newspaper), Dhaka

Professional achievements and leadership

- First woman to lead Bangladesh Television (BTV) as Director General, 2005
- First woman Commissioner of Taxes in Bangladesh, 1999
- First woman elected Vice Chair of Officers' Club, Dhaka, 2003
- EngenderHealth notes as a Champion of HIV Prevention [engenderhealth.org/itf/bangladesh-2.html]

Promoting women's advancement and rights

- As a Board Member of Grameen Bank, the organization that pioneered microcredit by providing microfinancial services to rural poor, I have had an influential role in creating opportunities for the rural poor women in Bangladesh.
- Promoted women's rights, access, empowerment and advancement throughout career in government service, media, academia and NGO activities.
- I helped mainstream women's and children's rights issues in governmental policies, awareness for HIV/AIDS and reproductive rights. While working at the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, one of my important responsibilities was to oversee 34 gender-specific projects that were designed to provide social and legal protection for women and children.
- Took lead role in the preparation of *5th Periodic Report of Bangladesh* and played an important role in the review of the implementation status of the

report at CEDAW Committee meeting during the 31st session of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women in 2004, as Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs. Took initiative to implement the recommendations of the concluding observations by CEDAW Committee. Also participated at the 2002 regional conference in Sri Lanka to facilitate the implementation of CEDAW.

- Actively promoted Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) resolutions in government programmes, member of the delegation of Beijing+5, United Nations General Assembly Special Session, and represented the progressive views and advances in Bangladesh during various sessions. Worked as a member of the Drafting Committee of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation for Beijing PFA in Thailand, 2004 and participated in the interactive meeting at the United Nations Global Review on Beijing+10 in 2005 in New York.
- Played an important role in the review of *2nd Periodic Report at the Child Rights Convention (CRC)* meeting in Geneva, in 2003. Following an exploratory mission in Sweden, France and Norway at the invitation of the Swedish Government in 2004, drafted the proposal to establish an Independent Commission for Children in Bangladesh. Also advocated creation of Children's Ombudsman and Gender Ombudsman in Bangladesh.
- As Director General of BTV, emphasized equality, equity and gender concept, women's empowerment through various means, including microcredit, awareness of HIV/AIDS, trafficking and migration issues. Created awareness on CRC through programmes highlighting the plight of street children, and broadcast programmes on various women and adolescent girls related issues including empowerment of adolescent girls.

Promoting GO-NGO cooperation and collaboration

- As Chairperson of Government and Civil Society Committee at the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, took various initiatives for GO-NGO collaborations so that NGOs and civil society can contribute to shaping government policies and programmes, dissemination of the concept of CEDAW, Beijing PFA and MDG at the grass-roots level, strengthening WID focal point mechanism to bridge the gap between policy and implementation.
- Engaging NGOs as a partner for programme implementation.
- Took initiative to introduce gender sensitive curriculum at the various civil service training institutes, such as: Bangladesh Public Administration Training Center (BPATC), Bangladesh Civil Service Administration Academy, Academy of Planning and Development (APD), National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC) and National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM).

Publications

- *Dowry, A Social Crime*. Author, 2004.
- *The Counter Trafficking Framework Report: Bangladesh Perspective*. Supervising Editor, 2004.

- *Report of the PRSP Thematic Group on Women's Advancement and Rights. Government Policy Guideline on Gender and Children Perspective in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).* Supervising Editor, 2004.
- *Combating Trafficking: Commitment, Policies and Programs of Bangladesh Government.* Published in the journal: *Orderly and Humane Migration: An Emerging Development Paradigm.* Author, 2004.
- *Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia. Regional Synthesis Paper for Bangladesh, India, and Nepal.* Asian Development Bank (ADB). Contributor, 2002.

International conferences

- February 2006 Regional Conference on Combating Trafficking, Pakistan
- October 2005 Public Broadcasters International Conference, Norway
- September 2005 Conference on Violence Against Women, Pakistan
- March 2005 United Nations Global Review on Beijing+10, United Nations Headquarters, New York
- September 2004 Regional Consultation on Maternal and Child Nutrition and Food Security, India
- September 2004 High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, Bangkok, Thailand
- July 2004 5th Periodic report on CEDAW during the 31st session of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, United Nations, New York, USA
- January 2004 Meetings with the Child and Gender Ombudsman of Sweden, France and Norway
- March 2003 Global Summit on Women and Development of Micro-Entrepreneurship and Microcredit, Morocco
- November 2002 Human Rights Challenges of Globalization in Asia Pacific US: The Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
- October 2002 International Congress on Child Migration, New Orleans, Louisiana, USA
- October 2002 Consultative Meeting on Trafficking in Women and Children, Slovakia
- September 2002 International Seminar on Regional Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Sri Lanka
- August 2002 Seminar on Strengthening HIV/AIDS Activities in Sectoral Plans, Thailand

- June 2000 Special Session of United Nations Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century, New York

National conferences

- Keynote speaker at various national seminars with primary focus on women, adolescent girls and children with broader focus on dowry related issues, awareness of violence against women, public policy and budget, women's empowerment through access to financial services and migration, HIV/AIDS.

Resource person and keynote speaker in international and national workshops and gender training programmes with major focus on the following issues

- Concept of CEDAW and Beijing PFA
- Trafficking of women and children
- Rights based approach and women's rights
- Feminization of migration
- Microcredit for women's empowerment
- Awareness regarding HIV/AIDS and its gender impact
- Training and capacity-building to end gender-based violence
- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger

Membership and leadership in other organizations

- 2004: Member, Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) on Migration, Mobility and HIV/AIDS
- 2003: Co-Chair, UNAIDS Sub-Group
- 2003: Adviser, Acid Survivors Foundation
- 1996: Member: United Nations Delegates Hospitality Club, New York Harvard Club

Awards and citations

- Awarded cash prize by the Government for outstanding contribution in Tax Collection
- USAID Award in Recognition of Service Promoting GO-NGO Cooperation
- Shining Personality Award for Excellence in Public Administration, by Women's Voice Foundation
- Jagadish Bose Gold Medal for Public Administration

Travel

Travelled to the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, France, India, Malaysia, Morocco, Nepal, The Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Slovakia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland) and United States of America.

Personal

- Date of birth: 11 August 1948
- Marital status: married, mother of two sons
- Religion: Islam
- Hobbies: reading, social services and music